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A Soviet Industrial *trest* Between  
Moscow and Bukhara (1922-1929)



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## Abstract

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This paper narrates the story of *Red Orient* (Rus. *Krasnyi Vostok*; Uz. *Qizil Sharq*) textile trust (*trest*). This trust was initially owned by the Bukharan People's Republic, then, after the national delimitation of Central Asia, by the Uzbek SSR. Its activity included all the steps of the added-value chain of industrial transformation of ginned cotton (spinning, twisting, dyeing, finishing, weaving, and printing). Its factories and mills, initially all located in Russia, served as a training ground for the first generation of native Uzbek textile workers while its management participated in the planning and construction of the first cotton textile plant in Fergana towards the end of the decade.

Two threads are entangled in this story: first, the day-by-day workings of the New Economic Policy in a small industrial organization; second, the economic side of early Soviet nationality policies. This paper looks at the nitty-gritty aspects of procurements, bookkeeping, audit, and management. It shows how balance sheets were more an item for negotiation and a political weapon, than a diagnostic tool for the efficiency of *Red Orient's* business. Above all, the story of *Red Orient* reveals that early Soviet economic policies did not exclude that the Central Asian cotton harvest could be processed by mills owned by the republics themselves, and result in finished textiles for the Central Asian market. The Bukharan (later, Uzbek) governments, either directly or through their representatives in Moscow, confronted all-Union agencies in the name of the "national" nature of the trust, be it to settle complicated debt relations, to reshape the procurement of raw materials, to acquire additional looms and, ultimately, to negotiate the construction of the first textile factory in Fergana. In other words, the republics, as shareholders and eponymous "nations" of the trust, took ownership of its destiny and day-to-day trade and production activities.

## **The Hunt for *Red Orient* A Soviet Industrial *trest* Between Moscow and Bukhara (1922-1929)<sup>1</sup>**

*Communism created ultimately effective aesthetic structures and ultimately defective economic ones ... Factories are not built to produce commodities. They produce the united-working-class-body. They are allegorical figures of industrialization. Industry represents the leading metaphor of party ideology and factories are the works of this ideology. They result in a deficit of goods, but an overproduction of meanings ... They are the poems of communist ideology.*

(V. Todorov)<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Introduction**

In 2013-2014, Uzbekistan was the world's sixth largest producer and the fifth largest exporter of cotton.<sup>3</sup> This means that its domestic textile industry absorbed only little more than one-fifth of the raw cotton harvested in the republic or, more exactly, of the lint obtained from that raw cotton. In January 2005, the Uzbek government launched a "Programme for the Development of the Textile Industry" to increase the percentage of domestic cotton processed in Uzbekistani mills, but since then this ratio seems to have increased more because the cotton harvests (the denominator) have shrunk than because of the modest increase in the output of textiles.<sup>4</sup> On a different scale, this focus on the "export" of ginned cotton, excluding its further transformation into yarn or fabric, also existed before Uzbek independence, when Soviet all-Union planning was in place. We know comparatively much less about the consumption of Central Asian cotton by local textile producers in the Tsarist and early Soviet periods.<sup>5</sup>

Historians and social scientists, both in the former Soviet Union and in the West, have focused on the emergence, consolidation, and sustainability (or lack thereof) of the cultivation of cotton in Central Asia. The available literature on this and related topics (irrigation, labor, ginning, and so on) is extensive, albeit of mixed quality.<sup>6</sup> By comparison, the history of industrial development (and, in particular, of the textile sector) in this part of the world is an unexplored field. Local scholars have produced a large number of short articles on this or that plant or, more often, on the industrialization of individual districts, but much of it does not go beyond the eulogy of Soviet achievements and the heroism of factory workers.<sup>7</sup> While it would be imprudent to dismiss all this literature in bulk, it remains true that the history of the textile sector (and industry as a whole) in Soviet Central Asia would greatly benefit from a “revisionist” approach, similar to that which has transformed our views about Soviet nationality policies, collective agriculture, and sedentarization in recent years.<sup>8</sup>

In this untrodden field, a particularly interesting point is the nexus between the local production of raw materials and their subsequent transformation in Central Asia itself. If “history matters” in the determination of paths of economic development, as researchers seem now to agree, it is necessary to explain how and why (but, above all, when and to what extent) Central Asia became an exporter of raw materials while failing to develop its own manufacturing industries. This is a challenging research agenda and requires a reappraisal of local industries in the Tsarist period, as well as a thorough reconstruction of the region’s trade with neighboring regions, especially South Asia and the Indian subcontinent. The received idea that Russian rule brought about the de-industrialization of Central Asia, which has until now gone unchallenged, deserves a careful re-examination – and, potentially, refutation. Not only would this enhance our knowledge of regional history, but it would also open up the possibility of interesting comparisons with the (real or supposed) de-industrialization of the Indian subcontinent<sup>9</sup> and of the cotton-producing areas of the Ottoman empire.<sup>10</sup>

This paper offers a contribution to the debate about why and when Central Asia, and Uzbekistan in particular, specialized in the export, rather than the processing and manufacture, of raw cotton, by looking at one crucial juncture in

time and, more importantly, by examining what seems at first like a deviation or exception to this development path. The Bukharan People's Republic and, from 1925, the Uzbek SSR possessed and managed, first as majority and then as the sole shareholder, a textile company (*trest*), named *Red Orient* (Rus. *Krasnyi Vostok*; Uz. *Qizil Sharq*). This trust included all the steps of the added-value chain of industrial transformation of ginned cotton, including spinning, twisting, dyeing, finishing, weaving, and printing. Its factories and mills, initially all located in Russia, served as a training ground for the first generation of native Uzbek textile workers while its management participated in the planning and construction of the first cotton textile plant in Fergana towards the end of the decade.<sup>11</sup>

While nobody at the time questioned the role of the Uzbek SSR as a major producer of raw cotton, the story of *Red Orient* shows that this choice did not exclude the development of the local textile industry. The possibility that part of their cotton harvest should be processed by mills owned by the republics themselves, and result in finished textiles for the Central Asian market, became viable. Even though these requests were not always successful, both Bukharan (then Uzbek) and Moscow-based organs considered them legitimate arguments in the negotiation process that shaped industrial planning and trade policies. While the management, cadres, and, very likely, the majority of the workers of *Red Orient's* factories were Russian or European, the Bukharan (later, Uzbek) governments, either directly or through their permanent representatives in Moscow, confronted all-Union agencies in the name of the "national" nature of the trust, be it to settle complicated debt relations, to reshape the procurement of raw materials, or to acquire additional looms. The managers of the mills were not Bukharan, but it was the Bukharan council of *nazirs* that ultimately obtained the dismissal of managers they were not happy with. In other words, the republics, as shareholders and eponymous "nations" of the trust, took ownership of its destiny and day-to-day trade and production activities. Such an engagement was neither ignored nor systematically opposed by all-Union political institutions; if anything, it was encouraged, as long as the VSNKh did not press for increased centralization and planning. All in all, the vicissitudes of *Red Orient* show that, in the early years of Soviet rule, alternative paths for the economic development of

the Central Asian republics were at least thinkable. Rather than tracking theoretical and political debates on this matter, this paper explores how the practical activity of *Red Orient* and its plants up until 1930 echoed them, although from a remote distance.

When we adopt this angle of observation and embrace a micro-historical approach, the hunt for *Red Orient* through various archives and published sources becomes a way of engaging with an array of other issues. The story of this *trest* intersects with the larger history of early Soviet nationality policy, but also with that of the “New Economic Policy” (NEP) in its nitty-gritty aspects of bookkeeping, audit, management, and the overall struggle for efficiency. In other words, this paper looks at *Red Orient* from the viewpoint of the conventional political history of the Soviet “national” periphery, but it also attempts to approach its activity from the angle of business history. *Red Orient* as a “national” enterprise and *Red Orient* as a business organization under NEP were the same thing in real life; only the historian can disentangle and reconstruct these two aspects *ex post*. Such an intellectual operation would nonetheless sacrifice the imbrication between the “national-political” and “industrial-business” dimensions of the life of *Red Orient*, which constitutes its most significant and distinctive feature. It is therefore preferable to *narrate* the story of *Red Orient* and, through this narration, tease out the wider significance of its most crucial episodes.

From the standpoint of the student of Soviet history, *Red Orient* is an almost unknown episode in the relations between Moscow and the political entities that sprang up in Central Asia in the aftermath of the 1917 revolutions. Its story starts with an agreement between Russia (the RSFSR) and Bukhara (BNSR), and it continues with the tense relations between the all-Union level of power and an individual Soviet republic (the Uzbek SSR); between and below them, this story involves the organs governing Moscow and its hinterland and – more significantly – the regional level, represented most typically by the party’s Central Asian Bureau. What emerges is the complexity of the relations between “center” and “periphery”: the latter were shaped not only by legislation and administrative or Party decisions, but also by personal networks and the physical mobility of some minor figures between Bukhara, Tashkent, and Moscow. More

broadly, this study shows the often overlooked importance of the economic provisions embedded in Bolshevik nationalities policy. Besides borders, alphabets, and “quotas” in the Party and Soviet apparatus, these policies included issues of investments, shareholding, and transfer of industrial assets. Finally, *Red Orient* reminds us of the variety and limits of early Soviet “nativization” (*korenizatsiia*) policies: the *trest* and its factories were a training ground for workers and a handful of Central Asian decision-makers who could experiment (or toy with?) industrial management in a context that remained, however, largely dominated by Europeans.<sup>12</sup> In this respect, the importance of *Red Orient* (and of similar companies) was much greater than the small number of its spindles or “native” workers would suggest. These factories were, as Todorov says in the epigraph to this introduction, “allegorical figures of industrialization” and therefore worth fighting for if one wanted to cultivate the idea that the Uzbek SSR should have its share in *industrial* socialist development.

The story of *Red Orient* is also a vantage point for the microscopic observation of dynamics characteristic of the NEP era. In this respect, this study integrates an abundant historiography that has focused on this period as a whole, or, more specifically, on the cotton sector.<sup>13</sup> As evident in the next sections, looking at a single trust opens interesting perspectives on the day-to-day difficulties of industrial production in the early NEP years, such as obstacles in procuring raw materials and fuel. It also shows what (bad) Soviet managers might look like, what they were accused of, and how they tried to defend themselves with political arguments in the heyday of the move towards the “intensification” of factory work. While *khozraschët* (“the application of commercial principles to industry in order to guarantee efficiency and sensitivity to the market”)<sup>14</sup> was a prominent feature of the NEP and scholarship has commented on the work of the Workers-Peasants’ Inspection (Rabkrin) in controlling accounting and management,<sup>15</sup> documents from *Red Orient* show how both bookkeeping and auditing were more objects of negotiation than neutral tools for regulating economic mores. Another keyword of the NEP, the alliance between factory and country (*smychka*), advocated by Bukharin until his downfall, receives an interesting twist if regarded from the perspective of the Bukharan and Uzbek stakeholders of *Red Orient*. Their goal was not just to

strengthen the ties between workers and peasants by means of what Trotsky dubbed “an endless ribbon of cloth,”<sup>16</sup> but to link the metropole and the Central Asian countryside by letting Uzbek cotton-growing households purchase cloth woven from the very cotton they had handed over to the Soviet procurement agency. In *Red Orient*, the *smychka* could have acquired, at least symbolically, an anti-colonial shade: Uzbek cotton could be processed by an Uzbek plant for the Uzbek market, rather than being conflated with other sources into the cauldron of pan-Soviet production plans. All in all, the story of *Red Orient* adds to the complexity of the industrial world of the 1920s. Recent Russian historiography on the NEP has insisted on its “multi-layered” character (*mnogoukladnaia ekonomika*) because it combined a variety of enterprises, defined first on the basis of the ownership of the means of production (State, private, co-operative) and then on the basis of other criteria (dimension, combination of one or more of the types above).<sup>17</sup> This paper emphasizes the importance of a further variable: the explicit or hidden “national” character of some of the NEP trusts, which shaped their relations to institutions and other economic actors both in the “metropole” and at the “periphery.”

Using these two red threads, this paper follows the zigzags of *Red Orient* from its establishment to the first five-year plan. Section 2 clarifies *Red Orient's* historical background, focusing on the Central Asian cotton sector and the establishment of Soviet rule in the region, as well as the institutional context of the New Economic Policy in which this trust started operating. Section 3 discusses how wider Bolshevik nationalities policy included the transfer of factories to the Bukharan People's Republic and how the original “national” nature of *Red Orient* shaped its relations with other economic organizations, both in the “center” and at the periphery. Until the national delimitation and the transfer to the Uzbek SSR, the business life of *Red Orient* reflected both internal management problems and tense relations with its Bukharan stakeholders, as explained in Section 4. An analogous blend of political motives and technical assessment marked the results of the audit which the Peasants' and Workers' Inspection (Rabkrin) carried out in 1925. Section 5 demonstrates how, once transferred to the Uzbek SSR and with a new industrial plan, *Red Orient's* “national” nature became visible in the attempt to establish a more direct link

with the republic, both for the supply of raw materials to its mills in Russia and for the provision of the Central Asian market (which could have led to the expansion of the weaving sector of the trust). In Section 6, under the first five-year plan, *Red Orient* metamorphoses into something rather different, but not totally incompatible with the original intentions which both Bukhara and Moscow had expressed on the occasion of its foundation: the experience accumulated by *Red Orient* served as a basis for the establishment of the first cotton textile factory in the Uzbek SSR itself. While we will mostly proceed chronologically, sometimes it will be necessary to look at *Red Orient* from specific viewpoints, such as the provision of raw materials, the role of its managers, its relations with other trusts, or even the nuts and bolts of its balance sheets. Conclusions, as well as some suggestions for future research, appear in Section 7. This paper addresses itself to a large and diverse audience and, hence, sometimes explains what may be obvious to some readers but vital to others. This is an intrinsic limit of such an exploratory work.

## **2. The setting: cotton and revolution.**

The Russian empire's conquest of Central Asia conventionally begins with the fall of the Kokandi fortress of Aq-Masjid (modern Kyzyl-Orda, in Kazakhstan) in 1853. It would take two more decades, however, before the newly conquered territory, which by then included the whole of the Syr-Darya valley and Samarkand, acquired the institutional shape it would retain until the Bolshevik revolution. The territory of the Turkestan general-governorship was ruled from Tashkent while the shrunken territories of the Bukharan emirate and Khivan khanate became Russian protectorates. While local short-staple cotton (*ghuza*) was not unknown before the conquest, it was only under Russian imperial rule that cotton, this time in the form of American long-staple varieties, became a prominent part of the crop mix. By shaping the natural and social landscape of the region since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the history of the cotton boom has been linked to the economic, social, and environmental history of Central Asia in the scholarly and non-scholarly imagination. The epochal importance of the pre-revolutionary "cotton boom" cannot be denied, nor the fact

that the main industrial activity in colonial Central Asia was the ginning of raw cotton, rather than its further transformation in local textile mills. It is the absence of a modern local textile industry, and even more the Soviet and post-Soviet ideological construction that surrounded such supposed absence, that makes the establishment of a Bukharan textile trust so intriguing from the historian's viewpoint. Yet the background of the birth of *Red Orient* is also made up of the institutional and political change that overtook Central Asia in the years of the revolution and civil war (which led to the establishment of the Bukharan People's Republic) and of the specificities of the New Economic Policy for the cotton sector in general.

### *2.1 Central Asian cotton under Russian rule*

The best known development in the economy of pre-revolutionary Turkestan is the boom in the cultivation and first transformation (ginning) of cotton.<sup>18</sup> Between the early 1890s and the First World War, the acreage under cotton increased spectacularly, and the output with it, although with some stops and starts. In an attempt to recall briefly the phases of such a development, we would mention here that "native" cotton (*ghuza*, *Gossypium herbaceum*) had been part of the crop mix in the khanates and emirate well before the conquest. As the Russians realized in the 1860s, when the unavailability of US cotton during the civil war boosted their Central Asian imports, *ghuza* was a short-staple variety, scarcely suitable for modern mechanical spinning. Hence, once Turkestan had been conquered, some private entrepreneurs and a few Russian officers, including the first governor-general, distributed the seeds of American cotton. After some unsuccessful experiences with the *Sea Island* variety, in the 1880s it began to be clear that *Upland* American cotton could give good yields in the local conditions. The potential for easy and quick gains led to the so-called "cotton fever" of the 1880s (*khlopkovaia likhoradka*). In this first phase, the cultivation and first transformation (ginning) of cotton revolved around Tashkent; many, though not all, of those who invested in this new business were Russian or European, sometimes with little or no farming experience. They rented relatively

large plots from the Muslim population and hired native sharecroppers to grow cotton on it.

This first phase did not last very long. By the beginning of the 1890s, only a few of the companies that had invested in cotton during the “fever” had resisted; others had disappeared or gone bankrupt and been absorbed by someone else. The “plantation model” in particular had failed. By comparison, smallholdings, where native peasant households were growing American cotton, were faring much better. The center of cotton production shifted from Tashkent to the Fergana valley where more and more land became cultivated under cotton while other irrigated crops shrank, as did the fallow land. One could look at the cotton boom, hypothetically, as a way to overcome the increasing ecological constraints the native population faced: the scarcity of irrigated land and water resources, demographic expansion, and the growing difficulty of finding enough fallow land to support draught animals for agriculture. Cotton promised to be a breakthrough crop: its price was high (and even higher in Russia because of custom duties on imports), it was a labor-intensive crop, and labor was fairly cheap, at least at the beginning of this process. Provided that relatively inexpensive grain could be imported from elsewhere in Central Asia (the Syr-Darya basin north and east of Tashkent, Semirechie, eastern Bukhara), the choice to grow cotton was anything but irrational or coerced. The arrival of the Transcaspian (then Central Asian) railway line at Andijan (in the easternmost part of Fergana) and the construction of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway, which was completed in 1906, were essential to satisfy the growing local demand for cheap grain and other products, including manufacture. In addition, in 1891, the Russian administration started to grant a significant tax break to villages where American cotton was grown.<sup>19</sup>

Conventional accounts of the pre-revolutionary economy of the region point to growing inequality as a consequence of this process.<sup>20</sup> An unknown percentage of smallholders became indebted and planted cotton because it was the crop that gave them more chance to pay back their dues, but, to do this, they had to accept advances on seeds from Russian companies and local intermediaries. Indebted peasants sometimes became insolvent and had to surrender their land.<sup>21</sup> While there is a general consensus around the increase of

social inequality in Turkestan on the eve of World War 1, this inequality has never been systematically measured. One cannot deny the presence of severe tensions in some parts of the countryside, but Soviet historians were *looking for* such an increasing inequality because they needed to prove the existence of “social stratification” (a necessary precondition for revolution), and this casts legitimate doubts about this narrative. Many other basic pieces of information about the economy of pre-revolutionary Turkestan remain obscure – most notably, the total GDP of the region and the GDP per capita.

