THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN STALINIST CENTRAL ASIA

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ABSTRACT

THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN STALINIST CENTRAL ASIA

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This thesis mainly deals with the issue that if the policies of women's emancipation implemented in Stalinist Central Asia were constructed on the basis of Marxist ideology. For this purpose, after how the issue of women's emancipation is conceptualized in classical Marxism, the existing political, economic, sociocultural structures as well as the gender relations in the region before the confrontation between the Central Asians and Soviet Russians and the policies of women's emancipation implemented in the pre-Stalinist era are discussed, the policies of Stalin concerning women's emancipation are elaborated in detail. Being denoted that the issue of women's emancipation in socialist society is sacrificed for achieving the great Stalinist ideals, in this thesis conclusively, it is stated that despite being neither directly women's emancipation-oriented nor Marxism-inspired the policies of Stalin concerning women produced both Marxist and emancipatory consequences in Central Asia in the long run.

Keywords : Emancipation of women, Women in Central Asia, Marxism, Stalin

ÖZ

STALİN DÖNEMİ ORTA ASYA'DA KADININ ÖZGÜRLEŞMESİ

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Bu tez temel olarak Stalin dönemi Orta Asya'da uygulanan kadının özgürleşmesi politikalarının Marksist ideoloji üzerinde inşa edilip edilmeği konusunu ele almaktadır. Bu amaçla, klasik Marksizm'de kadının özgürleşmesi konusunun nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığı, Orta Asyalılarla Sovyet Rusların karşılaşmasından önce bölgedeki mevcut politik, ekonomik ve sosyokültürel yapılar ile toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri ve Stalin öncesi dönemde uygulanan kadının özgürleşmesi politikaları tartışıldıktan sonra, Stalin'in kadının özgürleşmesine yönelik politikaları detaylı biçimde irdelenmektedir. Bu tezde sonuç olarak, sosyalist toplumda kadının özgürleşmesi konusunun Stalin'in büyük ideallerini gerçekleştirmek adına feda edildiği belirtilerek, ne doğrudan kadının özgürleşmesi odaklı ne de Marksizm temelli olduğu halde Stalin politikalarının uzun vadede Orta Asya'da hem Marksist hem de özgürleştirici sonuçlar ürettiği ifade edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadının özgürleşmesi, Orta Asya'da kadın, Marksizm, Stalin

in inestimable memory of my father…

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
FYP	Five Year Plan
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
SWW	Second World War
TASSR	Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Women, emancipation of whom is not yet accomplished despite both relative and disproportionate progress made mostly in recent times, are still subject to various forms of inequality in political, economic and sociocultural spheres throughout the world. This inequality, generally speaking, coagulates in the societies where the traditionalism, conservatism, religiosity and patriarchy become deeper, firmer and stronger. Within the same society, even within the same further smaller communities, however, the scope, content and density of the uneven political, economic and sociocultural circumstances confronted by women, who are not a single entity in any sense, diversify between the two edges of a wide but atypical inequality spectrum.

How to convert this gender inequality against women into equality in every sphere of life, how to emancipate women in other words, is generally theorized more systematically and holistically by the feminist thinking, which in itself radically splits into several fractions while approaching the issue. Marxist ideology, which pledges to emancipate all human beings genuinely under socialism, as well, refraining from intersecting with the feminist space, covers some basic topics like family, marriage, sexuality albeit not methodically and thoroughly but desultorily and tangentially within the context of classical Marxism. Founders of Marxism, Marx and Engels delineate the boundaries of the women's emancipation within the context of genuine emancipation of humanity that would be accomplished only after the eventuation of the formidable class struggle in behalf of socialism. Complete transition from capitalist to socialist mode of production, that is to say, is formulated as the true path for the emancipation of women by classical Marxism.

Soviet Russians, who, contriving to realize the socialist revolution in 1917, induced a deep refraction in the 20th century world history, were the leading implementers of the Marxist ideology including its proposals on the emancipation of women. Due to the historic difficulty in sustaining the pure alignment of theory and practice, Soviet

politics in general has always been broadly regarded as either being Marxist, semi-Marxist or totally non-Marxist in the literature. Concerning the policies of women's emancipation, likewise, it is definitely possible to argue that Soviet Russians failed to sustain theory-practice harmonization not only because of the lack of cohesive and coherent argumentation on the emancipation of women in Marxist thinking but also because of the reluctance, insincerity and irresoluteness of the male dominated Communist Party while approaching the issue. The emancipation of women throughout the USSR, despite this, was given high priority for several reasons especially during the first post-revolutionary decade. In the Stalinist era, the issue of women's emancipation lost its priority under the thick shadow of the 'socialism in one country' doctrine, implementation of which, however, had both positively and adversely affected the emancipation process of all 'Soviet' women.

One category of these 'Soviet' women, who were exposed to the policies of women's emancipation of Soviet Russians were those in Central Asia. The indigenous people of the region, actually, despite their geographical remoteness, have long been acquainted with the Russians because of the Tsarist era. What was new with the Soviet Russians, however, was their ideology, that is to say Marxism, on the basis of which the newcomers were strictly decisive and insistent to subvert existing order that contrasted with the Soviet existence and interests in the region. Women, therefore, being regarded as the indispensible elements of the transformation process, were immediately introduced to the policies of emancipation by the Soviet Russians. Although the scope, density and content of these policies were lessened with the arrival of Stalinism as in the case of the other regions of USSR, Central Asian women were given relatively special priority, even in the Stalinist era, because of the deplorable image of the region in the eyes of the Soviet Russians concerning the severity of the women question.

This study, being situated in the very middle of the narrow space where the, Marxism, Stalin, Central Asia and the issue of women's emancipation intersect with each other, will endeavor to answer the question that if Stalinist policies concerning women in Central Asia were established on the basis of Marxist ideology and, as an extension of this, if Central Asian women were emancipated in accordance with the

Marxist proposals for the women question in the Stalinist era. While striving to formulate a statement for this problematic, the study will inevitably intervene in some other Soviet policies in the region including regime consolidation, subversion of the existing religious and customary order, economic development and state security both before and during the Stalinist era. Because the emancipation of women, not only in Central Asia but also throughout the USSR, has never been only a matter of eradicating the gender inequality at the political, economic and sociocultural levels but rather it has been at best the major component or at worst the trivial extension of realizing the giant Soviet ideals in the region until the early 1950s. Although the best and the worst options correspond to Leninist and Stalinist eras respectively, the emancipation of Central Asian women, however, was far more achieved in the latter era when compared to the preceding one not only because of the fact that any kind of societal transformation requires long time but also Stalinist policies mainly constructed on the 'socialism in one country' doctrine indirectly but significantly contributed to the emancipation of women in the long run despite the high price paid for in return. Concerning how Marxist the policies of women's emancipation were in the region, on the contrary, it would not be misleading to argue that the former era was relatively but definitely far more Marxism-inspired than the latter.

The net answer that will be given to the above mentioned question, therefore, will be the women-related Stalinist policies were neither directly women's emancipation-oriented nor purely Marxism-inspired; these policies, however, as a whole, partly due to the advantage of twenty five-year long 'one-man rule' period, engendered some Marxist consequences. To arrive at this conclusion, this study is constituted on the basis of four chapters, all of which were necessarily covered to find out the demarcations of the above-mentioned intersection zone.

The study starts with a chapter in which the conceptualization of the women's emancipation in classical Marxist thinking will be stressed on. To establish the link between the classical Marxism and the emancipation of women, references of Marx and Engels to the women-related issues like family, marriage, sexuality, women's labor, motherhood in both their single and collective works will be dealt with in this

chapter. How Lenin, as both theoretician and implementer, interprets the issue will also be discussed since not only he exerted substantial efforts concerning women's emancipation in theory and practice but also his commentary on the issue directly reverberated the early post-revolutionary policies concerning the women question. While concluding, it will be definitely stated that despite the existence of trivial discrepancies among the three in approaching the issue, they all idealize the emancipation of women in a vigorous parallelism handling it as a derivative of class society, assigning the socialism for true emancipation and skipping over the gender relations in societies.

The second chapter will be an introductory chapter of Central Asia, boundaries of which will be regarded as the boundaries of the area occupied by today's five independent Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Before focusing on the pre-Stalinist and Stalinist policies of women's emancipation in the region in the following parts of the study, to understand the existing basic political, economic and sociocultural structures, dynamics and factors as well as the gender relations, hierarchies and women's status in the region is fundamentally important from the standpoint of this study, since the peculiarities of Central Asia not only affected the course, scope and content of the forthcoming Soviet policies but also had a determinative impact on the Soviet performance concerning the emancipation of Central Asian women. For the purpose of introducing the Central Asia preceding the historic confrontation between the Central Asians and Soviet Russians, in this chapter therefore, after touching upon the brief history and the basic sociocultural features of the region including religious, ethnic, linguistic structures and lifestyles, gender relations and the condition of the women in the society will be dealt with in more detail.

'What was done' concerning the emancipation of Central Asian women before the Stalin's complete rise in power will be the main subject of the third chapter. The pre-Stalinist period that will be regarded as the first post-revolutionary decade, has an historic importance since the multifaceted and intense women's emancipation policies were put into practice not only in Central Asia but also throughout the Soviet Union. In this chapter, hence, the revolutionary legislation inaugurated to equalize

the genders and the policies of female mobilization in Central Asia by the virtue of wholehearted efforts of the women members of the Communist Party will be studied under two distinctive subsections in order not to provide the required basis for comparing and contrasting the Leninist and Stalinist policies regarding the women question but rather to evaluate the progress in the women's emancipation in the pre-Stalinist period. This part of the study will also illustrate that the issue of women's emancipation, despite the sincerity and willingness of the Party to emancipate women, has always been a part of broader ideological goals of regime consolidation and the direct establishment of socialism in the region where the revolutionary conditions were not mature in any sense.

The fourth chapter of the study, lastly, is allocated to how the genuine emancipation of women under socialism was sacrificed for the great *raison d'état* in Stalinist era and, despite this, how the Stalinist policies generated emancipatory impact on the women. Although the policies of women's emancipation sharply fell from grace in this period as it is clearly seen in the famous Stalinist motto that the 'women question was solved', this chapter will start with the mass unveiling campaign initiated in the name of women's emancipation in the very early Stalinist era. In the other subsections, after touching upon how pacified the women sections of Communist Party, the impact of the great Stalinist projection of 'socialism in one country' on the process of women's emancipation in Central Asia will be discussed. Before starting the first chapter, however, it is worth to note that this study never intends to discuss whether the Stalinist politics in general were Marxist or not; isolating our main concern from this long-lasting and pending debate in the literature, our conclusive statements, instead, will only be limited to the Marxist roots of the policies of women's emancipation.

CHAPTER II

MARXIST THINKING ON THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

Being an overall theory of classed society, production and reproduction of the class dominance, development of the class conflicts and struggle and process of capital accumulation, Marxism offers a comprehensive political and economic philosophy methodologically based on the dialectical materialist interpretation of the history. Within this philosophy, however, it is hardly possible to find out a set of definitive conceptualizations on the issue of woman emancipation neither in the classical Marxism nor in the contemporary interpretations of it. Not systematically and thoroughly conceptualizing the issue, founders of Marxism, Marx and Engels, refer it within the boundaries of classical Marxist thinking. But even they, despite not fundamentally, differ in approaching the issue: Marx attributes more roles to nature in defining the sex roles whereas Engels doesn't ignore the role of the society in constructing them. Lenin, succeeding them as both a Marxist theoretician and implementer, is likeminded; but distinctively, he puts more emphasis on the role of women both in the revolutionary process from capitalism to socialism and in the process of women emancipation. All, however, come through the same end associating the woman question with the class society and confirming that the transition from capitalism to socialism is required for genuine emancipation of women

From the standpoint of this study, classical Marxist thinking on the women's emancipation matters significantly since the Soviet regime would strive for implementing the Marxist ideology in all political, economic and socio-cultural stratums. Therefore, in this part of the study, first the women-related references of Marx and Engels in both their single and collective works will be assembled; secondly, a brief revision of the book written by Engels after the death of Marx, namely *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, will be presented, since dealing with the issue from a historical-materialist perspective, this book is

mostly regarded as the constituent of woman emancipation in Marxist thinking; lastly, how Lenin, being both a theoretician and an implementer, commentates on the issue will be discussed.

In spite of occupying little space in classical Marxist thinking, the woman issue is mostly taken into consideration in terms of division of labor, family, marriage, prostitution and woman labor in the capitalist societies. Marx and Engels, being well aware of the subordinate position of woman in the capitalist societies, understand the issue in its functional relationship to the class structure and struggle (Meyer, 1977, p.89). Stemming from the statement that "man's relationship to nature is immediately his relationship to man, and his relationship to man is immediately his relationship to nature, his own natural function" (Marx, 2000, p.96), Marx argues that the most immediate, natural, and necessary relationship of the human being to human being is the relationship between the man and woman; it can be concluded that, from the character of this relationship, if man conceives himself as species-being, a human being, man-woman relationship is the most natural and humanistic relationship (Marx, 2000, p.96). But Marx also states that "The production of life, both of one's own in labor and of fresh life in procreation now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship" (Marx, 2000, p.182). By social connoting the cooperation of several individuals, Marx alludes that to the extent that the man's relation to nature has a social aspect, his relation to woman would have a social aspect either (MacKinnon, 1989, p.15).

Sex, to Marx, being given by nature, is within the material substratum; woman and man, by nature, are biologically different from each other (MacKinnon, 1989, p.15). Therefore, being a woman or man, as most feminists argue, is not something socially constructed and learnt; on the contrary it is given. Division of labor, which becomes more and more complicated throughout the process of human development originates from the sexual act, and like sex, it "develops spontaneously or 'naturally' by virtue of natural predisposition" like physical strength (Marx, 2000, p.184). Division of labor within the family is also natural and depends on the sex and age; the labor power of each individual within the family contributes to the whole labor power of the family (Marx, 2000, p.478). Women, implicitly, are assigned to housework and

childcare whereas men are assigned to working out; women are first of all mothers, sisters and wives and even their departure from the domestic sphere in the age of capitalism didn't and couldn't challenge these natural, not 'societal', statuses, roles and responsibilities.

Family, on the other hand, is the nucleus of capitalist relations and the capitalism has both historically progressive and detrimental effect on the family (MacKinnon, 1989, p.16). Marx celebrates family in capitalist society since it constructs the basis for the emancipation of the women by articulating them to the social production on the one hand and negates it as the higher form of the private property on the other. Making women enter into the labor market to earn, capitalism is progressive and contributes to the women emancipation and, eventually, to the human development since individuals of a society, either male or female, learn to work side by side (MacKinnon, 1989, pp.18-19). Since capitalism doesn't discriminate against the worker according to being male or female, it equalizes the sexes at least in the market and the working women, lining up with men, participate in the revolutionary struggle against the capitalism (Hartmann, 1981, pp.4-5). These women, however, are the proletarian and their family is the proletarian family which sharply differs from the bourgeois family in the sense that the oppression of the proletarian women emerges not from their biology but from their class affiliation and even if women oppression predates the capitalism, it doesn't predate the emergence of the class society (MacKinnon, 1989, pp.19-21). Being a miniature model of capitalist class relations, bourgeois family is repeatedly denounced by Marx and Engels. Man as the wage earner is the bourgeois whereas woman and children are the proletariats and slaves of bourgeois men and since not love but economic interests bind these people; bourgeois marriage is a business deal. The wife, for a bourgeois, is only an instrument of production and a bourgeois marriage is an order of 'wives in common' (Marx, 2000, p.260), in other words, it is intensified prostitution (Meyer, 1977, p.86). Therefore, bourgeois family as the nucleus of the capitalist society is supposed to wither away together with the overthrown of the capitalism. In *Communist Manifesto*, mentioning about the abolition of the family after the transition to socialist society, Marx and Engels assert that:

> On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.
>
> The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital. (Marx, 2000, p. 259)

The issue of mutual sex love is also very obscure and problematic. In a capitalist society a marriage between the bourgeois is called monogamy whereas that of proletarians is called sex-love; bourgeois woman is oppressed as *woman* within the monogamy whereas proletarian woman is oppressed by the ruling class as proletarian, in other words, majority of the women is oppressed not because of being *women* but because of being proletarians (MacKinnon, 1989, pp.32-33). What happens to the bridge between monogamy and patriarchy after the socialist revolution is never mentioned and that makes us to deduce that patriarchy will wither away together with the private property and monogamy after the overthrown of capitalism. But it is totally unanswered what kind of marriage and family would be in socialism and communism.

In short, capitalism, by nature, transforms women into means of production, reproduction and gratification as well as human labor and all other human relations into commodities (Meyer, 1977, p.87) and since all inequality and oppression stem from the private property, nonexistence of it would bring true emancipation of woman and not only women but also all human beings will emancipate under socialist mode of production.

Engels, in spite of going hand in hand with Marx while constituting basic arguments of Marxism including woman issue, deviates slightly from Marx in some aspects while more comprehensively framing the socialist theory of woman emancipation in his famous study *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Engels, 2001). The book, in fact, is a product of substantial efforts to formulate that sociopolitical conditions of woman derive from the material basis of the society. Engels, putting it differently, endeavors to explain the sexual relationships, family, women's oppression and emancipation methodologically on the basis of historical materialism.

Throughout the book, the idea that the roots of private property, state and monogamous family are inseparably intertwined to each other constitutes the vertebra of the main arguments of Engels related with the women's oppression and emancipation. Private property, actually, being an economic stimulator, triggers the emergence of the state and the monogamous family both of which are within the domain of socio-political superstructure which is defined by the material structures. The ages that precede the emergence of this triple in fact sharply differentiate from the subsequent ages in terms of economic, political and sociocultural dynamics, however the line between the two is not sharp and clear-cut, on the contrary, there was a very silent and gradual transition from kinship based organizations to states, from communistic to individualistic way of life, from female to male supremacy.

History of primeval societies, to Engels, records three great successive epochs determined in accordance with the metamorphosis of the material conditions: Savagery, barbarism and civilization[1]. Primitive and simple economic activities of the former epoch turn into highly advanced and complicated economic relations in the age of civilization whereas the barbarism in which the private property is invented is mostly regarded as transitory period (Engels, 2001, pp. 27-34, 191-217). Economic transformation of the primeval societies inevitably comes along with the socio-political transformation; organizational structures also mutate concomitant to material conditions. Ancient people originally organize around the kinship ties; *gens* is the main form of organizations which constitutes the nucleus of phratries, tribes and leagues of tribes; they, however, towards the later stages of barbarism deviate into the state which continues to appear in the consequent ages (Engels, 2001, pp.102-190).

[1] According to Engels, savagery is the most primitive age characterized by the finished natural products, use of fire, eating fish, the invention of main tools like bow and arrow and small scale settlements; barbarism is identified with initially the art of pottery, taming and raising the animals and cultivation of plants, then the animal domestication, cultivation and irrigation of plants for nutrition, and towards the next epoch melting the iron, invention of the writing and more intense agrarian activities; civilization lastly is the highest level which humanity could have ever reached, corresponds to a period of wider utilization of natural products, manufacture and art accompanied by more complicated division of labor, production of commodities in large scale and the development of exchange economy which eventually creates the nonproductive but significantly profiting merchant class (Engels, 2001, pp.27-34, 191-217).

This political evolution, however, corresponds to socio-cultural transformation from matriarchal to patriarchal order: The economic transformation eventuates at the expense of women's status within the society. Because, during the transition from savagery to civilization the family structure also transforms respectively from multi-generation group family into nuclear family[2], that is to say, from polygamous to monogamous marriage which is mainly characterized by first the relinquishment of the maternal lineage by the paternal one due to the gradual limitation of the mutual sexual intercourse between the family members and second the accumulation of the private property and wealth in the hands of the men (Engels, 2001, pp.34-101).

Monogamy, according to Engels, is where the first gendered division of labor, namely breeding children, and the first class antagonism and oppression appear (Engels, 2001, p.79). Monogamous marriage is, therefore, a class marriage. The women, who, get involved in the social production, with the development of capitalism however, are the proletarian women and according to Engels, "the proletarian marriage is monogamous in the etymological sense of the word, but by no means in a historical sense" (Engels, 2001, p.87). That is, proletarian woman is not oppressed or inferior to man within the family since the proletarian man has neither private property nor power; proletarian marriage is not based on the economic interest like bourgeois marriage, but on the mutual sex love which is born out of proletarian relations.

Engels prescribes the complete overthrow the private property as the mere remedy for the women emancipation. The economic foundations of the monogamous family would come to an end since the private property will disappear after the social revolution, so will the supremacy of man over woman. After the transition of the means of production to the collective property, monogamous family also ceases to be the economic unit of the society and the women confined to domestic sphere would be reintroduced into the public industries (Engels, 2001, p.91). Domestic labor

[2] Engels argues that the savagery corresponds to group family which has two forms as consanguine and punaluan family, is composed of more than one generations and among the members of which sexual intercourse is not severely limited; barbarism corresponds to the pairing family which is also very large but sexual intercourse is significantly limited; civilization, lastly, corresponds to the monogamous family in which the sexual intercourse is restricted to the married wife and husband (Engels, 2001, pp.34-101).

becomes a societal matter; household affairs performed by women are socialized as well as the care and education of the children which eventually emancipate women in its full sense (Engels, 2001, pp.91-92).

The book, in spite of laying the foundations of women emancipation in Marxist thinking, is strictly criticized by some scholars: according to Heitlinger (1979, p.15), the book is controversial, problematic, misleading, inadequate; MacKinnon (1989, pp. 13, 36) argues that Engels cannot accomplish to explain the woman's status as a social phenomenon and evaluates his approach rigidly casual, unidirectional and one-sided; Meyer (1977, p.91) thinks Engels together with other Marxist thinkers could thoroughly explore neither roots and functions of sexist oppression nor the capitalist and proletarian family.

Antagonism between man and woman is seen as the origin of the class antagonism however, like Marx, Engels asserts that not the division of labor between the sexes, but the antagonism emerges out of the classes; that means sex based division of labor is inherently not exploitative. According to him, in the primitive ages the division of labor was also very simple and divided between the sexes: "The men went to war, hunted, fished, provided the raw material for food and the tools necessary for these pursuits. The women cared for the house and prepared food and clothing; they cooked, weaved and sewed" (Engels, 2001, p.192), that is, division of labor by sex occurs in the most primitive social life but "sex divides labor, not the relations to the means of production" (MacKinnon, 1989, p.23). He beforehand accepts the presence of division of labor but fails to explain why domestic affairs already managed by woman in group family totally become unproductive and useless in monogamous family.

Engels appreciates the savagery and the earlier and middle stages of barbarism – which more or less coincide with the era of gens and tribes– in which women have freedom and are kept in high esteem in a matriarchal order but there is no incontestable proof that all tribes are matriarchal organizations. He gives the impression that matriarchy which reigned in primitive 'propertyless' community is blessed with sexual equality and freedom and it is preferable to male dominance which matches up with the private property and patriarchy (Meyer, 1977, p.91). He

also cannot clarify the correlation between the accumulation of private property in the hands of the men and the women's oppression. Moreover, he inconclusively analyzes the nature of individual housework and fails to apply the Marxist concepts of use-value, surplus-value, exchange-value to domestic labor (Heitlinger, 1979, p.19).

