

## THE NATIONAL-TERRITORIAL DELIMITATION IN CENTRAL ASIA MIRRORED IN THE NEWSPAPERS "TURKISTON" AND "ZARAFSHON"



<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15570355>

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**Abstract.** *This paper focuses on discussions regarding Tajik people in the Turkistan Communist Party's official newspaper, "Turkiston," and the Samarkand Regional Communist Party's official newspaper, "Zarafshon," conducted between August and September 1924.*

*Starting in early 1924, debates aimed at the National-Territorial Delimitation were underway in Soviet Central Asia. Concrete proposals for the delimitation were centered around the Central Asian Bureau, ultimately leading to the decision in October of the same year to establish the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Oblast.*

*The National-Territorial Delimitation in Central Asia was not a unilateral reform imposed by the Soviet regime. Instead, it was shaped by the intentions of the Russian Communist Central Government and the activities of Central Asian national elites. The discourse on national issues by intellectuals, particularly national elites in Central Asia at the time had a significant impact on the establishment of national republics.*

*In this paper, I examine Communist Party newspapers published in Arabic-script Uzbek to explore what kinds of discussions regarding national and territorial issues were conducted within these publications. The discussions about the National-Territorial Delimitation within the Communist Party organization, centered around the Central Asian Bureau, differed in both purpose and role from those taking place in the national-language Communist Party newspapers.*

*Based on the above, this paper analyzes the role of national-language Communist Party's official newspapers in Central Asian national formation by focusing on the discussions regarding national and territorial issues concerning the Tajik people in "Turkiston" and "Zarafshon" during the period from August to September, when concrete proposals for the National-Territorial Delimitation were nearing completion.*

**Keyword:** *Central Asian National Formation, Media, Nation, National Language, National-Territorial Delimitation, Communist Party's Newspaper, Turkistan Communist Party, Tajik, "Turkiston", Uzbek, "Zarafshon".*

**INTRODUCTION.** The year 1924 was likely a pivotal moment in the formation of national groups and republics in Central Asia. During this year, specific plans for the National-Territorial Delimitation aimed at establishing national groups and republics were developed primarily by the Central Committee

of the Russian Communist Party and the Central Asian Bureau (1922-1934). In October of the same year, the establishment of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (hereafter, the Uzbek SSR), the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic<sup>1</sup> (hereafter, the Tajik ASSR), and the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Oblast was decided. Additionally, the establishment of a national republic for the Kara-Kalpak was advocated during this time, and in February 1925, it was established as an Autonomous Oblast under the Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

Research on the National-Territorial Delimitation during the Cold War faced limitations due to restricted access to primary sources, making comprehensive investigations from multiple perspectives challenging. In this context, some studies concluded that the National-Territorial Delimitation was a top-down reform implemented by the Soviet regime to divide rebellious regions and facilitate governance<sup>2</sup>. However, after the Cold War, the use of archival materials became more accessible, leading to an increase in research focusing on the activities of national elites and Jadid intellectuals in the context of nation-building in Central Asia.

With the increase in these studies, research on the national formation in Central Asia from the late 19th to early 20th centuries is being conducted from multiple perspectives. This includes analyses of the Soviet regime and its national policies, as well as the nationalism movements led by Central Asian national elites and Jadid intellectuals, and the debates on the national formation about the question "Who are we?" during these movements<sup>3</sup>.

This period was a significant turning point from the perspective of Central Asian history, and Central Asian national formation during this time remains an

<sup>1</sup> Until the emergency meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on October 11, 1924, there were plans to establish it as the Tajik Autonomous Oblast within the Uzbek SSR. However, during this meeting, the necessity of establishing it as the Tajik ASSR was recognized, and on October 14, the Tajik people were granted the right to establish the Tajik ASSR (Масов, Рахим. 2008 *Таджики История национальной Трагедии*. Иффон: Душанбе. 79-80с). Therefore, in this article, when referring to matters before October 14, 1924, the Tajik ASSR will be referred to as the Tajik Autonomous Oblast.

<sup>2</sup> Allworth, E., *The Nationality Question in Soviet Central Asia*. New York, Prather, 1973. The debate on whether the founding of the Central Asian republics should be seen as a divide-and-rule strategy of the Soviet regime continued thereafter. In Sabol, Steven 1995 "The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National Delimitation," *Central Asian Survey*, 14(2), 225-241p. it is argued that during the delimitation of borders, there was an intention of divide-and-rule specifically concerning the Ferghana region, excluding other areas.