As a result, historians have expressed mixed judgments on the economic consequences of the Russian conquest of Central Asia. Soviet historiography alternates the enumeration of its positive effects (the “objectively progressive” consequences of the development of capitalism and the political influence of the Russian proletariat) with the deprecation of “colonial rule.” Outside the USSR, at least until the 1990s, the interpretive paradigm known as “Sovietology” saw this country as a “prison of peoples” where Muslim nationalities were particularly disgruntled.<sup>22</sup> Henceforth, post-Soviet revisionist scholarship has been concerned, above all, with the history and anthropology of Islamic practices, beliefs, and intellectual history. Unfortunately, as far as the social and economic history of the region are concerned, historians still rely predominantly on Soviet scholarship. One of the consequences of this reliance is the focus on public investments, on regulations, and, more generally, on what Soviet writers identified as the collusion between monopolistic capitalism and Russian autocracy.<sup>23</sup>

The sub-field of business history is somewhat more populated. Possibly because of a political urge to emphasize the importance of a tradition of local entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan, dissertations and publications on the birth and growth of individual sectors (banking, oil, etc.) have appeared. In-depth studies of a single company or factory, which were the first fruits of business historiography in Europe and in the US, are not represented in the recent scholarship of the Uzbek republic, possibly as a reaction against the Soviet-style eulogy of single plants, organizations, or farms. In many cases, the existing studies do not focus on business as such (i.e., as an economic activity that creates income through the mobilization of labor and capital) but rather on the relation

between business and, for instance, the development of “Jadidism” (the local Islamic “reformism” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which has dominated the agenda of Uzbekistani scholarship for quite a few years now)<sup>24</sup> or the lives of specific groups (e.g., Bukharan Jews). Only very recently have historians produced tentative, albeit sweeping, overviews of the activity of private native and Russian companies in pre-revolutionary Turkestan, with a focus on legal questions.<sup>25</sup>

## *2.2 The “continuum of crisis” in Central Asia (1914-1924)*

Typical research questions in mainstream economic history tend to be counterfactual. In our case, the fundamental question is what would have happened to Central Asia and, more specifically, to Russian Turkestan if the Bolshevik revolution had not occurred. This general question can be specified in different ways. For instance, would Central Asia have continued to follow the same pattern of development, based on the export of low added-value products and raw materials (e.g., cotton and minerals), or would it have developed its own transformation industry? Were the seeds of such a transformation already there, before the revolution nipped them in the bud? How would this change have occurred? Would the “cotton bubble” have finally burst, as some observers had forecast since the 1890s? Was the Bolshevik regime indispensable to ensure the survival of a system of economic relations that had become short of breath by WWI? Given the present dearth of quantitatively-minded inquiries on the pre-revolutionary economy of the region and the ignorance (or neglect) of the region’s peculiarities by the few economists who have tried this exercise,<sup>26</sup> it is still impossible to answer. It might be useful, however, to recall how Russian Turkestan and the two protectorates “transited” and transformed themselves between 1914 and 1924. This should be enough for the reader to gauge some of the specificities of the revolutionary events and the first steps of Soviet rule in the region compared to the situation in the rest of what, in 1922, became the USSR. These specificities should be kept in mind to understand the underpinnings of the “national” nature of *Red Orient* since its origin.

Peter Holquist defines the long period of WWI, revolution, and civil war as a “continuum of crisis.”<sup>27</sup> He focuses on the grain-producing Don territory in the

south of European Russia; in the case of Russian Central Asia, it might be preferable to extend the “continuum” to the mid-1920s in order to include the “pacification” of the central provinces of Turkestan. The war increased the demand for raw cotton, which led to the unprecedented expansion of the acreage under this crop and of the total cotton output in 1915. In 1916, however, the situation started to degenerate rapidly: revolt in the countryside spread from the Djizakh district, between Samarkand and Tashkent, to Fergana and, above all, to Semirechie in what is now southern Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan.<sup>28</sup> The revolt had both remote and immediate causes: the former included, above all, long-standing conflicts over the use of resources between the native population and Russian and European settlers; among the latter, increased fiscal pressure and the conscription of local Muslim men for military service in labor battalions. The 1916 uprising constitutes the first step in the concatenation of inter-ethnic violence and retaliation that accompanied the political and military turmoil of the 1917 revolutionary year, and in the involvement of Central Asia in the civil war.<sup>29</sup>

Between 1918 and 1922, Central Asia went through its own internal civil war, which saw the opposition between the Red Army and a galaxy of armed opponents, characterized by very different degrees of ideological consistency, military organization, and transnational connections. From an economic viewpoint, the season of anti-Soviet insurgency (known in sources and literature as *basmachestvo*) brought about generalized collapse: confrontations resulted in the destruction of valuable capital (cotton cleaning mills, pumping stations, telegraph lines) while both the Red Army and the *basmachi* bands imposed a heavy toll on draught animals by expropriating horses and forage. Peasants stopped going out in the fields for fear of being attacked, and, combined with depopulation, this led to the neglect and disruption of the irrigation and drainage systems. As Soviet observers were ready to acknowledge, during the years of revolution and *basmachestvo*, large parts of Central Asia regressed to a natural economy and to subsistence agriculture.<sup>30</sup> This state of things in the local economy combined itself with demographic crisis. The only quantitative estimate of population losses in Central Asia in this period, published by Buttino in 1990, claims that “between 1916 and 1920 some two million people were lost, equivalent to 27 percent of the population.” This phenomenon concerned the

native Muslim population, in particular the nomads, more than the Russians.<sup>31</sup> Human capital also deteriorated in terms of the health, skills, and knowledge of the laboring population. For instance, in Qashqa-Darya, sericulture had been a side activity before 1917, as the survival of abundant plantations of mulberry trees still testified ten years later, but in 1927 Qashqa-Darya peasants were reportedly planting the silkworm grains they received from the cooperatives in the earth, as if they were seeds.<sup>32</sup>

This was, in short, the economic scenario the Bolsheviks were facing when they finally managed to gain control of the territory of Central Asia. Political issues were equally complicated. In a first phase, the Tashkent Soviet had adopted a chauvinist policy, especially in the management of food provisions. This was not, however, a viable approach; as Moscow realized by the summer of 1919, it was necessary to forge an alliance with the progressive and pro-Bolshevik wings of the local Muslim *intelligentsia*. Reciprocally, the revolutionary atmosphere (which had been developing since 1905) had precipitated expectations of autonomy, political representation, and reform, both in Turkestan and in the two protectorates. The Bolsheviks gradually opened up their ranks to Turkestani Muslims and stretched out a hand to those who were known as the “Young Khivans” and “Young Bukharans” from the former protectorates. In September 1920, activists of these groups participated in the coups that, with the substantial help of the Red Army, led to the establishment of two people’s republics in Khorezm (KhNSR) and Bukhara (BNSR).<sup>33</sup> Developments in the sphere of nationalities policy allowed the formation, within the Party, of specific organizations for the Muslims of the former empire, which would attract a number of new leaders into the Party’s orbit. These developments also lay at the origin of the “decolonizing” land-and-water reform in Semirechie and elsewhere in Turkestan (1921-1922).<sup>34</sup>

Adeeb Khalid argues that there is a connection between the ideas of the “Young Bukharans” and those that circulated in the late Ottoman empire<sup>35</sup> and that the BNSR was “an attempt at creating a modern national state for the Muslim population of Bukhara.”<sup>36</sup> While the discussion of the strength of such connections is best left to specialists in intellectual history, what matters here is that the BNSR's identity (and, above all, what it would become) was not set in

stone from the beginning. Above all, the economic relations between Moscow and Bukhara were quite fluid between 1920 and 1924. When, on the background of “decolonizing” rhetoric, Moscow decided to “devolve” a set of industrial plants to the BNSR, it thought (and possibly hoped) that this move would attract and settle the latter into its own orbit. But when Bukharan politicians pleaded to obtain and retain the management of the same plants, they may have had different expectations; they had to answer to domestic political stakeholders and were themselves trying to build a future for their country that was probably different from that envisaged by Moscow.

One can extend this approach to the years after 1924 when all of Central Asia was reshuffled as a consequence of “national delimitation.” This process led to the establishment of “national republics” and “autonomous provinces,” the frontiers of which roughly correspond to today’s international borders.<sup>37</sup> On that occasion, the Uzbek SSR inherited the BNSR's assets, including its industrial trust and the plants it was managing. As we look at the vicissitudes of *Red Orient*, it is essential not to lose track of what was at stake: negotiations were not just about a couple of textile mills that the “center” would have ended up controlling anyway (how could one have known in 1922, or even in 1926?), but instead were about shaping long-lasting economic relations at what was perceived as a crucial historical moment. That the Central Asian side would be losing ground throughout the 1920s is clear to us, but it was not something the actors themselves could have forecast. Practically and symbolically, the ownership of a set of textile mills, however located, showed that it was possible, for the BNSR, and then for the Uzbek SSR, to participate in the industrial transformation of its main export: cotton.

### *2.3 New Economic Policy and Soviet textile industry*

The term “New Economic Policy” (*Novaia ekonomicheskaiia politika*, or NEP) designates a set of measures and, by extension, a phase in the early history of the Soviet Union. By comparison to the period of “War Communism” which had preceded it, one of the cornerstones of the NEP was the renunciation of forced requisitioning of agricultural products, which was replaced in March 1921 by a

progressive agricultural tax. The NEP sought to make amends for the “war” the Bolsheviks had waged against the peasantry in the previous years and to bring together workers in the agricultural and industrial sectors (*smychka*). In Central Asia, one of the consequences of NEP was to bring radical “decolonization” policies to an end. In practice, the NEP aimed at recovering pre-revolutionary output levels in many sectors (including agriculture) by allowing market relations between economic actors. In the meantime, the NEP aimed at the conciliation between the Bolshevik ideal of workers’ empowerment and the need to expand and rationalize industrial production – which, in turn, should have satisfied the peasant demand for consumer goods. In this context, textile factories represented an important testing ground because the textile sector had been particularly important for the industrialization of Russia before the revolution but had virtually collapsed during the civil war. It is not surprising, thus, to find a rich historiography of the textile sector before and during the New Economic Policy. Some of these studies have focused on the institutional framework of the early Soviet textile industry<sup>38</sup> while, more recently, historians have looked more in depth at the organization of labor within the factory and at the political culture of the workers themselves.<sup>39</sup>

As in other countries, in Russia WWI brought about a push towards the centralization of key economic sectors. In the second half of 1915, to co-ordinate the procurements and industrial transformation of textile raw materials, the ministry of trade and industry established three committees, focusing on cotton, wool, and flax and jute respectively, and invited private entrepreneurs to participate in their work. These organs, however, did not manage to exert their grasp on the markets despite virtually fixed prices on textile consumers’ goods and on raw cotton in 1916. The situation evolved after the revolution of February 1917: in response to an increasingly chaotic situation, a group of textile entrepreneurs in European Russia set up a new organization, *Tsentrotkan*, to regulate the distribution of manufactured goods. It seems, however, that 95 percent of the value of retail transactions involving textile goods fell beyond the grasp of *Tsentrotkan*.<sup>40</sup>

This can be regarded in hindsight as an important step towards the centralization of textile production, but precisely because it was the fruit of an

industrialists' initiative, *Tsentrotkan'* could not go through the October revolution unscathed. The Bolsheviks established a new set of organs of economic governance and planning, including the Supreme council of the national economy (VSNKh, or Vesenkha). In December 1917, VSNKh labored to set up its own alternative *Tsentrotkan'* for the Moscow region with the involvement of the factory workers themselves. Having settled the governance of the textile industry in this way, the Bolshevik government, at the beginning of January 1918, moved on to reform the mechanism for the provision of cotton. All cotton was declared State property, and the State enjoyed a monopoly on its trade at all levels, at least theoretically, the degree of control the new regime could exert in Turkestan being limited. Finally, between January and February 1918, the first congress of the Union of textile workers decided on the establishment of a new, more powerful organ called *Tsentrotekstil'* which concentrated more powers than the previous *Tsentrotkan'* by including the wool sector and spinning more firmly within its scope. *Tsentrotekstil'* was formally subordinated to the VSNKh. This new institutional framework consolidated itself in April 1918.<sup>41</sup> On June 28, 1918, a decree of the Russian council of people's commissars (Sovnarkom) decided on the nationalization of all big textile enterprises under the leadership of *Tsentrotekstil'*. Yet its performance was rather disappointing. Hence, in October 1918, the VSNKh established yet another organ, a "head administration" (*glavnoe upravlenie*, or *glavka*) for the textile industry, known for short as *Glavtekstil'*.<sup>42</sup> Between October and the end of January 1919, *Glavtekstil'* and *Tsentrotekstil'* worked together; then the former absorbed the latter.<sup>43</sup> From the first *Tsentrotkan'*, through *Tsentrotekstil'*, to *Glavtekstil'*, the Bolshevik regime was building upon the war experience to subordinate the textile added-value chain to a central organ and, through this, to the VSNKh.<sup>44</sup> This was the general institutional framework of the textile sector, yet, in the factories themselves, day-to-day management was assured, with mixed results, by the workers' unions or by the workers' shock committees. In Chris Ward's words, "*Glavtekstil'* act[ed] less as a directing agency and more like a co-ordinating committee between the unions and Vesenkha"; at any rate, "[b]y 1920 there was precious little actual production for these bureaucrats to administer."<sup>45</sup> This was the situation in the factories which *Red Orient* took on in 1922.

The creation of trusts (*tresty*) and syndicates (*sindikaty*) in the second half of 1921, with the advent of the New Economic Policy, should be read against this background. This move should have allowed a better management of production and, above all, economies of scale. While less strictly subordinated to *Glavtekstil'*, the trusts had, nevertheless, to be registered at VSNKh. All the assets these trusts possessed had been nationalized, but their own status could vary: some of them were private, but the majority were “mixed,” that is, co-owned by a State organization (generally the VSNKh) and semi-autonomous agencies, such as banks, or other trusts.<sup>46</sup> In the textile sector, notes Ward, “trustification” was relatively quick: in December 1921, nine of the twenty-two trusts registered at VSNKh operated in this field. Each of them consisted of one or more textile plants. These could be either specializing in the same process (e.g., spindling), or they could bring together, for instance, a spinning mill with a weaving one and a workhouse for dyeing or mercerization. Three textile trusts had all-Union significance while the others were organized on a territorial basis. Trusts kept their own accounts, procured their raw materials, and sold their output on the open market. Such leeway, though, found a limit in the intervention of Party cells and Party representatives in the management. Moreover, the possibility for each trust to establish its own prices was curtailed in the summer of 1923 when “trust functions were limited to technical supervision while Vesenkha [...] fixed prices and handed down production targets.”<sup>47</sup> These moves also affected the life of *Red Orient*.

Parallel to the organization of a number of trusts, the NEP period also saw the creation of an all-Union Textile Syndicate: *Vsesoiuznyi Tekstil'nyi Sindikat*, or VTS. Unlike *Glavtekstil'*, which continued to exist together with other similar directorates,<sup>48</sup> the VTS's role was not so much to co-ordinate production as to balance the distribution of output and make sure that the peasantry would receive a sufficient and timely amount of manufacture in order to maintain the “alliance” (*smychka*) between the factory and the country which lay at the very foundation of NEP itself. “[A] joint-stock company operating under state auspices,”<sup>49</sup> the VTS aimed at the full “syndicalization” of the wholesale and retail distribution of textiles. This goal was not easy to attain, particularly in Central Asia. In this region, the VTS had to face two specific issues. First, the percentage

of its wholesale sales that went to private merchants was more substantial – and it only diminished slowly, if at all, during the NEP – than in any other region of the USSR.<sup>50</sup> Second, besides the competition of private merchants, in Central Asia (and in the Uzbek SSR in particular) the VTS had to deal, willy-nilly, with one single, powerful partner, the Cotton Committee, which exerted formidable economic leverage in order to control the provision of manufactures to the countryside.<sup>51</sup>

To understand *Red Orient's* position, it is also necessary to consider how these trusts procured their raw materials, namely ginned cotton. The key institution here was the Central Cotton Committee (*Glavnyi Khlopkovyi Komitet*, or *Glavkhlopkom* in acronym). Although it was technically a joint stock company, the *Glavkhlopkom* acted as an organ of the all-Union VSNKh. If one looks at its functions rather than at its denomination, its origins can be found in the war years, particularly in the advent of fixed prices for Turkestani raw cotton and in the virtual constitution of a “cartel” of cotton merchants. Politically, the idea of a specialized cotton committee took shape in late 1919 when the special commission of the all-Union central committee of the party on Turkestan (*Turkkomissii*) was charged, together with the VSNKh, with the compilation of its statute.<sup>52</sup>

A complex and ever-changing web of relations based on shareholding and credit tied the Central Cotton Committee to all-Union and regional banks, State organs, trusts, and so on. In particular, besides the all-Union Central Cotton Committee, there were local cotton “committees.” At the beginning, they were joint stock companies, basically co-owned by the republics of Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khorezm (not to mention Transcaucasia). Then they evolved into republican agencies which the *Glavkhlopkom* strove to control, with varying results. The power of the Committees extended to the regulation of the production, quality control, pricing, and sales of raw cotton. This was, in broad terms, the institutional framework of the cotton sector in which *Red Orient* had to operate throughout the 1920s.