Classical Marxist ideology incorporates the issue of women's emancipation but it nevertheless regards it as collateral issue of which marginal significance derives from the constituting elements of Marxism, all forms of oppression including sexism, in this sense, is only a derivative of class structure and struggle (Meyer, 1977, p.99). Marx and Engels recognize the existence of women's oppression and don't neglect the significance of women's emancipation for a genuine humans' emancipation but they both approach the issue within the historical materialist worldview according to which the underlying factors of woman oppression may well be found in the economic determinants of the society. Class struggle and conflict are addressed as the main evils whereas the classless society is addressed as the sole antidote for true woman emancipation. Their obsession in correlating woman question to class relations rather than the relations between the sexes, however, prevents them from generalizing a coherent and complete theory of gender relations. Woman, according to them, is not oppressed by man as a *woman*, but oppressed because of being the victims of the class society. Since they, contrary to feminists, hesitate to interconnect the woman oppression with the patriarchy which can be defined as the all socio-cultural structures enabling men to dominate women, Hartmann (1981, p.11) regards traditional Marxist thinking as sex-blind although it may well be argued that Engels is slightly less sex-blind than Marx, because he, unlike Marx, both states that womanhood is not defined by nature, but it is social phenomenon (MacKinnon, 1989, p.19) and he recognizes the emergence of patriarchy throughout the historical development of humanity. But his theory, covering the issues like housework, childcare, prostitution, woman's status, nevertheless fails to articulate the matter of gender hierarchies and relations.

Being a revolutionary and a true Marxist from the earlier ages to his death, Lenin devoted much energy to woman emancipation than Marx and Engels not only in

theory but also in practice. Being well aware of the urgent need for the support of all oppressed segments of the society, including women, to be successful in the approaching socialist revolution, Lenin frequently referred to the working conditions, domestic burden, sexual abuse, political rights of woman and like his predecessors he blames the capitalism for all these evils and points out the need for revolutionary democracy in his earlier works.

After the establishment of Soviet Republic, in 1918, at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women, Lenin says that "There can be no socialist revolution unless very many working women take a big part in it" (Lenin, 2004, p.61) and continues to remind the rights of women concerning marriage and divorce, arguing that including the most advanced European states "no other republic has so far been able to emancipate woman" than Soviet Republic (Lenin, 2004, p.63); abolishing all privileges of men −landowners, capitalists, landowners− stemming from the private property, Soviet Republic -Republic of the working people- is where all men and women are equal (Lenin, 2004, pp.80-81). But he also denotes that in spite of all legislation enacted to emancipate women, they continue to be domestic slaves as long as they are in charge of all unproductive household affairs (Lenin, 2004, pp.65-66, 71). The true emancipation of woman, to him, will occur under the communism which provides the entire transformation of domestic affairs into large scale socialist economy; the establishment of public caterings, kindergartens and house cleaning services would alleviate the burden of woman and provide the utilization of woman labor in productive areas (Lenin, 2004, pp.65-67). Relating the supremacy of men, like Engels, to existence of private property, he states that European countries claiming to sustain the full equality between the sexes through the enactment of the legal regulations could never succeed in it as long as the capitalism continues to subsist (Lenin, 2004, p.69). Politics which is under full control of the privileged men in capitalist societies would be available to every working people, including all party or non-party working women, in Soviet Republic to provide them a wide field of activity to participate in administration, political and social affairs (Lenin, 2004, pp.69-74, 80-81).

Lenin, not neglecting the reality of woman question, like his predecessors, tackles with the issue within the proletarian struggle against capitalists. In other words, he never prioritizes the women's emancipation against the class conflicts and struggle. To him, overemphasizing the issues like sex or marriage problems is nothing to do with the socialist revolution; it is a veiled version of bourgeois concerns (Lenin, 2004, pp.101-109). A true communist woman knows real underlying factors behind the woman oppression: Women question arises from the capitalist relations which provide required material basis for the accumulation of private property in the hands of the men. The emancipation of women from this standpoint is only possible through the transition to socialism which would bring the required economic basis, possibly not immediately but eventually. Lenin during his debate with Clara Zetkin, German activist and defender of woman's rights, he says that;

> The theses must emphasize strongly that true emancipation of women is not possible except through communism. You must lay stress on the unbreakable connection between woman's human and social position and the private ownership of the means of production. This will draw a strong, ineradicable line against the bourgeois movement for the "emancipation of women." … The communist women's movement itself must be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movements; and not only of the proletarians, but of all the exploited and oppressed, of all victims of capitalism or of the dominant class. Therein, too, lies the significance of the women's movement for the class struggle of the proletariat and its historic mission, the creation of a communist society (Lenin, 2004, pp.109-110).

Lenin, whose arguments echo with those of Marx and Engels, firmly believing the reality of woman oppression under capitalist relations both at home and at work, stresses more on the indispensable need for the political mobilization of women to realize both the woman emancipation and socialist revolution (Buckley, 1989, p.25). He, like his predecessors, directly correlates woman emancipation with socialization of woman labor on the hand and the socialization of household affairs on the other. Moreover, he not only continually emphasizes the importance of right to divorce, access to abortion and education on birth control but also puts the required legal regulations into implementation (Buckley, 1989, p.26). He severely advocates the utilization of woman labor in productive areas but he, deliberately or not, can't beware of internalizing sexist division of labor ascribing women to the works like food distribution, public catering (Lenin, 2004, p.73). He never confirms the establishment of separate organizations of communist women; only under the roof of Communist Party communist women should organize and work (Lenin, 2004,

p.110). But Lenin, in sum, differentiates from Marx and Engels in the sense that he deals with the issue on the concrete level.

Marx, Engels and Lenin represent a strong parallelism while approaching the women question: All are very sensitive not to destroy the constituent principles of classical Marxist theory, they all regard this question as a derivative of class society, all address the socialism as the only way for woman emancipation, and all ignore gender relations and hierarchies within the family or society that are not necessarily stem from the economic determinants. Marx and Engels' arguments on family, male-female relations, woman oppression that will eventually transformed by the abolition of private property remain on the abstract level until Lenin strived for converting them into concrete policy proposals.

CHAPTER III

CENTRAL ASIA: CONFRONTING SOVIET RUSSIANS

Enclosing a vast area of land in the very middle of the Eurasian land mass, Central Asia, recorded history of which dates back to 2500 years ago, had already been the cradle of the affluent political, economic and sociocultural structures and dynamics before the arrival of Soviet Russians in early 20th century. Being a buffer zone amongst the nomadic tribes, merchants and pilgrims as well as the imperial and dynastic conquerors (Kort, 2004, pp.3-4), Central Asia has been haunted for centuries that left behind a legacy of dualisms like rural-urban, nomadic-settled, native-foreigner, Muslim-non-Muslim, modern-traditional, tribal-nontribal etc. Historic confrontations of the subjects of these dualities in time and space, however, have engendered ingrained socio-cultural texture as well as primordial conflicts and fragilities in the region.

In this part of the study, initially, after submitting a brief political history of Central Asia, basic economic, social and cultural structures and dynamics will be referred in order to highlight the above mentioned peculiarities of the region. Secondly, the gender relations and gender hierarchies within the Central Asian societies will be dealt with stressing on the varied religion and tradition originated societal practices to which women were broadly exposed in the region.

3.1 Central Asia in Brief: Politics, Economy, Society and Culture

In spite of standing as a "melting point for nations and cultures with very different traditions and origins", being a station rather than a primary destination, Central Asia geographically is a remote place which has generally been out of reach other than the great empires (Kort, 2004, p.3-4). Independent states of Central Asia could, nevertheless, hardly sustain the full control over the region since not only the internal conflicts prevented them from uniting but also the accessing empires have reigned over the region for centuries (Kort, 2004, p.4).

Persian and Turco-Mongolian Empires, among these powers, deeply influenced the region not only in society and culture but also in political structures and economic activities. Persian era which dominated Central Asia from the ancient times down to the 9th century was characterized by agricultural activities and animal husbandry of the settled Iranians on the one hand and nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralism of the indigenous people on the other (Krader, 1997, pp.73-77). This period was substantially ended by Arab invasions which introduced the next socio-cultural arbiter to the region: Islam has become the major religious faith and rapidly spread among the sedentary Iranians and nomadic Turks (Krader, 1997, pp.76).

Termination of short-term Arab rule by the Turkic invaders eventually initiated the Turco-Mongolian era which continued down to the arrival of Russians in 18th century. In this era not only mass conversion into Islam took place but also the ethnic composition has changed on behalf of the Turks, even some Iranians were Turkicized (Krader, 1997, p.78). The satrapies and provincial states of Persian era turned into larger political organizations in this era and this political development was accompanied by the economic vitalization: Dealing with trade, besides agriculture, sedentary people have always kept in touch with merchants, nomads, artisans (Krader, 1997, p.78). Standing as the centers of Islamic-Persian culture, Samarkand and Bukhara have also become the trade centers within the region as well as those of the neighboring geography (Kort, 2004, p.23). Devastating conquest of the region by the nomadic Mongolian tribes, in spite of being catastrophically brutal, contributed into the political unification of the people (Krader, 1997, pp.84-90; Kort, 2004, p.26). Rehabilitation of the region could only be sustained by the successor of Mongolian ruler Genghis Khan, namely by Tamerlane after who the political stability couldn't be achieved up to the Russian arrival in the region (Kort, 2004, p.28-29).

Russians, having remained in close contact with Central Asians for centuries because of economic concerns, initiated the military expeditions in early 18th century (Krader, 1997, pp.97-99; Kort, 2004, p.33). Having been regarded as the outsiders and non-Muslims, Tsarist Russians were not welcomed promptly, instead, to seize first the northern part of the region and then the southern part in late 19th century Russians had to suppress the rebellions of nomadic Kazakhs and the resistance of Kyrgyz and

Turkmens respectively (Krader, 1997, pp.99-105). In spite of the discomfort of the native people with the Russians what they achieved in this era was greater peace and security (Kort, 2004, p.40). They contributed to the economic development of the region where the cotton production was highly increased. Their economic interest in cotton production resulted in the conversion of pastoral lands into farms which also restricted the mobility of pastoral nomads, especially Kazakhs, and made them settle in (Kort, 2004, pp.38-39). Collapse of Tsarist Russia during the First World War, however, didn't end the Russian rule since after a period of uncertainty, Soviet Russians, in 1918, could establish the sovereignty that would last more than 70 years.

This oversimplified history of Central Asia up to the Soviet arrival, in spite of supplying a very rough picture of it, would in no sense be complete unless how complicated, affluent and intermixed the region in its ethnic composition, linguistic structures, religious beliefs, kinship based organizations, life styles is mentioned. More than a hundred ethnic affiliations under three principal ethnic groups of Turkic (Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen), Iranian (Tajiks, Persians) and from late 19th century on Slavic (Russians, Ukrainians) together with the smaller ethnic groups of Arabs, Jews, Karakalpaks, Uighurs, Armenians, Kurds are recorded in the region. All these people speak many languages with many dialects of two main language families: Altaic languages, first, especially the Turkic with northwest, southeast and southwest dialects –which are further subdivided– are spoken among the Turkic people; second, Indo-European languages of Iranic (Tajik, Farsi, Yaghnobi, Afghan, Kurdish), Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian) and some others like German, Jewish, Armenian are spoken among the respective ethnic groups (Krader, 1997, pp.33-50).

Before the arrival of Islam, Shamanism of indigenous nomads, Zoroastrianism of Persians together with Buddhism, Judaism, Manichaeism and Christianity of relatively smaller communities were the existing religions at the time of Arab conquest but none of them was preponderant over the others (Krader, 1997, pp.118-120). Islam, as soon as it arrived at the region, influenced the native people and mixing with the long-lasting Persian culture has become the main cultural unifier in the region. The region, nevertheless, was not free from the subdivisions within the Islam and although the Sunnite sect, consisting of both Turkic and Iranian people,

formed the majority of Muslims, Shiite and Ismailite sects were also existed especially among the non-Tajik Iranians, Azerbaijani Central Asians and some other Iranian speaking ethnic groups (Krader, 1997, pp.120-126). Besides these sects, Sufism, being a mystique Islamic doctrine, was an influential religious order in Central Asia, especially among the Sunni Muslims, from the 11th century on (Krader, 1997, p.123). Devoutness and firmness in faith and Islamic practice, however, were fundamentally varied among the Muslims: Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations, who were mostly pastoral nomads were superficially Islamic, they were not or were perfunctorily obeying the rituals, had few Islamic institutions and leaders, namely *mullahs*; sedentary agriculturalist and urban Central Asians, that is, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Uighurs were fanatical Muslims, Islamic laws and practices had very regulatory and determinant roles in ordinary life, *mullahs* were very influential; nomadic Turkmens were also not devoutly religious people (Krader, 1997, pp.125, 130-132).

Occupationally indigenous people were basically divided into two as nomadic pastoralism and sedentary pursuits; Kazakhs in northern steppes, Kyrgyzs on eastern plateaus and Turkmens in arid deserts fell into the first category whereas the Uzbeks in oasis and lowlands and Tajik mountaineers dealt with sedentary agriculture, commerce and trade (Massell, 1974, p.5). All of these people, however, were mostly rural which was proportionally ranging from 99 percent for nomads and 90 percent for the settled (Massell, 1974, p.6). The rest of the sedentary Uzbeks and Tajiks were the most important component of the urban population while the non-indigenous people especially Russians mostly formed the urban population in Central Asia (Krader, 1997, p.181).

Engaging in whether nomadic or sedentary pursuits, Central Asians were organizing around the self-sufficient communities on the basis of kin-ship lines (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.34; Massell, 1974, p.5): These communities were the foundation of the social structure not only in private but also in civil and military life in Central Asia (Krader, 1997, p.156). Genealogical kin-group, according to Krader, "whether village, lineage, clan, clan-confederation, or tribe, was like a corporation in some respects, like a state or nation, and like a trade or labor association" (Krader, 1997, p.157). Although they had no political authority in its pure sense and were

components of supra-communal forms of emirates, khanates and also empires, to make clear-cut separation between the kinship units and political structures was impossible since these both were highly merged into each other; they were, in other words, states within the state and empires within the empire (Krader, 1997, pp.159-160). Never ending conflicts and cleavages among these 'mini-states' instigated the power struggles within and over the region and prevented Central Asia from becoming stabile and integrated geography.

Continuous historic confrontation of these ethnically, linguistically, religiously, occupationally and organizationally diversified people with each other as well as with the outsiders at war, in economic activities, especially in trade, or in political unifications engendered the dualisms mentioned above on the hand and created highly diffused socio-cultural structures on the other.

3.2 Gender and Women in Central Asia

Within this socio-cultural complexity and affluence, to determine where the women were positioned is very difficult since there is very little material on it. The studies of Soviet activists and propagandists sent to the region in 1920s, which are in detail mentioned in Massell's book, endorse the idea that Central Asian women, under the indictment of Islamic and customary –*shariat* and *adat*– laws and regulations, were subordinate and inferior to men, more tragically they were the most enslaved of the enslaved in family and socio-economic life: They were extremely illiterate, secluded from the socio-political life, prevented from participating in politics, forced to marry involuntarily or at very early ages, sold like a commodity to the future husband, compelled to wear veils (Massell, 1974, pp.93-127). Northrop, however, in his classical study, argues that "many Bolshevik views sounded as much Orientalist as Marxist" (Northrop, 2004, p.39) and expresses that his study approaches the quick generalizations of Soviet activists regarding Eastern women with doubt and claims that the typification of women as secluded and oppressed doesn't represent the all segments of Central Asian society and ignores the regional, cultural and class distinctions and local complexities (Northrop, 2004, pp.39-46). But what the little material on the issue generally offers, with the risk of European ethnocentrism, is that the Central Asian societies were historically patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal

societies in which male superiority over female is the general rule. But this doesn't necessarily mean that in the social order sustained by the *shariat* and *adat* laws, women had no rights and duties, instead within the context of Islamic and customary norms, women were granted some rights and social roles in the family and the social life although these rights and roles were very limited especially in the latter one.

Krader depicts the Central Asian family and society in his book[3] in detail leaning on the data of 1897 Tsarist Russian census when necessary. Central Asian family, according to Krader, consisting of several generations was an extended[4] patriarchal family since the ultimate authority belonged to the father; it was patrilineal since the kinship is continued through the male line; it was patrilocal in its residence pattern since the woman left her natural family and participated in the men's family when she got married (Krader, 1997, pp.141-144). Massell, like Krader, defines these self-sufficient communities as by and large patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal and he adds that the male and female roles were "sharply differentiated, though elements of ritualized female inferiority tended to be more pronounced in sedentary communities than in nomadic-pastoral ones" (Massell, 1974, p.6). Northrop also argues that the attributed social roles to women were different in urban wealthier families from those in the rural, nomadic, lower-class families even if the familial and social norms were no less patriarchal in the latter ones (Northrop, 2004, p.42).

Central Asian women's status within the society was closely related with the patriarchal structures: Status achievement throughout the life started in the father's house according to whether or not father could afford the dowry and wedding expenses of his daughter; it continued with the woman's entry in the husband's house as the first wife since the polygyny was not illegitimate even if it was not common; the woman's status reaches the highest level if she could give birth to a son after which she firmly consolidated her status within the family (Krader, 1997, pp.144-146). The women in Central Asia were not totally 'rightless' as Soviet activists

[3] Please see Krader, L. (1963) *Peoples of Central Asia*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.141-167.

[4] According to the Russian census of 1897 average number in the families is 5,5 both in nomadic population of Central Asian steppes and in sedentary people of Turkestan. But the urban Central Asian family had a tendency to be the conjugal rather than the extended (Krader, 1997, pp.149, 151).

claimed instead they possessed some definite rights and duties even if the higher the status more entitled the rights were. The women, especially those who fulfilled the conditions of having a dowry, being the first wife and bearing the son, were highly estimable. They enjoyed a great authority in the domestic sphere (Krader, 1997, p.145) and even some women have become *otines,* the female equivalents of male religious leaders and held honorary and special positions within the society (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.139; Northrop, 2004, p.43). Central Asian women, in spite of being under the pressure of Islamic law, had the right to divorce, on the condition that handing over the brideprice to the husband although this right was generally enjoyed by the husbands especially if the family was childless (Krader, 1997, p.146). But the woman or the family of the woman had the right to retain the brideprice, if divorce was initiated by men (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.42; Krader, 1997, p.146).

The traditions that emerge from the religious and customary norms like brideprice, polygamy, levirate, arranged or forced marriages, veiling and seclusion were being practiced in Central Asia and all were closely dealt with by the Soviet state within the context of emancipating women. Brideprice −*kalym* or *qalin*[5]−, among these, was a widespread practice which transfers a certain amount of wealth from the prospective husband's family to bride's family in exchange for the dowry of the bride after the wedding. Having been harshly attacked by Soviet Russians on the rationale that it was one pure form of debasing woman through selling/buying affair just like a commodity, *kalym* was misinterpreted, according to Krader, it was semantically translated as brideprice instead of bridewealth into Russian or Western languages and marriage was not a purchase of a wife but it actually was a "complex movement in Central Asia, involving a person (the bride), goods, together with feasting, paying of respect, competitions, the actual wedding ceremony and other rituals" (Krader, 1997, p.147). Kamp, using the word *qalin*, states that it was a kind of varied gift transactions of marriages practiced in Central Asia which was not

[5] In the literature, some scholars use the word *qalin* whereas some others use *kalym* as it was used in Russian texts (Kamp, 2006, p.46).

regulated by the Islamic law[6] but rather it was a Turkic custom (Kamp, 2006, p.45) *Kalym*, argues Corcoran-Nantes, was essentially not the 'price' of women but it was a financial security to discourage the divorce and was little different from financial arrangements and gift exchange rituals in the West (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.42, 150). But, it was nonetheless a definite indicator of the male superiority over the females since, apart from appraising the value of the bride, its exchange for the dowry depreciated neither the wealth of the father nor the future husband.

Polygamy, being an extension of patriarchal order, was another tradition in Central Asia although it was not common. It was more consistently being practiced among wealthier and privileged settled population than in nomadic-pastoral population (Massell, 1974, p.6), but the nomadic men also married to more than one woman if they had the required material wealth (Blocqueville, 1986, p.69). Levirate, marriage of a widow woman to the brother of the husband, was closely correlated with polygamous life since the widow woman was mostly becoming the second -or more- wife of her *ex*-brother-in-law (Krader, 1997, p.146). Although levirate ensured the maintenance of women and her children, it was nevertheless a loss of status and prestige and she was tolerated because no additional *kalym* was required (Massell, 1974, p.120). Arranged or forced marriage was also very common practice even it was the norm in Central Asia. Both the parents and the female elders of the family played active role in the choice of the prospective partner (Corcoran-Nantes; 2005, p.149). The marriages along with the amount of dowry and the brideprice were being arranged before the children matured even sometimes in infancy (Krader, 1997, p.142).

Women's seclusion from public life and veiling are the other prospects of women's oppression in Central Asian patriarchy. Seclusion was mostly interpreted as the physical segregation of women in female quarters -*ichkari*- at home or in *harems* of khans; absolute prohibition on contacting with males and severe constraints on the female participation in most spheres of public life like schooling, social organizations, politics, shopping in the market, some religious activities and folk

[6] According to the Islamic law, a marriage gift called *mahr* was given to the bride by the groom; however generally two-thirds of it was being given at the time of marriage whereas the rest of it was given in case of a divorce initiated by the husband (Kamp, 2006, p.45)

festivals (Massell, 1974, pp.229-230). There was, certainly, close correlation between the seclusion and veiling since women were also secluded in the public space under their veils. Seclusion, according to Northrop, was not strictly universal in all Central Asia except for certain regions and particular social spaces: P*arandji* and *chachvan* which covered not only the entire body from head to toe but also the face, being relatively recent dressing style innovated as a response to Tsarist conquest, were more common among the Uzbeks and Tajiks and among the wealthier Muslim women either urban or rural; Turkmen women were wearing *yashmak* which left face uncovered except for the mouth; Kazakh and Kyrgyz women rarely veiled (Northrop, 2004, pp.19, 43-44). Like Northrop, Krader also argues that veiling and seclusion were mostly peculiar to intensely devoted Muslims of Uzbeks, especially Tajiks and Uighurs, whereas among the Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs and Turkmens women were neither veiled nor secluded (Krader, 1997, p.135). But Turkmen women, according to Blocqueville[7], were also veiled from head to toe but their face was generally open with the exception that they closed their mouth when they came across with a stranger man, but this didn't necessarily mean that women were not allowed to contact with the stranger males, instead they were talking to them with ease and they were appreciated and respected (Blocqueville, 1986, pp.48-53, 65-66). Although it is not possible to find much information about female quarters in a typical Central Asian home, the advanced form of seclusion, *harem*, a special place for the khan's wives in Khiva, was depicted by Arminius Vambery[8] as:

> The harem is here very different from those of the Turkish or Persian court. The number of women is limited… The present Khan has only two lawful wives, although the Koran allows four. … The Khan, although possessing the same unlimited power over his wife as over any of his subjects, treats her without severity, and on the whole with tenderness, unless she be found guilty of any particular offence. She possesses no titles or prerogatives whatever; her court is distinguished from in nothing from the other harems, but that she has more female servants and slaves about her (Vambery, 1970, p.95).