<sup>3</sup> 小松 1996『中東イスラム世界 7 革命の中央アジア—あるジャディードの肖像』東京:東京大学出版会.; 小松久男 2022「サルト人とはだれか—近代中央アジアの民族名論争—」『西南アジア研究』第 94 号 59-91 頁.; Abdirashidov, Zaynabidin. 2023 *Türkistan Ceditçilerinin Eserlerinde Türkistan Algısı*. "Türkistan" Ankara: Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi.; Khalid, Adeeb. 2016 *Making Uzbekistan —National, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR—* New York: Cornell University Press. Etc.

area of strong interest even within the region<sup>4</sup>. However, it is important to note, as pointed out in previous research, that the study of modern history in Uzbekistan often presupposes the ideology of contemporary Uzbek nationalism, which negatively evaluates the Soviet regime<sup>5</sup>.

Kumakura analyzed how the debates among Central Asian national elites influenced the decision-making process of the Central Asian Bureau, which held full authority over Central Asia under Soviet rule regarding the specific plans for the National-Territorial Delimitation<sup>6</sup>. The discussions on the National-Territorial Delimitation, involving Central Asian national elites and intellectuals active with the Communist ideology, as focused by Kumakura's study, necessitate further investigation to gain a more balanced and detailed understanding of modern national formation in Central Asia.

This paper focuses on the discussions concerning Tajiks as featured in the Russian Communist Party's regional branch newspapers, "*Turkiston*" and "*Zarafshon*," published in Arabic-script Uzbek. It aims to elucidate an example of the discourse on language, ethnicity, and borders related to Tajiks in the period just before the implementation of the National-Territorial Delimitation. These Communist Party's newspapers, published in national languages, functioned as platforms where intellectuals proficient in these languages could debate and share discourses on national and republic matters. Consequently, the debates within these newspapers were conducted with different objectives than those involved in formulating specific plans for the National-Territorial Delimitation in the Central Asian Bureau. Therefore, the discussions in the newspapers did not necessarily fully endorse the Communist Parties' activities at the time or align with the concrete proposals of national policies.

Considering these factors, this paper examines the nature of the debates that took place in August and September 1924 regarding the establishment of the Tajik Autonomous Oblast (Hereafter: Tajik AO) within the Uzbek SSR, the details of these discussions, and their differences from the Soviet government's policies and the actually implemented the National-Territorial Delimitation. Additionally, it explores the role of the Communist Party newspapers published in national languages as media, examining their function as media outlets and the ideologies assumed by their contributors.

### SOURCES DISCUSSED IN THIS STUDY

This paper focuses on the discussions surrounding the Tajik issue as covered in the newspapers "*Turkiston*" (1922-24) and "*Zarafshon*" (1922-28). "*Turkiston*" was a daily political and social newspaper published by the Turkistan

<sup>4</sup> Абдуллаев, Р. М. 2000 *Туркестан в начале XX века: к истории*. Ташкент: Шарқ; Эшпўлатов, Б. 2000 *Ўзбекистон Совет мусталакачилими даврика*. Ташкент: Шарқ. ит. д.

<sup>5</sup> 帯谷知可 2022 『ヴェールのなかのモダニティ』東京:東京大学出版会. 42 頁.

<sup>6</sup> 熊倉潤 2014 「民族自決と連邦制—ソ連中央アジア国家建設(1923-1924)」『ロシア史研究会』94 号 3-21 頁.

Communist Party in the capital city of the Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (hereafter, the Turkistan ASSR), Tashkent, starting from September 13, 1922. “*Turkiston*” was established as the successor to “*Ishtirokiyun*”, which had been in circulation since June 12, 1918, and “*Qizil Bayroq*”, which started on December 12, 1921. The publication of “*Turkiston*” ceased after 411 issues, two days before the official announcement of the establishment of the Uzbek SSR was made on December 5, 1924. Subsequently, “*Qizil O'zbekiston*” was published as the successor to “*Turkiston*”. Initially, “*Turkiston*” was circulated with 2,500 copies, eventually increasing to 7,500 copies<sup>7</sup>.

The other newspaper discussed in this paper, “*Zarafshon*”, was the official newspapers of the Samarkand regional Communist Party and was published starting October 27, 1922, as the successor to “*Hurriyat*”, which had been published since April 18, 1917, and “*Mehnatkashlar tovushi*”, which started on June 11, 1918. Although its publication ended in 1928, “*Lenin yo'li*” was published as its successor starting in 1930. In 1924, “*Turkiston*” and “*Zarafshon*”, along with “*Farg'ona*”, were the only three Uzbek-language newspapers in Arabic script published in the Turkistan ASSR. Notably, “*Turkiston*” played a central role as an Uzbek-language newspaper in Arabic script in Turkistan ASSR<sup>8</sup>.