### 3. From the *Russo-Bukharan Manufacture to Red Orient*

The origin of *Red Orient* cannot be fully apprehended without looking at it through the prism of Bolshevik nationalities policy in the early 1920s. As Jeremy Smith persuasively demonstrates in his important 1999 book, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, the new regime's attitude was shaped by the practicalities of the revolution and the subsequent civil war. In particular, these policies oscillated between the Austro-Marxist definition of self-determination (Ger. *Selbstbestimmung*, Rus. *samoopredelenie*),<sup>53</sup> aiming at cultural autonomy for population groups which could not be easily defined in space, and that which was emerging from the ashes of WWI, which insisted on the allocation of a specific, bounded territory to each national group.<sup>54</sup> According to Smith, from the revolution to 1920, "national self-determination was implemented outside of Russia," and "alliances were built with nationalist movements" while rights were granted to linguistic minorities within Russia. After 1920, national autonomous territories were created inside Russia.<sup>55</sup> According to Terry Martin, "an authoritative formulation" of Bolshevik nationalities policy emerged at the XII all-Russian party congress in 1923.<sup>56</sup>

Neither of these works, however, explores the entanglement between political history and the history of economic policy, and the agency of the "national communists" is particularly neglected in the latter. For instance, Smith dedicates a paragraph to the "massive programme of industrial development [of] non-Russian areas" and even mentions *Red Orient*<sup>57</sup> but neglects to discuss the achievements of such a move or explain it as anything more than the Bolshevik "rhetoric of backwardness" in dealing with the former imperial peripheries. The story of *Red Orient* must be seen instead as a reflection of local national communists' ability to exploit the category of "backwardness" to extract benefits from the "center" rather than the implementation of the latter's top-down diktats. This is true not only in the way the trust was created and received its first textile mills, but also in the way it tried to orient its relations with other economic actors, such as the powerful *Egor'evskii* trust, which had supplied one-half of the initial capital. In the very difficult context of the early NEP period, characterized by lack of credit, unavailable raw materials and energy, and monetary instability,

*Red Orient* (and the BNSR behind it) could rely on two resources: the production of raw cotton and, more importantly, its “national” nature. From 1924, the importance of this second aspect increased dramatically as the *Egor’evskii* pulled out of *Red Orient*’s shareholding (though maintaining considerable commercial credit).

### *3.1 The industrial side of nationality policy in Central Asia*

Against this political-ideological background, the decision-making process that led to the emergence of the trust which would become *Red Orient* remains difficult to reconstruct. Even primary evidence was often compiled after the allocation of assets to the BNSR had taken place and may be inexact. There seems to be agreement, though, that the trust evolved as a consequence of decisions made at the XI all-Russian Party congress (March 27 to April 2, 1922). One of its resolutions was to carry out the “planned establishment of industry in the peripheries [*na okrainakh*], by means of the transfer [*perenos*] of factories to the sources of raw materials.” This concerned, first of all, textile factories, but it seems that the Party central committee looked on the establishment of such textile factories in the former Turkestan ASSR, Turkmenia, and Transcaucasia as an exceptional measure.<sup>58</sup> The desirability (but not yet the assurance) that a cotton textile factory would be built specifically in Turkestan was first formulated in a deliberation of the Labor and Defence Council (*Sovet Truda i Oborony*, STO in acronym) on October 6, 1922 and confirmed by the VSNKh on November 18, 1922.<sup>59</sup> It was at this point that the provincial revolutionary committee of Fergana asked that the factory be built in Fergana (New Margelan), claiming that such a location benefitted from water resources and a favorable climate.<sup>60</sup> An additional argument, which might have resonated in the ears of many Soviet decision-makers at the time, was that cottage industry and crafts already existed and flourished in the neighboring city of Margelan while the coal mines of Kyzyl-Kia were equally close; this would create optimal conditions for the emergence of a cluster of factory workers.<sup>61</sup> Even though New Margelan did not receive its factory at the time, it is worth bearing these arguments in mind to understand what would happen later in the same locality.

There were two distinct transfers of industrial assets (instrumental machinery, but sometimes entire factories) to the BNSR and Turkestan: one of them concerned assets that could *materially* be packed and transported to Central Asia; the other included objects located on the territory of the RSFSR. Hence, in the framework of the initiatives that followed the XI all-Union Party congress in late March-early April 1922, on July 14, 1922 a decision of the all-Union Politbiuro bound Soviet Russia (the RSFSR) to transfer all the nationalized assets necessary to establish four industrial plants -- a textile plant, a tanning yard, a paper factory, and a soap plant -- to the BNSR by 1923.<sup>62</sup> It is in this second initiative, which was also a product of the XI congress, that one sees the origin of *Red Orient*. No physical transfer of textile mills to the Central Asian “periphery” happened before 1926; instead, the BNSR ended up with multiple textile factories not in Bukhara, but in Russia.

A closer look at military events and at Fayzulla Khojaev’s key political role at the time suggests the reason why the Moscow Party and Soviet organs felt the need to transfer these industrial assets to this Central Asian allied republic or, at least, allows a glimpse into the specific incentives they might have been responding to in the spring of 1922. At the beginning of that year, Khojaev was not in Bukhara but in Moscow where he was negotiating the status of the Bukharan People’s Republic and its communist party. However, he had to return quickly to Bukhara in March to cope with the new military and political crisis caused by Enver Pasha’s volte-face and the consequent revival of the anti-Bolshevik insurgency in the region. As a member of the revolutionary military council in charge of anti-*basmachi* struggle in eastern Bukhara, Khojaev was in a relatively good position to ask for and obtain Moscow’s support. It is legitimate to surmise that such support not only concerned the “exceptional measures” which Fayzulla Khojaev had to take to face the guerrillas<sup>63</sup> but also included more material benefits, such as the promise to transfer to the BNSR the industrial installations in question.

Among the industrial plants promised to Bukhara in Spring 1922, the tanning yard and the soap factory were just a technologically more advanced form of economic activities that already existed in the emirate (and in Central Asia in general). The paper factory was a novelty, and even more so the textile

mill; no spinning factory in the modern sense had existed in Central Asia before the revolution, still less a weaving factory. We know that the paper factory had already reached Bukhara by January 1923, while the BNSR decided not to accept the soap plant. Nor did it go to the trouble of packing and shipping the promised tanning yard because the machinery had already irretrievably deteriorated.<sup>64</sup> The capital stock must have been in poor condition indeed for Fayzulla Khojaev to give it up at once, as industry surely did not abound in Bukhara at the time. Khojaev tried, unsuccessfully, to negotiate a bargain with Moscow to swap the tanning yard and the soap factory for a wool textile plant. His argument – that Bukharan raw wool could be more cheaply spun on the spot – did not persuade, or, possibly, by early 1923 his position with Moscow had weakened because of the temporary victory over the *basmachi*.<sup>65</sup> In the end, a report compiled by the Uzbek government on the state of local industry noted that, in 1926, the only industrial enterprises in Bukhara province were a printing-press, a tanning yard, and a brick factory – and the tanning yard was not the one promised in 1922.<sup>66</sup>

The story of the textile mill, which interests us the most, is more complicated. With all its shortcomings, the spindling and weaving machinery in question was too precious to be discarded for both material and symbolic reasons: the textile sector was perceived as the basis and quintessence of industrial manufacturing, it maintained a special relation to Central Asian cotton production, and Bukhara, with Turkestan, had been experiencing a real “hunger” for cotton textiles since 1917. The Bukharan government was ready to get hold of the factory without having to move it. The Supreme Council for the National Economy (VSNKh) had said that the factory could remain where it was (in the Riazan’ *guberniia*) if the Bukharan government wished. The Bukharan and, later, Uzbek governments did not oppose this decision.<sup>67</sup> The factory was officially assigned to the BNSR by a decision the Presidium of the all-Union VSNKh as early as December 9, 1922, and in January 1923, Khojaev could boast that it was already employing 1,800 workers.<sup>68</sup>

The textile mill, called *Zaraiskaia* because of its location (now it would be in the Moscow region), constituted the backbone of the *Red Orient* trust, and information about it is quite extensive. Because this was the first plant to be assigned to the BNSR and because it was devoted to both spinning and weaving,

the entire trust sometimes identified with the *Zaraiskaia* factory in these first years. Before nationalization, it had originally been part of the Swiss Anonymous Society.<sup>69</sup> The factory had then belonged to a mammoth of textile production in the early NEP period, the *Egor'evskii* trust, but it constituted such a small proportion of the trust's activity that, for instance, no reference to it or its transfer can be found in a detailed 1923 report compiled by the *trest* itself for the Moscow Workers and Peasants Inspection (MRKI).<sup>70</sup> Because the Bukhara people's republic did not have the resources to restore the *Zaraiskaia* factory, though, the *Egor'evskii* trust was called upon, with the blessing of the VSNKh, to constitute the "Bukharan-Russian Commercial Cotton Textile Manufacture" (*Bukharsko-Ruskaia Tovarnaia Khlopchato-Bumazhnaia Manufaktura*), which would soon become *Red Orient*. The Bukharan government and the *Egor'evskii* trust contributed each half of the total capital stock (600 thousand rubles),<sup>71</sup> but the management of the plant was in the hands of the former. More exactly, this company answered to its industry and trade ministry (*nazirat*).

It is impossible, in the present state of research, to know whether the treatment of the Bukharan People's Republic was exceptional or fit a pattern that Moscow applied to other "national republics" in the same years. There is, however, some evidence that other Central Asian republics were offered textile mills in Russia. In one of the few works devoted to this topic, two Uzbekistani historians write that, as a consequence of the STO decision of October 6, 1922 mentioned above, the VSNKh decided to transfer to the Turkestan republic a factory of the former *Izmailovskaia manufaktura*, with 42,000 reels and 620 looms while the VSNKh "textile section" had to provide the necessary additional machinery to let it recommence its production.<sup>72</sup> In addition, the Uzbekistani historians state that the Turkestan republic, following a suggestion by the powerful *Ivanovo-Vosnesenskii* trust, was able to rent another factory, previously owned by the *Bolshaia Shuiskaia manufaktura*, at an advantageous rate.<sup>73</sup> It is open to speculation, though, whether the Turkestan republic did indeed take on the management of one or both these textile plants; there is no sign of the fate of these factories during the "liquidation" of the Turkestan republic's assets during the process of national delimitation.<sup>74</sup>

The case of Turkmenia and of its *Turkmenmanufaktura* is much clearer and, though similar to *Red Orient's* in its general lines, follows a different timing. Turkmenia had to wait until it became a fully-fledged republic before it could acquire a textile factory on Russian territory: the *Reutovskaia* factory, located in Reutovo, in the Moscow hinterland. The memory and traces of this Turkmen connection in Reutovo still seem to be alive.<sup>75</sup> The *Reutovskaia*, which included both spinning and weaving, became available to the Turkmen SSR in the 1924-1925 economic year, later than Bukhara had acquired the *Zaraiskaia*. Like the latter, the *Reutovskaia* factory served as a training ground for the first cadres of Turkmen specialized workers.<sup>76</sup> This role was implicitly celebrated in Dziga Vertov's 1926 film, *Sixth-Part of the World*.<sup>77</sup> In 1925, the Turkmen republic also started developing successful plans to establish a first cotton textile plant on its own territory, parallel to the construction of the Fergana factory.

### 3.2 Red Orient's Russian factories

The importance of the *Zaraiskaia* factory was not only that this was the first plant around which the Bukharan trust took shape. More than the other factories *Red Orient* acquired or rented in the following years, the *Zaraiskaia* had an important political function: it was conceived as a "school" for the preparation of the first generation of native Central Asian (Bukharan, then Uzbek) skilled industrial workers. The Uzbek republican VSNKh started maneuvering in this sense in October 1925; the first one hundred young people were sent for training to the Riazan' province in 1926. The relevance of this training initiative for the intended future of the Uzbek SSR was highlighted by the visits Faizulla Khojaev and Yuldash Akhunbabaev paid to this contingent of young people on their trips to Moscow. According to a commemorative publication some four decades later, the group of trainees consisted of both young men and women (one fifth of the total), aged between 16 and 19. A condition of enrollment was the ability to read, write, and express oneself in Russian. The composition of this group in terms of geographic provenance reflected the special connection between the *Zaraiskaia* factory and Bukhara. The trainees came largely from provinces that had been part

of the latter before the national delimitation, namely Zeravshan, Qashqa-Daria, and Surkhan-Daria – although some others were from Penjikent and Ura-Tepe.<sup>78</sup>

Another important textile mill, called *Krasnyi Uzbekistan*, was located in the Moscow region in what is nowadays the territory of the city of Chekhov.<sup>79</sup> It was also known by its pre-revolutionary name, *Veniukovskaia fabrika*, and included both spinning and weaving facilities. The plant used to belong to the Medvedev family of manufacturers. As other assets received by the Bukharan trust, this factory had been a victim of the general collapse of the textile sector in the civil war years. This is reflected in the records which the Moscow Council for the national economy (MSNKh) kept for 1921: production had plummeted and, although the number of workers did not diminish much, the number of working days was indeed very small. For instance, in July 1921, the days of *inactivity* were 26 – in practice, all the weekdays in the month. The summer of 1921 seemed to bring some relief, but the MSNKh noted at the beginning of 1922 that everything depended on the provisioning of raw materials, which was extremely discontinuous.<sup>80</sup> The *Veniukovskaia fabrika*, thus, was well on its way to being mothballed, cannibalized, or absorbed by other organizations, as happened to other textile plants.<sup>81</sup> *Red Orient* started counting the *Veniukovskaia* among its assets after October 1924 when it began renting it from the *Serpukhovskii* trust on the basis of a ten-year contract.<sup>82</sup> In 1925, its exact denomination showed that the *Veniukovskaia fabrika* specialized in weaving and printing cotton cloth, both chintz (*sitets*) and other kinds of fabric.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, *Red Orient* obtained the machinery and assets of a dyeing and printing factory close to the village of Fili (now incorporated in western Moscow), originally owned by a A.Yu. Efros. This factory, too, was about to be dismantled.<sup>84</sup>

Besides these assets, the now Uzbek trust tried renting a couple more textile plants, for reasons and with consequences which we will discuss below. Between 1924 and 1925, *Red Orient* rented a fourth factory in eastern Moscow (Kirpichnaia street), the *Blagushinskaia fabrika*. This had allegedly formerly belonged to a Rabinovich although another document mentions that it was part of the *Petrovskaiia Manufaktura*. In the mid-1920s, this factory was “owned” and managed by the MSNKh through the Moscow Textile Company (*Moskovskoe AO Tekstil'nogo Proizvodstva*). It consisted of both a weaving and a dyeing, twisting,

and finishing (mercerizing) department, but *Red Orient* was only interested in renting the second.<sup>85</sup> Although in mid-1924 this factory was regarded as “strategic” because of its twisting department, the available accounting materials were inadequate, which in turn made the assessment of its real potential problematic and might explain why *Red Orient* abandoned it fairly soon.<sup>86</sup> In April 1926, another organization took on the *Blagushinskaia* although it is unclear on whose behalf. We can be sure that in 1928 the factory began to be rented by the *Vigon'trest*, whose activity focused – as the name suggests – on wool rather than on cotton.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, at the end of 1924, *Krasnyi Vostok* rented a fifth factory from two private citizens, Costa and Kaulen (*Zubovskaia fabrika*, a weaving plant), in the Klin district, north of Moscow. It would dismiss it only one year later, though, in the framework of the same general reshaping of the *trest's* assets and activities which engulfed the *Blagushinskaia* factory.<sup>88</sup>

Some activities which had little or nothing to do with spinning or weaving also depended on the *Zaraiskaia fabrika*: a brick factory, a steam mill, a peat quarry, and, it seems, a couple of State farms (*sovkhozy*).<sup>89</sup> Much more relevant than these, however, were the many shares that *Red Orient* had in important local banks, such as *Mosgorbank* and *Nizhgorbank*, based in Moscow and Nizhnii Novgorod respectively, and in two federal banks, *Prombank* and *Vneshtorgbank*. The first of these two, or “Industrial Bank,” depended directly on Piatakov’s VSNKh and constituted, in a way, the latter’s “financial arm”; in 1926, *Red Orient* was severely indebted with it. The second depended on the people’s commissariat of international trade. Finally, we know that the *trest* “owned” some circulating capital (raw materials and ready products) and real estate in the Bukharan people’s republic, and later in the Uzbek SSR. At the beginning of 1925, these non-industrial real estate “properties” included seven concessionary “departments” (*otdelenia*), thirteen brand shops, and ten stalls (*Javki*).<sup>90</sup> All this seems to reflect the diversified interests of the trust – a diversification that some Soviet organs of economic and industrial governance may not have sympathized with.<sup>91</sup>

### *3.3 Business-to-business relations: first ambiguities*

In short, in the first years of activity, *Red Orient* consisted of two main textile plants, one (*Zaraiskaia*) devoted to spinning and weaving, and the other (*Veniukovskaia*) to weaving and printing. The latter was rented while the former used to belong to the original partner of the Bukharan people's republic, the *Egor'evskii trest*, one of the largest cotton textile producers in NEP Russia. A controversy arose almost immediately between the Bukharan People's Republic and its partner, which exemplifies both the complicated intersection between issues that were characteristic of all business and industrial enterprises in the early NEP period and the specificities of *Red Orient* as a "national" trust. It is therefore worth narrating this controversy in some detail.