[7] Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville was a French soldier who had been enslaved for more than one year by Turkmens after a war between Iranians and Turkmens in 1860. For details Blocqueville, H. C. (1986) *Türkmenler Arasında,* R. Akdemir (çev.), Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları

[8] Originally Hungarian Arminius Vambery was a disguised dervish with an Ottoman passport who has traveled in Central Asia for one year in the second half of the 19th century. For details Vambery, A., (2009) *Bir Sahte Dervişin Orta Asya Gezisi,* Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı

In spite of not being allowed inside the *harem* in Khiva, Vambery argues that the women in *harem* were more restricted than the wives of other Eastern rulers in contacting with the outer world; in Bukhara in the streets women were veiled from the head to the bosom and had worn dark clothes, man had never accompanied his wife and the both sexes were definitely separated from each other whereas among the nomad tribes, harem was entirely unknown and the social relationships between the man and woman were not severely restricted (Vambery, 1970, pp.80, 96, 172).

Gender relations and women's status and rights seem to be diversifying in Central Asia in respect to economic, social, cultural, regional, ethnic, generational, as well as the urban/rural, settled/nomadic identities. But if it is required to generalize it is possible to argue that Central Asian societies were highly patriarchal societies. Although it is possible to argue that the gradual and silent transition from matriarchy, if there was ever, to patriarchy was realized in accordance with the Engels' logic of historical evolution, the transition from kinship based organizations to states, from communal to individualistic life, from polygamous to monogamous family was hardly eventuated in Central Asia before the arrival of Soviet Russians.

Who Soviet Russians encountered with in Central Asia were, conclusively, the economically backward and pre-capitalist, politically divided and intact, socio-culturally highly heterogeneous and insular native societies with deep-rooted traditional solidarities and orientations. More importantly, Central Asians confronted the new 'outsiders', who were as much strictly decisive and insistent to convert all existing structures contravening Soviet projection as the indigenous people who were resistant and obstinate to adopt and internalize the new regime. Women, being the natural components and supplements of the long standing and inviolate Central Asian life, have abruptly become the central figures of the initial economic, political and socio-cultural transformation policies of the Soviet Russians in the region.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN PRE-STALINIST CENTRAL ASIA

Soviet seizure of Central Asia was, in fact, the first and the easiest part of the forthcoming 70-year Soviet rule in the region since the next phase of 'what is to be done?' indicated the complexity, difficulty and even utopianism of achieving the true socialist revolution in the region. Lacking of capitalism, and accordingly, capitalist state, revolutionary working class and any other precondition all of which eventually bring about the transformation of the mode of production from capitalist to socialist, Central Asia was one most immature Soviet region to establish the socialism. Main question regarding the region was asked in the Second Congress of Asian Communists held in 1919: "How was one to build the socialism under 'Eastern conditions'": The answer was quite problematic from the Marxist point of view since it was argued that the socialism in Central Asia, where there was no proletariat but nomads and peasants, no capitalism but medievalism, would be consolidated directly transiting the stage of capitalism, methodology of which couldn't have been predetermined in advance but would have been left to the prospective practical experience (Massell, 1974, p.42).

Central Asian type practical experience in pre-Stalinist era was mostly characterized by the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime. The early post-revolutionary era was highly painful and troublesome since Bolsheviks had to tackle with not only the Russian Civil War (1917-1921) and its devastating effects on the economy but also the anti-Soviet resistance movements at the local level. In Central Asia, Basmachis opposed to the Bolshevik rule up until mid-1920s and the political stability in the region could have been provided only after the division of initial Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) into five regions in 1924 as a consequence of the national delimitation policies which substantially weakened the Basmachi resistance (Kamp, 2006, pp.60-66; Massell, 1974, p.197). Although nationalities policy was broadly discussed as the 'divide and rule' strategy in the literature, it eventually served for consolidating the political stability and Soviet

legitimacy in the region and after the sedation of the tension, Soviet penetration into the region, at the economic, political and socio-cultural levels, has become deeper, firmer and stronger (Massell, 1974, pp.58-62). The principle of taking the local sensibilities, conditions and requirements into consideration, in other words, was gradually abandoned in behalf of the centralism and state-coerced policies in the aftermath of national delimitation.

Both before and after 1924, women question was one central issue of the Bolshevik experience in Central Asia. As a matter of fact, even before the revolution women issue had already been broadly discussed not only among the Marxist Russians but also among the Muslim secular elites, namely *Jadids*, in Central Asia (Kamp, 2006, pp.32-52). Only after the revolution multifaceted policies of women's emancipation were put into practice in both Soviet Russia and Central Asia. From the legal regulations that granted political and civil rights to all 'Soviet' women to field studies principally aimed at mobilizing the women politically, economically and socially besides massively educating them, a wide range of policies were pursued in order not only to win the support of women masses in the painful post-revolutionary era but also to create Marxist ideal type of woman who both works, produces, earns and is aware, secular, active and free (Buckley, 1989, pp.34-37, 60-64). There were three main constituent elements of creating ideal 'Soviet' woman on the basis of Marxist ideology: The first and the most revolutionary element was to grant women the political and civil rights to equalize the genders before the law; the second was to sustain the economic liberation of women principally pulling them into the labor force besides improving their material wealth and the third was to mobilize the women politically recruiting them to the Party and raising the political consciousness level.

In case of Central Asia, policies of women's emancipation, generally speaking, were carried out within the same context. The scope and content of these policies in Central Asia, however, remarkably differentiated from those in Soviet Russia since, in the absence of capitalism, Bolsheviks diagnosed that the women were being oppressed by men under the patriarchal order that was reinforced by Islam and custom and therefore Bolshevik policies on the emancipation of women, especially

after 1924, fused with the anti-Islamic and anti-traditional policies because not only Islam and custom together with clans, kinship system, tribal structure were directly addressed as the main evils of women oppression but also the existence of all was seen as the major threat to the Soviet existence in the region (Massell, 1974, pp.84-89, 192-196).

Women, in brief, have become the prominent subjects of the pre-Stalinist era Central Asian practical experience within the framework of direct establishment of the socialism in the region. Bolsheviks, in this era, impatiently strived for reaching the targeted ends in ten-year period, trying to challenge the centuries old predominant norms, values and practices. Their impatience, however, in spite of yielding the expected results to a certain degree, have also provoked widespread unrest towards the upcoming 'one-man rule' period. In this part of the study, we will strain at explicating 'what was done' in Central Asia regarding the woman's emancipation before Stalin's complete rise in power. For this aim, initially, promulgation of gender equalizing Bolshevik legislation will be underlined. This legislation in Central Asia not only granted women the political and civil rights but also replaced the existing legal and judicial order with the secular and centralized Soviet models. Legal regulations concerning women, therefore, didn't simply directed at the gender equalization before law; instead it inwardly influenced all Central Asians since the Bolsheviks wanted to erode the sharp contrast between the Soviet ideals and the Islamic and customary way of life in the region. Secondly, how Central Asian women were mobilized politically, economically and socially will be dealt with within the context of woman section of the Communist Party −*Zhenotdel*− activities since the economic liberalization and active political involvement in state and governing affairs as well as the inclusion of women in every sphere of social life was *sine qua non* for the genuine women emancipation from the Marxist point of view. To draw women from private to public, actually, was one main concern of Bolsheviks according to whom Central Asian women were secluded and isolated from all spheres of political, economic and social life under the pressure of Islam and custom. While discussing Bolshevik model of Marxist emancipation of women in Central Asia, pre-Stalinist era, in spite of Lenin's death in 1924, will be referred as the 1917-1927 period from the October Revolution to the initiation of mass unveiling

−*Khudjum*− campaign which heralded the forthcoming Stalinist era. Almost three-year harsh power struggle period within the Communist Party that resulted in Stalin's success will be regarded as the extension of the Leninist era although especially last year of this transitory period gave strong hints of Stalin's rise in power.

4.1 The Emancipation of Central Asian Woman by Law

> The right to vote and to be elected to the soviets is enjoyed by the following citizens of both sexes, irrespective of religion, nationality, domicile, etc., of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, who shall have completed their eighteenth year by the day of election. (Article 4, 1918 Constitution[9])

Right to vote and right to be elected is the first and only constitutional right entitled unconditionally to all Soviet women in 1918 Constitution. But the legislation put into practice to assure the equality of both sexes before law was not limited to the first Soviet Constitution. Instead within all Soviet legislation remarkable space was allocated to the issues concerning women. The size of this space, however, is not striking since, from the Marxist point of view, the entitlement of political and civil rights to women is as understandable as the exclusion of oppressing classes[10] from some rights. In the early post-revolutionary era, therefore, a serial of laws, decrees or codes, which all signified sharp departures from the preceding Tsarist norms, were enacted in both Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and Central Asia to accomplish the legal emancipation of women.

Gender equalization before law, that has already been initiated constitutionally, was extended in late 1918 by the enactment of Code of Laws on Acts of Civil Status, Marriage and Guardianship which legalized the basic civil rights of women. It, first, further consolidated the initial regulations on liquidating the restrictions on divorce and granting either spouse the right to demand divorce ensured by the Decree on the Introduction of Divorce in December 1917 (Buckley, 1989, p.35) and also converted the marriage into a civil rather than a religious issue that should be registered at

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[9] For details 1918 Constitution of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic on web address: http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/constitution/1918/article4.htm

[10] In the next part of fourth article of 1918 Constitution, the people who were not given the right to vote and to be elected were listed. Among these people were profit making employers, non-working income earners, private merchants, trade and commercial brokers, monks and clergy of all denominations. For details please see 1918 Constitution on web address: http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/constitution/1918/article4.htm

ZAGS (Soviet registry offices) and be contracted on the mutual consent. Through this Code not only freedom of women's mobility was provided by the article related with the choice on residence place but also the women were freed from using the husbands' surname, the partners were given right to choose either females' or joint surname as well as the males' surname during the marriage registration (Buckley, 1989, p.35). Moreover, married man and woman were also prohibited from restricting each other's property rights mostly to erode the men's power on the properties of the family (Buckley, 1989, p.36). 1918 Code also introduced some regulations regarding the children. Most importantly outlawing the status of being 'illegitimate', the Code granted all children either from registered or unregistered −*de facto*− marriages the same rights (Buckley, 1989, p.36). The scope of these rights was broadened by the promulgation of the Decree on the Legislation of Abortions in 1920 to forestall the life-threatening backstreet abortions since the 50 percent of women was declared to be infected whereas the 4 percent was declared to be dying due to the illegal and insanitary abortions (Buckley, 1989, p.37). Code of Laws on Marriage and Divorce, the Family and Guardianship enacted in 1926 may be regarded as the last revolutionary legislation concerning the emancipation of women put into practice in the pre-Stalinist era: Code of 1926, enacted due to the rapid increase in *de facto* marriages although the 1918 Code was in effect, further reinforced the rights of women, whose marriages were either registered or unregistered, to ensure the maintenance of women and children after the dissolution, especially that of *de facto* marriages (Buckley, 1989, pp.40-41).

Woman's emancipation related Bolshevik legislation was, by implication, in force in all regions under Soviet rule, in Central Asia, however, certain period of time was allowed to remain ambivalent in terms of center periphery relations (Massell, 1974, p.201). Bolsheviks, only after the eventuation of the first phase of national delimitation policies[11] in 1924, directed at outlawing *shariat* and *adat* laws and

[11] Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (on the territory which includes today's four Central Asian Republics and the southern regions of today's Kazakhstan) which was established in 1918 was divided into several regions as a result of the national delimitation policies. First of all, Turkmen and Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) were established in 1924. Being split from Uzbek SSR, Tajik SSR was formed in 1929 whereas Kazakh SSR and Kyrgyz SSR were established in 1936 on the regions called Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) and Kara-Kyrgyz ASSR respectively. Some other regions like Bukharan People's Soviet Republic,

courts which were legitimating ‘archaic’ practices and norms like brideprice, polygamy, levirate, forced marriage, under-age marriage and these laws and courts were replaced by secular, uniform, centralized Soviet laws and courts (Massell, 1974, pp.196-200). The scope of Central Asian Criminal Codes was broadened supplementing the ‘crimes of custom’ −*bytovye prestupleniia*− articles within the Codes (Massell, 1974, pp.201-207). The new ‘women emancipating’ legislation strived not only for legitimizing civil rights regarding marriage, divorce, property ownership, inheritance to neutralize the male-favoring existing order but also weakening the power of Islam and custom thereby, clans, tribal structure and traditional kinship systems.

The successive legal regulations promulgated in RSFSR were, not thoroughly but with fine adjustments, put into practice in TASSR and in successor Republics in the post-1924 period. Although the 1918 RSFSR Code was declared to be applicable in TASSR, it couldn’t be implemented in effectively despite some adjustments (Massell, 1974, pp.202-204). To adapt the 1918 Code to the socio-cultural peculiarities of the region, some commissions composed of Muslim legal experts including *red mullahs* were established by Turkestan Commissariat of Justice in 1920 and 1921 in search for the possibility of reconciling the Islamic and socialist norms (Kamp, 2006, p.69; Massell, 1974, p.202). These commissions established as the regional extensions of the Soviet judicial administration developed some proposals which demanded a wider and looser radius of action within the 1918 Code; these proposals, allowing polygyny and setting the marriage age as twelve and fourteen for girls and boys respectively, however, having been discussed by the Soviet authorities, were mostly rejected except for some mild issues like registration of births and deaths and the commissions were eventually abolished in 1924 (Kamp, 2006, pp.112-113; Massell, 1974, pp.202-203). Turkestan ZAGS, Registry of Births, Marriage and Deaths, was established in 1919. It was in charge of enforcing provisions of 1918 Code regarding marriage, divorce and children rights. However, it didn’t function effectively other than submitting the registry books to the local

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Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic and Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast were either divided up between the Republics or annexed to one single Republic. For details please see, Krader, L. (1997) *Uralic and Altaic Series: Peoples of Central Asia*, Indiana University, Bloomington, London: Curzon Press Ltd.

soviets (Massell, 1974, p.201). Other legislative attempts concerning brideprice, polygamy, child-marriage, forced marriage, under-age marriage were remote from being coherent and unified in the ambivalent period.

By 1924, which was marked by the division TASSR, Bolsheviks have become more consistent, coherent and decisive in their policies (Massell, 1974, p.204). Although these policies differentiated in union Republics in terms of timing, further local peculiarities and priorities, Bolshevik regime principally inclined to attack on the so-called Islamic and customary practices and norms. The first initiative, in late 1924, was the unequivocal outdate of brideprice, polygamy and forced marriage through a supplement to 1918 RSFSR Criminal Code which was stated to be implemented in Central Asia and leaning on this supplement Turkestan ZAGS mandatorily searched for the mutual consent and ensured that the brideprice was not paid before registering the marriage (Massell, 1974, pp.204-205). 1926 RSFSR Code was not explicitly declared to be applicable in Central Asia, Massell argues, it was the next resolute step since not only it symbolized the decisiveness of Bolsheviks in institutionalizing the secular, egalitarian, uniform code of laws in congruence with the revolutionary norms but also it proved the eventual aim of eradicating all crimes of custom in Central Asia (Massell, 1974, p.205). Criminal Codes of the Republics, in this sense, were continually revised to incorporate these crimes. Uzbek Criminal Code, for example, formally banned brideprice, polygamy and forced marriage in 1926 (Massell, 1974, p.205). It issued one-year jail for the man who got married more than once (Northrop, 2004, p.251), but initially the polygyny was not listed among the crimes of custom up to the 1931 when the Code was amended once again (Edgar, 2003, p.142; Keller, 1998, p.23). Turkmen SSR Criminal Code, likewise, intended to abolish brideprice in 1926 although the modifications concerning the issue continued over time (Keller, 1998, p.23). The promulgation of the Code of Laws on Crimes Constituting the Relics of the Tribal Order as the special supplement to 1918 RSFSR Criminal Code in 1928 was the last legal regulation in pre-Stalinist Central Asia. It proscribed the inter-clan and inter-tribal customary practices like blood-vengeance, blood-money, brideprice, child marriage, forced marriage, marriage by abduction, rape, polygamy, levirate and all other traditional practices which all were regarded as degrading women (Massell, 1974, p.206). Following this legislation, Edgar argues,

in Turkmen SSR number of crimes of custom cases brought to Soviet courts increased sharply (Edgar, 2003, p.143).

To enforce and implement the Soviet legislation was the task of courts under the local Commissariats of Justice, however, to expect the *shariat* and *adat* courts to function in implementing Soviet laws effectively was not realistic. Therefore, the gradual outlaw of *shariat* and *adat* laws accompanied by the overthrown of the existing courts which was also a gradual process since it was initiated in 1918 and could only be eventuated in 1927 almost in a ten-year period (Kamp, 2006, p.69; Massell, 1974, p.196). Especially after complete suppression of Basmachi Revolt the attack on these courts was stiffened. The dual legal system due to the recognition of the legal personality and the autonomy of these courts has come to an end with the gradual subordination of the courts to the People's Courts by a serial of legal regulations in 1923, 1924 and 1926 (Massell, 1974, p.198). In 1923, *shariat* and *adat* courts were prohibited from levying on the fines in criminal incidents; in 1924, they lost all jurisdiction authority especially when in late 1924 brideprice, polygamy, forced marriage were wholly outlawed with the enactment of the supplement to RSFSR Criminal Code; in 1926, all these courts were proclaimed to be voluntary judicial bodies of which verdicts would not in any case be legally binding; in 1927 with the enactment of a decree on *Shariat and Adat Courts* essentially eradicated the residual authority of these courts. Eventually, the number of these courts significantly fell down from a few hundreds to two dozen in 1927 (Massell, 1974, p.200).

Enactment of Soviet laws and the establishment of Soviet courts however, didn't necessarily result in the effective implementation of the new laws and the absolute protection of women in the new courts due to women's responses on the one hand and the difficulty in stamping out the religious and customary norms and practices all of a sudden on the other. Massell denotes that the majority of Muslim women were indifferent to Soviet legislation or they were not aware of their rights; they didn't vote, they abstained from contacting with Soviet agents and institution and more importantly they didn't bring their grievances to Soviet courts (Massell, 1974, p.257). From the other side, Massell states that *de facto* marriages were definitely

forbidden to prevent Central Asians from taking the advantage of unregistered marriage as a tool to legitimate polygamy and levirate, polygamous marriages continued to exist in camouflaged manner and regarding the payment of brideprice, similarly, "male heads of families and clan simply invented new modes of negotiations for bride-price that evaded official detection" (Massell, 1974, pp.207, 268). Northrop also argues that Uzbeks resisted to the legal changes and widely violated the Soviet laws in 1920s and 1930s; despite the irreversible abolishment of polygyny, there was *de facto* recognition of it and the payment of brideprice endemically continued to be practiced (Northrop, 2004, pp.250-252, 269-273). The issue of underage marriage has also remained to be highly problematic issue. In RFSSR Family Code, marital age was stipulated as sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys. According to the *shariat* and *adat* laws, however, young people could have married at the very early ages; it was nine for the girls and twelve for the boys (Massell, 1974, p.113; Northrop, 2004, pp.250-252). This was strictly denounced by the Bolsheviks and the medical authorities composed of doctors, carried out some scientific studies to set an average age level but it was troublesome to determine the appropriate age for marriage. Eventually, central Soviet authorities let each Republic off to determine marriage age rather than imposing central standards (Northrop, 2004, p.254). In Caucasus, for example, the girls at the age of thirteen were permitted to get married whereas in Uzbek SSR a law was enacted in 1928 ratifying sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys as the proper marriage age (Kamp, 2006, p.114; Keller, 1998, p.24; Northrop, 2004, p.254). The new regulations were legally binding; however, mass violations of legal marriage age were reported by local audits (Northrop, 2004, p.272).

Divorce policies, although right to divorce has backfired against the Central Asian women, were given special importance by Bolsheviks who not only established strong correlation between the divorce and the revolutionary consciousness but also utilized the divorces as an instrument to undermine the clan loyalties, kinship ties and 'not bourgeois' but traditional and extended family structures. Initially Bolsheviks and *Zhenotdel* activists, therefore, strongly encouraged the women, those who wanted to end their marriages and to initiate divorce in Soviet courts (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.55) and the female-initiated divorces were given high priority and

approved in Soviet courts without questioning (Massell, 1974, p.211). As a result of strong Soviet support behind the divorce, many women took the advantage of this and there occurred rapid increase in divorce rates, in 1927, 91 percent of all divorces were initiated by women in Tashkent (Northrop, 2004, p.268). This situation, however, was not easily adopted by native people especially by men since the female-initiated divorce, despite the limited rights granted to women by *shariat* laws, had always been sporadic in Central Asia before the Soviet arrival. Social unrest emerged out of the rapid increase in divorce rates diverged in content from murdering women and collective riots to physical and verbal harassment (Massell, 1974, p.281). Moreover, there occurred class-based consequences of divorces; in Turkmen SSR for example the divorced women mostly abandoned their landless, poor husbands as well as some parents forced their daughters to divorce their husband in order to marry richer men (Edgar, 2003, p.145). Native communists, Massell cites, argued that the female-initiated divorces together with the demand for the division of the property and the assignment of the children were "undermining established households, fragmenting fields under cultivation, harming agricultural production, and thus intensifying hunger and chaos", they were "profoundly demoralizing in nature" and they "led to the corruption of the moral bases of the family" (Massell, 1974, pp.261, 297). Under these conditions, Soviet authorities not only withdrew their active support for divorces but also admitted the restrictions brought to female-initiated divorces by the local authorities in Central Asia in late 1920s (Massell, 1974, pp.344-345).

Soviet courts as well as the laws were far behind effectively implementing the Soviet laws concerning the crimes of custom. First of all, there was a problem of physical presence since Bolsheviks couldn't have managed to establish formal judicial apparatuses and failed to arrive at remote regions, especially nomadic people (Massell, 1974, p.306). Moreover, due to the shift of most existing judicial figures, *mullahs* and *kadis* from *shariat* and *adat* courts to new Soviet courts, Bolsheviks failed to create reliable cadres in the judicial apparatuses (Massell, 1974, p.306). Filling the gap emerged out of dysfunctional Soviet authorities, unofficial judicial bodies like clan elders, tribal leaders or village notables have continued to be decision makers. Massell notes that 1929 official surveys carried out in Central Asia

revealed that there was "extensive collusion between criminal, judicial and administrative local organs in delimiting or blunting the effects of emancipatory legislation"; in each Republic, he continues, official action concerning crimes of custom were delayed for up to three years and these delays provided local officials to grant accused amnesty just after the conviction or even before the trial (Massell, 1974, pp.292-293). Northrop likewise states that only very small percentage of all cases resulted in the conviction and punishment; according to the 1928 audit reports, 10 out of 120 underage marriage crimes, 20 out of 203 murder crimes were prosecuted after the trials in Uzbek cities whereas many other cases didn't reach to trial due to neglect, incompetence and sabotage (Northrop; 2005, pp.275-276). Local native officials, police officers, prosecutors and judges mostly remained indifferent to crimes of custom; they were not only reluctant to punish such crimes but also didn't give the high priority to the eradication of polygamy, kalym, underage marriage so forth (Keller, 1998, pp.27-28; Northrop, 2005, p.276).