This paper examines the debates that were initiated by a critical editorial on the state of Tajik language education in Khujand, published in the newspaper “*Turkiston*”. The discussion began with an article titled “Concerning the Tajik Issue - Related to National Republics and Autonomy,”<sup>9</sup> contributed under the pseudonym Samarqandlik<sup>10</sup>, in the 337th issue of “*Turkiston*” dated August 26, 1924. It was followed by an article by Bektash titled “About the Tajik Issue (Related to the Article by Samarqandlik in Issue 337 of “*Turkiston*” Newspaper),”<sup>11</sup> published in the 182nd issue of “*Zarafshon*” on September 8, 1924. The debate continued with an article by the journalist Ismoilzoda titled “Concerning the Tajik Issue Anew,” published in “*Turkiston*”<sup>12</sup> newspaper on September 14, 1924. These discussions addressed the unification of Tajik grammar, perspectives on the Uzbekization of Tajiks, and debates over the social and economic alignment between Uzbeks and Tajiks, considering the decisions regarding the National-Territorial Delimitation.

This paper also investigates the discussions related to the National-Territorial Delimitation conducted in the Communist Party's official newspaper

<sup>7</sup> Нуриддинова, Феруза. 2020 *Миллий Матбуот Фихристи - «Иштирокиюн», «Қизил Байроқ», «Туркистон» ва «Қизил Ўзбекистон» Газетларида Эълон Қилинган Мақолалар Изоҳли Библиографияси (1918-1930)*. Ташкент: Мумтоз Сўз. 14-15р.

<sup>8</sup> Anqoboy “Markazlashtirish kerak” *Turkiston*No.282, 1924.6.2

<sup>9</sup> Samarqandlik “Tojiklik masalasi tevaragida -Milliy jumhuriyatlar va muxtoriyatlar tuzilish munosabati bilan.” *Turkiston*, No.337. 1924.8.26.

<sup>10</sup> This is an anonymous article, and while the translation would mean “Samarkandian,” for convenience, it is treated as a contributor's name in this article and is referred to as Samarqandlik.

<sup>11</sup> Bektash “Tojik malalasi to'g'risida (Turkiston gazetasining 337-inchi sonida bosilgan “Samarqandlik” maqolasi munosabati bilan).” *Zarafshon*, No.182. 1924.9.8.

<sup>12</sup> Ismoilzoda “Yana Tojiklik masalasi tevaragida” *Turkiston*, No.351. 1924.9.14.



published in Arabic-script Uzbek. It takes into consideration the resolutions concerning the implementation plan for the National-Territorial Delimitation carried out by the Central Asian Bureau during that period. Furthermore, it explores the role played by the Communist Party's official newspaper published in national languages in Central Asian national formation.

### DISCUSSION IN THE NEWSPAPERS “*TURKISTON*” AND “*ZARAFSHON*”

This paper focuses on the discussions that spanned across the newspapers “*Turkiston*” and “*Zarafshon*”, as mentioned above. The debate commenced with the article “Concerning the Tajik Issue - Related to National Republics and Autonomy” published in “*Turkiston*” newspaper on August 26, 1924. The article by Samarqandlik, which sparked the discussion, raised concerns about the use of Uzbek as the language of instruction in Tajik schools in Khujand. It argued that while Uzbek, Kazakh, and Turkmen languages were already treated as distinct languages, there was still a reluctance to promote the use of Tajik. The article asserted that the Soviet regime's intention was not to Sinicize, Russify, or Uzbekize nations but to educate each nation in its own language, emphasizing that language issues should be at the center of political and social concerns. It criticized the lack of Tajik-language textbooks and specialized Tajik schools as either negligence by regional leaders or their failure to adhere to the Soviet regime's fundamental policies. The article insisted that, if they were true communists and genuine supporters of the Soviet government, they should have developed textbooks, established schools, and produced newspapers and magazines in the Tajik language for the Tajiks.