Because of the widespread de-monetization of the economy after the revolution and civil war, the partnership of the *Egor'evskii* trust and *Red Orient* for the exploitation of the *Zaraiskaia* factory was based on the conferring of consumables. Yet while the BNSR immediately paid its share in raw cotton, the *Egor'evskii* trust apparently never conferred what it had promised (fuel, raw materials, and money). In addition, in January 1923, the *Egor'evskii* trust bought yarn at credit from the *Zaraiskaia* for an amount more or less equivalent to its participation in the equity of the *Bukharskaia manufaktura*. In practice, the *Egor'evskii* trust was assuming that it could borrow at leisure from the weaker Central Asian partner. In March, the management of *Red Orient* (which had by then supplanted the *Bukharskaia Manufaktura*) decided to retaliate by suspending its supply of yarn to the *Egor'evskii* trust. This dissolved the partnership between the two organizations despite the fact that the latter had an important participation in the former. By then, the *Egor'evskii* trust had paid less than two-thirds of its share of the stock capital; this resulted in a massive credit for *Red Orient*, to which one should add all the arrears for the unpaid yarn. A deliberation of the Presidium of the MSNKh (the Council for the National Economy of the Moscow region) allowed the *Egor'evskii* trust to pull out of *Red Orient* in mid-April 1923 while the Bukharan government agreed to "buy back" the latter's share by selling its yarn to the *Egor'evskii* trust at a 10 percent discount, starting in July 1923. All this meant that the Bukharan/Uzbek trust was intrinsically under-capitalized, not only because of the general scarcity of ready

money or bank credit, but also because of the asymmetry between the two partners: the big and Moscow-backed *Egor'evskii* trust clearly saw the *Zaraiskaia* factory as its own and still intended to integrate it in its own production chain. The obstinacy of the *Egor'evskii* trust in trying to receive yarn virtually for free (or at long-term credit) suggests that it was trying to compress its own costs at the expense of *Red Orient*, clearly caring little about the latter's viability. The decision of the MSNKh in this respect favored the stronger side. On the other stood the BNSR (and then the Uzbek SSR) which possessed very little economic leverage besides its own cotton production.

The controversy, however, did not end when the *Egor'evskii* trust relinquished its shares in *Red Orient*. One year later, in June 1924, the Bukharan trust announced that it had fulfilled its obligations towards its former partner and even claimed a credit of some fifty thousand rubles. The *Egor'evskii* trust replied that it was *Red Orient's* turn to be in debt by some seventeen thousand rubles. The two parts submitted this issue to the attention of the arbitration commission of the Labor and Defence Council (STO).<sup>92</sup> From *Red Orient's* point of view, this was not a very wise move. The result of the ensuing inquiry was that its books fell under the magnifying glass of the people's commissariat for the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (NKRKI, or Rabkrin).

#### **4. *Red Orient* under Bukharan rule**

Between 1924 and 1925, *Red Orient* was the object of two distinct inspections of the Rabkrin, which scrutinized the managers and their practices. The two inspections, however, had very different origins and motives. The Rabkrin was not acting on its own initiative but responding to calls for action from various actors concerned in the activity and destiny of *Red Orient*. The peculiar situation of this trust, its "national" nature, combined with the physical location of its factories in Russia – complicated the question of its management. The first Rabkrin inspection reflected the interests of the Bukharan government and its wish to link more tightly *Red Orient* with its own trade organization, Bukhgostorg. The second inspection, in all likelihood precipitated by the controversy with the *Egor'evskii trest*, was prompted by *Red Orient's* Russian

competitors. In this case, too, the “national” nature of *Red Orient* was relevant, as it could be wielded to deflect accusations of inefficiency and mismanagement. Both these episodes flesh out the relation that existed between the republican government and its “national” trust beyond what was reflected in shareholding schemes and formal resolutions.

#### *4.1 Micro-management and “Oriental” intrigues*

It is not easy to reconstruct the identity of the managers of the factories the trust controlled, and of *Red Orient* as a whole. As a general rule, at least until 1926, political credentials appeared more important than technical or managerial qualifications. In this, *Red Orient* was not different from many other Soviet enterprises, in particular in light industry, where shortcomings in the selection of leading staff can be explained by the Bolshevik scepticism towards managers in general.<sup>93</sup> The first chair of the governing body of *Red Orient* seems to have been one Aleksei Aleksandrovich Beliakov, at least in 1923 and for some part of 1924.<sup>94</sup> According to a different source, in 1924, the head manager of *Red Orient* was Ata-Khojaev (Pulatovich). Already a member of the central committee of the “Young Bukharans” since the late spring of 1917,<sup>95</sup> he had been in charge (ostensibly as deputy) of the internal affairs of the people’s republic until the summer of 1923 and then became its representative in Moscow. Ata-Khojaev had lost his post in the government of the BNSR as a consequence of the “purge” of the summer of 1923, which involved four ministers (or *nazirs*), including Abdalrauf Fitrat and Sattar Khojaev. They had been removed from government positions under different pretexts (e.g., “the surge of capitalist elements”), but essentially because of their “nationalist” inclinations, which Moscow, ostensibly, no longer tolerated. By moving to Moscow, Ata-Khojaev was not promoted; instead, he was physically removed from all direct opportunity to meddle with Bukharan affairs. In 1925, he was degraded to the role of assistant director of *Red Orient* though he managed, at the same time, to climb some steps of the ladder within the all-Union government.<sup>96</sup> Yet the source that relates this move is partly in contradiction with the signatures at the bottom of the balance sheet deposited in October 1925, where one F. Klimov was the chair of the direction, while

Rappoport, Sattar Khojaev, and a L. Gerzman were the other members of the board.<sup>97</sup> It may be that, in his quality as a representative of the Bukharan government in Moscow, Ata-Khojaev was responsible for the smooth functioning of the trust, without actually being the chairman of its board. Whatever the decision on this specific question, it seems fair to state that *Red Orient* remained quite strongly under the influence of the leadership of the Bukharan people's republic until at least 1926. It is interesting, in this respect, that documents dated 1925 still refer to it as a "Bukharan" (not an "Uzbek") trust. It was this Bukharan leadership, which included representatives of the local merchant class, that handled Beliakov and, through him, the Russian factories of *Red Orient*. While many of the managers and cadres on the spot remained Russian, European, or Jewish, they answered to the Bukharan government (and then, to Bukharan elements in the Uzbek government) directly or through the representative in Moscow. In this, the republican leadership was ready to employ tools for political and economic control that had emerged at the all-Union level, namely the vigilance of the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Rabkrin), in order to influence the fate of the trust and, if necessary, to discredit the managers.

At the beginning of 1924, *Red Orient* received a first visit by a commission of Rabkrin experts. This was anything but the result of an initiative by the "central" government in Moscow to strengthen its control of assets belonging to a "peripheral" republic; instead, the Bukharan *nazir* of industry and trade, Atabaev, had requested such auditing (*revizia*) of the trust's books. It was the government of a "friendly" republic eliciting help from the central government of the Union to exert some control over the way its own "patrimony" in European Russia was managed. After all, this was a way to reduce control costs for Bukhara. Yet the Bukharan government (the council of *nazirs*) was not abstractly worried about *Red Orient's* bookkeeping. They were more concerned about something closer to their hearts: the relations between the trust and their own State trade organization, Bukhgostorg. In its business with the latter, *Red Orient* acted both as a producer selling its output and an intermediary dealer – a role that the original denomination of the *Russko-Bukharskaia Manufaktura* clearly specified.

The *nazirs'* grievances, on the basis of which the Rabkrin commission was intervening, went well beyond accounting but invested the business relations between *Red Orient* and Bukhgostorg more generally. First, it appeared that the prices of *Red Orient's* products and those the latter imposed for commodities it had purchased elsewhere were too high, surely higher than those of the all-Union Textile Syndicate (VTS). Hence, Bukhgostorg did not manage to sell the goods it received from the trust at prices high enough to cover its own costs, which contributed to the growth of its deficit. Second, *Red Orient* was taking little account of the preferences of the Bukharan market, which made the task of the State trade organization even more difficult.<sup>98</sup> The question was whether prices were too high because of high costs of production or because the trust was milking lucrative margins in its trade with Bukhgostorg. Even when they were commenting on *Red Orient's* production, though, the attention of Rabkrin inspectors remained focused on business-to-business relations and on pricing policies between the Bukharan trust and its partners. In its first auditing of the trust, the Peasants' and Workers' Inspection essentially bypassed issues related to labor and technology.

The inspectors started by exposing a matter of fact: for various reasons, including the original under-capitalization, the assets of the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* were not used to their full capacity. This happened because the factory had remained closed for many years, some of the machinery probably needed repair, and spare parts were hard to obtain. But it was also the result of bad managerial choices. For instance, it seems that the management had used the lack of adequate supplies of yarn to justify the frequent interruptions which affected the weaving department, but this was hard to defend if, as it was the case, the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* was spinning its own yarn. The Rabkrin audit suggested the integration of these two functions and the use of the available capital to its full capacity to keep the impact of some costs (especially fuel) at bay.

To some extent, though, the lack of integration between spinning and weaving was not the managers' fault but arose from a structural deficiency of the factory itself: the latter did not, indeed, produce ready-to-weave yarn, but a semi-finished yarn, which needed to be processed by sub-contractors (*kontragenty*). This happened because some of the factory's textiles were not sold to the final

consumers but instead to other businesses in charge of finishing, dyeing, and printing them. These partners would not have accepted supplies of inferior quality (for instance, cloth made out of badly twisted or non-mercerized yarn).<sup>99</sup> *Red Orient* found this situation difficult because sub-contractors were slow in their payments, which in turn affected, as we will see, the trust's own procurements. The Rabkrin commission suggested that, ultimately, the additional costs of this system would have been less than the revenue forgone if *Red Orient* had resigned itself to the production of inferior varieties of cotton fabric and sold it directly in the bazaars.

If “downwards” relations along the added-value chain were problematic enough, this was even truer for relations with other businesses “upwards,” namely the suppliers of ginned cotton to the spindling department of the *Zaraiskaia fabrika*. This was ostensibly a consequence of the management's inability to time their purchases of raw materials to profit from the lower prices at the beginning of the season (soon after the harvest). The high cost of raw materials, then, was one of the reasons for the high cost (and price) of products. Being the victim of a constant lack of liquidity, the Bukharan trust did not have room to maneuver in timing its procurements and ended up buying either from “speculators” (on the private market) or at credit from the Bukhgostorg. Hence, the latter was not only paying the price of these higher costs by being unable to sell at convenient prices on the Central Asian market; it was also pouring money into *Red Orient*. As the auditors put it, in the receipts of transactions between Bukhgostorg and *Red Orient* “one hear[d] the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness about the failed payments of the factory for the cotton delivered [by Bukhgostorg]” [sic].<sup>100</sup>

In the end, the Rabkrin commission's report emphasized the top management's responsibility for this state of things. A.A. Beliakov, who was responsible for *Red Orient* in this phase, felt that the relations between the trust and the Bukharan government had frozen. He believed that the latter was targeting him personally and tried to persuade the Rabkrin inspectors of this. Yet, how dismissively one of these inspectors, Udal', considered Beliakov's victimizing (and rather “Orientalist”) paranoia is clear from the following quotation:

Talking to me, A.A. [Beliakov] expressed the opinion that in Bukhara there is a plot against him [*protiv nego v Bukhare intriga*]. In conscience, I don't think so. That the climate is clearly not in *Red Orient's* favor, this is true. But one should not forget that it is *Red Orient* that provides three quarters of the motives for this [...]. I absolutely do not think that a plot was spun especially against Beliakov.

Udal', who had travelled to Bukhara, knew perfectly well what the real reason for the *nazirs'* coldness was: "One must look for the reasons of this aversion in the relations between *Red Orient* and Bukhgostorg. The latter has categorically decided to have nothing more to do with *Red Orient*, until the liquidation of all debts."<sup>101</sup> Apparently, Beliakov was doing little to pull the Bukharan trust out of this awkward situation; his management style was very ineffective, at least according to the commission. This is hardly surprising if, as it seems, his main qualification was that he had signed up to the Bolshevik party early in his life.

He [*scil.* Beliakov] feels as if he were in Christ's bosom – for everything, it is Beliakov who answers. Beliakov, the tradesman; Beliakov, the production manager. Beliakov [runs] at the meeting and at the assembly; Beliakov [goes] down to the shopfloor, and everywhere's Beliakov! In the end, comrade Beliakov does not notice those mistakes and shortcomings that can be seen everywhere and on all sides, because one can never check [at the same time] on oneself and on others.<sup>102</sup>

The inspectors concluded that all sorts of shortcomings marred the activity of *Red Orient*; these shortcomings pertained to the production itself, to the trust's relations with its suppliers, and to the management in general. Interestingly, the commission seems, from the beginning, to have excluded the hypothesis that this situation also depended on inefficiencies on the side of Bukhgostorg itself. In this, Rabkrin was probably listening to the suggestions of the Bukharan *nazirs* who were keen on protecting their republican trade organization rather than their textile trust and were probably aiming at strengthening their control over the trust.

This inquiry marked the beginning of Beliakov's downfall. In his defense, Beliakov could state that, despite the negative conjuncture of 1923 for the textile sector in general, *Red Orient* had performed relatively well and even managed to make some profit. If this were true, Beliakov would have been a sacrificial victim immolated to satisfy Bukhara and the Bukhgostorg. All that the Rabkrin commission had discovered was plausible and quite possibly true. But how was it possible that *Red Orient* was making profits, when its production costs were so high that its output cost more than the VTS's textiles? The truth is that such profits were not assured: much depended on how (and, above all, *by whom*) the balance sheets were compiled. Moreover, even if they existed, they probably depended more on *Red Orient's* activity as a trading company than on its industrial production. Such trading activity, however, came under the magnifying glass of another Rabkrin inspection. Because of it, *Red Orient* had to defend itself with the help of the Uzbek government in a way that reveals the importance of its "national" nature.

#### *4.2 Red Orient between trade and industry*

If it was the Bukharan government that prompted the first inspection, economic governance organs residing in Moscow influenced the other, almost at the same time and pertaining to the same period. Although in principle this second one was a "routine" inspection, it surely took into account the interests of other textile trusts of the Moscow region and European Russia. In other words, if *Red Orient's* stakeholders backed the first inquiry, the second voiced the various wishes and complaints of its competitors. What both groups shared was the resentment against some practices that were allegedly incompatible with the "values" of the socialist economy: the fact that accusations against *Red Orient* could be very different, and even completely opposed, though, illustrates the pliability of those "values" and the way economic actors could yield them against each other in any of the many institutional forums the Soviet system provided, including the Rabkrin. The second inspection, however, dug more deeply than the first in its effort to reveal structural inefficiencies in *Red Orient's* production. These shortcomings differed from those visible in textile factories during NEP more in their scale than in their nature.

The inspection started by looking at *Red Orient's* trade activity. Already in May 1924, the control office of the Moscow stock exchange (*birzha*) had written to the Rabkrin to denounce the fact that *Red Orient* had been trafficking in goods other than the cotton cloth, or cotton yarn, it was supposed to produce. In addition – they wrote – it was partly thanks to these businesses “on the side” that the trust was sometimes selling its products at prices lower than those decided on the stock exchange itself (*kotirovannye tseny*). This had led to what the disgruntled accusers considered disloyal competition – or, more exactly, dumping.<sup>103</sup> In practice, as the Moscow stock exchange itself admitted, *Red Orient's* management was doing nothing but behaving as it would have done before the Bolshevik revolution: besides what was necessary for its own production (raw materials, energy, etc.), the trust also bought and sold rice, kerosene, mineral oil, and even raw cotton, sometimes using it for swap operations against its own cloth production. In this way – by means of combining the production of cotton cloth with the traditional operations of a merchant house – *Red Orient* had been managing to reduce the amount of idle liquidity.<sup>104</sup> This may have displeased some of the other trusts and trade organizations who participated in the Moscow stock exchange. At the same time, though, *Red Orient* kept selling its own textile products at prices higher than the official ones, as it had done with Bukhgostorg. This was a very different practice, which people's commissariat for internal trade (Narkomvnutorg) considered “economically inadmissible.”<sup>105</sup>

The original denomination of *Red Orient* included the term “trade.” This detail, and a specific paragraph in its statute, could indeed have served as a justification that this trust sold (and bought) at prices higher than those fixed by the Narkomvnutorg or developed a speculative trading activity “on the side.” However, this discussion did not concern *Red Orient's* trading activity as such, but the fact that it took place at unregulated prices.<sup>106</sup> The trust, however, had little interest in trading at the official prices. That *Red Orient* looked at the private sector more than at state organizations is clear from the fact that, out of the contracts it had signed until early 1925, 62% were concluded with private subjects, 21% with state organs, and the rest with the cooperative network.<sup>107</sup> Trade at unregulated prices was mentioned by the statute, but only the *Bukharan*

Economic Council had approved the latter. This meant that *Red Orient* could trade at prices other than those the Narkomvnutorg had established but *only* in deals with subjects of the Bukharan people's republic. If it wanted to do so in the USSR at large, the statute had to receive the Narkomvnutorg's endorsement – which was unlikely. In this respect, the accusations to which the Rabkrin was reacting seemed grounded.