The most influential tool of newly established regimes, legislation power was extensively utilized by Bolsheviks after the revolution. Despite some deviations from the RSFSR laws, *shariat* and *adat* laws and courts were replaced by central, secular and uniform Soviet laws and courts in the pre-Stalinist period. Under these laws Central Asian women converged into not only political and civil rights but also statutory protection in the new judicial system. This convergence, however, has mostly remained on paper because not only first ten-year post-revolutionary period fell short to provide effective implementation of the new laws but also to eradicate ossified socio-cultural norms and practices by law power was more intractable than to theorize.

4.2 Female Mobilization in Central Asia: *Zhenotdel*

> Laws alone, of course, are not enough, and we are by no means content with mere decrees. In the sphere of legislation, however, we have done everything required of us to put women in a position of equality and we have every right to be proud of it. The position of women in Soviet Russia is now ideal as compared with their position in the most advanced states (Lenin, 2004, p.71).

Pre-Stalinist era was mostly identified with the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime by means of the intense legislative action. Women, having been the favored subjects of this constitutive legislation, acquired the political and civil rights, even

before the many western women could have did, without much suffering and struggling. Lenin, continually denoting the indispensability and vitality of the equality of the sexes before the law, didn't retard to materialize what he had enunciated before the revolution. Lenin's discontentment with just granting women the rights on paper led Bolsheviks to initiate centrally controlled and directed systematic efforts which accompanied the process of revolutionary legislation. These efforts were mostly exerted by the activists of the *Zhenotdel* −women section of the Communist Party− who wholeheartedly strived for emancipating the women within the context of Soviet interpretation of Marxist ideology.

The issue of women's emancipation was not a new phenomenon for Russians that came into the question just after the October Revolution. Instead, in Tsarist era mostly due to the translation of European Marxists' works on women question into Russian, the Russian Marxists had become quite relevant to the issue long before the revolution (Wood, 1997, p.27). Not only future Bolsheviks Lenin and his wife Nadezhda Krupskaia referred to the issue in their early writings but also substantial space was allocated to it in other printed materials (Wood, 1997, pp.28-30, 33-35). Most of the prospective *Zhenotdel* members, especially Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai, both contributed to the theoretical development of Marxist emancipation of women and actively involved in the revolutionary process (Wood, 1997, pp.34-38). After the revolution, therefore, women-related issues were comprehensively regarded in Bolshevik politics not only because of the increasing proportion of the women within the working class[12] and their active role in revolutionary process but also as a matter of genuine emancipation of human under socialism proposed by Marxism. But who strived for converting these theoretical debates into concrete operations and who transferred these ideas from the center to the periphery, to the most remote and isolated regions of the Soviet territory were the *Zhenotdel* activists who were composed of women.

Established in 1919, *Zhenotdel*, The Department for Work among Women, was organized under the command of the Party to forestall the evolution of a separate

[12] In large scale industries, women constituted the 25 percent of workers in 1913, which rapidly increased up to a level of 40 percent in 1917 and 46 percent in 1920 (Wood, 1997, p.44).

women movement while avoiding to offend them in the course of institutionalization of the Bolshevik regime. Despite the Bolshevik antipathy to any feminism-inspired formation which thought to be generating disjunctive and fractional impulse on the integrated and coherent class struggle, *Zhenotdel* and all other *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units were activated in all Soviet territory including Central Asia *bona fide* to solve the women question and to emancipate the women (Brodsky Farnsworth, 1976, pp.292-299; Clements, 1992, p.486) Designed to precipitate the process of achieving the practical results of women emancipating Soviet legislation, *Zhenotdel* principally endeavored to sustain the economic and political participation and socio-cultural reorientation of women while instilling them the revolutionary doctrine.

Main aims of the *Zhenotdel* were listed under three topics as to broaden the influence of the party over the working and peasant women through enlightening them about politics and life; to increase the political participation of women drawing them into the party, trade unions, cooperative organizations and the soviets; providing the socialization of the housework and childcare by means of promoting the establishment of nurseries and public dining rooms interacting with the other organizations like trade unions (Buckley, 1989, p.66). To achieve these aims, it was subdivided into three administrative units: First the organizational-instructional work, being the closest to the 'highest politics', comprehended organizing the meeting with the leaders of the local organizations, suggesting drafts concerning woman labor and determining the female cadres of the *Zhenotdel*; second, agitation-propaganda (agitprop) dealt with the encouraging and directing the women to involve in the politics and bringing together both the party and non-party women; third, press unit executed the publication of women journals like *Kommunistka, Rabotnitsa, Krest'ianka, Sharg Kadyny* which discussed the parameters of women question like abortion, prostitution, motherhood, woman labor, status, conditions of rural and Muslim women (Buckley, 1989, p.66-67). Other than these subdivisions there was also a 'sector' of the *Zhenotdel*, which focused on the question of the Eastern women and supervised the politics of woman's emancipation in Central Asia (Buckley, 1989, p.67).

The first Central Asian *Zhenotdel* tasked with creating a network of *Zhenotdels* throughout the region was established in Tashkent in 1919 but due to the lack of native collaborators, activists were sent from the center to Central Asia. These activists, some of whom were both Muslim and Turkic[13], reported to the center that the Central Asian women were oppressed by five masters, namely, "God, the emir, the landowner, the *mullah*, and her husband" and due to "inferiority, segregation, and humiliation, of deliberate separation from society, politics, and the economic marketplace" women were illiterate, backward and oppressed (Massell, 1974, pp.121, 125). Mostly leaning on these reports, Bolsheviks designed the policies of women's mobilization under the supervision of Central Asian *Zhenotdel* to free them from their masters. Activists of *Zhenotdel*, for this aim, strived for achieving to raise the political consciousness, encourage the women to mobilize politically, economic and socially. Within this framework, activities of *Zhenotdel* in Central Asia were broadened especially after 1924: Special resolution declared in the 13th Congress of the Communist Party in 1924, issued two provisos which obliged the local conditions and sensibilities to be taken into consideration on the hand and the establishment of *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units in Central Asia (Massell, 1974, p.213). The activities of *Zhenotdel*, hereafter, were fulfilled in close contact with some other newly established associational, vocational social units called Delegates' Meetings, Women's Clubs, 'Down with the *Kalym* and Polygamy' and 'For a New Way of Life' associations, cooperatives, literacy and hygiene circles, medical dispensaries (Massell, 1974, pp.213, 355). Houses, Red Corners and Red Tents were other forms of *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units which were mostly organized to mobilize the rural and nomadic women who had difficulty in reaching other units located in the town centers (Buckley, 1989, pp.89-91).

Delegates' Meeting −*Delegatskie Sobranie*− was the general form of agitprop work of *Zhenotdel* and Buckley, quoting from Inessa Armand, states that for *Zhenotdel* activists these meetings had supplied "the best opportunity for exerting long-term influence on non-party women" who were being selected as the female delegate

[13] Anna Nukhrat was one Turkic (Chuvash) female writer, Party propagandist and *Zhenotdel* activist who carried out organizational work among the women in Central Asia (Massell, 1974 pp.96-97, 133).

−*delegatka*− to attend these meetings (Buckley, 1989, p.71). Meetings principally undertook three main tasks for the aim of emancipating women: The first task was to raise the political consciousness teaching the delegates some theoretical issues regarding Communist Party, working class, socialism, trade unions, cooperatives and the conditions of women in capitalist societies; secondly, the delegates were given the opportunity to gain practical experience working in the state and social institutions like courts, hospitals, factories, soviets, trade unions, cooperatives and schools; lastly, it was aimed to ensure the political participation of the delegates who had already become mature enough in theoretical issues and work experience (Buckley, 1989, pp.72-74). Mobilization of the non-party women via Delegates' Meetings was successful to a certain degree especially in urban areas. Some Muslim women voluntarily ran on the party's ticket and were elected to the posts in state institutions, although few joined the Party (Massell, 1974, p.262). The success of these meetings in Central Asia, however, was far behind the expected levels since not only these meetings mostly targeted at the working women and could hardly reach the Central Asian housewives but also the Soviet institutions were weak and insufficient in Central Asia (Buckley, 1989, p.78, 82).

Women's Clubs −*Zhenskii Kluby*− were born out of the concerns of adapting the revolutionary tactics to the local conditions in Central Asia. They were established as "genuine preparatory schools for life and work" (Buckley quoting from Kuznetsova, 1989, p.83) to sustain a smooth transition from secluded domestic sphere to political, economic and social life among Central Asian women. The Party encouraged the establishment of the clubs especially in the most backward regions where the deeply embedded socio-cultural structures prevented women from participating in the labor force (Buckley, 1989, p.84). To mobilize the women from private to public sphere, activists of the clubs benefited from some innovative approaches like group discussions in public baths, women's workshops, shops, tea houses which were designed to bring women together to inform them about basic affairs of the daily life besides politically activating and making them believe in the socialism and Soviet rule (Buckley, 1989, p.71). Low level of participation, however, led them to initiate individual visits at home to introduce then new way social life (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.53). Further miniature models of clubs were also set up for the women who

were living especially in rural regions. The House of Dekhanki in Ashgabat was one of them which dealt with the women who were coming from the countryside, staying in town a few weeks and when they turned back to their villages, the very same women, together with the activists of the Houses from time to time, established the red corners and schools there to transfer their knowledge obtained in the Houses (Buckley, 1989, pp.88-89). The general failure to attract the nomadic women stimulated the Bolsheviks to develop other methods which resulted in the establishment of the mobile Red Tents which have stayed for two or three months together with each nomadic community (Buckley, 1989, pp.89-90). Red Tents, composed of at least two workers, principally aimed to provide social entertainment including singing, dancing, cinema then health education and political elucidation (Buckley, 1989, 89). All these social units in conjunction with the *Zhenotdel* more or less pursued the same goals of Delegates' Meetings respecting the local requirements, needs and priorities among which liquidating the illiteracy, training women in some light economic activities and educating the women about cleanliness, hygiene, healthcare, childcare were the top issues.

Zhenotdel and its social units strived for mobilizing Central Asian women in al spheres of life. Under socialism, however, the economic mobilization and education policies had a great impact on Central Asian women, which not only drew them into social production but also provided the required basis for public visibility (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.64). From the Marxist point of view, as Northrop cites from a speech of a *Zhenotdel* activist, economic and material wealth was the fundamental path for the solution of the women question (Northrop, 2004, p.81). Because if the diagnose was the women oppression under patriarchal order, then the basic Marxist remedy would be the economic liberation of women from oppressing fathers, brothers, husbands, religious leaders, clan leaders etc. The most radical attempt concerning economic liberalization came in mid-1920s, when Bolsheviks initiated the land reform in Central Asia, which principally aimed at withdrawing the land from the landowners and to reallocate them to landless people regardless of sex and to increase the production of cotton (Kamp, 2006, p.113). Bolsheviks, however, spent more energy on pulling the women into the productive labor force from the arduous and savage housework than redistributing them land. Activists of *Zhenotdel* and all

other *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units, therefore, paid much attention to labor recruitment since the women's invisibility in labor power was not only related with the women's economic dependence on men but also seclusion of women from public life as a result of Islamic and traditional way of life. Central Asian economy was mostly depending on the agriculture, petty production and commerce among the settled people whereas the nomadic people were dealing with the nomadic pastoralism. Within this pre-capitalist economic order, Central Asian women, before the arrival of the Soviet Russians, had already been engaging in some artisanal and agricultural work like weaving rugs and clothes, processing wool and cotton (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.53). Niurina and Nukhrat, two *Zhenotdel* activists, engaging in organizational work among the nomads and mountaineers, reported that "woman does everything, the man almost nothing" (Massell, 1974, p.98). After the revolution, in urban areas *Zhenotdel*-conducted women's *artels* "where women undertook 'outwork' for the factories that utilized the traditional skills of indigenous women, such as weaving, carpet-making and embroidery" and rural areas cooperatives where women from villages produced handicrafts and processed raw materials were established (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, pp.53, 64). Although women could have only worked in private segregated environments, most of them nevertheless partook in paid productive labor force (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.53). *Artels* and cooperatives, without converting the conventional gendered division of labor, served as a transitory period in drawing women into the paid labour before the introduction of heavy industrialization policies in 1930s (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.54).

Bolsheviks, referring the Central Asian societies as 'backward of the backward', paid special importance to education of Central Asian women and they strongly encouraged all urban, rural and nomad women to attend the courses given in the newly established schools. Especially after the introduction of the Red Corners and Red Tents in the region, providing the education facilities to the most remote regions, Soviet Russians, unlike any other 'outsiders', had the chance to be in close touch with the indigenous population who have been living in the most isolated areas (Corcoran-Nantes, p.52). Education was so important that the men who refused to send their wives and daughters to go the Soviet schools were prosecuted (Edgar,

2006, p.260). Educational mission of *Zhenotdel* was certainly beyond teaching women how to read and write or informing them about the daily life practices, motherhood, hygiene or health. Political consciousness raising was an important part of education program: Marxist ideology, Soviet goals and policies were instilled persistently during the educational activities (Buckley, 1989, pp.72; Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.52).

Political, economic and social mobilization of women was the main principle of *Zhenotdel* not only Central Asia but also in all Soviet Russia, however, the implementation of Soviet laws was also within the scope of *Zhenotdel* activities in Central Asia to derive the practical results of women related legal regulations. The impact of legislative attack on the so-called religious and traditional norms and practices was intensified and reinforced by the *Zhenotdel* activists. They have instructed the women about their rights under the Soviet law and consulted them about brideprice, veil, polygamy, levirate, under-age or arranged marriages besides offering them "a free legal aid service" and acting as "legal advocates and public defenders of indigenous women litigants" and they strongly encouraged the women, who wanted to end their marriages, to initiate divorce in Soviet courts (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.55). 'Down with the Kalym and Polygamy' and 'For a New Way of Life' associations were organized for the aim of, respectively, evoking the public opinion in the struggle with the local customs and propagating the new values, skills and habits (Massell, 1974, p.355).

Central Asian *Zhenotdel*'s activities, Massell argues, were far greater in scope and intensity than the European Russian *Zhenotdel* that included implementing the Soviet legislation and *Khudjum* policies, sponsoring the divorces and unveiling, promoting political recruitment into the Party, encouraging cultural reorientation and economic mobilization among the women (Massell, 1974, p.355). *Zhenotdel* and other organizations provided advantages both for the women and for the new regime and succeeded in influencing and mobilizing many women living especially in urban centers (Buckley, 1989, p.102). Thousands of women in Central Asia participated in these organizations, benefited from education and training political recruitment possibilities (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.54). Electoral participation increased

remarkably among the Central Asia women including semi-nomadic and nomadic women after entitlement of political rights by Soviet laws (Massell, 1974, p.270). *Zhenotdel* could have drawn many women out of their secluded way of life and supplied them with the new possibilities, knowledge and future (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.52). Problem of accessing female masses surmounted to a significant degree, red tents, red corners, houses provided the close contact with Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen nomads who were mostly remained intact (Buckley, 1989, pp.88-91).

The success of *Zhenotdel* and *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units, however, remained still far behind the intended level and speed. Both Women's Clubs and Red Tents, like Delegates' Meetings, were not as successful as expected in attracting the Central Asian women. Problem of access was overcome physically; however, linguistically *Zhenotdel* activists had big difficulty in communicating with the native women since most of them were non-indigenous, especially Russian who didn't know the native languages (Buckley, 1989, p.93; Kamp, 2006, p.98). Initiation of mass unveiling campaign in late 1920s further complicated activities of *Zhenotdel*. Many women, following the *Khudjum* campaign, massively left the Party and some other avoided from undertaking any political work within the Party (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.56). The men, likewise, mostly left the Party objecting the policies −particularly those of *Khudjum*− towards women and they have become highly prejudiced against the activities of the Clubs; men's attitudes towards their wives, daughters or sisters reached to tragic levels of murdering them (Buckley, 1989, pp.92-93; Massell, 1974, p.281). The image of *Zhenotdel* activists also worsened by late 1920s; they were, mostly by religious leaders, labeled as immoral and incompetent and most men hesitated to permit their wives to involve in the *Zhenotdel* activities because of the rumors that the *Zhenotdel* women were prostitutes (Buckley, 1989, p.98; Kamp, 2006, p.202; Northrop, 2004, p.95).

Zhenotdel's relative failure, however, was not only emerging from its relationship with the women but also with the Party. Women's organizations directed by *Zhenotdel* were mostly met with suspicion, amusement and non-action: The party committees at the local level were very reluctant to organize their own women's departments, some party members openly criticized the *Zhenotdel* activities and they

were vehemently in behalf of the transfer of the authority of the *Zhenotdel* to the other party departments (Buckley, 1989, p.98). Massell calls *Zhenotdel* and other social units as "specialized mediating networks standing between the population and the Party-State" (Massell, 1974, p.220). This 'inbetweenness' made things harder for the activists because they not only had to adjust their attitudes towards Central Asian women but also had to manage the from-above instructions. Party's distrust and distance towards the *Zhenotdel* from the very beginning eventually resulted in the complete liquidation of *Zhenotdel*s in 1930. In its short period of lifetime, agitating all existing political, economic and social structures, *Zhenotdel* and other social units strived for fulfilling the hard task of creating new ideal 'Soviet' woman out of humiliated, segregated, secluded Central Asian women on the basis of the Marxist ideology. Their relative failure, however, suggests that they couldn't accomplish to liberate them from their masters in its full sense; they, in other words, could have slightly contributed to challenging the gender relations in Central Asia.

CHAPTER V

THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN STALINIST CENTRAL ASIA

> Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life. The possibility of exercising these rights is ensured to women by granting them an equal right with men to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, prematernity and maternity leave with full pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens. (Article 122, 1936 Constitution[14])

Joseph Vissaniorovich Stalin, born in a Georgian family in 1878, has become one of the historic personalities, policies of whom designated not only the lives of the every Soviet citizen but also the world politics up until the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991. In a chronological but oversimplified sequence, first, as a direct result of the triumph of 'socialism in one country' of Stalin over the 'permanent revolution' of Trotsky, introduction of the rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture policies besides the abolition of private property and free trade in 1928 within the context of command economy; second, 'refinement' of Soviet society through the wholesale liquidation process of so-called exploiting elements as well as the inner-Party 'enemies', 'opponents' and even 'abstainers' which was initiated in early Stalinist era but turned into the well-known Great Purges in 1936-1938 and continued after the Second World War (SWW) in the name of eradicating collaborators of the enemies during the war; and lastly the disastrous but great and resounding victory in the Great Patriotic War which not only resulted in the tragic population losses in millions but also launched the bipolar world politics, namely Cold War, were all the major determinants of Stalinist politics which changed the course of history in 20th century. Sharply departing from the policies of his predecessor, politics of Stalin, however, when its extremely traumatic and tragic consequences for Soviet people are put aside, managed to achieve a great economic, social and cultural transformation within the society in every sphere of life.

Central Asia, despite remaining relatively intact during the world war due to its geographical remoteness, more or less, met the same fate under the Stalin's rule.

[14] For details please see: http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/36cons04.html#chap13

Besides the completion of administrative restructuration of the region in 1936 Constitution which consolidated districts of five separate SSRs, in Stalinist era, the relative socioeconomic and cultural development of the region was maintained as well as some catastrophic legacy mostly due to the forced collectivization and mass deportation policies was bequeathed to the native people. Major concern of the preceding era, that is the regime consolidation together with the direct establishment of socialism on basis of eradicating all anti-revolutionary, anti-Soviet elements that were supposed to be backed by Islam and custom in Central Asia, was more successfully achieved in almost twenty five years long Stalinist era through the socialization of land, promotion of the indigenous proletariat and the elimination of land owning, wealthy or richer peasants within the context of 'socialism in one country'. Stalinist politics didn't decelerate the direct assault on Islam up until the outbreak of SWW during which the policies towards Islam were softened due to some pragmatic concerns (Haghayeghi, 1996, pp.28).

Women, as in the case of the preceding era, continued to be the ideological figures of Stalinist politics not only in Central Asia but also throughout the Soviet Union. But the Marxist emancipation of women, this time, was not among the top issues in Stalin's schedule; therefore, the boundaries of women's emancipation were demarcated within the context of not Marxist ideology but broader ideological goals, requirements and priorities of Stalinism (Lubin, 1981, p.187). Policies of women's emancipation, in this sense, were pursued not as a continuation of the revolutionary gender equalizing legislation or intense *Zhenotdel* activities of pre-Stalinist period but in accordance with the 'socialism in one country' and the world war politics both of which not only drew women massively into the labor force but also produced new gender and family policies. Being implemented through the new Family Codes enacted in 1936 and 1944, these policies which redefined how family and motherhood should be in a socialist society ultimately aimed at creating another type of 'new woman' that was strikingly distinctive from the pre-Stalinist 'new woman' conceptualization. The second 'new woman' however, was introduced all Soviet women not only to the issue of 'double burden' as a direct result of the mass entrance into the labor force but also to some gendered norms, values and practices in this period.

Stalinist policies concerning women, therefore, were not the policies of 'women's emancipation' in its literal meaning but were one of the subsidiary issues of his politics up until 1953. Declaring that the 'women question was solved' in 1930, Stalinism sacrificed genuine women emancipation under socialism for the theoretical and practical concerns of *raison d'état*. Political, economic and sociocultural priorities of Stalin, however, didn't necessarily bring about any 'further' subordination of females to males; instead, Soviet women, as a result of 'indirect' emancipation policies, benefited from political, economic, socioeconomic facilities as well as the state services more than they did in the pre-Stalinist era as a result of the well-established welfare system in USSR.

Central Asian women were no exception in terms of the Stalinist policies: They were also regarded as the means to achieve the Central Asian part of the giant Soviet ideals but at the same time economic and sociocultural lives of women in Central Asia were transformed in a significant degree. What distinguishes women in Central Asia from the other Soviet women under Stalinism, however, was the campaign launched against the veil in 1927 when Stalin has just risen to power after the inner-Party power struggles persisted since the Lenin's death in 1924. This part of the study, therefore, will start with the mass unveiling campaign called *Khudjum*. This campaign occupies a distinctive space in the history of Central Asia since the Soviet leaders together with the *Zhenotdel* women, while acclaiming unveiling as an act of new life that would have ended every kind of women seclusion either in private or public spheres and therefore brought true emancipation for women in Central Asia, urged Muslim women to get rid of their veils in a coercive manner; Stalinist regime, however, substantially failed to trigger the mass unveiling, and accordingly to herald the true women emancipation during and after the campaign, although some other dimensions of short-run *Khudjum* policies paved the way for the implementation of the forthcoming Stalinist policies in the region. Secondly, the ultimate liquidation of the *Zhenotdel* throughout the Soviet Union as the natural extension of the discourse that 'women question was solved' will be dealt with touching upon the eleven-year old morbid relationship between the Party and the *Zhenotdel*. But more importantly, in this subsection, leaning on the scarce material on the issue, how and why *Zhenotdel* activities, despite this morbid situation, were mostly continued in Central

Asia under the newly established *Zhensektory* will be underlined. Lastly, the impact of 'socialism in one country' and world war politics on women will be discussed since the great Stalinist motivation behind accomplishing the five year plans perfectly, annihilating any simple probability to lose the Great Patriotic War and relieving the post-war traumas produced the rapid economic mobilization of women as well as the pro-natalist, pro-family gender policies which signalized sharp deviation from the Marxist understanding of women's emancipation. Although how Central Asian women were influenced by these policies is inadequately studied on in the literature, being leaned on the available resources concerning the issue, it will be strained as to display that the political, economic and sociocultural situation of women in the region has not become, at least, worse in Stalinist era than that in the preceding era albeit women in Central Asia, like others, paid very high price to reach to certain level of 'emancipation' to the end of Stalinist era. At the end of the twenty five year long period, Central Asian women were, nevertheless, not the women of late 1920s since they have become less veiled, less secluded, more qualified and more literate, although indigenous people in the region succeeded in maintaining their traditional and religious *modus vivendi* in a significant degree even up until the dissolution of USSR in 1991.