Following these claims, discussions continued in both “*Zarafshon*” and “*Turkiston*”. The debates by Bektash in “*Zarafshon*” and Ismoilzoda in “*Turkiston*” were opposites, with Ismoilzoda explicitly condemning Bektash's views. In the article “About the Tajik Issue (Related to the Article by Samarqandlik in Issue 337 of “*Turkiston*” Newspaper)” published in “*Zarafshon*” on September 8, 1924. The author Bektash criticized Samarqandlik's concerns as unfounded and took a passive stance toward the reforms sought by Samarqandlik. Bektash argued that national issues should be resolved based on social, political, and ethnographic research, and additionally pointing out the significant linguistic differences between the Tajik spoken in Khujand and Samarkand and that spoken in the Pamirs, highlighting the difficulty of linguistic unification for the Tajik language. He also stated that the Russian Communist Party, taking into account the aforementioned circumstances, is responding with an understanding of the Tajik people from social, economic, ethnographic, and historical perspectives. He described that the current situation of the Tajik people in Khujand and Samarkand, already aligns with the party's intentions. He argued that Tajiks and Uzbeks in these regions had become indistinguishable from historical or other perspectives.

In response, Ismoilzoda presents his perspective in the article “Considering the Tajik Issue Anew” published in the September 14th edition of “*Turkiston*”,

issue 351, building upon these two discussions. While the previous two arguments primarily focused on the language issues of Tajiks, Ismoilzoda, building upon their discussion topics, centered his argument on the reasons for including the Tajik AO within the structure of the Uzbek SSR at its founding. He particularly focused on the economic activities and linguistic differences between Uzbeks and Tajiks, explaining why the plan for the National-Territorial Delimitation is rational. In his argument, Ismoilzoda asserts that true unity is impossible without economic harmony and criticizes Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism for being ideologies that failed due to their disregard for economic unity. Despite linguistic differences, he noted that Uzbeks and Tajiks exhibit economic harmony, which makes coexistence within the Uzbek SSR possible. Regarding language, he emphasizes the need to promote Tajik language education more than Uzbek, which is a second language for Tajiks. Addressing the regional variations in Tajik vocabulary highlighted by Bektash, he stresses the necessity of linguistically consolidating Tajik into a unified language. He concluded by stating that national development goes hand in hand with linguistic unification, and this is an issue that Tajiks themselves must resolve.

### ANALYSIS BASED ON THE DISCUSSION

The three articles discussed in this paper are all based on the premise that Uzbeks and Tajiks are coexisting entities. The specific plans for the National-Territorial Delimitation began to be discussed in early 1924. The theses adopted by the Bukhara Communist Party Committee on February 25, 1924, already stated the intention to include Tajiks as an Autonomous Oblast within the Uzbek SSR<sup>13</sup>. Subsequently, some changes were made, and by October, the Tajik AO was incorporated as the Tajik ASSR under the Uzbek SSR, which was approved by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

The discussions in the “*Turkiston*” and “*Zarafshon*” newspapers, as covered in this paper, took place from August to September and were conducted under the assumption that the Tajik AO would be part of the Uzbek SSR. Therefore, they developed arguments on how Tajiks should conduct national education, based on the premise of coexisting with Uzbeks.

The discussions covered in this paper reflect three distinct perspectives and interpretations regarding the issues and situations surrounding Tajiks at the time. The regions particularly noted in these discussions—Khujand and Samarkand—were areas where Tajiks were the majority<sup>14</sup> but became part of the Uzbek SSR after the National-Territorial Delimitation. In “Theses on the Issue of the Situation of Tajiks” prepared by Abdurakhim Khojibaev for the members of the Commission on the National-Territorial Delimitation, it is stated that in regions where Tajiks are

<sup>13</sup> Средне Азиатское Бюро ЦКРКП 1924 *На Историческом Рубеже*. Ташкент. 14с.

<sup>14</sup> ЦСУ СССР 1928 *Всесоюзная перепись населения 1926 год* 15. Москва. 28-19, 44с., indicates that by 1926, when the assimilation of Tajiks into Uzbeks was already underway, 57,736 out of the 67,000 residents of Khujand were Tajiks. Additionally, РГАСПИ. Ф.17. оп.113. д.725. 109-111с. reports that according to the 1920 census, there were 44,000 Tajiks and 3,000 Uzbeks in Samarkand at that time, showing that Tajiks were overwhelmingly more numerous than Uzbeks.

the majority, Tajik should be recognized as an official language and used in educational settings, even if these regions are part of the Uzbek SSR. The document calls for the guarantee of the status of the Tajik language<sup>15</sup>. However, in reality, after the National-Territorial Delimitation, educational institutions in the Uzbek SSR predominantly conducted education in Uzbek, even in regions with Tajik majorities, forcing assimilation onto the Tajiks. M. K. Amosov's report dated May 8, 1929, indicated that the Tajik population in the Uzbek SSR, which was about 800,000 at the time of its establishment, had decreased to 350,000 by 1929<sup>16</sup>.