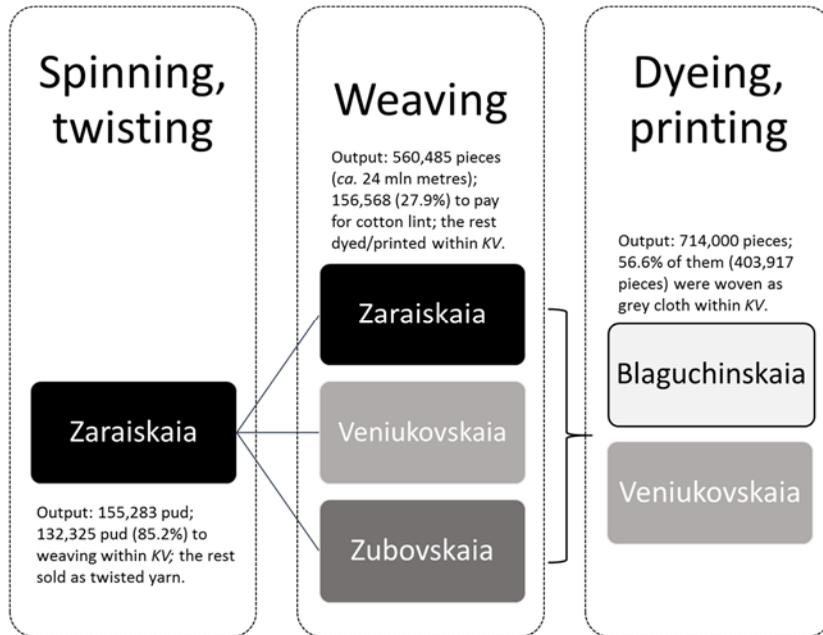
There was more, though, in the allegation of “economically inadmissible” practices. Besides these irregularities in the trading activity of the Bukharan trust, and looking for motives for them, the Rabkrin noted shortcomings in the production itself. The first inspection of 1924 had already mentioned some of them (procurements, under-utilization of the machinery), and it appears that Beliakov had found a remedy. All in all, the conclusions this second inspection reached in 1925 echoed those of its predecessor: *Red Orient* had high costs of production, and it had managed to remain afloat so far either by transferring them onto the Bukharan trade organization or other purchasers by means of higher prices or by “trading on the side” in various goods, thereby securing extra income. Yet the circumstances and reasons for these higher costs, implicit in the 1924 report, became explicit in 1925: technology and industrial organization ceased to be relevant in the narrow framework of the relations with the Bukhgostorg and became an object of attention as such. The second Rabkrin inspection, influenced by allegations by Moscow-based organizations, went well beyond the assessment of *Red Orient's* trade practices and, with the pretext of looking for reasons for these allegations, unearthed a series of shortcomings in the way its production was organized.

First, labor was too abundant relative to capital: the number of workers for each one thousand spinning reels was higher in the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* than in any other textile factory with the exception of silk-processing ones (which used different technology). Moreover, while a few trusts had managed to curtail this number throughout the 1923-1924 economic year, *Red Orient* did not distinguish itself in this direction. The situation in weaving was not dissimilar: *Red Orient* used more labor, and, as a result, the productivity per worker (one eight-hour shift), as measured in meters of cloth, was about 5 percent lower than in the *Krasno-Presnenskii* and *Serpukhovskii* trusts.<sup>108</sup> In addition, the 3547 workers of

the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* (out of 3695 employees) earned on average around 17 percent more than the standard average salaries for the USSR, probably because of the high percentage of workers of the “upper ranks” (level 4 ½ or 5).<sup>109</sup>

Second, between 1924 and 1925, as we know, *Red Orient* had concluded a series of agreements to expand its production by acquiring more industrial plants. More exactly, it had started renting the *Veniukovskaia*, the *Blagushinskaia*, and the *Zubovskaia* factories. The idea was probably to reduce costs (including transaction costs) and improve quality through vertical integration: if the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* and the *Zubovskaia* both spun and wove, the *Veniukovskaia* would print that cloth, and the *Blagushinskaia* would twist, mercerize, and dye the yarn required for weaving it. These plans for “vertical” integration corresponded to what the first Rabkrin inspection suggested and were quite brilliant, on paper. If one is to believe Fayzulla Khojaev’s proud words, in the 1924-1925 economic year, 85.2 percent of the yarn woven by the *Zaraiskaia*, *Zubovskaia*, and *Veniukovskaia* factories was spun by the *Zaraiskaia* itself, and more than half of the grey cloth dyed or printed by the *Veniukovskaia* and *Blaguchinskaia* factories was produced within the trust (Fig. 1).<sup>110</sup> The problem was that the newly acquired factories reproduced some of the shortcomings of the *Zaraiskaia*: if in the latter the roof was in bad condition, in the *Blagushinskaia* chemical substances were simply stored outdoors. In the *Veniukovskaia* factory (which was faring much better than the rest), the printing machinery was also under-utilized by 30 percent; in the other two, management was opaque, and even the renting contracts were so “legally illiterate” that the trust had to rewrite them again and again.<sup>111</sup>

**Fig. 1** – *The integration of the cotton added-value chain in Red Orient.*



The inefficiencies that the Rabkrin inspection unearthed posed some important problems of responsibility, both for the management on the spot (Beliakov) and, on a political level, for the Bukharan (by then, Uzbek) government. Beliakov, against whom the Bukharan leadership had not yet taken any measures, had ostensibly decided what to rent without consulting the republican organs; he had therefore violated the statute. He tried to defend himself in two ways. He claimed that he had kept Fayzulla Khojaev, instead of Atabaev, informed of his moves. Nobody seemed to accept his version of the facts, as nobody had taken his allegations about a plot against him seriously some time before.<sup>112</sup> And he also used a typical Soviet discursive strategy: he put forward the political merits of the trust and, not without patronizing tones, recalled shortly before his dismissal that *Red Orient* had done much for the working class. In Zaraisk, this help had taken the form of new or restored

lodgings for more than 600 people and decent sanitary facilities (running water and heating) and at approximately one-third of the usual cost per square meter in the Moscow region – which casts some doubt on the quality of the workers' houses and dorms (*kazerny*). Beliakov also pointed at educational facilities for the local workers, for Bukharan trainees, and even an orphanage.<sup>113</sup>

In sum, the routine Rabkrin inspection of 1925 revealed the situation of *Red Orient* as a “national” trade-and-industry enterprise, relative to the rest of the textile sector in the Moscow area at the eve of the years of “high NEP” and at the moment of its transition from the Bukhara people’s republic to the Uzbek SSR. Such position was one of weakness, *vis-à-vis* the Moscow stock exchange as well as the major trusts which voiced their concerns through it. *Red Orient* was inefficient not only in its transactions with both suppliers and clients (as the first Rabkrin inspection noted), but also in the way it organized the combination of labor and capital. The attempt to integrate the main phases of textile production by renting a few additional plants, however, was undermined from the beginning both by the plants' decayed state and the ambiguous ownership of such project of integration. While Fayzulla Khojaev implicitly endorsed the renting of three additional factories, the tepid attitude that met Beliakov’s attempt to justify his decision by calling Fayzulla Khojaev himself in cause suggests that, while the three factories represented a useful resource for political propaganda, political and managerial responsibilities about their acquisition were a source of mild embarrassment. It is not by chance that most of *Red Orient*'s renting agreements would be discontinued almost immediately afterwards. While both the Rabkrin inspections could reveal problems in the organization of trade and production, responsibilities and recipes for change remained a matter of negotiation between the management and the major stakeholder, namely the Bukharan leadership in the government of the BNSR and of the Uzbek SSR.<sup>114</sup>

#### *4.3 What the auditors saw*

Besides Rabkrin’s reports, a diagnostic tool to understand whether Beliakov was doing well or not was, of course, the balance sheets for *Red Orient* in the years between 1923 and 1927. These balance sheets were established with the

involvement of Rabkrin auditors, who intervened as inspectors and certifiers. Close examination of the balance sheets, however, reveals that their drafting process was far from a technical endeavor: the balance sheets were as much a matter for negotiation as the decision to rent new factories or approve a new industrial plan. Though the available documentation remains fragmentary, it is worth looking at how numbers were put together and agreed upon in order to understand how Rabkrin participated in all this and how it was, all in all, sensitive to “political” arguments (such as those mobilized by Beliakov) and to “national” ones (such as those the Bukharan, then Uzbek, leadership could wield to protect their interests).

Not only were some balance sheets imprecise and manipulative; the choice of *which* balance sheet one would look at is also challenging. For instance, while for the economic year (October to October) 1924-1925 the balance sheet that the top management undersigned and one Rabkrin auditor endorsed (after Beliakov had quit) are identical to the kopek, for 1923-1924 we have very different versions. In general chronological order, in the first version the income was a fabulous 1,371,599 rubles;<sup>115</sup> after the Rabkrin intervention, the bottom line marked a deficit of some forty-eight thousand rubles,<sup>116</sup> which would soon transmute into a 134,233 ruble gross income.<sup>117</sup> Finally, there was an ecumenical version in which the balance was in perfect parity.<sup>118</sup> To understand how this was possible, and to apprehend the underlying negotiations between stakeholders, one needs to go through the documents step by step. Doing so will reveal how the balance sheets for *Red Orient*, especially in the crucial year 1923-1924, are not a diagnostic tool for the health of the trust or for the responsibilities of its managers. On the contrary, the way the balance sheets were put together (which includes authorship, timing, and the decision to publish them or not) is, rather, a diagnostic tool for power relations between the Bukharan government, the management of its trust in Russia, and Soviet control agencies (e.g., Rabkrin). It is not at the balance sheets that we should look to understand whether Beliakov was wrongly dismissed or whether Fayzulla Khojaev was in good or bad faith when he commented on the results of “vertical integration” between the factories of *Red Orient*.

The first suspicious circumstance lay in the fact that the approval of these balance sheets only started when more than twelve months had elapsed since the end of the economic year in question: snapshots of the situation on October 1, 1924 were available only at the beginning of 1926, more or less at the same time as those for the following economic year. The Rabkrin had noted the abysmal state of accounting in 1923; on top of that, whatever the existing data may have shown in October 1924, there had been plenty of time to manipulate them between then and January 1926. This procedure has left little or no paper trail, but it is plausible that the highest estimate of *Red Orient's* income was indeed the first one, and it was put together for the benefit of the Moscow Tax Commission. We have Beliakov's word on this point, and he would have had no reason to lie on this specific aspect.<sup>119</sup> It is true that the trust's managers and accountants may have wished to underestimate its income for fiscal purposes, but the wish to show that the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* and the trade department were doing well in the first year of activity could have balanced this temptation. Moreover, *Red Orient* may have had no time to prepare anything reliable while the Tax Commission (unlike the VSNKh) could not wait for further controls to be carried out.

Then came the Rabkrin auditors who saw a version of the balance sheets which has not survived but which other documents mention. The Rabkrin experts found that the circulating capital (raw materials, semi-finished, and finished products) was overestimated; they also downsized the amount relative to the repairs to the *Zaraiskaia fabrika*, and revised the estimate of errors and omissions (*summy do vyiasnenia*). All this was quite straightforward, and the Uzbek VSNKh itself did not hesitate to accept these changes and to admit some of the shortcomings of the earlier version. But one specific point was more controversial: the ascription of "provisions for liabilities and charges" (*fond rezervnyi*) for some 630 thousand rubles. "Provisions" (or "reserves," as they are sometimes, though less correctly, called) are sums of money that a company sets aside for charges or risks likely to materialize after the conclusion of the economic year. They appear in the balance sheets as liabilities (*passiv* in Russian) and in the expenses (*debet*) side of the income statement. The majority of Soviet balance sheets in this period do not include an income statement, only a balance sheet, and it will be on the latter than one needs to focus.<sup>120</sup> There was

considerable confusion over whether, and where, these “provisions” should be registered. It seems that the trust, with the support of the Uzbek VSNKh, had made an attempt to flip them from the expenditures to the receipts side in the income statement (and, one supposed, from liabilities to assets in the balance sheet). The argument they ostensibly used to justify such a heterodox operation was that the “provisions” had been set aside in 1922-1923 when the accountants had indeed registered them as liabilities. However, no documentation existed for 1922-1923, so nobody could verify whether this had been the case, and even then, the maneuver would have been scarcely justifiable. The Rabkrin inspectors insisted on bringing the provisions back to the liabilities side; this decision erased the income (which, according to this draft, would have been around 582 thousand rubles) and set the final result as a forty-eight thousand rubles deficit.<sup>121</sup>

Naturally, this went against the desiderata of the Uzbek VSNKh, which chose, however, to comply. Beliakov’s reaction was far less composed, possibly because his job depended on the bottom line on the balance sheet. He claimed, in 1926, that the liabilities contained all sorts of items that did not belong there and that these “faked” liabilities approached 700 thousand rubles. Had the inspectors left them out, the result would have been much closer to the very high income estimate he had supplied to the Tax Commission earlier. That Beliakov himself was not very sure of this specific argument is patent from the fact that the Tax Commission was only ancillary to his many “political” arguments mentioned above. There was little he could do, though, since he had lost his chairmanship in May 1925. Khal’fin and Sheshunov, who had been the trade manager and the head accountant under Beliakov’s chairmanship, had been prosecuted although they were cleared in the end.<sup>122</sup> The first and second Rabkrin inspections had found Beliakov’s management inadequate – although Bukhara hesitated for quite a while before dismissing him. In this sense, the discovery of this massive over-estimation of the income of the trust may have been decisive in tilting the balance against him.

A new team, led by a F. Klimov, and including E. Rappoport and a V. Moszhukin as head accountant, replaced Beliakov and his acolytes in the last months of 1925. The Bukharan on the team, Sattar Khojaev, joined them shortly afterwards, probably between January and March 1926. This team undersigned a

further version of the balance sheet of *Red Orient* for 1923-1924, which the all-Union VSNKh subsequently approved on January 21, 1926 and then published on February 12 in the official *Torgovo-Promyshlennaia Gazeta*.<sup>123</sup> This time, the provisions appeared as liabilities, as the Rabkrin inspection had recommended, but receipts still exceeded expenditures by a substantial amount. The bottom line signalled an income of 134,233 rubles before taxation. The official balance was far less optimistic than what Beliakov had proposed and took the Rabkrin audit into account *to some extent*: it retained the principle (the ascription of provisions as liabilities) but tinkered with numbers enough to avoid ending up with a deficit.<sup>124</sup> The new management, therefore, ignored part of the recommendations of the Rabkrin audit and moderated others, yet they did not pay for it, and the Rabkrin's auditors did not intervene to challenge this version, which became official. Although we do not know exactly why, or how, this is revealing of the relations between Rabkrin and the trust. Possibly because of an intervention of the all-Union VSNKh, which checked what was published in the *Torgovo-Promyshlennaia Gazeta*, Klimov and the rest of the new management were able to opt for a compromise between the Rabkrin's requests and the interests of their major stakeholder. Beliakov's departure might have facilitated their task since such a compromise could then pass for a political decision in Bukhara's favor, rather than for indulgence towards sloppy management. Still, this is matter for speculation; the sources are silent about how, in practice, the official balance sheet was adjusted mid-way. What the sources do show is that *Red Orient* received kid glove treatment, but exactly why is uncertain. A circumstantial, albeit plausible, reason is that *Red Orient* was a "national" trust and therefore had a strong political and symbolic value both for Moscow and Bukhara.

The importance of the image of *Red Orient* as a "national" enterprise is confirmed by another circumstance. The one discussed above, characterized by a reasonable income, was the balance sheet for *Red Orient* in 1923-1924 that was published in the official newspaper of the VSNKh. For the internal consumption of the new management and the Rabkrin, however, there existed a further version of the balance sheet, which ended the year in perfect parity.<sup>125</sup> Unlike the other versions, this balance sheet was linked to the one for the following year (which ended in October 1925), during which bookkeeping was probably more

consistent. It was this version that concluded the paper trail of the Rabkrin inspection, and it was from this document that the new industrial plan for *Red Orient* moved. Although it was less severe in its conclusions than the first product of the Rabkrin inspection (the one that had cost Beliakov his job), it was not published. For everybody outside the direct stakeholders of the trust, *Red Orient* was moderately successful even during the dramatic year of the “scissors crisis.”

In sum, the analysis of the extant balance sheets for *Red Orient* in 1923-1924 is suggestive of two circumstances. First, bookkeeping and accounting in 1923-1924 were patchy, not only because of the shortcomings of the trust’s staff but also because of the peculiarities of that year, such as the monetary reform of early 1924. In the absence of close studies of Soviet accounting at the time, it is hard to say whether this was a generalized or an uncommon phenomenon – although one would reasonably incline for the former. But general economic circumstances alone do not explain the enchainment of balance-drafting, inspections, and changes in the management. Instead, such enchainment reflects a process of negotiation between Rabkrin and *Red Orient*’s various stakeholders – a process that led to greater control of the trust’s Russian factories while avoiding damages to its reputation. The first balance sheet after the Rabkrin inspection led to Beliakov’s dismissal but remained unpublished. We do not know if it was meant to be a political tool in a reshuffling of the trust’s leadership, but it surely had that effect. Neither it nor the latest versions were published, though, or circulated beyond the shareholders and the organs of State control. The balance meant for external consumption was instead slightly positive, despite the turbulent year it referred to. It was meant to reassure clients, competing trusts, and above all, suppliers and to invite confidence in the new administrators who had publicly undersigned it.