5.1 Unveiling Campaign: *Khudjum* Policies

Entitlement of women's rights and the economic, political and social mobilization of women under the supervision of *Zhenotdel* constituted the vertebra of the Bolshevik policies of women's emancipation in all Soviet territory in pre-Stalinist era. There was strong parallelism between these policies in Soviet Central Asia and in the rest of the Soviet territory although, in accordance with the local priorities and sensibilities as well as the Bolshevik priorities and projects regarding the region, some adjustments were made either in enacted laws or in *Zhenotdel* activities.

The mass unveiling campaign, *Khudjum*, that was initiated in 1927 in the name of the women's emancipation in Central Asia, however, was the sharpest deviation from overall logic and systematic of preceding Bolshevik policies for emancipation. Because, Soviet leaders, this time, giving an undertaking to free Central Asian women from all kinds of seclusion and to achieve the ultimate level of genuine

emancipation of women through this campaign launched against the veil, opted for the coercion instead of law power or conviction as they did in the pre-Stalinist era.

Degradation of this coercive strategy to a Soviet revolution in women dress, however, would be very misleading since this campaign was not only designed to fight against the seclusion of women as a part policies of women's emancipation but also to accelerate the process of overturning the Islamic and customary order and authorities seen as a threat against the Soviet regime and existence in the region. Moreover, there were also some, maybe not primary but at least secondary, economic considerations behind the campaign like drawing women into the labor force and creating the native proletariat in the preparation period of the mass industrialization and collectivization policies. There were, therefore, multifaceted and intertwined political, economic and sociocultural goals and inclinations behind attacking on the most visible, tangible and presumably the most sensitive object of Islamic faith as well as the customary mode of life and the patriarchal power in Central Asia. The repercussions of the campaign both at the state and society level, however, displayed that the Soviet leaders were successful in achieving the goals of *Khudjum* other than the women's emancipation.

Before 1926, neither gender equating legislation nor women emancipation oriented *Zhenotdel* activities comprehended consistent attacks on the veil, instead, the veil related Bolshevik policies were mostly sporadic and instantaneous. More awkwardly, neither any law was put into practice concerning unveiling (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.46) nor was any official call issued by the Communist Party (Kamp, 2006, p.144). Northrop, likewise, argues that the veil was not among the preeminent issues of multifaceted *Zhenotdel* activities up until 1926 and focusing on the unveiling after 1926 in the name of women's emancipation, Bolsheviks, contending that the female subordination was being justified by Islam, substituted gender for class but, in essence, targeted at the existing religious order and its leading figures in the course of Central Asian revolution[15] (Northrop, 2004, p. 72-77).

[15] Northrop further claims that women emancipation policies in general were not at the core of the Bolshevik policies in Central Asia before 1926; rather, only after the failure of indigenization, attacking on Islam and land, water reform policies in the region, the issue of women emancipation

The fact that Bolsheviks didn't have a concrete attitude towards unveiling before 1926 doesn't necessarily mean that the issue of women veiling/unveiling has never been debated on. On the contrary, even before the Soviet arrival to the region, the veil, in spite of not being specifically focused on, had already been dealt with under the framework of 'women reform' in Central Asia by the 'progressive' Muslim clergy as Bolsheviks called, namely *Jadids*, most of whom principally supported the Bolshevik revolution and joined the Communist Party albeit temporarily (Massell, 1974, pp.28-36). After the revolution, however, questioning the veil has become one of the preeminent issues for Central Asian *Jadids* (Kamp, 2006, p.137) who argued that "the *parandji* and *chachvan* lacked the Qur'anic roots" and "the veil merged out of the social tensions of warfare and class exploitation that existed under the khans" concluding that the unveiling was not a sin while the 'traditionalist' *–qadimist–* clergy was severely rejecting the *Jadidist* proposals concerning unveiling (Northrop, 2004, pp.89, 92). But according to the Bolsheviks, before the *Khudjum* operations, sponsoring unveiling was being regarded as the 'leftist deviation', *Jadidist* preoccupation and un-Bolshevik attitude since the major concern was to sustain the economic and material welfare and to promote the complete political and economic independence of women (Northrop, 2004, p.81).

In spite of the lack of any decisive and definite Bolshevik attempt against veil in the first half of the 1920s, Kamp states that before unveiling has become a state-reinforced issue, it had already become debatable even applicable and women had already initiated unveiling individually in Uzbek SSR (Kamp, 2006, pp.132, 148). According to her, in Uzbek SSR, significant number of women, who had already become in close contact with the state through "voting, land reform, delegate meetings, attending state-sponsored schools, literacy courses, women's craft cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, and consumer cooperatives" (Kamp, 2006, p.146), unveiled[16] before the *Khudjum* and they were either workers, students, teachers, Party/Komsomol members, *Jadids* or others endorsed by the male family

succeeded this serial of Bolshevik policies pursued to consolidate the Bolshevik rule in the region (Northrop, 2004, pp.72-79).

[16] Northrop, unlike Kamp, argues that the unveiling was not the central focus of Bolsheviks and Zhenotdel activities and before 1926, unveiling remained as a sporadic act and very few women cast off their veils as a consequence of personal liberation (Northrop, 2004, pp.79-80).

members (Kamp, 2006, pp.146-147). Moreover, she claims that the veiling was not an action at will; instead, young girls were being forced to veil under the pressure of society (Kamp, 2006, p.146).

Despite being denounced as a '*Jadidist* distraction' in Northrop's words, by late 1926 veiling was being referred as an urgent question to be solved by the Bolsheviks and it has become primary issue of the *Zhenotdel* (Northrop, 2004, pp.83-84). Although there have been several factors behind the maturation of unveiling campaign from the *Jadid* proposals to local communists' and *Zhenotdel* activists' initiatives, from the efforts of high-ranking party leaders and women activists in Moscow, Baku and Tashkent to international pressures, the constitutive impetus has come from the higher echelons of the party, from *Sredazburo* and *Kavkazburo* which were both the regional supervisory bodies of the party in Central Asia and Caucasus respectively (Northrop, 2004, p.82). The idea of promoting unveiling massively in Central Asia was first pronounced by Zelenskii, who was the male Russian head of *Sredazburo* at that time, at a conference of *Zhenotdel* organizers held in October 1926, calling for struggling against seclusion without directly mentioning veiling or unveiling (Kamp, 2006, pp.162-164). This idea was stiffened through the resolution called 'On the Work of Central Asian Party Organizations among Working and Peasant Women' passed by Central Committee in Moscow in June 1926 (Massell, 1974, p.226). The resolution, directly addressed to *Sredazburo*, was ordering the political recruitment and economic mobilization of women on the one hand and intensifying "the struggle against residues of feudal-patriarchal attitudes towards women" on the other (Massell, 1974, p.227). After a serial of official meetings held in Central Asia following the promulgation of the resolution, it was compromised to commence a decisive campaign against the women's seclusion −*zatvornichestvo*− to draw women into every sphere of public life.

Women's seclusion, although it was not directly correlated with veil before 1926, has always been one central issue of Bolsheviks who insistently strived for mobilizing Central Asian women under the supervision of *Zhenotdel* and other *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units of Delegates' Meetings, Women Clubs, Red Corners, Red Tents, and Tea Houses. Political, economic and social mobilization of females would

have eventually extricated Central Asian women from seclusion, isolation and exclusion. After 1926, however, women's seclusion had become more and more central to the policies of women's emancipation in the region. More importantly, women's seclusion was identified with the veil, specifically *parandji* and *chachvan*; veil, in other words, was attributed a strategic meaning not only as an indicator of women's seclusion but also as cause and effect of it and the veil was not, in Massell's words, "the most tangible, publicly perceived embodiment of physical and symbolic apartheid" anymore, but it was "the very linchpin of seclusion itself" according to Bolsheviks (Massell, 1974, p.232). The word *zatvornichestvo*, therefore, in spite of being used to refer initially to all forms of women's seclusion from physical segregation at home and to the exclusion both physically and mentally from public life, eventually shifted in scope from holistic vision of seclusion to specifically veiling (Massell, 1974, p.231).

The discourse to liberate women from the veil, and thereby, from the seclusion itself was not the only reason behind the theoretical maturation of unveiling campaign. Although from the very beginning, the incorporation of the female labour into the economy has always been one central dimension of women emancipation policies, when the low level of economic mobilization is concerned, on the eve of forthcoming mass industrialization and collectivization policies of Stalin, there would be urgent need for the formation of a native proletariat which included the production potential of the female labour. Therefore, during the *Khudjum* period, women's *artels* and cooperatives were liquidated to sustain the broad recruitment of women into the labor force which eventually resulted in the involvement of women not only into the factory production but also into the heavy industrial work due to the 'pure' equalization of male and female work (Alimova, 1998, p.152). The veil, in this respect, was regarded as only restrictive factor for women while laboring (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, pp.43-44, Massell, 1974, p.232) and therefore it should have been removed to sustain maximum the efficiency in production.

When the idea of initiating a massive unveiling campaign was definitely agreed upon, the word *khudjum* was meticulously chosen for the campaign. *Khudjum* which literally derives from three predominant Central Asian languages of Turkic, Arabic

and Persian, had military connotation meaning ‘all-out attack’, ‘sweeping advance’, ‘assault’ and ‘storm’, (Massell, 1974, p.229). High-level *Khudjum* Commission established to implement the campaign in Uzbek SSR laid down the strategy: ‘mass public unveilings would be the Party’s instrument for breaking down the seclusion and drawing Uzbek women into public life’, ‘for women to be free and equal, the parandji had to disappear’ (Kamp, 2006, p.165).

The campaign was limited to the urban and sedentary agricultural regions which are called Uzbekistan and Tajikistan today (Edgar, 2003, p.132). In other words, the most urbanized and economically developed area, namely Uzbek SSR where the Islamic devoutness and firmness was also at the highest level, was nominated again as the main center of the campaign. In the other Republic, however, “there was no Turkmen *khudjum*” and in Edgar’s terms, due to the ‘nomadic exceptionalism’ Turkmen women were supposed to enjoy more freedom and higher status when compared to sedentary Muslim women (Edgar, 2003, pp.133-134). In Turkmen SSR where the women were not veiled strictly, *khudjum* policies mostly based on stamping out the brideprice, polygamy, underage marriage, divorce and illiteracy (Edgar, 2003, pp.134-419; Northrop, 2004, p.83). But in the absence of the veil, Edgar argues, it had become more difficult to carry out emancipation of women policies, since indigenous collaborators of Bolsheviks were more resistant than those in neighboring Uzbek SSR concerning “the pressures coming from above for the transformation of women’s status and family life” (Edgar, 2003, p.149).

Having been executed under the supervision of *Sredazburo* and the *Khudjum* Commission, the operations in Uzbek SSR, on the other hand, are well be divided into two phases according to Massell: The first phase operations were initiated in December 1926 and pursued until March 1927 whereas the second and the core phase of the campaign was launched in March 1927 and continued up to mid-1927 (Massell, 1927, pp.233-246). This initial phase, Massell argues, was characterized by the arrangement of meetings held in the major cities of Uzbek SSR, namely in Tashkent, Fergana, Samarkand and Zerafshan, and it was “by and large limited to communist, official, urban, and relatively most secularized strata of the population” (Massell, 1974, p.233). The second set of operations was more comprehensive than

the initial steps in scope and content since not only it targeted at the whole population rather than a certain strata but also to attract the attention of women to unveiling it was comprising of multiple strategies and methods from mass media publications enforcing unveiling to doctors' conferences stressing on the harmful effects of veil on health like depriving the skin of sun light and air from party meetings to literary and artistic works on women degrading Islamic norms and practices (Massell, 1974, pp.239-240).

Throughout the *Khudjum* campaign lasted from late 1926 to mid-1927 one single day had a historic and symbolic importance since on that day the campaign has acquired public character: On the International Women's Day of the year 1927, namely on March 8, female party members together with the males' wives and relatives, *Zhenotdel* activists and all other non-party women were called for mass unveiling ceremony that would be organized in ornamented city centers; the congregated women in the meeting places simultaneously tore their veils, burnt them in the bonfires and then walked in the city streets symbolizing the end of the women seclusion and transition to the new way of life offered by the Bolsheviks (Massell, 1974, p.241-245; Northrop, 2004, p.82).

Reports issued just after the March 8 events were denoting a triumph since only on March 8 nearly 10.000 women were unveiled and this number reached to a level of 90.000-100.000 in the following May (Alimova, 1998, p.150; Massell, 1974, p.245; Northrop, 2004, p.97). Moreover, it was also recorded that five thousand women involved in the literary classes whereas more than five thousand women were selected as assessor of the people in 1927 spring (Alimova, 1998, p.150). The unveiled women, at the initial stages of *Khudjum* were mostly socially isolated women like orphans, child-brides, disaffected wives, widows and divorcees who were also affiliated to the *Zhenotdel* for help and support (Massell, 1974, pp.260-264).

Long-term results of the *Khudjum* campaign, however, were not as hopeful and pleasing as the short-term ones. Because, due to the direct and harsh attack on the veil, symbolically very vital expression of Islamic, customary and patriarchal texture in other words, societal reaction against the campaign didn't retard; instead, in a

‘cause and effect’ manner attack on veil triggered social violence and unrest on the one hand and accelerated the expurgation process of the religious leaders as well as the other ‘un-revolutionary’ elements like the ‘prosperous’ people within the society as a Bolshevik response. Bolshevik methodology behind all *Khudjum* operations, however, was also very influential and deterministic in the forthcoming sociopolitical chain of events. Because, the Communist Party and the other party-affiliated ruling bodies, this time, represented a coercive strategy instead of law power or persuasion and search for voluntary participation as in the case of other *Zhenotdel* activities. Concerning this methodology, Northrop states that “the choice of assault as the preferred mode of women’s work in Central Asia, too, required that new methods be adopted, stressing coercion over persuasion and emphasizing sudden, dramatic transformation over slow, steady change” (Northrop, 2004, p.83) and Kamp endorses his statement arguing that “more women unveiled because of coercion rather than conviction” (Kamp, 2006, p.178). Central Asian women’s act of unveiling, putting it differently, was not a ‘Marxist’ act since it was a result of ‘Throw off your parandji’, ‘Down with the parandji’ sloganeered coercion dictated by the party without even any law power behind; it was not, in other words, a result of the revolutionary shift in self-consciousness, self-liberation or self-awareness all of which are idealized in Marxist thinking for genuine emancipation of human beings.

Societal response to the coercive *Khudjum* operations inevitably demonstrated a wide spectrum along the two extremes of passionately affirming and strictly opposing unveiling since Uzbek society as a whole was not a single entity. Generally speaking, it is possible to argue that the party-affiliated indigenous people were located at the extreme of affirmative action whereas the religious leaders –*mullahs*– mostly represented the opposite side of the response spectrum (Massell, 1974, pp.256-284). Northrop states that “regional, ethnic, generational, professional and rural/urban identities” had a deterministic effect on how the interlocutors of *Khudjum* responded to the idea of unveiling either in theory or in practice and he adds that the largest portion of the Uzbek society was between the extremist reactions (Northrop, 2004, p.88). Massell, differentiating native males’ and females’ responses from each other, states that male response has ranged from “evasion and selective accommodation to limited retribution and massive backlash” whereas that of females has ranged from

"avoidance and selective participation to militant self-assertion and un-controlled involvement"[17] (Massell, 1974, pp.257, 266). Central Asian women, at any rate, were caught in the very middle of a high voltage zone and as the mere subjects of the campaign they were exposed not only to the state/Party pressure to unveil but also to social pressure not to unveil.

Initial societal reactions were mostly characterized by a tendency of not to participate in soviet schools, enterprises, organizations as well as not to vote and running for to be elected; by mid-1927, women who had been veiled or had never been veiled before, nomadic women, showed massive disposition to enjoy their legal rights or the educational facilities (Massell, 1974, p.245). More significantly, in late 1927, it was reported that mass unveiling turned into a 'phenomenon of mass re-veiling' (Northrop, 2004, p.97). "Some women reveiled because of the threats from husbands, fathers, brothers and neighbors" (Northrop, 2004, p.188). Most of the women who unveiled on March 8 were not comfortable to appear in public; moreover they were ashamed of showing their faces (Kamp, 2006, pp.169-170) since it was being regarded as, consciously or subconsciously, a sin or a religious deviance. Restlessness, however, hasn't simply emerged from internal revenges and religious beliefs; instead readily established link between the unveiling and impurity −more specifically prostitution− caused the emergence of strong sense of discomfort among these women. From verbal to physical harassment, from death threats to rape, unveiled women confronted with various forms of traumatic cases. By 1928, it was reported that the outcomes of divorce ratings, unveiling and overall mobilization of the women had gone further than the Bolsheviks could have ever envisioned; due to some economic and psycho-cultural reasons like the isolation of divorced or unveiled women from their communities, the aforementioned outcomes have verged on the level of mass prostitution among the unveiled and divorced (Massell, 1974, p.265). More tragically in the following three-year period state-coerced unveiling campaign resulted in the burst of violence, which reached to a level of mass murder of unveiled the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. Minimum 235 Uzbek women, Kamp

[17] By the quoted statements above, Massell generalizes the males' and females' responses not only to the *Khudjum* campaign but also to the revolutionary legalism and *Zhenotdel* activities in Central Asia (Massell, 1974, pp.256-284).

denotes, were declared to be murdered in 1927 and by 1928, however, this number increased to about 2000 up to 1929 (Kamp, 2006, p.186) and she states that according to the related archival materials, in spite of occurring occasionally when compared to the cases of the year 1928, the murders because of unveiling and activism were continued during the forced collectivization in early 1930s[18] (Kamp, 2006, p.218). These women were mostly murdered by their husbands or husband's families (Keller, 1998, p.24). This violence, however, was not only directed against the unveiled women; instead thousands of men and women, who were supposed to be in connection with *Khudjum*, were killed (Massell, 1974, p.282) including several activist women and their families, leading members of *Zhenotdel*, local soviets and party departments together with actresses, male writers and intellectuals (Kamp, 2006, p.193; Massell, 1974, pp.282-283).

Uzbek Communist Party and *Zhenotdel* haven't remained completely voiceless against this violence. *Zhenotdel* activists have insistently stressed on the urgent need for enacting deterrent penalties for murderers besides ensuring the security of unveiled women (Kamp, 2006, pp.206-207). Uzbek Criminal Code was revised twice in 1928 and 1929: Initially, minimum 8 years severe isolation for the crime of killing or severely wounding a woman because of religious concerns or other daily matters whereas three years for humiliating women due to unveiling and two years for lighter versions of such crimes were promulgated; the following year, the punishments for general opposition for unveiling were strengthened, murdering the unveiled women was regarded as an act of terrorism which by implication meant that the sentences for anti-Soviet terrorist activities may well be applied in cases of murders of unveiled women (Kamp, 2006, pp.207, 211; Massell, 1974, p.316). Moreover, issuing a decree to illegalize the veil has publicly been discussed in 1928 and early 1929. The *Zhenotdel* activists, including Serafima Liubimova, former head of Central Asian *Zhenotdel*, were strongly in behalf of the enactment of such a decree, however, stressing on the importance of the political, economic and social mobilization and

[18] Kamp argues that in Uzbek SSR the direction of the violence shifted from the unveiled women to the activists of the collectivization campaign in late 1920s and early 1930s since the societal responses were not only originating from the overturn of the gender hierarchies in the region but also the state/party interventions into the long lasting life styles of Central Asians (Kamp, 2006, p.214).

development of the material conditions of women rather than formally abolishing the veil, according to Massell, Kamp and Northrop[19] the issue of outlawing veil was totally abandoned in January, in mid-April 1929 and in July 1929 respectively (Kamp, 2006, p.209; Massell, 1974, pp.350-352, Northrop, 2004, p.297) due not to reach consensus because of inner-Party struggles and divergences and to the lack of massive popular support. By mid-1929, Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to retreat in terms of the policies of unveiling and according to this new Bolshevik standpoint, official encouragement for unveiling would be terminated, "administered massive unveiling in public as an overly crude and dangerous violation of local customs" would be stopped and the women who wanted to unveil would be kept under scrutiny (Massell, 1974, pp.353-354).

Neither the latest legal regulations nor the efforts of *Zhenotdel* activists sufficed to prevent the crimes and to protect the victims of the violence. Bolsheviks, however, according to Northrop, leaning on the some official reports on the prognosis of the *Khudjum* campaign classified the native society into two categories as the 'class allies/proletarian elements'[20] and the 'class enemies/non-proletarian elements' (Northrop, 2004, pp.103-118) and embarked on to determine the ones who fell into the second category, who, in other words, were posing a threat against the Soviet regime in the region. The resources of the post-*Khudjum* course of events were

[19] Although Northrop argues that the issue of outlawing the veil came to end in June 1929, unlike Massell and Kamp, he states that debates on issuing a decree on unveiling didn't totally disappear in late 1920s. On the contrary, in Stalinist era, especially in 1930s women politics in Central Asia was built on the veil and the first wave debates on banning the veil in 1927-1929 during the Khudjum was succeeded by the second wave (1936-1937) which appeared during the discussions of the Stalin Constitution and the third wave (1940-1941) which took place just before the Soviet entrance into the SWW even if it was never outlawed in Soviet era (Northrop, 2004, pp.284-313, 315).

[20] While the Muslim clergy and the riches were regarded as the class enemies, Northrop argues, the workers, poor and middle peasants, educated groups and women themselves were seen as the ones who fell into the first category above. The native communists, moreover, were seen as the class vanguard of the Uzbek society and *ipso facto* leading extension of the Soviet power in the region (Northrop, 2004, pp.113-114). But as mentioned earlier, responses of the Central Asian society, including those of workers, poor peasants, educated people and women, towards the unveiling operations of Bolsheviks displayed a wide spectrum of behavior pattern. The response of rural Central Asia which could be generalized as not welcoming even strictly opposing the Khudjum, was not confusing in this sense although the workers' attitudes were relatively more promising than those of Uzbek communists (Northrop, 2004, pp.113). Therefore, to suppose in advance that Bolsheviks simply identified their allies and enemies rather than they laid their strategy to fight the anti-Bolshevik elements within the society and to sustain the stability in the region and further consolidate the regime would be credulity.

immediately diagnosed as the Muslim clergy and the riches (Alimova, 1998, p.151; Kamp, 2006, p.198; Northrop, 2003, pp.109, 115-118), namely, religious leaders –*mullahs, imams, ishans*–, tribal and communal notables –*begs, manaps*–, merchants and other non-laboring elements who were all regarded as the enemies of the *Khudjum* and the Soviet regime as a whole (Massell, 1974, p.340; Northrop, 2004, p.109).