The situation of Tajik language education, as pointed out by Samarqandlik, was not an issue confined to Khujand alone. Such problems existed in various regions even before the National-Territorial Delimitation, and after the delimitation, the issues of Tajik language education and textbook shortages became more severe. Samarqandlik raised a critical voice against the fact that, even in Khujand, where the majority of the population was Tajik, education was conducted solely in Uzbek. This can be attributed to the fact that figures who would later become symbols of Tajik identity had identified themselves as Uzbek until the capital of the Tajik ASSR was established, and in 1924, the Tajiks lacked cultural and political leadership for their nation<sup>17</sup>. It was Fayzulla Xo'jaev, who played a leading role in the establishment of the Uzbek SSR, who proposed the establishment of the Tajik AO within the framework of the Uzbek SSR. Even by the time the National Subcommittee was established in May 1924, Tajiks had not yet participated in it<sup>18</sup>.

Bekdash's response to Samarqandlik's inquiry reflects the contemporary awareness among the intellectuals of the Turkistan ASSR regarding Tajiks. Even before the discussions on the National-Territorial Delimitation began in earnest, there were debates in the newspaper "*Turkiston*" about regions like Samarqand and Khujand, where Tajiks formed the majority, arguing that the Tajiks in these areas should be assimilated into the Uzbek language<sup>19</sup>. This stemmed from the nationalism movements led by Muslim intellectuals in the early 20th century, which were inspired by the Ottoman Empire, the most powerful Islamic state at the time, and inclined towards Turkism. Later, intellectuals who were bearers of Tajik culture also engaged in enlightenment and literary activities as "Turk" at that time<sup>20</sup>. In the early Soviet period, Uzbek was considered a more progressive language compared to Tajik, which was treated as Persian. Although the Soviet policy aimed to promote Tajik language education, in reality, there were not a few intellectuals like Bekdash who held a reluctant view towards the increase in Tajik language education.

Ismoilzoda was highly critical of such views held by Bekdash. His perspective closely aligned with the specific proposals for the National-Territorial

<sup>15</sup> Масов 2008: 70-71с.

<sup>16</sup> РГАСПИ. Ф.17. оп.113. д.725. 109-111с.

<sup>17</sup> Khalid 2016: 296-297p.

<sup>18</sup> Khalid 2016: 300p.

<sup>19</sup> V.M., "Tojiklik atrofiga" *Turkiston*, No. 214, No. 215. 1923.12.30, 1.3.

<sup>20</sup> Khalid 2016: 298-300p

Delimitation at the time. In the joint research within the Central Asian Bureau concerning the implementation of National-Territorial Delimitation also mentioned the close economic ties between Tajiks and Uzbeks, with the economic structure of the Uzbek SSR being investigated while considering the economic structure of the Tajik AO<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, Ismoilzoda's views on Tajik language education resemble the policies of the Russian Communist Party's Central Government regarding national language education. The 1918 resolution by the People's Commissariat for Education stated that all nationals have the right to receive education in their mother tongue<sup>22</sup>, and promoting the education of Tajiks, who would be a minority in the Uzbek SSR, was in line with Soviet fundamental policies. In addition to this, Ismoilzoda emphasized the necessity of consolidating the Tajik language.

Considering the situation where Tajik language education was not being promoted, it is important to take into account the significant influence of the ideology stemming from Pan-Turkism, which regards Uzbek as a superior language to Tajik. In light of this, Ismoilzoda's article, which sharply criticizes Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism, should also be a focal point of analysis. Under Soviet rule, nationalism was viewed as a potential threat because it could foster alliances among the above classes to achieve nationalist goals. Marxist ideology presumed that recognizing national forms could, in fact, lead to the fragmentation of nationalist alliances among the above classes<sup>23</sup>. In this context, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism were seen as dangerous ideologies that could potentially unite people across class lines. Ismoilzoda, after condemning Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism, argues for the legitimacy of establishing the Tajik AO within the framework of the Uzbek SSR. However, the critique by Ismoilzoda regarding the linguistic assimilation of Tajiks into the Uzbek language is primarily based on the argument that it does not align with the fundamental party policies concerning nationalities policy. In this discourse, Ismoilzoda does not characterize the advocacy for the assimilation of Tajik into Uzbek as Pan-Turkism.