## **5. *Red Orient* as a national enterprise**

The period after the Rabkrin inspection of 1925 marked important changes for *Red Orient*: first, the reshuffling of its leadership; then, a new industrial plan inspired by principles of rationalization and cost-cutting, as the Rabkrin recommended; last, a greater engagement of the major stakeholder (by then, the

government of the Uzbek SSR) to protect its business interests, improve results, and strengthen the link between the textile trust, with its Russian factories, and the Uzbek cotton sector. Such engagement – and the investment of political capital that went with it – was somewhat different from that of the leaders of the BNSR in previous years. The *nazirs* had called for the intervention of the Peasants’ and Workers’ Inspection to protect the interests of its *trade* organization, Bukhgostorg, and might have toasted at Beliakov's dismissal. Despite the continued centrality of Bukharans in dealing with *Red Orient*, the Uzbek government increasingly considered the trust crucial for its *industrial* interests and strove to orient its purchases, its production, and its sales in a way that would favor the republic’s national interests. It was ready to play the “national” card *vis à vis* Moscow-based institutions, despite and against the fact that the management of the trust itself was sometimes following different incentives. These attempts increasingly clashed against the move towards centralized industrial planning and the syndicalization of trade and ultimately metamorphosed into the revived project for a textile plant in the Uzbek SSR itself.

### *5.1 New wine in old barrels: the 1925 industrial plan*

Beliakov was replaced by F. Klimov (chair of the board), E. Rappoport (a new accountant), and a Bukharan, Sattar Khojaev. While we know little about Klimov and the new accountant, the choice of Sattar Khojaev and Rappoport raised some objections. In particular, the Rabkrin received an anonymous letter in 1926 in which Rappoport was described as “having just come out of prison” and Sattar Khojaev as “a notorious thief, expelled from the Bukharan territory, an infamous [former] people’s commissar of finance, who ha[d] plundered the national riches of the Bukharan republic.”<sup>126</sup> This latter allegation seemed to have its roots in the fact that Sattar Khojaev, formerly head of the Financial Administration of the BNSR, had gone on trial in 1923 for embezzlement of public money. His prosecution and his exclusion from the Bukharan government, however, must be seen as part of a wider purge which occurred in June 1923, as we saw with Ata-Khojaev. As had happened to him, by becoming part of the team in charge of the

re-launch of *Red Orient*, Sattar Khojaev was given a chance to reinvent himself, although physically far from Bukharan (by then: Uzbek) politics.<sup>127</sup>

Some of these accusations may have been Beliakov's last poisoned gift, but they also reflect the controversial nature of the new management. Klimov and his fellows, possibly pressured by the Rabkrin, had taken some draconian measures: they reduced the number of management staff, dismissed all the various *sovkhozy* that depended on the trust, and increased the general productivity of labor in both weaving and spinning (but without lowering the number of workers per reel or loom). They also refused to continue to rent the *Blagushinskaia* and *Zubovskaia* factories, which were in such pitiful condition that *Red Orient* had trouble transferring them to other organizations, either directly or through the MSNKh.<sup>128</sup> This marked the end of the "vertical integration" of different phases of the manufacturing chain – an end which Beliakov had partly anticipated when, already fallen in disgrace, he was looking for rapid sources of cash: he advertised *Red Orient's* yarn, instead of using all of it on the trust's own looms (see Fig. 2 below, left).<sup>129</sup> The output grew, and so did the share of it which was sold to state organizations, which rocketed to 90.5 percent in the first six months after the Rabkrin audit's deliberations. Output sold through private channels plummeted to 9.5 percent, with sales in Uzbekistan accounting for more than half of it, and those in the former Khivan republic (where Soviet rule was little more than nominal) for as much as one-third.<sup>130</sup> Sales to the private sector further decreased to 3.1 percent for the fabric and 7.8 percent for the yarn in 1926.<sup>131</sup> The shift in the markets *Red Orient* was targeting was ambiguous: it is doubtful if the majority of its output even reached the Central Asian market. For one thing, the new management cut *Red Orient's* own warehouses and shops in Uzbekistan; the only real estate the trust retained was its prestigious Moscow office (*otdelenie*) on the Varvarka (in the *Gostinnyi Dvor*).<sup>132</sup>

The Rabkrin decision of June 1925 included directives on *Red Orient's* relations with both its suppliers and its "customers" – both seen from the viewpoint of the spinning, weaving, and printing sectors of the *trest*. Inevitably, the same problems that had characterized these relations in previous years would materialize again and emerged first in the production of yarn and then in the way *Red Orient* obtained non-dyed (grey) cloth (*surovye*) for printing. These issues

derived from the producers' (and consumers') difficulty in handling means of payment, which was a characteristic feature of the NEP economy. This difficulty could lead to additional transaction costs and indirect costs for the settlement of disputes. One way of dealing with this was to minimize monetary transactions by building up tight credit relations with one's suppliers. With the new industrial plan, *Red Orient* tried to do so, relying both on pre-existing ties with the *Egor'evskii* trust for the sale of yarn and on new agreements for this supply of grey cloth (*surovye*) for its printing sector. In one case, this strategy was successful; in the other, *Red Orient* succumbed.

The new chair of the board, Klimov, tried to minimize monetary transactions by pushing *Red Orient* to become a subcontractor for the printing of calicoes. This was the opposite of what the trust had attempted one year before when it had rented the *Blagushinskaia* factory. On the other hand, this was a strategy Beliakov himself had tried when he made a final desperate effort to balance the books for 1923-1924 by collecting orders for printing and dyeing cloth woven by other enterprises. According to the new plan, a way to maximize the use of the available machinery of the *Zaraiskaia* and *Veniukovskaia* factories without increasing the expenditure for raw materials would have been to operate on behalf of other enterprises. The *Veniukovskaia* would provide the raw materials (*daval'cheskii tovar*) itself: in this case, grey cloth.<sup>133</sup> This move would have helped the weaving and printing sectors, but it would not have simplified the life of the spinning one; moreover, it would have fragmented *Red Orient's* different activities even further. Last, Klimov's plan was about to fail, at least initially, because the suppliers of grey cloth were unwilling to subcontract the printing to *Red Orient*, given its recent track record (or what was known of it).<sup>134</sup> Despite this, this model seems to have worked, at least until the end of 1927 when *Red Orient* (and the *Veniukovskaia* factory in particular) found themselves again running the printing machinery below their full capacity because the non-dyed cloth promised by those multiple third parties had not been delivered.<sup>135</sup> The same bottlenecks evident in the first year and a half of activity of the trust came up again but perhaps reflect the inefficiency of the NEP system in allocating resources more than *Red Orient's* own shortcomings.

There was another way the scarcity of means of payment could be dealt with. Thanks to the complexity of Soviet bureaucratic architecture, this situation generated grey areas where, to paraphrase David Shearer, a good deal of “wheeling and dealing” could occur.<sup>136</sup> One could try to bypass or minimize monetary transaction, or one could appeal to administrative and political forums. The notion of “who owed what to whom” could become diluted, instead of emerging clearly as it would in a normal dispute resolution. The ambiguity and strain which surrounded debt-credit relations, however, could open up opportunities for advancing political arguments. In the controversy over the payment of yarn by the *Egor’evskii* trust, *Red Orient’s* adversary appealed to an administrative forum, which in turn created a window for the Uzbek SSR to defend its trust. The problems *Red Orient* was facing were old, as old as the controversy that opposed it to the *Egor’evskii*. The way the government of the Uzbek SSR intervened to defend the interests of its trust, however, was now different from what the BNSR had done, both for the intensity of such an engagement and for the language that framed it.

Since its origin, *Red Orient* had been selling much of its yarn production to the large and powerful *Egor’evskii trest*, which had been one of the founders of the former but had soon pulled out of it. The controversy that opposed the *Egor’evskii* and *Red Orient* was long-standing: when the new management came in after the Rabkrin inspection, the case was being reviewed by an arbitration commission of the all-Union Labor and Defence Council (STO in acronym). The way the commission and the Uzbek government handled this controversy exemplifies how nationality was used to influence the outcome of tensions between business partners who were otherwise hostile to each other.

In November 1925, in balancing the complex debt-and-credit relations that linked *Red Orient* and the *Egor’evskii* trust, the STO arbitration commission ordered *Red Orient* to pay some 144 thousand rubles – a considerable amount, more than double the income for the preceding economic year. The commission had no particular reason for animosity against the Uzbek trust; at the same time, it was taking a strong stance in favor of *Red Orient* about the supply of some textiles for the Solovki labor camp, which the OGPU considered inferior quality.<sup>137</sup> At this point, after this decision in favor of the *Egor’evskii* trust had become

public, the representative of the Uzbek SSR in Moscow (but, importantly, not the management of the trust) appealed against it, asking to curtail the amount due by about a third. The *Egor'evskii* resisted this attempt: in its view, the Uzbek government had no right to meddle in the affairs of the two companies who were the only subjects legitimately able to appeal the commission's decision. This episode came to an end only in February 1926, when another all-Union government commission ruled the protest of the Uzbek government out of order. However, this second commission decided against *Red Orient*, not because of the form of the first appeal by the Uzbek government (that is, not for the reason that the *Egor'evskii* had mentioned) but because of the content matter under discussion. Even more significantly, the commission ruled against the appeal of the Uzbek government, therefore recognizing that the Uzbek government *could* indeed appeal. In this way, it not only denied the validity of the opponent's formal exception; it also implicitly stated that it was acceptable for a republican government to intervene in support of its own national trust in all-Union forums of arbitration.<sup>138</sup>

In sum, the Uzbek government intervened to support its trust, using its political leverage even though the trust was, in theory, an autonomous organization. It did so despite the attitude of the management of *Red Orient* on the spot, which did not raise any objection to the commission's original deliberations. From the viewpoint of Moscow-based organs (but possibly thanks to Kuibyshev's personal involvement),<sup>139</sup> the all-Union STO, through its arbitration commission, did not exclude this possibility. This suggests that the Uzbek SSR regarded *Red Orient* as a strategic national asset and was ready to use its political weight within the Soviet system to assert this idea; it also suggests that the central organs, such as the STO, did not regard this behavior as abnormal. It is also true, though, that the "national card" alone was not an absolute trump: on the subject matter, the STO commission sided with the *Egor'evskii* trust nonetheless.

## 5.2 *Whose cotton? Procurements and sales.*

After the Rabkrin inquiry, *Red Orient* and the Uzbek government attempted to build new connections between the *trust* and the Central Asian market. The trust sometimes relied on the support of the politicians to foster its interests in this respect; in other cases, it was the republican administration that highlighted the special “national” nature of *Red Orient* in order to contain the influence of the Central Cotton Committee and other procurement agencies in the countryside. There were two closely connected terrains on which *Red Orient* portrayed itself (and was portrayed) as a “national” trust, endowed with a special liaison with Central Asia: the procurement of ginned cotton for the spinning sector of the trust (concentrated in the *Zaraiskaia* factory) and the distribution of textile goods to the peasants so that they were, in turn, encouraged to expand the cultivation of cotton. The confrontation between *Red Orient* and the Uzbek government on one hand, and the all-Union VSNKh and the Cotton Committee on the other, was part of a wider battle around the role of the latter in Central Asia, which took place between 1924 and 1927 and involved the Central Asian Bureau, as well as the banking sector.<sup>140</sup>

The national delimitation, more than the new industrial plan of 1925, changed the institutional chain through which any textile trust obtained ginned cotton. In addition, between 1923 and 1925, the way the cultivation of cotton took place in Central Asia and the way the peasantry sold their cotton harvest also underwent significant transformations. In the first years of its activity, *Red Orient* had to rely on private suppliers or, alternatively, on the Bukhgostorg. In 1925, and even more so later, the Central Cotton Committee (Glavkhlopkom) had managed to bring under its control the greater part of cotton production in the newly constituted Uzbek SSR, which was also a larger producer than the Bukharan people’s republic alone used to be. In the USSR, the Cotton Committee operated in practice (but not *de jure*) as a monopolist. The only possible alternative to the purchase of cotton from it, or from its republican branches, was to buy imported cotton from another organization, the all-Union Textile Syndicate (VTS in acronym). The VTS only allowed fifty-five days of credit to pay for the cotton while the Glavkhlopkom conceded delays up to three months. The management of *Red Orient*, though, qualified the Cotton Committee’s terms to

*Red Orient* as “literally extortionate” (*bukval’no kabal’nye*), if compared to those the Committee applied to other, larger textile trusts. This happened because *Red Orient* had to buy at credit because, as a consequence of its systematic undercapitalization, it did not possess enough liquidity to do otherwise. To buy at credit, the Uzbek trust had to recur to *Aziabank*, which provided the necessary guarantees, for instance on the trust’s letters of credit. *Aziabank’s* conditions were particularly harsh, especially because the bank used ginned cotton as collateral, transferring the additional costs (storage, etc.) to the debtor.<sup>141</sup> The Central Cotton Committee would have given up all additional banking guarantees it was asking from *Red Orient* on one condition: that *Red Orient* sold its entire textile production to the Cotton Committee itself so that the latter could distribute it to the peasants through the Committee’s own network.

After long hesitation, the board of *Red Orient* finally decided, in Autumn 1925, to embrace these conditions and to be supplied by the Central Cotton Committee with cotton from Fergana.<sup>142</sup> The trust, however, hoped that the Uzbek VSNKh would intervene to soften the Committee, given the republic’s role as a cotton producer – a hope that was unlikely to be fulfilled, as the relations between the Uzbek republic and the Khlopkom were not at their best in 1925 and 1926.<sup>143</sup> *Red Orient* was also expecting some help from the Uzbek government in its deals with *Aziabank*, not only on the side of cotton supplies but also for the distribution of its textile output in Central Asia. *Red Orient* was quite ready to use its position as a “national trust” of the Uzbek SSR as political leverage in its business negotiations, even when no Soviet state organs were involved (e.g., the STO). In dealing with the Cotton Committee, *Red Orient* was much more vocal and energetic than it had been against the *Egor’evskii* trust. It did not exert pressure directly but mobilized (or tried to mobilize) organs of the Uzbek SSR.

Conversely, the government of the Uzbek SSR tried to use *Red Orient* as a spearhead to regain some control over the destiny of the republic’s output of ginned cotton. In the name of the “Uzbekness” of the trust, in August 1926 the Uzbek Sovnarkom asked the all-Union VSNKh to allow *Red Orient* to buy cotton directly from the Uzbek branch of the Cotton Committee, *Uzbekkhhlopok*, instead of obtaining it through the centralized provisioning system. *Uzbekkhhlopok* was, in practice, the monopolist purchaser of all the raw cotton grown in the republic,

and it was in charge of its ginning, pressing, and shipping. But *Uzbekkhllopok*, unlike *Red Orient*, was not an authentic “national” enterprise; the participation of the Central Cotton Committee (and, through it, of the VSNKh) in its capital was higher than that of the Uzbek SSR itself. Instead, the Uzbek SSR had a firm grasp on *Red Orient*. The establishment of a special link between the “national” cotton procurement agency and the “national” textile industry (that is, between *Uzbekkhllopok* and *Red Orient*) would have indirectly allowed the Uzbek government to later exert more influence on the former by arranging prices, payment conditions, and so on. In addition, this link would have had a strong symbolic value by ensuring that at least a part of the republic’s cotton was spun and woven on the republic’s own spindles and looms, instead of getting lost in the cauldron of domestic and imported raw materials that the all-Union directorate for the textile industry (*Glavtekstil*) was managing. The VSNKh, the Labor and Defense Council (STO), and the all-Union Sovnarkom, though, rejected this proposal, ostensibly without explanation.<sup>144</sup> Such a move towards decentralization in the supply of textile raw materials was diametrically opposed to the plans of VSNKh, not only for *Red Orient* but also for other trusts. The attempt to link the Uzbek production of cotton as a raw material to the incipient Uzbek textile industry through the bias of a privileged link with the supposedly national procurement agency, *Uzbekkhllopok*, ultimately failed because, unlike *Red Orient*, *Uzbekkhllopok* was solidly in the hands of an all-Union organization, the very powerful Central Cotton Committee.

A further reason for trying to establish this link was the need to supply adequate textile goods, at the most appropriate time, for Uzbekistani rural consumers. In this respect, *Red Orient* and its Uzbek stakeholders were more successful. In particular, on the occasion of the harvest, Uzbek peasants received money they were not able to spend: a circumstance that generated conjunctural inflation. Furthermore, the absence of goods for purchase made the peasants wait for cotton prices to rise later in autumn and winter before selling their harvest and dissuaded them from sowing more cotton in the following spring. In sum, an adequate supply of palatable textiles was essential to recover and expand pre-war levels of raw cotton production in Central Asia. The Cotton Committee, and in particular *Uzbekkhllopok*, was responsible for this and had an interest in seeing

that the operation was successful. Yet besides the obvious difficulties in reaching out to the most remote localities and fighting against private retailers, *Uzbekkhopok* had to face the issue of the inferior fabric and cloth available to the peasants. In theory, the Uzbek trust *Red Orient* had specialized in weaving cloth for the Central Asian market, but this remained doubtful even after the Rabkrin audit of 1925. For instance, after June 1925, the trust stated that it would reorient its sales towards the Central Asian market, raising their share from 14.7 to 54.4 percent of the total output.<sup>145</sup> This represented a shift from what had been the practice, if not the official line, of the *trest* itself under Beliakov's management when the *Zaraiskaia* factory looked essentially at the Russian market, producing cloth "in a variety of superior Asian-style patterns" (see Fig. 2 below).<sup>146</sup> Later in 1926, though, the Uzbek government reported that *Red Orient* was still selling the majority of its output in European Russia. This statement might have been imprecise, but it reflected either the fact that *Red Orient's* production was scarcely visible on the Uzbek market or that the Uzbek government wanted its presence to grow. Other sources show that, if textiles from *Red Orient* managed to reach the Central Asian consumer, it was often through Russian-based private dealers or Russian trade organizations which had purchased it from one of the many concessionaries of the trust in European Russia.<sup>147</sup> With the new industrial plan of 1925, almost all these concessionaries (*otdeleniia*) closed down, which constituted both a challenge and an opportunity to sell to Central Asia more directly. At the same time, though, *Red Orient* had also sold its warehouses in Uzbekistan. A new strategy to make *Red Orient* textiles available to the Central Asian peasant was needed.