Although the pacification of the religious leaders together with the liquidation of *shariat* and *adat* courts, had already been initiated before Stalin's power arrived at the Central Asia, Soviet leaders, concurrently with promoting the unveiling, condensed the struggle against the religious clergy (Kamp, 2006, p.181); that is to say, unveiling was not only a matter of women's emancipation but was a matter of regime consolidation in the region. The unconcealed opposition of Muslim clergy towards the campaign, however, impelled Bolsheviks to take more strict precautions against these people. Because, almost all recorded discourse of *mullahs* and *imams* was including anti-*Khudjum* expressions (Northrop, 2004, p.197). Many clergy, moreover, "not only took a stand against unveiling but actively encouraged men in their communities to 'punish' unveiled women" (Kamp, 2006, p.194). They, declaring that *Zhenotdel* women were prostitutes and the unveiling was a sin dictated by atheist communists, commanded Muslim men to prevent their wives, sisters, daughters, mothers from unveiling and thereby from dishonor, corruption and certainly prostitution (Northrop, 2004, pp.92-93). They also pioneered the some rumor campaigns like referring the destructive earthquakes took place in 1927 as the God's punishment to Uzbek people (Massell, 1974, p.277; Northrop, 2004, p.93).

By 1929 not only the mosques and other places of worships were closed down as a Soviet response but also accusations against the religious leaders who were alleged to be involved in the reactionary backlash were converted into the death sentences (Massell, 1974, p.317). Many clergy in this period were arrested due to charges of objecting policies women's emancipation (Keller, 1998, p.33). This struggle, however, directed not only at the reactionary clergy who strictly opposed to both unveiling campaign and other women emancipation policies but also the progressive clergy, namely *Jadids*. According to Keller, Bolsheviks used *Khudjum* campaign as

an effective tool to create antagonism between the two streams of the clergy (Keller, 1998, pp.32-36). Northrop also claims that *Jadids*, from the Bolsheviks' point of view, were more dangerous than other clergy since they were not explicitly opposing the Bolsheviks but ultimately benefiting from the Bolsheviks policies on unveiling seeming to be supporting the emancipation of women (Northrop, 2004, p.117).

Khudjum campaign, moreover, has also served for as an instrument of purifying and cleansing the party ranks of the tacit 'enemies', 'abstainers' and 'anti-Soviet', disloyal, class-alien elements. It actually surfaced the male dominated native communists' attitudes, responses and thoughts concerning the gender relations, unveiling and family matters all of which were regarded, by the Bolsheviks, as the criteria for the political loyalty to the Soviet regime: Native communists, whose wives and relatives remained veiled, who forced them not to unveil or not to involve in public life, who didn't obey the Soviet laws related with the brideprice, polygyny, underage marriage etc. were the mere subjects of this inner-party purification (Northrop, 2004, pp.209-225). As a result, the first wave of Central Asian purges was inaugurated by late 1928 in order to punish, that is, either to expulse or to exile the 'male' indigenous communists in respect to their performance in the course of unveiling campaign (Kamp, 2006, pp.202-203; Massell, 1974, p.318; Northrop, 2004, p.219). Central Asian part of Great Purges in 1936-1938, according to Northrop, which cannot be compared to the previous one in scope, method and goals, was also related with the policies of women's emancipation besides many other factors and within this context many native communists lost not only their party membership but also their lives and this time it included the female communists (Northrop, 2004, pp.229, 239-240).

When whether or not the Soviets achieved the expected results from their economic considerations of creating the native proletariat and utilizing the female labor is concerned, they seemed to be attained relative success. Alimova argues that in late 1930s, 80 percent of labor force in cotton growing was comprised by women who were working on the 15 different type of agricultural process and moreover, by 1939 women were occupying male positions (Alimova, 1998, pp.152-153). Female labor, gradually, was pulled into the factories and state farms as women acquired

productive skills through the education (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.79). To what extent forcing Central Asian women to unveil contributed to this relative success of Bolsheviks, from the other side, seems to be debatable. Because, as it will be discussed in detail below, noteworthy women participation into the labor force in 1930s was rather correlated with the forced collectivization policies which mostly accompanied or followed the efforts to transform and to unveil the women within the context of *Khudjum* campaign. Northrop, moreover, giving varied examples[21], states that most of the women who were working in the factories or collective farms continued to stay veiled while working (Northrop, 2004, pp.323-327).

The question of whether the Central Asian women, after the *Khudjum* campaign, could have relieved of the so called seclusion or not, therefore, was negatively answered by the scholars to a large extent in the literature. In quite-short *Khudjum* era, not only women mostly refrained from unveiling but also they have become further secluded in private sphere due to above mentioned factors. Both Kamp and Northrop, however, mention about a substantial decrease in veiling in the following post-*Khudjum* decades. Kamp relates this trend first to the development formal education system both in urban and rural areas in the region; second to the compulsion of women to work unveiled during the SWW and lastly to the impact of new minded Uzbek men who returned homeland after the war with the ability to speak Russian and the participation in the Party (Kamp, 2006, p.222). Northrop, likewise, argues that when the official policies redirected away from the veil, this brought its decline, with the exception of the SWW period[22], as a result of, first, the massive entrance of non-Muslims into Uzbek SSR during the war which unavoidably caused intercultural confrontations among the nationalities and second the great impact of the war in the collective minds of the Uzbek people which helped to create

[21] Relying on some archival data, Northrop states that 60 percent of women working in a cooperative and all women working in a rural kolkhoz in 1932, 75 percent of the women working in silk spinning facility in 1934, all women working in another kolkhoz in 1936, 95 percent of women working in an *artel* in 1939, 82 and 90 percent of women working in two different kolkhozes in 1940 were veiled, some of whom were even the wives or relatives of the native communists (Northrop, 2004, pp.323-326).

[22] Kamp states that there occurred a relative increase in the rate of veiling women during the SWW and she associates this with the rotation of Stalinist focus to the war which brought a relative religious freedom to the region (Kamp, 2006, p.220).

a new identity which was both Uzbek and Soviet (Northrop, 2004, pp.349-350). In this sense, there is no doubt that the Stalinist rhetoric of achieving the true women's emancipation by casting off the veils and thereby ending the women seclusion couldn't have been converted into the practice during the *Khudjum* years. However, when the fact that veiling was totally abolished in post-Soviet Uzbekistan is concerned, it is possible to argue that Soviet policies could have conclusively transformed the Central Asian societies albeit gradually.

5.2 From *Zhenotdel* To *Zhensektor*

The earlier years of the Stalinist era definitely manifested that the official rhetoric and practice concerning the women's emancipation would have significantly diverged from that of preceding era. Because in 1930, the *Zhenotdel* was ultimately liquidated within the framework of Stalinist politics which claimed that the women didn't need any special attention anymore since they were the absolute equals of men either in political struggle or in labor force (Wood, 1997, p.221) declaring the proverbial Stalinist motto of the time: The woman question was solved.

Even though the literal meaning of this declaration simply offers that the three main aims of *Zhenotdel*, roughly speaking, raising the political consciousness of the working women, increasing the political and economic participation and socialization of housework and childcare were achieved, there was no doubt that the women question was not 'literally' but 'officially' solved. As a direct result of this official solution, not only in Central Asia but also in all Soviet territory, that is to say, from the central body to the all peripheral units, *Zhenotdel* ceased to be as a separate department of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Liquidation of *Zhenotdel*, despite being untangled in a trice under the impact of Stalinist mode of politics, in the literature, is rather correlated with the mortal pathology of the protracted 'affair' between the *Zhenotdel* and the Communist Party than the Stalin's authority, decisiveness and ruthlessness.

Notwithstanding the *Zhenotdel*'s constructive, active and therefore very crucial role in the implementation of the revolutionary legislation and the female mobilization policies in the pre-Stalinist era, this didn't necessarily mean that the relationship

between the leading *Zhenotdel* women and the male Bolsheviks was not problematic; instead, there has always been an undulating affair between the two from the very beginning to the end. Before 1930, therefore, *Zhenotdel* had already faced with the liquidation crises twice[23] (Wood, 1997, pp.127-146, 212).

When established in 1919 women activists of *Zhenotdel*, on the basis of the Marxist approach to the women's emancipation, had assembled "a vision of socialist future and the means to achieve it" but except for the relatively free atmosphere of the Civil War years in which they explicitly endorsed the idea of radical restructuring of the family and the sexual liberation, their utopianism, as Clements calls, was "diverged in significant ways from those articulated by the Party's male leaders" (Clements, 1992, pp.485, 489). After the isolation of the second head[24] of the *Zhenotdel*, Alexandra Kollontai, who was accused of both utopianism and feminism due to her radical views[25], from the Party in 1922, *Zhenotdel*, under the rule of successive directors, abandoned debating the theoretical questions concerning the women emancipation –without sacrificing their utopian dreams– and shifted to focusing on the construction of a socialized life –*byt*– on the basis of the socialization of the housework, childcare and other living facilities and the establishment of the egalitarian relations between the two sexes (Clements, 1992, pp.491-494).

From the dismissal of Kollontai to the liquidation, *Zhenotdel*, concerning the activities and programs for women's emancipation, was adjusted according to the

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[23] The first one, which reached to a level of the liquidation of the provincial units and the severe weakening of the central body due to some multifaceted reasons like internal identity crisis, leadership gap, inability to sustain the control over the staff member, lack of cooperation and coordination with the local units, took place in 1921-1922; the second crisis, however, happened in 1928 and despite the efforts of Artuikhina, internal critics raised their voices charging the *Zhenotdel* with 'narrowness, attention to form over content, false optimism and propaganda'(Wood, 1997, pp.127-146, 212).

[24] The first director of the *Zhenotdel*, namely Inessa Armand, held the position until her death in 1920 from the cholera. After Kollontai, Sophiia Smidovic (1922-1924), Klavdiia Nikolaevna (1924-1925) and Aleksandra Artiukhina (1925-1930) headed the *Zhenotdel* up to the liquidation (Buckley, 1989, p.65).

[25] Kollontai, leaning on the Marxist thinking on women emancipation, passionately propagated the radical restructuring of the family, sexual liberation of women, free love and the creation of new women who was in every way equal to any man (Brodsky Farnsworth, 1976, p.292-316; Clements, 1973, pp.323-338; Clements, 1992, pp.485-496). Concerning the 'withering away problem of the family' in Marxist thinking, however, Hoffmann argues that Bolsheviks including Lenin were restless about 'the family disintegration and sexual frivolity as distractions from building of the socialism' (Hoffmann, 2003, p.89).

Communist Party; it, was, in other words, silenced, rasped and relatively subordinated in this period. The tension between the two, however, has never diminished, and mostly due to the Bolshevik obsession and phobia of bourgeois feminism and fractionation within the class struggle as well as the tacitly prejudiced, disdainful and condescending minds of the male communists, the life of *Zhenotdel* fell short to achieve the genuine emancipation of women under socialism. In January 1930, therefore, Central Committee declared that the liquidation of *Zhenotdel* was a part of the overall restructuration within the Party (Massell, 1974, p.357; Wood, 1997, p.212); the *Zhenotdel* workers were appointed to the other posts (Clements, 1992, p.495) and delegated to the newly established Department for the Agitation and Mass Campaigns which was assigned to deal with the women issues throughout the Soviet territory (Massell, 1974, p.357). Under these departments Women's Sections called *Zhensektory* were set up at the Republic, *krai*, *oblast*, town, the district level and in the large enterprises (Buckley, 1989, p.124). *Zhensektory* together with the *Zhenorganizatory* –Women's Organizers– who were appointed to the rural areas, rather than focusing on the women issues alone, were tasked with the general political matters; that is to say, main aims of *Zhensektory* were determined as to sustain the good implementation of the five year plans to achieve the ultimate aims of industrialization and collectivization (Buckley, 1989, p.124). *Zhensektory*, however, were less durable than the *Zhenotdel*; in 1934 they were also totally abolished claiming that the women in the urban areas were mostly drawn into the laboring force and there remained no problem like women backwardness; moreover, the Delegates' Meetings, which were put under the direction of *Zhensektory*, being regarded as ineffective and misguided, also fell from the grace (Buckley, 1989, p.124).

Central Asian *Zhenotdel*, nevertheless, didn't suffer from the mortal fate of its superior body in its full sense. Because, as Buckley cites, "the abolition of a special apparatus for work among women was premature" in Muslim areas where the women question had not been entirely solved; as Kamp states, the local branches of the *Zhenotdel* were designated as *Zhensektor* of the local parties and *Zhenotdel* in Uzbek SSR continued to function; as Massell argues, "Central Asia was specifically (albeit quietly) exempted from the liquidation order" and *Zhenotdel* in Central Asia

was renamed as *Zhensektor* (Buckley, 2006, p.125; Kamp, 2006, p.217; Massell, 1974, p.357).

The late 1920s, when the central *Zhenotdel* faced its ultimate crisis, actually coincided with the *Khudjum* years in Central Asia in which the *Zhenotdel* activists unwittingly, depleted their residual prestige, eminence and credit substantially in the eyes of Central Asians at the expense of passionately involving in the unveiling campaign. Although Massell argues that the radical policy-shifts concerning especially divorce and unveiling as well as the sanctions and reprisals as a strategic retreat of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia by mid-1929 was in particular related with the questioning the existence, efficiency and imperativeness of *Zhenotdel* and other *Zhenotdel*-conducted social units in Central Asia (Massell, 1974, p.356), the chronological coincidence of the closure of central *Zhenotdel* and the 'failure' of *Khudjum* didn't eventuate in the irreversible abolition of the Central Asian *Zhenotdel*. On the contrary, in spite of the great achievements of *Zhenotdel* concerning the women's emancipation in the region, Soviet leaders, being quite aware of the fact that the woman question in Central Asia was still very far away from being solved, avoided from solving this highly complicated question even officially. Low level of women's participation into the labor force in Central Asia, however, was the major component of this question according to the Stalinist thinking. Therefore, unlike the other *Zhensektory* throughout the USSR, the ones in Muslim Republics were not dissolved since it was perceived that the opposition to women participation into the workforce was still continuing (Constantine, 2007, p.119).

Zhenotdel in Central Asia, however, was not thoroughly immune from the doom of its central apparatus; instead, under the very pressure of the liquidation process at the upper level, it was also exposed to the organizational restructuration albeit not liquidated. *Zhenotdel* was converted into the *Zhensektory*, as mentioned earlier, but the active role of *Zhenotdel* in promoting the unveiling and divorces was not delegated to its successor, instead this policy was cut short and moreover, many of its other liabilities concerning health, education, labor, justice, security etc. were distributed among the several commissariats and other state agencies (Massell, 1974,

p.358). Additionally and more importantly, main focus of women politics in Central Asia was shifted from promoting the women's emancipation to the fulfilling the women-related parts of the five-year economic plans; *Zhensektory* in Central Asia mainly targeted at encouraging women to join to the collective farms in order to sustain the labor productivity and well-management of the agricultural production besides promoting the socialism (Buckley, 1989, pp.125-126). The tasks of organizing women and managing daily women issues were also transferred to the newly constituted Sections for Way of Life –*Bytovye Sekstii*– which were attached to the local soviets and Commissions for Improvement of Women Labor and Way of Life –*Komissii po Uluchshenii Truda i Byta Zhenshchiny*– which were attached to the Central Executive Committees of republican, provincial or city soviets (Massell, 1974, pp.357-358).

Conversion of the former Central Asian *Zhenotdel* into *Zhensektory* and the demotion of it in the hierarchy of Soviet state, attaching it to the politically inferior local soviets which have become more and more subordinate to the party in time, indeed, definitely suggested that, in Massell's words, "the entire enterprise of women emancipation and mobilization in Central Asia was being reduced to relatively low-priority and low-key activities, and removed to a secondary political plane" on the one hand, "Soviet regime still considered it important to respond the need for 'special forms and methods of work' generated by the role and status of women in Muslim traditional societies" on the other (Massell, 1974, pp.358-359). Kamp, likewise argues that the dissolution of *Zhenotdel* didn't mean the end of the official interest of the party/state in the women's issues and despite the official structures that promoted the *Khudjum* campaign disappeared, official concerns for creating new Uzbek woman has continued in Soviet era as a whole (Kamp, 2006, p.217).

Liquidation of both the central *Zhenotdel* and its 'mutated' successor *Zhensektor* in 1930 and 1934 respectively, notwithstanding the fact that the underlying ground of the liquidation process was multi-dimensioned and multi-factored rather than being direct product of Stalinist politics, may well be regarded as the most significant indicator of how the policies of women's emancipation in Stalinist era were depreciated and fell from grace when compared to those of the preceding period. The

argument that 'the woman question was solved' by itself substantiates the Stalinist approach to the issue which put an end to the efforts of *Zhenotdel* women exerted with a great dynamism, ardent, and most importantly, the devoted hearts to accomplish the 'socialist' path to the genuine emancipation of women even in most remote areas of Soviet territory.

The relative segregation of Central Asian *Zhenotdel* from the ultimate liquidation falls short to confute the above mentioned Stalinist stance on the issue of women's emancipation. Because the scarce material[26] on the activities of *Zhensektory* which supplies nothing more than some the statistical data about the impressive increase in the number of women drawn into the industry or the collective farms (Buckley, 1989, p.126) seems to be displaying the fact that Stalinist politics was more concerned with achieving the 'socialism in one country' than literally solving the woman question in Central Asia.

5.3 'Socialism in One Country' and Women in Central Asia

> As for the women collective farmers themselves, they must remember the power and significance of the collective farms for women; they must remember that only in the collective farm do they have the opportunity of becoming equal with men. Without collective farms – inequality; in collective farms – equal rights. Let our comrades, the women collective farmers, remember this and let them cherish the collective farm system as the apple of their eye (Marx, 1951, p.87-88).

Stalinist era, as an era of deliberately planned economy which introduced the first five of all Five Year Plans (FYP) implemented to accomplish the giant Stalinist projection of 'socialism in one country' on the basis of the rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture, had a great impact on all Soviet women, including those in Central Asia. The great will and decisiveness of Stalinist crew to arrive at the level of planned economic expectations radically altered the lives of Soviet women, who found themselves composing even more than the half of the labor force on the one hand and highly literate on the other at the end of Stalinist era. This alteration, however, was not only a product of mass entrance into the labor force and mass education but was a product of the gender and family policies which were

[26] Buckley argues that the references to the *Zhensektory* are very rare and brief in the literature and the existing resources that discuss the women's emancipation in Soviet era pass over the political work among women in 1930s and 1940s. She adds that the crucial problems with which the Muslim women confronted in these decades were not entirely discussed and the little material on this is the indicator of the little official interest to deal with them (Buckley, 1989, pp.126-127).

delicately adjusted and readjusted in accordance with first the ideals of ‘socialism in one country’ and second the war politics. Being materialized in the provisions of 1936 and 1944 Family Codes, these policies, despite the Marxist/Bolshevist rhetoric in the background, were almost nothing to do with the Marxism based women’s emancipation policies of the 1920s. Stalinist politics, as a whole, however, positively but relatively contributed to the process of women’s emancipation in USSR mostly as a direct result of the highly developed welfare state.

Central Asian societies that have always been in the limelight of both Leninist and Stalinist politics because of their notorious impression of being highly ‘backward’, ‘primitive’, ‘feudalist’ and ‘anti-Soviet’ in the eyes of the Soviet Russians were directly influenced by the doctrine of ‘socialism in one country’. Occupying vast fertile lands which were highly appropriate for cotton and grain production, Central Asia was more subject to the policies of collectivization rather than those of industrialization within the context of planned economy. Women in Central Asia, as in the case of other regions of USSR, not only massively entered into the labor force but also have become significantly literate during the Stalinist era. Very scarce material about the impact of Stalinist gender and family policies on Central Asian women, from the other side, suggests that these policies have hardly had transformative effects on the lives of the Central Asian women since the traditionalist/conservative traits of these policies were seemed to be better fitting to the conventional lifestyles of Central Asians than the radical women’s emancipation policies of the preceding period. Stalinist leaders, however, retaining the notorious impression of Central Asia, has always remained vigilant towards the ‘reactionary’ attitudes and practices concerning women and family matters.

Five year plans, all of which were basically designed to transform the Soviet society into highly industrial and urban society targeting at incredible rise in the yearly industrial production, were implemented in conjunction with the forced collectivization of agriculture which not only pooled the labor and land to provide the large scale mechanization of agriculture and increase the agricultural production but also drew the unproductive rural labor force into the industry. Being initiated in late 1920s, both of these phenomenal Stalinist policies brought profound changes in

the socioeconomic roles of the women in USSR (Lapidus, 2003, p.218) because while the women massively participated in the industrial labor in the urban parts of USSR, in the rural regions, they extensively involved in the agricultural labor under the mass collectivization. Mass women's participation into both industrial and agrarian labor force, however, was not just a spontaneous societal response towards the needs and requirements of the planned economy but was also a direct result of deliberate state policy which strongly encouraged women to involve in the labor force (Lapidus, 2003, pp.216-219; Schrand, 1999, pp.1456-1459). Although the discourse that conversion of unproductive, unwaged women labor wasted in the domestic sphere into the productive, waged labor, which has always been regarded as the one building stone of genuine emancipation of women in Marxist thinking, was well utilized as a means of legitimating mechanism behind this deliberate Stalinist policy; significant shift of women labor from private to public sphere was closely related, according to Lapidus and Schrand[27], not with the Marxist concerns for female emancipation but with the aim of overcoming the socioeconomic crisis occurred during the implementation of the First FYP after which Party continuously issued official documents on female employment and the socialization of the everyday life (Lapidus, 2003, pp.216-219; Schrand, 1999, pp.1456-1459).

Economic mobilization of women in Stalinist era, however, either as a female emancipation policy or as a practical political concern, gave even more than the expected results: The percentage of women working in the industrial sector increased to 35.5 percent during the First FYP (Schrand, 1999, p.1463) and it reached to a level of 41.6 percent in late 1930s due to the implementation of the Second FYP (1933-1937) (Lapidus, 2003, p.220). After the SWW, which further accelerated the female entrance into the labor force due to the mass mobilization of men for the army followed by the huge loss of males in the fronts, this percentage eventually exceeded that of men, which reached to 56 percent (Lapidus, 2003, p.220-221). The situation

[27] Both scholars argue that the chronological incongruence between the inauguration of the First FYP plan (October 1928) and the mass economic mobilization of the women (March 1929) in the Stalinist era, despite being masked by the Marxist rhetoric of female emancipation, indicates that insistent efforts to encourage women to involve in the labor force were formulated as a remedy for sudden labor shortages and rapidly falling real wages that occurred during the First FYP rather than as an official policy for female emancipation. Women, in Lapidus' words, served as 'shock absorbers' in early 1930s (Lapidus, 2003, pp.213-236; Schrand, 1999, pp.1455-1478).

in the agricultural sector was not different: 52 and 80 percent of agricultural labor force were being occupied by women in 1941 and 1945 respectively throughout the USSR (Clements, 1994, p.86). These promising numbers concerning the female employment, nevertheless, didn't necessarily mean that the women were highly trained and equalized with men in the labor sector; instead, women mostly occupied the least skilled or unskilled and low waged jobs (Hoffmann, 2003, p.116; Schrand, 1999, p.1466) although women started to occupy traditionally male positions as well as more administrative roles in the labor force during the world war.