When examining these three articles, it is important to note that their discussions place significant emphasis on "what the intentions of the Russian Communist Party are." In Samarqandlik's article, the decision regarding Tajik language education in Khujand is criticized for deviating from the basic policies of the Soviet regime. Bektash, on the other hand, argues in his article that the Russian Communist Party made its decisions after conducting social, economic, ethnological, and historical research. He criticizes Samarqandlik's dissenting opinion on these decisions. In contrast, Ismoilzoda accuses Bektash of engaging in arguments that exacerbate issues, claiming that his stance is incompatible with the Communist Party. Their discussions not only question the true intentions of the

<sup>21</sup> Средне Азиатское Бюро ЦКРКП 1924: 25с.

<sup>22</sup> Собрание Узаконений. 1918, No30, ст.833.

<sup>23</sup> Martin, Terry. 2001 *The Affirmative Action Empire*. New York: Cornell University Press. 2-6p.



Communist Party but also define and assert what they believe those intentions to be within their arguments.

Their arguments and assertions do not necessarily align with the intentions of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in Central Asia. In fact, some of their claims could exacerbate issues that became significant problems within the Russian Communist Party following the National-Territorial Delimitation<sup>24</sup>. However, this can be attributed to their discussions being conducted near the realities of the Turkistan ASSR. Newspapers like “*Turkiston*” and “*Zarafshon*” were published with the objective of promoting the intentions of the Turkistan Communist Party and the Samarkand Regional Communist Party. In practice, however, they served as forums for local figures, like the authors of the articles discussed here, who were rooted in the regions of the Turkistan ASSR, to interpret the intentions of the Russian Communist Party and discuss how local administration should proceed. It is also noteworthy that participation in these discussions in the official newspapers extended beyond just journalists and national elites. The debates in these newspapers involved various local regions where the newspapers circulated, serving as a platform for discussing and sharing the intentions of the Russian Communist Party. Furthermore, these discussions had the effect of highlighting the political nuances of the region, which were often obscured by the mere promotion of the fundamental intentions of the Soviet regime.

### CONCLUSION

The discussions examined in this paper are merely one example of the debates surrounding the National-Territorial Delimitation featured in the newspapers “*Turkiston*” and “*Zarafshon*.” Both “*Turkiston*” and “*Zarafshon*” are Communist Party’s official newspapers written in Arabic-script Uzbek, and they contain discussions anticipating the relations between Uzbeks and Tajiks following the implementation of the National-Territorial Delimitation. Notably, there are bipolar arguments advocating for Tajiks to assimilate with Uzbeks and opposing views, which is particularly intriguing. Even among the intellectuals who would later become bearers of Tajik culture, there are instances where they argued that Tajiks should learn Uzbek and assimilate<sup>25</sup>.

The Central Committee of Russian Communist Party had approved basic policies concerning minority groups, and a thesis emphasizing the importance of Tajik language education in regions where Tajiks were the majority was submitted to the Commission on the National-Territorial Delimitation. However, there was a discrepancy between the Soviet regime's policies and the on-the-ground realities, as the spread of Tajik language education in these regions was difficult.

Within these Communist Party official newspapers published in Arabic-script Uzbek, while there were editorials reflecting central intentions, in fact there

<sup>24</sup> In РГАСПИ. Ф. 17. Оп. 112. Д.678. Л. 85-87., it is stated regarding the situation of the Tajik ASSR in 1925 that there were no Tajik language schools or good textbooks and introductory books in the Tajik language, and Tajiks were compelled to receive education in Uzbek language schools.

<sup>25</sup> Khalid 2016: 292-300p.

were also arguments that did not align with the Communist Party's policies. These, however, also reflected the local political dynamics. These official newspapers served not only to convey the top-down Communist Party ideology but also to facilitate the sharing of local realities and the factors shaping those realities. The discussions concerning national issues in these official newspapers differed in role from the debates held by the Central Asian Bureau and the Russian Communist Party Central Committee, which were responsible for drafting the implementation plans for National-Territorial Delimitation.

Published within the Turkistan ASSR, these official newspapers aimed to raise awareness of national issues occurring within the autonomous republic, incite discussions related to them, and serve as a platform for generating interpretations and discourses surrounding these problems. The debates in these official newspapers allowed for the sharing of national issues and facilitated the examination of national recognition from multiple perspectives. Although published in national languages and reflecting the decisions and intentions of the Soviet regime, these Communist Party's official newspapers also played a role in sharing perceptions and issues related to national identity which were not necessarily always in compliance with the regime's directives.