*Red Orient* could expand its distribution network in Central Asia, or it could stipulate contracts with Uzbek trade organizations -- for instance with Uzbektorg or the union of co-operatives (*Uzbekberlash*) -- or it could conclude deals with the organizations that carried out cotton procurements in the countryside so that its textile products could be available directly to the peasants these were crediting. This latter solution had one shortcoming: it would make *Red Orient* dependent on the same partner for both the supply of raw materials and the sales of its finished products. But it had many advantages too: only cotton organizations possessed a capillary presence on the territory, especially in

the Uzbek SSR; moreover, they had considerable liquidity and could pay *Red Orient* without asking for long credit.

This second point was particularly evident by comparison with its alternative: that of concluding deals with Uzbek trade organizations. Uzbektorg was systematically illiquid and its network was ineffective. It had accumulated debts with banks and other economic organizations, and in 1926 the only way out seemed to be its recapitalization, by which the Cotton Committee would have attracted it into its orbit. The co-operatives were in no better financial health.<sup>148</sup> Negotiations with these organizations started under the new board chaired by Klimov and implicitly aimed at the establishment of *Red Orient*'s "commodity base" (*tovarnaia baza*) in Tashkent.<sup>149</sup> Two principles inspired them and reflected the small room available for concessions:

- 1) in selling goods to Central Asian economic organizations, we will need to credit them only for up to 75 percent of their value, because the Central Asian market, overflowing with money at the moment of the raw cotton procurements, can easily pay for those goods in cash, provided that we get close to the consumers without intermediaries; 2) the conquest of the Central Asian market and the acquisition of a permanent set of costumers for *Red Orient*, [because] direct transactions with the latter on the ground will give it [*scil.* the trust] the opportunity to be less dependent on the trade policy of the above mentioned economic organization.<sup>150</sup>

As a result of these negotiations, by January 1926, *Red Orient* had already excluded Uzgostorg from the list of its local partners, allegedly because Uzgostorg refused to accept its conditions. *Red Orient* had also ruled out working with other organizations, such as the Uzbek silk *trest* (Turkshëlk). Discussions continued in early 1926, only with the Uzbek league of co-operatives, *Uzbekberliash*, and there, again, *Red Orient* tried to play the politics card. It asked the Uzbek VSNKh to exert pressure on *Uzbekberliash* so that it accepted its conditions and also on *Aziabank* in order to secure more credit for *Red Orient*'s own operations with the league of co-operatives.<sup>151</sup> For these reasons, by the 1926 cotton harvest, the

Uzbek council of people's commissars preferred a direct connection between *Red Orient* and the Cotton Committee for the distribution of the former's production.<sup>152</sup>

If *Red Orient* and its Uzbek stakeholders were not successful in establishing a link with the republic for the procurement of raw materials, they were relatively more successful in progressively orienting the trust's output towards the Central Asian market, although this had to be done through the Cotton Committee. This move towards the periphery, so to say, was part of a general reorientation process that *Red Orient* started in 1925 and continued in the following years. Based on the available balance sheets from 1923 to 1927, this seems to have been a wise choice. It was thanks to this move that the Uzbek trust managed to retain some margins of autonomy in the distribution of textiles on the Soviet internal market. The all-Union VSNKh, though, fiercely opposed these reorientation plans. In the first months of 1926, the VSNKh ordered an inquiry about the destinations of *Red Orient's* finished products which the trust had been unable to distribute since 1925. This inquiry allegedly unearthed an "unsatisfactory trade activity" where "work [was] taking place without any order," to the point that finished products never left the plant's sheds "despite the favorable market conjuncture and the increasing demand for manufactured products." Further, the VSNKh claimed that relations between the Uzbek trust and Uzbek trade organizations were somewhat neglected. Therefore, in May 1926, the VSNKh proposed that *Red Orient* transfer all its output to the VTS, which would distribute it in the Uzbek republic, not within, but on top of its dispatching ("import") plans. Moreover, the VSNKh threatened to take the management of *Red Orient* away from the Uzbek government if it did not quickly resolve the issue of accumulated excess finished products.<sup>153</sup> *Red Orient* evidently solved this problem under the new management of P.B. Rudini (surely not an Uzbek). The VSNKh's press organ, the *Torgovo-Promyshlennaia Gazeta*, had denounced the scandal of unsold stocks on May 22, but by the end of the same month, Rudini had managed to sweep them all away, thereby saving *Red Orient* from being severed from the Uzbek SSR. This is so extraordinary that one cannot help finding it suspicious.<sup>154</sup> This specific outcome, the alleged rapidity of the solution to the excess stocks problem, and the manifest satisfaction of the VSNKh

suggest that the question of excess stocks could have been a pretext to replace the management of the trust and, by these means, to discourage *Red Orient* from acquiring an additional factory.

In autumn 1926, again, the VSNKh prompted an offensive aiming at the “syndicalization” of all cloth and fabric sales. All trusts, in particular the smaller ones, had to start selling all their production to the VTS. This did not concern *Red Orient* specifically, as had been the case in the previous months, but it would have indirectly affected its attempts to orient its production to the Central Asian market through the cultivation of appropriate relations with local retail networks. If *Red Orient* managed to temporarily escape the “syndicalization,” it was paradoxically because of two of its weaknesses: first, it was so small that it managed to temporarily ignore the orders to confer its output to the VTS and to participate in its capital; second, its production costs were too high and led to prices well above the target set by VTS.<sup>155</sup> (The clear proximity between Rudini and the VSNKh might have helped, too.) In sum, at the end of 1926, *Red Orient* was allowed to continue its sales in Central Asia, as recognized under Klimov’s leadership because it was not worth the VSNKh’s energy to rein in such a small organization.

**Fig. 2 – Advertisements for Red Orient in the TPG.<sup>156</sup>**

**ПРАВЛЕНИЕ БУХАРСКИХ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫХ ПРОМЫШЛЕННЫХ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЙ**  
 придельно-тканцовой мануфактуры **„КРАСНЫЙ ВОСТОК“**

ФАБРИКИ: 1. „Красный Восток“. 1. Ханниковка крутильных (близ Венгор).  
 ЗАРАЙСН, МОСКВА, БУХАРА

**Изготавливает:** пряжу в 1 нитку от 10 до 44 номера включительно  
 в початках и муртах.

**Выпускает:** пряжу крученую в 2 нитки в муртах и на бобинах  
 (крейд-шпулях) для трикотажа и тканей.

**ТКАЦКОЕ ОТДЕЛЕНИЕ ВЫПУСКАЕТ**  
 хлопчато-бумажные ткани как крашенные, тиб и суровые.

**ПРАВЛЕНИЕ В МОСКВЕ:** Старо-Гостыный Двор, помещ. № 62.

<p><b>Телефоны:</b>                  Председателя Правления                  А. А. Волынов . . . . . № 2-13-54.                  Коммерческий директор                  Л. А. Халифа . . . . . № 2-14-68.</p>	<p><b>Тенущий счеты:</b>                  Московский Городской Банк . . . № 657.                  Российский Коммерч. Банк . . . № 80.                  Всенобанк . . . . . № 331.                  7290</p>
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**Правление „КРАСНЫЙ ВОСТОК“**  
 отделили ткацкое и мушкет в ход  
**СИТЦЕ-НАБИВНУЮ ФАБРИКУ**  
**„КРАСНЫЙ УЗБЕКИСТАН“**  
 (Б. Медведевых)  
 при станции Лопсия, Курской железной дороге.

Фабрика выпускает отделанную **ТКАНЬ И ПЛАТКИ** лучших и разнообразных **АЗИАТСКИХ РИСУНКОВ**. На фабрике работает высоко-квалифицированный колорист.

Коммерческим Отделом Правления **ОТКРЫТ**  
**ПРИЕМ ЗАКАЗОВ**  
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 Телеф. № № 2-14-68; 5-03-55.

### 5.3 A new Muscovite factory to satisfy Central Asian demand

*Red Orient's* negligible output, though, was also an obstacle for the trust's intention to orient its production to the Central Asian market because such output could satisfy only a fraction of the Uzbek domestic demand of textiles,

however good the distribution network might have become with the help of the co-operative network or through the Cotton Committee. Its production was little more than one-twentieth of the output of the largest textile trust of the Soviet Union at the time, the *Ivanovo-Vosnesenskii*, and little more than one-fifth that of its direct competitor, the *Egor'ev-Ramenskii* trust. Even more irritating was the comparison with the Turkmen textile trust – which was a more appropriate benchmark. *Turkmenmanufaktura*, as it was called, was similar to *Red Orient* in that its production was concentrated in the Moscow region (*Reutovskaia* factory), yet it produced almost twice as much cloth as its Uzbek equivalent.<sup>157</sup> It was natural that the trust itself, and the Uzbek government behind it, was looking for means to expand the output of printed and non-printed cloth. At first, though, they did not express a precise preference *where* this expansion should physically take place.<sup>158</sup>

Not far from the *Veniukovskaia* factory, *Red Orient's* flagship plant in the Moscow region, stood other factories and mills. One of them, the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia*, had been mothballed as early as 1921. Someone else might have coveted and managed to acquire it later in the early 1920s, but in 1925 it was again in the process of being dismantled; hence, it was reasonable that the Uzbek trust would try to acquire it or, at least, purchase its looms (for a total of some 900 units) which were then sitting idle in what was ostensibly a rotting building.<sup>159</sup> The Uzbek government supported *Red Orient* in this endeavor, particularly in its negotiations with the Economic Council of the Moscow region (MSNKh). The MSNKh was inclined to favor the larger *Egor'evskii* trust which was also active in the Moscow region and had, as we know, a long history of tense relations with *Red Orient*.

Negotiations with the MSNKh about the destiny of those 900 looms started in March 1925 but advanced slowly and finally came to a halt in 1926.<sup>160</sup> A series of local economic and political organizations, such as the *uezd* and *guberniia* sections of the trade union representing textile factory workers, as well as the planning commission of the Moscow *guberniia* (Gubplan), had approved the transfer of all the machinery of the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory to *Red Orient*. But more powerful patrons backed the MSNKh: the VSNKh and even more its chairman, É.I. Kviring. The latter intervened personally to favor the

*Egor'evskii* trust. In the summer of 1926, together with the Presidium of VSNKh, he swore that he would speak out in case the MSNKh stopped resisting the joint pressures of *Red Orient's* management and the Uzbek representative in Moscow, Rozental'. The controversy between the two sides lay in the interpretation of the task the all-Union plan for the textile industry had assigned to the trust in question. According to the Uzbek side, an upgrade of production capacity from 2000 to 2500 pieces per day was compatible with the plan while the MSNKh and its allies claimed that *Red Orient* had already exceeded its quota of production.<sup>161</sup>

It appears that, in the discussion about the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory's destiny, the bone of contention had more to do with perspective than numbers. The main argument *Red Orient* could wield against its adversaries was that, whatever the numbers, the plan clearly defined some strategic task: the trust had to supply adequate provisions to the Uzbek internal market in order to satisfy its growing demand for cotton cloth. The Uzbek side could argue that, by expanding its productivity in the Moscow region, the trust could use the excess yarn already on its premises, which it could not have easily absorbed without the extra looms of the new *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory. The VSNKh, on the contrary, admitted that it was looking at the interests of "the local industry of the RSFSR" [*sic*: not those of the USSR as a whole]. Possibly with an eye on the *Egor'evskii* trust, the VSNKh felt that, if *Red Orient* had acquired yarn it could not use, then other weaving plants should receive it. Moreover, it was easy for Kvirring to dismiss the Uzbeks' main argument about the will of *Red Orient* to do its bit to satisfy the Central Asian demand for textile goods. With newly received data in hand, the VSNKh, in spring 1926, could point out that the share of *Red Orient's* output which was actually sold in Uzbekistan, after a promising beginning in the summer of 1925, had plummeted in the first quarter of the fiscal year 1925-1926 (October-December) to become no more than 25 percent of the total.<sup>162</sup> With these arguments, in July 1926 the VSNKh dismissed the trust's requests to acquire the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia's* looms to better serve its Central Asian clients.<sup>163</sup>

The problem for the VSNKh was not that *Red Orient* would have exceeded its production quota if it had acquired the additional looms: one can see it from the fact that the output of the trust increased under Rudini's management

because the *Veniukovskaia* factory intensified the usage of the machinery it already possessed.<sup>164</sup> What mattered to the VSNKh and the MSNKh was who would get the 900 looms. In a broader perspective, these organs could justify these choices in terms of rationalization of the textile sector in the Moscow region in order to better exploit economies of scale.<sup>165</sup> In the end, though, the controversial *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory was abandoned and never resumed work under either of the trusts which had coveted it in the 1920s. Instead, *Red Orient* continued to weave and print at the *Veniukovskaia* factory, which, in 1933 (with a different ownership), became a mechanical plant for the production of loom components.<sup>166</sup> It is nonetheless significant that, in the struggle for the 900 looms of the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory, both sides (the Uzbek trust and the VSNKh) used the argument of the supposedly special tie between *Red Orient* and the Central Asian market: the former, to state the need for an expanded and more suitable production that would satisfy local rural costumers; the latter, to accuse *Red Orient* of incompetence in supplying such market and, therefore, to demonstrate the uselessness of such an increase in output. If one believes the VSNKh's official journal, *Red Orient* was not putting enough energy into its mission of supplying Central Asian consumers. The initial promise of the Klimov chairmanship had given way to more ambiguous results – probably because of circumstances rather than the management's faults. Throughout 1926 and 1927, when the push for the “syndicalization” of sales grew, the VSNKh continued to raise the question of the supposed irregularities in *Red Orient's* sales to Uzbekistan. All in all, the “national” argument made *Red Orient* vulnerable because it invited possible adversaries to scrutinize the share of its production effectively sold in Uzbekistan. Yet the same argument could provide a shield for otherwise economically dubious managerial decisions or legitimize the existence of the trust, which came under threat by the beginning of 1927. At the time, in the framework of the generalized move towards a greater centralization of industrial planning, the Uzbek republic's share in the capital of *Red Orient* (as well as that of the Turkmen SSR in *Turkmenmanufaktura*) was in danger of being liquidated and transferred to a Moscow-based organization, for instance the VSNKh. This prompted a reaction from the representative of the Uzbek government in the capital who, in the name of the “national” nature of the trust, managed to turn

this issue into a political matter and thereby secure the support of the all-Union Party against the VSNKh.<sup>167</sup> This episode, however, demonstrated that it was time for *Red Orient* (and for the Uzbek government behind it) to cultivate its “national” orientation differently.

## **6. How *Red Orient* went native**

In 1922, the Bukharan People’s Republic was offered a set of industrial assets located in Russia. Probably because of the costs of shipping machinery and the construction of new buildings, the Bukharan government decided that the textile factory, which constituted the most interesting of these assets, both materially and symbolically, could remain where it was. Its activity, however, would be supervised by the republic and its shop-floor would become a training ground for Central Asian textile workers. This factory became the core of *Red Orient*. Despite the difficulties and shortcomings discussed earlier, the trust managed to survive and, in a couple of years, to prosper, thanks to a blend of shrewd trade operations (bordering on illegality) and political arguments. Its small dimensions also helped it escape the attention of top-level economic organs, such as the all-Union Textile Syndicate (VTS) and the VSNKh. When this was not possible any more, *Red Orient* and the Uzbek government behind it changed the way they defined the trust’s “national” identity: from supplier of textiles to the cotton-growing peasantry, to provider of training and expertise for the construction of the first cotton textile factory in the Uzbek republic itself.

The establishment of a modern, mechanized cotton textile factory in Central Asia was an unprecedented event. Even though – and *because* – the economy of the Uzbek SSR was, and would long remain, predominantly based on agriculture, such a new factory represented a symbolic turning point and acquired a political meaning that went well beyond its material output or the number of workers it employed. The factory embodied the commitment of the Soviet government to the economic development of Central Asia as part of its wider socialist transformation. Some in Moscow might have seen this factory as nothing more than tokenism: the year it opened its doors was also the year Stalin announced the goal of cotton autarky for the USSR. It is hard to say if the

political men in the Uzbek republic extolled the new factory because they truly believed it represented the beginning of more diversified economic development or because they saw it as the sugar coating for the commitment to cotton monoculture. Either way, the factory *Red Orient* helped to establish was indeed something new, relative to what textile production in Central Asia had been until then, so that the factory itself represented a political currency expendable at various levels. To apprehend such novelty, we need to understand the state of textile production and consumption in Central Asia before 1917 and in the years between the revolution and the moment when *Red Orient* went native.

### *6.1 Central Asian textiles under early Soviet rule*

It is generally thought that the Russian imperial government prevented the establishment of textile mills in Central Asia and therefore (unintentionally or deliberately) condemned this region to devote itself to agriculture and, ultimately, to Prebisch-style dependence on the Russian industrial center. Leaving aside the problem of the State-driven nature of Central Asian de-industrialization for a moment, it is the thesis of de-industrialization itself that has not been adequately tested. Historiography has exclusively focused on the absence of large textile mills while we have no study at all on labor-intensive small industry in Turkestan and the protectorates in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>168</sup> While our knowledge of the history of local industrial business in pre-revolutionary Turkestan might eventually advance to the same level as that of enterprises in the European parts of the empire, until now this has remained an almost unexplored field. This is partly because of the scarcity of accessible sources but also because the idea of native industrial entrepreneurship fitted awkwardly in Soviet narrations of backwardness and modern nationalist narratives of victimhood.