Direct consequence of the mass female participation into the labor force in USSR was, indisputably, the so-called 'double burden', which duplicated, instead of relieving, the roles and responsibilities of the women within both the public and the private spheres: Duplication of the burden on women, basically, emanated from the failure to socialize the unproductive, arduous and unpaid domestic affairs besides traditional motherhood business. In the pre-Stalinist era, actually, the Bolshevik regime, notwithstanding its extreme focus on the Marxism based women's emancipation, failed to establish day care centers, cafeterias and other types of communal services which would free women from housework and motherhood responsibilities (Schrand, 1999, p.1455). Stalinist era, however, didn't or couldn't reverse the situation significantly: The high rates of female existence in labor force, that is to say, was not accompanied by the sufficient socialization of the everyday life despite the relative expansion of the investment in the communal services. The relative expansion, however, was contributed to the industrialization rather than the female's emancipation which, therefore, it prevented these services from being "perceived as a formal right and ensured that expenditure on them would not undermine the economic benefits of simultaneously mobilizing women's productive and reproductive labor interests of rapid industrialization" (Schrand, 1999, p.1466).

Only the reason behind the 'double burden', however, was not only the lack of the indispensible means for Marxist women's emancipation, namely social services, but also the Stalinist gender and family policies which were legitimated by the new family laws put into practice in 1936 and 1944, both of which substantially revised the Family Codes of 1918 and 1926 which were accused of extremely weakening the

family. The first of Stalinist family law enacted in 1936, although it was comprised of relatively moderate provisions when compared to that of 1944 Family Edict (Lapidus, 2003, p.227), basically dealt with, four basic topics of abortion, divorce, child support and rewards for mothers: Abortion was totally abolished except for the cases which threatened the mother's life or health; to divorce was made harder conditioning the both spouses to be present at the proceedings and the increasing the divorce fees; the rates of child support, being paid by the absent parent, were extraordinarily heightened and lastly, the mothers who had seven children or more were promised to be rewarded cash money (Fitzpatrick, 1999, pp.152-156; Hoffmann, 2003, pp.101, 104-105). The latter and the post-war Stalinist family law of 1944, however, bearing more conservative, illiberal even puritanical traits than the former one[28], introduced further limitations on divorce like two-staged proceedings and higher divorce fees; abolished the official recognition of the unregistered marriages which, for the first time in post-revolutionary era, resulted in the official discrimination of children as legitimate and illegitimate; additional protection and security was offered to mothers by means of honorary titles and higher material incentives to support them in troublesome post-war era (Lane, 1970, pp.348-349; Lapidus, 2003, p.232). From the revolution in 1917 to the 1944, the legal status of the Soviet family, therefore, has rotated by the official regulations from being weakened to being strengthened (Lane, 1970, p.349).

Radically diverging from the pre-Stalinist rhetoric of women's emancipation, the novel approach to the 'already-solved' women question on the basis of legislative actions reformulated the ideal family of a socialist society. This new formulation, in spite of still rejecting the bourgeois nuclear familial structure, praised the socialist family as a reproductive and socializing institution. Family, under Stalinist policies, have no longer been referred as an institution of capitalist society that would eternally wither away under socialism; instead, it has been celebrated as the microcosm of the new socialist society and supposed to become stronger and stronger, just like the state itself, as genuine socialism approaches (Lapidus, 2003,

[28] Lane argues that despite the official attempts to strengthen the family in 1936, main provisions of the 1926 code were kept intact until 1944 Family Law which firmly stabilized the position of the family (Lane, 1970, pp.342-381).

p.227), it was regarded as a socialist organization, as an obligation to the society and the state instead of a kind of interpersonal commitment (Hoffmann, 2003, pp.106-107). It was referred as a mean to increase the birthrate[29] and he adds that it would also serve as an instrument of the socialist Soviet state which would "instill Soviet values discipline in children" (Hoffmann, 2003, p.106). Motherhood, therefore, in Stalinist era, ceased to be a communal issue and became a sublime obligation of the Soviet women. Even housework, which was strictly denounced both before and after the revolution, was celebrated being referred as socially useful labor (Lapidus, 2003, p.229). Stalinist state, however, "assigned double societal roles to women both as workers and mothers", while glorifying motherhood and having more children, also encouraged women to work during the pregnancy and to continue working after the childbirth (Hoffmann, 2003, p.112). This policy shift, during the SWW, further intensified the difference between the femininity and masculinity (Hoffmann, 2003, p.113; Lapidus, 2003, p.231) since, as in the case of Civil War era, it was emphasized that the women should raise the next generation of soldiers rather than fighting at the front the (Hoffmann, 2003, p.113). After the war, likewise, the marital stability and motherhood were assigned further higher priority in order to replenish the mass population losses (Lapidus, 2003, p.232). Abolition of coeducation of the girls and boys as well as the sexual segregation of the labor camps' prisoners in 1943 and 1944 respectively was another display of how Stalinism produced and promoted the gendered norms, values and practices (Lapidus, 2003, p.231).

These two laws were, in spite of being widely regarded as a legislative retreat[30] when compared to the preceding revolutionary legislation concerning women's emancipation, not only symbolizing Stalinist standpoint on the issue which had already declared the end of women question liquidating the *Zhenotdel*, but also the basic means which were pragmatically utilized first to achieve the 'socialism in one

[29] Lapidus states that the birthrate in USSR rapidly declined due to the reluctance of working women to have more children and frequent enjoyment of the right to abort mostly because of the insufficient communal services. Lane, giving the statistical information concerning birth rates, denotes that the birthrate in USSR has fallen from 47 percent in 1913 to 25,3 percent in 1958 (Lane, 1970, pp.342-381; Lapidus, 2003, pp.213-236)

[30] Hoffmann doesn't regard the 1936 Family Law as a legislative retreat; he rather argues that Stalinist family policies display strong resemblance to those of European countries that pursued pro-natalist, pro-family policies due to state population concerns in the interwar years (Hoffmann, 2003, pp.88-117).

country' in the inter-war period and second to ameliorate the societal traumas of the post-war period. The basic Stalinist motivation behind pursuing this pro-natalist, pro-family policy was, therefore, may well be regarded as the political and economic priorities of Stalin rather than emancipation of women. Stalinism, being extreme and socialist form of European welfare state (Kotkin, 2003, p.108), however, supplied more economic, political, educational opportunities as well as communal services especially in early 1930s and in wartime for women (Lapidus, 2003, pp.225-231). Stalinist politics concerning women, in this sense, carried highly progressive and reformist traits as well as traditional, conservative and illiberal ones.

Central Asia, on the other hand, continuing to be a space of special interest in the Stalinist era, was directly and deeply influenced by the policies of 'socialism in one country'. After 1928, Central Asia, as the other regions of the USSR, went into a phase of rapid industrialization and collectivization process. Industrialization in Central Asia, despite remaining mostly limited to the southern areas of the region[31], particularly to the Uzbek and Tajik populated areas, proceeded rapidly after 1928 (Matley, 1994, p.309). Although industrial growth rates in Central Asia have generally been lower than those in USSR (Khan and Ghai, 1979, p.13), first of all, the light industry of processing cotton and silk and then the industry of irrigation, railway, transport and waterway and industry of oil, coal and hydro-electric power (especially after the SWW) were developed in Stalinist era (Caroe, 1967, p.192).

The pace of industrialization, as in the other regions of USSR, facilitated the incorporation of Central Asian women into the labor force (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.79). Especially during and after the SWW, which has brought dramatic changes in the Central Asian industry, the role of women in the economy increased rapidly; between 1940 and 1970 the proportion of women in the industrial work force rose to 42 from 21 percent in Uzbek SSR, to 39 from 29 percent in Tajik SSR, to 40 from 36 percent in Turkmen SSR and to 48 from 29 percent in Kyrgyz SSR (Ubaidullaeva, 1982-1997, p.148). This remarkable rise after 1939 didn't only stem from the

[31] Matley also states that the industry among the pastoral Kazak, Kyrgyz and Turkmen people, who have never become permanently settled, didn't develop other than the rudimentary handicrafts industry together with the carpet and rug manufacturing which were the most advanced branches of their activities (Matley, 1994, p.309).

industrial growth after the war; instead, as in the case of other regions of USSR, women together with children and elderly people filled the gap in the labor force occurred due to the men's participation in the army and mass loss in the war (Fierman, 1991, p.19). Women, therefore, during and after the war period, incorporated into the traditionally male dominated sectors of the economy like heavy industry, mining and construction to undertake skilled or semi-skilled jobs in Central Asia (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.79).

The number of the native Central Asian women in labor force, however, has always been lower than that of USSR as a whole (Khan and Ghai, 1979, p.10; Ubaidullaeva, 1982-1997, p.148). Ubaidullaeva relates these lower rates with the heavy work load on native women in large families and underdevelopment of social services (Ubaidullaeva, 1982-1997, pp.148-149). Division of labor in the industrial sector, despite mass women participation, didn't challenge radically. Even in 1970s, almost half of the women in Uzbek SSR were still dealing with the non-mechanized manual labor and whereas 12 percent of them were employed in arduous manual jobs (Ubaidullaeva, 1982-1997, pp.152-153). Moreover, there have always been disparities in skill levels between the indigenous and non-indigenous women in Central Asia: Despite the impressive educational and training facilities supplied to native women, Slavic women tended to dominate the higher-skilled positions in industry whereas the native ones occupied the lowest skilled, manual jobs (Lubin, 1981, p.185). Sacks even argues that there was an interrelated sex and ethnic hierarchy as "males before females and Russians before indigenous ethnic groups" and in this sense indigenous women were the most disadvantageous due to large families, low levels of education, less work experience and submissive position in the society (Sacks, 1988, pp.89-90).

Collectivization policies, on the other hand, were implemented throughout the region without discriminating the region as agriculturally available or not. In the regions of Central Asia where predominantly nomadic Kazakhs, and to a lesser extent, Turkmens and Kyrgyzs had been living, collectivization took a shape of forced settlement of nomadic people and the integration of animal husbandry with land cultivation (Wheeler, 1964, p.130) whereas in the other parts of the region it was

more oriented to increase the cotton and cereal production. Despite the strong resistance especially among the nomadic population against the collectivization and the short-term failure in meeting the expected rate of the agricultural production, from 1928 to 1940, according to the records supplied by Khan and Ghai, total percentage of the rural households in the collective agriculture in Central Asia reached to a level of slightly less than 100 percent (Khan and Ghai, 1986, p.39).

Collectivization, which literally refers to a type of agricultural production, was implemented by the confiscation of the land, forced mobilization of the labor force and the *dekulakization* of the society throughout the USSR. Although, forced collectivization was officially initiated in Central Asia in 1928, initial steps of the collectivization have already been taken in the name of land and water reform just after revolution. By the Decree on the Socialization of Land enacted in 1918, right to use land was granted to all Soviet people regardless of sex, creed, nationality or citizenship (Wood, 1997, p.51). Land Code of 1922, however, introduced more detailed provisions concerning land use. Land and water reform in Central Asia, which was 'the most Marxist attempt that was made to translate Soviet power into Central Asia' according to Northrop, (Northrop, 2004, p.75) principally aimed at withdrawing the land from the landowners and to reallocate them to landless people.

Land and water reform, in spite of not being women's emancipation oriented, definitely granted Central Asian women right to have land. In fact, before the Soviet Russians, women had the right to own land according the archives of Islamic courts but this land was immediately got hold of by the male relatives or widow woman could have had land from the inheritance of her husband only if she had old-enough sons for farming (Kamp, 2006, p.112). As a result of, especially, the second phase of the reform, therefore, economic conditions of the women improved to a certain degree, especially those of widows who appealed to the courts for land rights (Massell, 1974, p.210). Differing from the land reform in RFSSR which granted equal portions of land to both peasant wives and husbands who were working in the communal farms, in Central Asia, where was no communal farm in that time, 'Soviet law declared that household heads owned land, and so women only had a right to newly divided properties if, as widows and divorcees, they were household heads

and if they could work the land themselves' (Kamp, 2006, pp.112-113). Although some leading women activists expressed their opinions in behalf of distributing land and water rights not to households but to individuals and especially to the weakest and disadvantaged women in the society like divorcees, orphans, widows, Bolsheviks, caring much more for attracting the poor and disadvantaged males than females (Massell, 1974, pp.162-163), therefore aimed not to improve the material wealth and sustain the equality but to initiate a class struggle between the landless poor and the large land owners in order to 'break village patronage relationships' (Kamp, 2006, pp.113, 191-192). Land and water reform, as it didn't bother to emancipate the Central Asian women, didn't also challenge the give and take relations between the landless poor peasants and rich landowning tribal leaders, local chieftains or any other rich people. Since the "water and land right were claimed by clans or tribes rather than by individuals, attempts to transfer the ownership tended to arouse the wrath of entire communities, and hence blurred rather than sharpened potential class distinctions" and moreover, the peasants and nomads, after the redistribution of the land, mostly restored their new property to the old owners since the subjection and loyalty of the peasant or nomad to tribal leaders and local chieftains was not simply a matter of material wealth but rather a matter of very strong feudal-patriarchal structure in Central Asia (Massell, 1974, pp.70, 72). Eventually the number of women who had property rights in land didn't display a sharp increase; instead, there occurred no remarkable difference in the number of the land owning women before and after the reform (Kamp, 2006, p.113). Although the ownership of private property was strictly denounced by Marxism as the material basis of class inequality, the strong correlation between the private property and the power relations pushed Bolsheviks to revolutionize the property relations in Central Asia before definitely putting the collectivization policies into effect. The reform process, despite its trivial success, however, gradually served for breaking the ties, feudal relationships in other words, between the rich and the poor peasants and together with the *Khudjum* campaign established the required basis for the radical collectivization (Kamp, 2006, p.192).

Signalizing the end of NEP era, collectivization, however, was radically different from that of land and water reform in nature, scope and content since the command

economy considerably limited the power and autonomy of the multiple authorities within the society as well as the degree of private property including the land. Although the collectivization policies were not implemented in uniformly throughout the USSR, generally speaking the land was declared to be the property of the all people and all means of production like draught animals, agricultural equipment, seed reserve, forage and buildings except for some personnel dwellings, cattle and poultry were forced to be pooled into the collective ownership (Khan & Ghai, 1979, p.40). The private ownership of goods, therefore, was substantially terminated without any gender discrimination.

Putting aside the highly devastating, traumatic and dreadful –especially short term– consequences of the collectivization in Central Asia, which was characterized by the phenomenal decreases in the agricultural production rates and the livestock population, widespread peasant rebellions, population deficit due to famine, deportation of wealthy, landowning peasants –namely *kulaks*–, harsh oppression of the rebellions, the major impact of the collectivization on the Central Asian women was, certainly mass participation into the agricultural labor force. Although, as mentioned earlier, within the context of *Khudjum* policies and *Zhenotdel*/*Zhensektor* activities Central Asian women were encouraged to be economically mobilized, mostly as a result of forced collectivization women were massively entered in the labor force. Although there is no exact statistical data on the number of women in agricultural work force in Stalinist Central Asia[32], Kamp for example states that women employment rapidly rose after 1930s in Uzbek SSR; following the collectivization most women were enrolled as the members of the collective farms, they became the full-time laborers and even by late 1950s they outnumbered the men in the labor force of the collective farms (Kamp, 2006, p.223). She further denotes that the number of rural women in labor force was much higher than that of urban women in 1939 (Kamp, 2006, p.223). Khan and Ghai, likewise, argue, without referring to a year or a specific period, that female participation in collective farms

[32] Despite the lack of statistics concerning female contribution to agricultural labor force in Stalinist Central Asia, in the post-Stalinist era, women accounted for 49 percent in Uzbek SSR, 44 percent in Tajik SSR, 49 percent in Turkmen SSR, 42 percent of Kyrgyz SSR of the total number of workers (Ubaidullaeva, 1982, p.150).

was very high which reached to a level of 48 percent of all labor force in these farms (Khan and Ghai, 1979, p.91).

Mass female participation into the agricultural labor force, however, was strongly backed by the official Stalinist discourse that the full equality between the sexes would only be sustained by the collectivization. Overwhelmingly benefiting from the Marxist proposal for women's emancipation which conceptualizes the economic independence of women as the basic condition for the independence from the oppression of the men and genuine emancipation, Stalinist regime, encapsulating the official formula that 'without collective farms – inequality', declared that only the state farms could terminate the inequality and provide women stand on their own feet (Buckley, 1989, p.118). The best option to end the female subordination and oppression, therefore, was formulated as incorporating women into the collective farms, to utilize their labor and to exhort them to improve their abilities and to use the machinery as much as possible (Buckley, 1989, p.118). Stalin, pointing out the dissimilarity between the petty capitalist agriculture and the system of collective farm, acclaimed this system as matter of honor which would have eliminated the gender inequality and liberated the women from the subordination to the fathers and husbands (Hoffmann, 2003, pp.115-116).

Despite the notable success of Stalinist policies in pulling women into the agricultural sector, whether or not women achieved the full equality or freed themselves from the oppression of men was highly debatable. Gendered bias of Stalin towards the women's agricultural labor which was attributed a lower status than the industrial or white-collar labor, in itself, was sufficiently indicative how gender equality was perceived by the Soviet leaders (Hoffmann, 2003, p.116). Gendered division of labor in the working environment of the collective farms, Corcoran-Nantes states, was harnessed rather than being challenged (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.79). Although the Central Asian women were urged to attend the schools and job training programs and encouraged to move more skilled jobs like tractor drivers, farm managers, Stalinist regime substantially failed in, despite its relative success in early 1930s, transforming the conventional gender relations in agriculture and men dominated the jobs of tractor driving and farm managing

(Clements, 1994, pp.70-71). Dunn states that during the SWW while the number of women administrators in collective farms was more than 30 percent, in Central Asia this number was relatively low and most of the administrators were men in the region (Dunn, 1978, p.174). In the collective farms, majority of women continued to deal with the grueling manual jobs like tending the livestock, gleaning and gathering the crops (Clements, 1994, p.71). Although Russian scholar Serebrennikov argues that many women have become tractor drivers, occupied administrative posts, gained special agricultural skills in collective and state farms even in 1930s throughout the USSR (Serebrennikov, 1937, pp.87-116), Lubin, citing the percentage of women in the mechanized agricultural work force as 2,4 and in the manual workers as 98,9 in early 1970s, displays how the division of labor in agriculture remained gendered in Central Asia even two decades after the Stalinist era (Lubin, 1981, p.184). The shift of women labor from the agricultural to the nonagricultural sectors of the economy in Central Asia, from the other side, was very limited due to the lack of specialized knowledge and industrial work habits and women those could have shifted were mostly employed as the apprentices or at the subsidiary jobs (Ubaidullaeva, 1982, p.151). According to the statistics supplied by Khan and Ghai, average annual earning of male worker were higher than that of females in the collective farms of Central Asia in 1970s and they argue that the difference was much more greater than the recorded data (Khan and Ghai, 1979, pp.98-101).

Despite the mass women participation in both industrial and agricultural labor force in Stalinist Central Asia, division of labor, wage ratings and skill level in the working environment continued to display highly gendered features. While working conditions had some gendered traits, in the private sphere, the burden of unpaid, unproductive and arduous household affairs besides the roles and responsibilities of motherhood continued to be regarded as female works. Stalinist Central Asia was no exception concerning the ‘double burden’; instead, the situation of native women highly resembled to that of Russian women (Northrop, 2004, p.348). The large size of families and many children within the family as well as the strong patriarchal structures within the society have further increased the burden on women. The quantity of social services and kindergartens was another reason of the double burden; the situation in Central Asia, however, was worse than that in the Soviet

Union as a whole since, according to the statistics supplied by Ubaidullaeva, Soviet Union doubled Central Asia concerning the amount of the social services even in 1970s (Ubaidullaeva, 1982, p.149). Pre-school facilities, which were more broadly provided in urban than in rural Central Asia, were unable to cater for all eligible children in the region (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, pp.69-70). When the high birthrate in the region is concerned, the impact of inadequate social services and kindergartens on working or able-bodied women for work further doubled the problem. Economic independence, in this sense, didn't bring about *ipso facto* emancipation to women in either Soviet Union or Central Asia; contrary to the Marxist proposal, mass women existence in the labor force has brought new gendered issues, norms and practices both in public and private spheres.

The collectivization of agriculture, from the other side, was largely accompanied by the systematizing the primary education and the introduction of Soviet education (Kamp, 2006, pp.222-223). In 1928, a law was enacted by the Soviet state for the compulsory education of Muslim women (Asthana, 1992, p.55). Educational facilities in Stalinist era, however, were not only expanded for women but also for men both in urban and rural regions of Central Asia as well as throughout the Soviet Union (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.65; Kamp, 2006, p.222). After the introduction of compulsory primary education for children in 1930, coexistence of the secular Soviet education and the Muslim education was almost totally eliminated and the principle of the coeducation of boys and girls was universally put into practice (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, p.66; Wheeler, 1964, pp.205-206). As a result of the establishment of highly developed compulsory education system[33] and the launch of mass campaigns against the adult illiteracy, high rates of literacy were sustained in Central Asia in the long run (Rywkin, 1990, p.103). The very low rates of literacy among the females recorded in 1926[34] were raised to about 75 percent in 1939 whereas they were

[33] During this intense education campaign, the alphabet in Central Asia was changed twice: Initially the Arabic alphabet being in use since 1922 was converted into the Latin alphabet in 1926 and then into the Cyrillic alphabet in 1935. However the implantation of Latin alphabet was not completed up to 1935 and although the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet was initiated in 1935 no serious progress was achieved until 1939 (Rywkin, 1990, p.92).

[34] In 1926, literacy rates among the urban Kazakh and Kyrgyz women were relatively higher than the those of urban Uzbek and Turkmen women, which were around the 10 percent and 5 percent respectively whereas the literacy rates of urban Tajik women was far below the other four

slightly less than hundred percent in 1959 in all Central Asian SSRs (Kozlov, 1988, p.160). Besides the primary and secondary schools, technical and specialist schools as well as the tertiary institutions and universities were established and towards the 1940s first generation of females who graduated from these higher education institutions started to appear (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, pp.66). Education, as an indispensible component of planned socialist state, served like a placenta to prepare all Soviet citizens for the distinctive sectors of the labor force as well as to invoke the state ideology, socialist thinking and principles (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, pp.66-68). Although the mass education policy of Soviet state was widely denounced as not taking the needs of people into consideration and purely regarded as a part of economic and political concerns of Soviets, it nevertheless significantly contributed to the general welfare of the society in Central Asia and in USSR as a whole (Wheeler, 1964, p.204). Concerning Central Asian women, universal education under socialism directly contributed to the emancipation process since, lessening the density of women's seclusion, it not only provided them public presence but also to become more and more qualified in the field of employment (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005, pp.64-65). Other than the educational establishments, however, some other state services were supplied to Central Asian people. Coates denotes that especially after the shift in economic policy from NEP to planned economy, libraries, theatres, cinemas, health care centers, nurseries, hospitals, dwelling houses etc. were built in five Central Asian Socialist Republics[35] without referring in what degree women benefited from these services (Coates, 1969).

Concerning the impact of Stalinist pro-natal and pro-family gender policies that were materialized mostly in the 1936 and 1944 Family Codes, despite not being widely studied by the scholars, very limited resources and some statistical data belonging to the Stalinist Central Asia suggest that these codes didn't bring radical change to the lives of Central Asians. The first code, as mentioned earlier, was formulated basically to increase the birth rate and to strengthen the institution of family. In

nationalities. In the rural regions, however, the literacy rates were even less than one percent for all five nationalities (Kozlov, 1988, p.163).

[35] Throughout the book, the writers give specific information and statistical data concerning the economic and sociocultural development in Soviet Central Asia (Coates, 1969).

Central Asia, however, in spite of the relative increase in the rates of divorce in 1920s, it is hardly possible to mention about a problem of weak family because, contrary to the situation in RSFSR, high birth rates and large family sizes mostly persisted in the region. Average birthrates, which were not so reliable due to the bad-organized registration systems (Kozlov, 1988, p.112), proceeded around the 35 per thousand from 1940 to 1980s in Central Asia (Ata-Mirzayev and Kayumov, 1992, p.215; Khan and Ghai, 1979, p.9; Kozlov, 1988, p.123) whereas the birthrates fell, plus or minus, from 30 to 15 per thousand in RSFSR and some other European regions of USSR (Kozlov, 1988, p.123). Family size in Central Asian nationalities[36], likewise, was very high when compared to that of ethnic Russians (Lane, 1970, pp.356-357; Lubin, 1981, p.188; Feshbach, 1984, pp.71, 87) as well as the fertility rates and the number of the children per family (Rowland, 1992, pp.225-227). Lane denotes that in Central Asia family was organized on the consanguine basis and in early 1930s there were families consisted of 50 people among the Tajiks and in 1940s in Turkestan region there were still large family units (Lane, 1970, p.343). Kamp states that most women in Central Asia benefited from the rewards, under the provisions of 1936 Family Code, for raising and bearing children (Kamp, 2006, p.227). Moreover, although there is no exact data that in what degree the women in Central Asia enjoyed the right to abort which had long been legalized in USSR, large families with many children simply indicate that the abortion, most probably due to denouncing abortion to be incompatible with Islamic belief, was not welcomed in Central Asia. Post-war Family Code, on the other hand, which mainly hampered the right to divorce, definitely influenced the lives of native women. Despite the legislative retrieval of Bolsheviks in late 1920s concerning divorce, many women in Central Asia enjoyed this right more than ever after the entitlement of the right. After the inauguration of 1944 Code, however, there occurred a sharp decrease in divorce rates. Lane, leaning on inadequate material on the issue, the number of divorce cases in Uzbek SSR fell from 9.617 in 1939 to 653 in 1946 and rises only to 780 in 1953; in the Samarkand region, however, the numbers were more striking since the divorce cases were scored only 52 and 20 in 1946 and 69 and 8 in 1953 in the urban and rural

[36] According to the statistics supplied by Feshbach, the average family size in Central Asian SSRs was more than 4, which was close to 5 in rural areas whereas in USSR it was below 4 both in urban and rural regions as a whole in late 1950s (Feshbach, 1984, pp.63-94).

areas of Samarkand respectively (Lane, 1970, pp.366-367). Women in Central Asia, who according to Clements, suffered from the war less than those in the western parts of USSR (Clements, 1994, p.87), were adversely affected by the 1944 Family Code, notwithstanding the fact that divorce rates[37] in Central Asia had always been lower than those in USSR as a whole (Ata-Mirzayev & Kayumov, 1992, p.216). When Olcott's argument that the most common reason for divorce in Central Asia was infertility (Olcott, 1991, p.244) is concerned, from the other side, decreasing divorce rates may well be interpreted by the men's avoidance from divorcing not to pay high fees. Symbolizing the highly traditional and conservative nature of Stalinist policies concerning women, pro-natalist, pro-family Family Codes, in short, hardly transformed the existing demographic trends in pre-Stalinist Central Asia characterized by high birth and fertility rates, large family size, low divorce rates since Central Asian societies could have preserved their traditional, religious and patriarchal *modus vivendi* even after the Stalinist period.

Stalinist gender and family policies, argues Hoffmann, despite being highly traditionalist and conservative in nature, were, actually, not implying a return to patriarchal family of the Russian peasants; instead the Stalinist legislation was basically formulated on the basis of strengthening the institution of the marriage and child support as well as promoting motherhood besides paternal responsibility (Hoffmann, 2003, p.109). Soviet family, therefore, didn't simply conform to the traditionalist family and this has become more apparent towards the national minorities within the Soviet Union (Hoffmann, 2003, p.109).

In Central Asia, as mentioned earlier, the *Khudjum* policies together with the preceding revolutionary legislation and intense *Zhenotdel* activities were not easily, fully adopted by the Central Asian people; on the contrary, in some segments of the society they were strictly denied and therefore not only the *Zhenotdel* efforts and unveiling campaign were not responded in an affirmative manner but also the legal regulations were widely violated in both Leninist and Stalinist eras. Northrop states

[37] Although there is no exact data on divorce rates belonging to Stalinist Central Asia, in late 1950s, divorce rate for per thousand married couples was recorded 1,4 in Uzbek and Kyrgyz SSR, 1.5 in Tajik SSR and 2,2 in Turkmen SSR whereas this rate was 5,3 in USSR as a whole (Ata-Mirzayev and Kayumov, 1992, pp.212-221).

that the cases of committing to the so-called crimes of custom, namely brideprice, polygamy and forced, underage, unregistered or child marriage, didn't display a sharp decrease during the 1930s and 1940s (Northrop, 2004, pp.272, 335). Lawless attitudes of Central Asians, however, didn't simply emerge out of the courage taken from the traditionalist and conservative nature of Stalinist gender and family policies. Denouncing strongly patriarchal peasant family, Soviet authorities in Stalinist era, increased the prosecution of the Central Asians who violated the laws and committed to the crimes of custom in Uzbek SSR (Hoffmann, 2003, p.109).

Stalinist projection of 'socialism in one country' which combined with the war politics hence late 1930s, shortly, brought out profound changes in the lives of women not only in Central Asia but also throughout the Soviet Union. Stalinist policies concerning women, all of which didn't directly aim at sustaining genuine women emancipation on the basis Marxist thinking but pragmatically adjusted in accordance with the realizing broader ideological goals, nevertheless both contributed to and adversely affected the process of women emancipation first pulling them massively into the labor force, supplying more education facilities and some other welfare state services and second duplicating the burden on women besides consolidating the conventional gender roles within the society. Almost quarter age long Stalinist era also fell short to radically transform the political, economic and sociocultural status of women in Central Asia not only because of, this time, ossified, ingrained norms and practices legitimated by Islam and custom but also due to highly conservative and illiberal Stalinist standpoint on the issue of women emancipation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this study, we mainly dealt with the issue of women's emancipation in Stalinist Central Asia striving for not to find out if the emancipation of Central Asian women were achieved but to ascertain whether the process of women's emancipation complied with the conceptualization of the issue in Marxist ideology. On the purpose of formulating a statement for this problematic, we discussed first how Marx, Engels and Lenin commentate on the emancipation of women, second, the existing political, economic and sociocultural structures and dynamics as well as the gender relations and women's status in Central Asia and third the scope and the content of the policies of women's emancipation in the pre-Stalinist Central Asia before going into the details of the Stalinist standpoint on the issue. All these chapters when combined with each other suggest that the policies of Stalin concerning women were neither purely Marxist nor completely emancipation-oriented but rather a part of accomplishing the targeted ends of 'socialism in one country' doctrine which combined with the war politics in late 1930s. Stalinist policies, however, produced some both Marxist and emancipatory consequences at the end of the twenty five years long 'one-man rule' period.

To convert the Marxist proposals on the emancipation of women into concrete policies in any society is, actually, excessively formidable task not only because of the incoherent and ambiguous Marxist approach to the issue but also because of the highly abstract conceptualization of it. Associating the women's emancipation directly with the transition from capitalist to socialist mode of production without thoroughly theorizing how to realize it after the establishment of socialism other than referring to socializing the so-called household and motherhood affairs, Marx, Engels and even Lenin, engage in the women's oppression in the capitalist societies rather than the women's emancipation in the socialist ones. Well-known Marxist statement, that is, 'withering away of the family' under socialism, further intensifies the ambiguity since, putting aside the inconsistent bourgeois and proletarian family

conceptualizations, the issue of what would replace the family, which is regarded as the nucleus of the capitalist societies, in socialism is totally left undefined and undetermined even in theory and, therefore, it is completely inapplicable in real life. Incarceration of the women's emancipation within the high and impassable walls of the classical Marxism, additionally, prevents this ideology from grasping the essence of gender inequality in a given society which is hidden in the gender relations rather than the class relations.

If this society is a society, which is quite unfamiliar with the capitalism, the conversion of Marxist approach to women's emancipation from abstractness into concreteness becomes further complicated. Central Asia, in the early 20th century, being economically backward and pre-capitalist, was being occupied by one such kind of societies whose economic activities, since they were mostly engaging in the nomadic pastoralism and sedentary pursuits, have better fallen within the Engels' barbarism even savagery epochs that both precede the civilization age. Contrary to what Engels argues, however, Central Asians were not in a transition period from matriarchy to patriarchy; instead, they were, by and large, patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal societies although they were still organizing around the self-sufficient communities on the basis of kinship lines like villages, clans, clan confederations or tribes. Despite the existence of conflicts and fragilities due to the primordial power relations among the states, clans or tribes besides historic dualities of rural-urban, nomadic-settled, native-foreigner, Muslim-non-Muslim, modern-traditional, tribal-nontribal in the region, under the cultural unifiers of Islam and custom, Central Asians, generally speaking, had long-lasting *modus vivendi* characterized by ingrained, ossified norms, values and practices which were highly gendered. Women in Central Asia, in this sense, being a heterogeneous mass of women whose rights, roles and societal status have broadly varied depending on the religious devotion, economic wealth, being settled or nomadic, were nevertheless subject to these gendered norms, values and practices.

Soviet Russians, when arrived at the Central Asia, had to not only consolidate their regime in such a peculiar region but also, bypassing the stage of capitalism, establish the socialism, which was almost totally unknown in the region. Central Asian

women, who were immediately regarded as the most backward and oppressed elements of the society by the Soviet Russians who, without doubt, approached them with a certain degree of ethnocentrism, have become the one constitutive part of this intertwined dual task in the absence of oppressed classes. When the regime consolidation and direct establishment of socialism concerns of the initial post-revolutionary period were replaced by great economic concerns after Stalin's irreversible rise to power in late 1920s, women continued to be essential figures of the Soviet interests in the region. The issue of women's emancipation, therefore, has never been simply gender equalization on the basis of Marxist ideology; this, however, didn't necessarily mean that the Leninist and Stalinist politics only pragmatically benefited from the issue, instead the Central Asian women's emancipation was broadly regarded as a prerequisite for Soviet existence in the region.

In the first ten year period after revolution, Bolsheviks, in the name of emancipating women, initiated intense legislative action to sustain the gender equality before law on the one hand and sent *Zhenotdel* activists to the field, even to the most remote areas of the region, not only to back the implementation of newly enacted Soviet legislation up but also to put the theory of creating active and productive 'Soviet' woman into practice on the other.

Marxist ideology, without doubt, guided the Bolsheviks, especially the women communists who embarked on the emancipation of women with a great revolutionary zeal, enthusiasm and dynamism, in content and methodology in these initial years. Equalization before law as well as political, economic and social mobilization of women was *sine qua non* for the Marxism based Bolshevik regime because Marxist ideology, under the socialist mode of production, offered genuine human emancipation which, at least theoretically, could not tolerate any gender discrimination. Legislation power, in this sense, was processed to grant the political and civil rights to all 'Soviet' women including Central Asians. Mobilization of women in all spheres of life, according to Marxism, especially the economic liberalization together with the political recruitment and the mass education, was as important and indispensable as the legislation. Mobilization policies carried out by

Zhenotdel and its social units provided Bolsheviks to establish close contact with native women who in this way extensively benefited from working and education facilities. The basic problematic concerning revolutionary legislation and mobilization policies, from the Marxist point of view, was the absence of the demand from the below. Party/state enacted the laws and implemented the policies not because of the pressure of the women masses but because of the eventual aim of promoting its goals and reinforcing its regime.

Marxism, on its own however, falls short to explain the nature and scope of women emancipation policies in pre-Stalinist Central Asia. Both Soviet interpretation of Marxism and Soviet goals and priorities were as deterministic as Marxism itself in the course and direction of these policies. Since the gap emerged out of the lack of oppressing classes under capitalism was filled by the existence of oppressing men under Islam and custom, being regarded as the equivalent of the capitalism on a different level, Islam and custom were targeted at within the context of women emancipation. The abolishment of *shariat* and *adat* laws and courts was intended not only to secularize and standardize the judicial system but also to weaken the power of the religious, tribal and clan authorities. Bolshevik policy on divorce, likewise, was more than granting the right; it was also an instrument to break the traditional kinship system. Introduction of crimes of custom was a direct action against the ossified and ingrained norms and practices legitimated by Islam and custom as well as it was the complementary element of gender equalization before law. Female mobilization policies *per se* were highly disruptive to existing order since allocating space for women in political, economic and socio-cultural spheres was an effective and rational methodology to subvert the religious and traditional solidarities and hierarchies within the clan, tribe or kinship based communities.

The Bolshevik proposition that Central Asian women were oppressed by men under the Islam and custom, however, was highly problematic from the Marxist point of view. Because oppression by men simply offers that women's emancipation is closely bounded up with being disposed of men's rule, dominance or superiority. It betokens, in other words, for true emancipation, the indispensability of challenging the gender relations which has always been a tangential issue to the classical Marxist

theory. Bolsheviks, being restless of Islam and custom rather than the gender relations, directed at both in the name of women's emancipation. When the success of these policies in the first ten-year post-revolutionary period is concerned, widespread violations of revolutionary legislation and the difficulty in drawing large segments of women into economy, politics and social life despite the *bona fide* efforts of *Zhenotdel* activists suggest that the Bolsheviks could have hardly achieved both the Marxist emancipation of women and the assault on Islam and custom based 'Bolshevik' women's emancipation. In the pre-Stalinist Central Asia, therefore, Bolsheviks didn't and couldn't challenge patriarchal gender relations deeply, radically and irreversibly although this doesn't simply means that the Bolsheviks failed because not only they favored women over men in their policies but also just a decade was too short to yield the expected crops.

The forthcoming twenty five years long Stalinist era which arrived at Central Asia under the shadow of *Khudjum* policies was relatively long to obtain the visible and measureable results concerning the women's emancipation. The policies of women's emancipation, however, were depleted in content, scope and density in the forthcoming quarter-age since it was not among the preeminent issues in Stalin's agenda. Instead, due to first the discourse that 'women question was solved', second Stalin's macro projection of 'socialism in one country' which brought the mass industrialization and collectivization policies and third the troublesome SWW, policies of women's emancipation were silenced and remained on the secondary level despite the high tension of early Stalinist era that emerged out of mass unveiling campaign.

Boundaries of women's emancipation in Stalinist Central Asia were demarcated by the transient mass unveiling campaign launched in 1927, conversion of *Zhenotdel* into *Zhensektor* in 1930 and the impact of 'socialism in one country' on women throughout the Stalinist era. With the relative exception of assault on veil in 1920s which was directly formulated on the basis of women's emancipation in Central Asia, the issue of emancipation was totally subordinated to the Stalinist version of 'building socialism' throughout the Soviet Union, which not only alleged that the

woman question was solved but also targeted at creating ‘new woman’ that would have served for *raison d’état*.

Stalinist policies concerning women, therefore, displayed strong discontinuity with the ones pursued in the first ten-year post-revolutionary period in Soviet Union as a whole. Because not only the policies of women’s emancipation were depleted and silenced due to the complete abandonment of gender equalizing legislation process and the ultimate liquidation of *Zhenotdel* in 1930 but also Stalinist understanding of women’s emancipation ceased to be even inspiring from the Marxist ideology despite pragmatically benefiting from some of its conceptualizations.

Marxism, actually, was not the sole guide of the Bolsheviks before Stalin since they also interpreted Marxist ideology in the policies of women’s emancipation in accordance with the Soviet goals and priorities in Central Asia. But in pre-Stalinist era, Soviet leaders definitely regarded Marxism during revolutionary legislation process and the political, economic and sociocultural mobilization of women by *Zhenotdel* activists. Stalinism, despite still being subject to pending debates in the literature in terms of either being Marxist and/or non-Marxist, in the sphere of women’s emancipation, hardly leaned on Marxist thinking although in the long run it produced some Marxist consequences.

Khudjum policies that may be regarded as the extension of the high momentous women emancipation policies of pre-Stalinist era, first of all, were highly debatable in terms of its Marxist roots. The campaign against veil, although it was initiated promising to terminate women’s seclusion in every sphere of life and therefore to ensure the genuine emancipation of women, putting aside its tragic repercussions, turned into another systematic assault on Islam and custom as a result of which the power and authority of all ‘anti-Soviet’ elements within the society were significantly weakened. Moreover, the campaign, not only encouraging women to work in the collective farms but also quickening the elimination of wealthier peasants, was also utilized as a proper mean to expedite the implementation of the forced collectivization of agriculture policies. *Khudjum*, in this sense, served for the realization of Stalinist plans in Central Asia rather than the emancipation of women. More importantly, *Khudjum* was a coercive strategy; the act of unveiling, that is to

say, was not left to development of self-consciousness, self-liberation or self-awareness all of which should have been promoted on the basis of the Marxist thinking, instead, indigenous women were abruptly forced to abandon their veils which was the most visible symbol of not only Islamic faith and belief but also the patriarchal power on women.

The liquidation of *Zhenotdel* on the basis of 'woman question was solved' argument, and the demotion of its short-lived successor *Zhensektor* in the state hierarchy, however, should be correlated with first the repulsion of the policies of women's emancipation to the secondary, even tertiary or further, place in Stalinist politics and second the intention to sustain complete control over Party-affiliated women organizations. This liquidation, more importantly, was symbolizing the end of the Marxism-inspired emancipation policies, because the communist women not the men were true believers of Marxist emancipation of women although they have always had to work under the pressure of the Party. Delegation of some functions and authority of *Zhenotdel* to *Zhensektor*, latter of which was more durable in Central Asia than in the other regions of Soviet Union, from the other side, displayed the fact that to achieve the Central Asian part of command economy required an official women organization to pull the unproductive domestic labor of native women to the productive labor sector as well as the fact that women issue in Central Asia has continued to occupy a distinctive space in Stalinist politics.

What gave an un-Marxist nature to the Stalinism concerning women policies, in essence, was definitely the great Stalinist doctrine 'socialism in one country' that combined with the war politics in late 1930s. Signifying the transition to command economy, this doctrine, actually, was not directly related with the women. But it nevertheless influenced the economic and sociocultural status of women in Soviet Union, since Stalinist politics, benefiting from the Marxist proposal that the economic independence would generate the true emancipation of women, officially encouraged women to enter into either the industrial or the agricultural labor force. This Marxist emphasis, however, was not accompanied by another Marxist proposal concerning the establishment of social services to free women from the burden of unproductive, arduous labor of the private sphere and therefore women confronted

with the issue of ‘double burden’; despite being under the guarantee of 1936 Constitution, so-called social services remained far below meeting the needs of the women. Putting aside the issue of double burden as a direct result of mass entrance into the workforce but disproportionate quantity of social services in return, having been alarmed by the decreasing birth rates, high divorce rates that was regarded as a matter of ‘weak family’ and mass population losses during and after the SWW which were all perceived as threats against the ‘socialism in one country’, Stalinist politics started to implement new gender and family policies. 1936 and 1944 Family Codes, inaugurated in order to not to interrupt proper implementation of Stalinist ideological goals, indisputably, were characterized by the sharp departure from the Marxist proposals on women’s emancipation. Redefining how should be the family and womanhood in a socialist society, these pro-natalist, pro-family codes not only put an end to the ‘withering away of family’ debates in Marxist thinking but also reinforced the existing gendered norms, values and practices besides producing new ones. In Central Asia, however, other than the mass women entrance especially into the agricultural labor force, Stalinist gender and family policies had relatively trivial impact on the native women. Although there is no comprehensive study on the issue in the literature, some statistical data point out no sharp decrease in the birthrates or a problem of weak family in Central Asia neither at the beginning nor at the end of the Stalinist era. Central Asians, that is to say, succeeded in preserving their family structures and traditional way of living despite the legislative revolution that abolished the *shariat* and *adat* laws and courts and intense female mobilization efforts of the pre-Stalinist era as well as the devastating *Khudjum* campaign, mass deportation policies and socialization of land in the Stalinist era. Although the troublesome Stalinist policies, that is to say, elimination of land owning or wealthier peasants as well as the some other political, and religious elites of the Central Asian society together with the forced collectivization profoundly destroyed the existing political, economic and sociocultural order in the region, all these policies had hardly affected the conventional *modus vivendi* of Central Asians, which was characterized by kin-ship based communities, the large families, high birthrates, gendered division of labor etc. even after the Stalinist period.

Stalinist policies on concerning women, despite not only being hardly based on Marxism but also not directly targeting at women's emancipation, nevertheless produced some Marxist repercussions in the long run. Terminating the NEP era and initiating a thoroughly state-run economy, Stalinism managed to establish a socialist state that would have realized a great economic and sociocultural transformation in Soviet Union. To ensure the economic independence of woman in a significant degree in Central Asia where the women's contribution to the economy had always been quite little, in itself, was a great Stalinist achievement in the region. Moreover, remarkable decrease in the number of veiled women towards the end of the Stalinist era may well be correlated with being less dependent on men economically as an extension of which women have become less secluded from the public life. Generalization of formal education as a deliberate state policy both in Central Asia and Soviet Union unavoidably contributed to the women's emancipation in the region since native women have become nearly hundred percent literate in 1950s.

Stalinist policies, in short neither in Central Asia nor in Soviet Union, directly targeted at the Marxist emancipation of women, they, however, while 'building the socialism' inevitably transformed the economic and sociocultural status of women to a certain degree. At the end of the Stalinist era, women in Central Asia, no matter how the gendered norms, values and practices were ingrained and ossified under the influence of Islam, custom and patriarchy, had already been introduced to a modern way of life which converted them into economically more independent, more educated, more skilled and less secluded 'Muslim' and 'Soviet' women, notwithstanding the fact that at the expense of it they paid very high prices.

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