The widespread belief that there was a law of the Tsarist state that prohibited textile mills in Turkestan is false.<sup>169</sup> Soviet historiography has over-emphasized a single statement by governor-general Samsonov opposing the establishment of a textile factory but has carefully avoided mentioning that the imperial government felt differently and that Samsonov's statement had no legal foundation.<sup>170</sup> Indeed, Soviet historian Maks I. Veksel'man argues that the few

doubts that governor-generals (and, far less often, imperial ministries) did express on the advent of textile plants in Turkestan had to do with the entrepreneurs involved. These were either foreigners or those unable to exercise full property rights or own real estate according to Russian law.<sup>171</sup> We should therefore question the assumption that, since no textile plant was established in Turkestan before 1916, it was due to the central imperial government's opposition to the industrial development of the colony. Besides, industry *did* exist in Turkestan before the revolution: besides numerous ginning plants and cotton-seed oil presses, one of the first industrial plants in Central Asia was a wool spinning and weaving factory in Semirechie, along the Kargaly stream, not far from present-day Almaty.<sup>172</sup> The small income that resulted from such an industrial sector might be a cause, rather than a consequence, of the emphasis that entrepreneurs and politicians put on cotton agriculture: they might have simply considered it more profitable than substantial investments in industry.

By causing the temporary isolation of Turkestan and disrupting the exchange pattern between the region and Russia, the revolution and civil war fostered the expansion of the local small-scale textile industry, including the spinning and weaving of cotton. This move, though interesting in itself, was not enough to fully satisfy local demand. Providing the Turkestani peasantry with cheap fabric was essential both economically and politically if the new Soviet regime wanted to gain control of the countryside and obtain cotton from it. For instance, in January 1919, Orenburg was on the front line of the civil war, and, while transit of manufactures for Turkestan through Samara was a possible alternative, it was largely frustrated by the destruction of important bridges across the Volga. Before the thaw, the Bolsheviks could lay rails on the ice: “every second need[ed] to be put to use,” as the head of the trade unions of the Ivanovo textile region, Vasilii S. Smirnov, reminded his comrades. Smirnov also ordered that they should compromise and negotiate with those who had power in Turkestan, even if they were not perfectly aligned, because, without adequate provision of grain and, above all, textiles, Russia would lose control of Central Asia and its cotton.<sup>173</sup> One year later, although communication between Turkestan and European Russia had been restored, the provision of textiles was

still insufficient. This gravely undermined the prestige of Bolshevik rule, as an alarmed radiogram reminded, among others, the Moscow-based *Glavtekstil*:<sup>174</sup>

Already four months have elapsed since the incorporation of Turkestan into Russia, but not a single *arshin* of fabric has arrived. All our promises in front of the Muslim population are turning into empty words, we are losing all authority, as we have no real possibility to forestall the approaching time, when we will not give any fabric to the peasants, who have been twice cheated by false assurances.

Even when textile products reached Turkestan, *basmachi* armed bands and continuing transport difficulties ensured that only a small percentage of them (no more than one-third in Spring 1920) could actually be distributed to the peasantry.<sup>175</sup> In 1922-1923, yearly imports of textiles into Turkestan were little more than one-twentieth of what they had been in 1914, and the recovery was very slow: in 1924-1925, imports were still less than one-half of the pre-war benchmark.<sup>176</sup> In this context, individual weavers and larger workshops sprang up to satisfy the local demand for fabric. While data are scant for 1917 and 1918, we have quite extensive evidence of this phenomenon for 1919 and the beginning of the 1920s. A report from Andijan, dated December 1919, estimated that, in the Namangan district alone, the number of weavers had increased from ten to twenty-five thousand between August 1918 and August 1919 while the estimate for the Fergana province as a whole was between eighty and one hundred thousand. Native looms were on sale in the bazaars of Andijan and other major cities, together with their accessories. Some of the weavers worked on “modernized native looms,” which allowed the production of better quality fabric. This textile production – especially cotton weaving – was theoretically illegal because (in principle) there existed a monopoly on the purchase of cotton. But cotton was on sale in most markets, and the same happened to wool yarn, the bazaar price of which had skyrocketed to 200 rubles a pound or more.<sup>177</sup>

The newly established – and still struggling – Bolshevik power in Turkestan quickly understood that the nationalized industrial sector of the republic would matter; still, in 1921, that sector counted only twenty-one textile

workshops (mostly wool and silk), of which seventeen were active, for some 1640 employees.<sup>178</sup> This is why the Bolsheviks in Turkestan were ready to recognize the potential of textile craftsmanship for spinning and weaving. Besides their usefulness as a reservoir for skilled work and as an audience for the cooperative movement, spindlers and, above all, weavers were simply indispensable for the local economy to re-start. Hence, in Fergana, institutions of economic governance were promoting the diffusion of the aforementioned “modernized native looms,” together with the import of a few pieces of more sophisticated machinery, like a steam wool cleaner. Building on the model of the local craftsmanship, in 1920 the administration planned to constitute “model workshops” with a higher level of mechanization, with various degrees of success. The wool sector was performing better than cotton, or, at least, the new government seemed to grasp it more accurately. Foreign prisoners of war and escaped Russian craftsmen (possibly, refugees) in Turkestan were sometimes able to operate more sophisticated mechanical textile appliances, in particular the Russian kind of “modernized” loom. At the same, in the silk sector, the administration strove to recover previous levels of industrial output by reconstituting damaged or dispersed capital stock (reels, twisting machines, looms). The difficulty of obtaining these pieces of machinery from Russia was coupled by the unavailability of raw materials or spun yarn, which Soviet economic institutions were unable to obtain, given the low procurement prices they could pay to the local producers or spindlers.<sup>179</sup>

## *6.2 Shaping the Uzbek industrial landscape*

It was in this context that, in the aftermath of the XI all-Russian Party congress in 1922, Moscow-based organs in charge of economic policy proposed building several light industrial plants in Central Asia and the southern Caucasus. More specifically, as noted above, in autumn 1922 the all-Union council of people’s commissars was pondering the possibility of building a textile factory in the Turkestan republic -- a possibility which the Fergana provincial revolutionary committee tried to seize by proposing Fergana (New Margelan) as an ideal venue for this enterprise. This did not occur, though.<sup>180</sup> Not so dissimilar was the

destiny of contemporary plans to pack and physically transfer one (or two?) textile plants to the Bukhara People's Republic: in the end, the BNSR's trust, which became *Red Orient*, only managed factories in Russian territory.

Projects to build a textile mill in Central Asia itself – and in particular in the Uzbek SSR – were likely revived only on the eve of the 1924 national delimitation, when secondary sources mention the short-lived constitution of a *Turkestskaia manufaktura*. Given this timing, though, it is likely that *Red Orient* soon absorbed it and that its assets (if any) merged with those assigned to the Bukharan people's republic.<sup>181</sup> One year afterwards, though, the Central Asian Bureau of the Party acknowledged the construction of *two* textile factories (one in Uzbekistan and the other in Turkmenistan) in the republican economic plans for 1925-1926. The Bureau endorsed the republic's motivation for this move, which was to shorten the added value chain between raw cotton and cloth.<sup>182</sup> In the second half of August 1925, *Red Orient* wished to participate in the construction of the factory. In the meantime, the Uzbek VSNKh decided that the plant should be located in Fergana, or "New Margelan."<sup>183</sup> *Red Orient's* interest in the operation initially emerged separately from the republican VSNKh's decision to include the textile factory in its plan, and the involvement of the trust does not appear to have been planned at the time: almost one year after these first signs of interest, the Presidium of the Uzbek VSNKh was still discussing whether it should rely on the trust for the *construction* of the factory in Fergana, let alone for running it.<sup>184</sup> This is to say that not only did this Uzbek initiative initially ignore *Red Orient*, but also that, by the summer of 1926, the most basic preparations for creating such an industrial endeavor had not even begun. The government was proud to announce that the construction of the Fergana textile factory had started in 1926 while actually almost nothing took place on the spot before 1928.<sup>185</sup> This did reflect structural shortcomings: the entire industrial sector of the Uzbek republic – which was already scant – was experiencing serious difficulties in recovering its pre-war output. In this, it was lagging behind compared to the agricultural sector, which had benefitted from substantially more funding, especially in the mid-1920s.

A report of the republican government to the all-Union VSNKh offered a diagnosis of these shortcomings. First of all, the governance of industry (which,

after the nationalization of all assets, was in the State's hands) was inadequate. Decisions occurred at the provincial (*okrug*) level in the local branches of the republican VSNKh, which was therefore to blame, for instance, for not yet having organized the standard system for allocating long-term industrial loans. In other words, even if a few budgetary resources (*assignovaniia*) were available, they did not reach the industrial organizations, or provincial organs used them in ways the government described as "uncontrolled, anti-economical, and criminal" (*bezkontrol'nyi, bezkhoziaistvennyi i prestupnoi*).<sup>186</sup> Second, and consequently, the report noted how financial resources for day-to-day functioning were scarce: all enterprises, even the private ones which were renting nationalized assets, had to rely upon short-term bank loans, overdrafts, discounts, and the like, which were relatively expensive. To cope, they either had to sell their assets on the private market or try to differentiate their activity, in the vain hope of earning quick cash. An example in this case was a Tashkent-based trust for the production of timber, which unsuccessfully embarked on the production of pencils, hoping to appeal to the consumer preference for cheap, daily-use goods while investments in construction were stagnating.<sup>187</sup> It was not only in the textile sector, thus, that the government of Soviet Turkestan tolerated and even promoted local craftsmanship to satisfy the local demand for consumers' goods even beyond the mid-1920s. Cooperatives and/or work units (*arteli*) were organized in the milling sector, in the production of leather products, and so on. For these, throughout the 1920s, the more significant obstacles came not from their supposed incompatibility with socialist production but from the inability to obtain raw materials.<sup>188</sup>

It is true, however, that the industrialization of Uzbekistan figured more prominently both in propaganda and on the political agenda. The second party conference of the Tashkent province (*okrug*) passed a resolution in autumn 1927, on the basis of a report by Ikramov, which celebrated the supposed first successes of the Party in its efforts to develop oil, coal, and textile industries. Even the development of technical crops, namely cotton, was regarded as a measure which would favor the industrialization of Uzbekistan.<sup>189</sup> Decision-makers at all levels also attached political and ideological expectations to the recovery of other plants which had been originally established before the revolution and then been

nationalized, for instance in the silk sector. In the absence of success on that front, but because of such urge to deliver results in terms of industrial capacity, local officers were obviously tempted to consider semi-artisanal workshops as industrial plants. For instance, there were improbable “plans to build four weaving factories” in 1927-1928 in the underdeveloped province of Surkhan-Darya, but these were either long-term goals or a reference to re-vamped large weaving workshops.<sup>190</sup>

Besides such declarations, however, other documents prove that Uzbek Party officers, locally as well as at the highest levels, were aware of the difference between establishing a factory and making it produce something. Even more, they were painfully aware of how hard it was to reach minimal efficiency or to attain the kind of political goals industrial plants were supposed to. For instance, in 1929, an inquiry into the Margelan silk factory (the most important of the republic, together with the one in Samarkand) revealed that, because of planning mistakes, only one-third of the looms were actually operated. Labor came from the countryside and was scarcely qualified while the recruitment of women (a political imperative in the late 1920s) was regarded as insufficient, despite the fact that they made up more than one-third of the total workforce.<sup>191</sup>

### *6.3 Building and manning the first textile factory in the Uzbek SSR*

Although we know that no practical step was taken before 1928, officially the construction of the Fergana textile factory (*Ferganskaia tekstil'naia fabrika*) started in 1926. Soviet historians use this year as its starting point because it had the advantage of symbolizing the recovery of pre-revolutionary output levels in agriculture. In 1927, the mill-to-be was dedicated to Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinskii (former director of VSNKh until 1924 and, above all, head of the secret police) on the occasion of his memorial service.<sup>192</sup> In other words, the factory received a name even before concrete plans for a substantial textile mill, and for the textile sector in general, had been produced. This circumstance is symptomatic of the great political and symbolic importance of this endeavor. The Fergana textile factory was something more than the bricks, mortar, and machinery that constituted it and could exist even before their appearance. When

the construction was completed and the factory had become *Red Orient's* new signature business, it was still necessary to recruit qualified textile workers. Hence, the physical establishment and practical activity of the factory are entangled from the very beginning with its construction as a *locus* of socialist transformation of the region. By the end of the 1920s and until the establishment of the Tashkent textile mill in 1932, the social change that such recruitment and training embodied (realistically and symbolically) became as important a product of the Fergana textile factory as the yarn it spun and the cloth it wove.

The material output of the Fergana factory attempted to bring together the processes of mechanized production and the taste of Central Asian customers, as shaped by the fashion and material culture of the time. Unlike the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory, but similar to the *Zaraiskaia*, the Fergana factory was, at least initially, exclusively devoted to spinning and weaving: the plans did not include any department for printing or dyeing. The cloth it produced might have been yarn-dyed, but this is unlikely, given the absence of dyeing plants in the vicinity. During the first phase, the factory would only weave coarse varieties of cloth, such as calico (*mitkal'*) and the rougher and cheaper *biaz'*. In that sense, its production would complement *Red Orient's* in the Moscow region where the same calicos could be printed and become *sitets*. In the second phase, the factory in Fergana would start producing better cotton fabric, such as cretonne and *toile de Nor*, specifically targeted for the Central Asian market. Unlike the *sitets*, these were thicker and not printed but yarn-dyed, combining a neutral warp with colored weft of a variety of colors. This implies that the *Ferganskaia fabrika* had plans to become able to dye its own yarn production, although the correspondence does not mention it. On both these kinds of fabric, margins were much higher than for the coarser varieties, and they were allegedly more palatable for Central Asian consumers. It is likely that *Red Orient* was indeed proposing to produce something similar to the traditional cotton or cotton-and-silk *ikat*, based on patterned yarn-dyed warp and often neutral weft. Cretonne and *toile de Nor* would be then used for the visible outer side of traditional garments while in Central Asia at that time printed cotton cloth (*sitets*) usually served for inner lining.<sup>193</sup>

As for the process of establishment and construction, it is notable that the blueprint for the first textile factory of the Uzbek SSR did not come from the first five-year plan but from the regional economic five-year plan for the years 1926-1927 to 1930-1931. Besides investments in irrigation and agriculture, this plan also contained provisions for the development of various branches of industry in the Uzbek SSR, sometimes contradicting previous directives. For instance, while in 1924 there had been some attempts to close down an important sugar factory in Kauchi (Yangi-Yul district, west of Tashkent) and reduce the cultivation of sugar beet in the Uzbek SSR, the regional five-year plan ordered that it should increase its output and supported expanding the acreage under sugar beet in its vicinity.<sup>194</sup> This plan constitutes a neglected phase in Soviet development policies in Central Asia because some of its provisions did not survive the inauguration of the first all-Union five-year plan. This was not, however, the case with the Fergana textile factory, which was one of the points of the regional plan that were pursued into the first all-Union *piatiletka*, although not everybody would approve the projects for its expansion after 1929.

The roadmap for the construction of the Fergana textile factory consisted of two phases. Despite some initial hesitation, in November 1928 the first half of the plan had been finalized and would start being enacted in June 1929.<sup>195</sup> According to a very early project, at the beginning the plant would only host ten thousand reels and 300 looms. According to a slightly later one, the factory would start operating with twenty thousand spindling reels and 600 looms. In both versions of the project, in the second phase (as it was initially conceived) the factory would reach a total of forty thousand reels and 1200 looms. This second phase would start in January 1931.<sup>196</sup> Some Uzbek historians, on the basis of unknown documents, seem to square the circle by reporting that the phases of construction to reach this final result were to be three: the first two, of ten thousand reels and 300 looms each; the last, of twenty thousand reels and 600 looms.<sup>197</sup> Another Soviet monograph notes that the factory started its operations in 1930 with 906 looms and 19,900 reels.<sup>198</sup> This is compatible with the idea that, in 1930, the construction process had basically completed its second phase (of three -- twenty thousand reels and 600 looms) but that, in view of the third and

final phase, the machinery of the weaving compartment was being installed more quickly than that of the spindling one, which was lagging behind at this date. The factory in Fergana obviously needed sources of energy which were relatively hard to find. In this respect, no industrial enterprise in Turkestan would have enjoyed the same network externalities as those available to a textile plant in the Moscow suburbs. The “new” textile plant had to share its source of energy (electric energy, in this case, very likely from kerosene generators) with an “old” plant – a cotton-seed oil press of the Cotton Committee. This was meant to be a temporary solution: *Red Orient* looked hopefully to the first five-year plan, according to which a hydroelectric power station was to be built on the nearby Isfara-Say. Yet the energy the Cotton Committee supplied would indeed have been enough to run more than three times the reels and the looms which would be there in the first phase.<sup>199</sup> One might ask why, in these circumstances, the trust did not consider employing workers for three shifts instead of two, at least on some of the machinery. In all likelihood, the answer to this question resides in the difficulty of recruiting a qualified labor force rather than in the unavailability of energy.

In December 1928, the VTS approved the first phase, which therefore certified its conformity to general all-Union plans for industrial growth in the textile sector. The VTS also agreed in principle with the second part of the plan, but on the condition that *Red Orient* find a sufficient number of qualified workers to man the additional machinery.<sup>200</sup> If the VTS seemed at first reassured by what the representative of the Uzbek SSR in Moscow was explaining at the beginning of 1929, the Rabkrin continued to have doubts about the opportunity to expand the factory to more than forty thousand reels, and the VSNKh seemed to follow it on this path.

But the Uzbek SSR was not only defending its plans around a single spinning and weaving plant; it was securing its own share in the development of the cotton industry according to the first five-year plan. The stakes were higher than what the sheer number of reels or looms might suggest, not only for symbolic reasons, but also because the speed of the expansion of textile production in these early years was expected to condition further investments. Odyli, the Uzbek representative in Moscow, wrote to the Presidium of the all-

Union VSNKh in April 1929 to defend the target of the five-year plan for his own republic (one hundred thousand reels). Quite passionately – Odyli’s past political career consisted in his long chairmanship of the Uzbek poor peasants’ (*Koshchi*) league – he refuted the idea that such an increase in production capacity was unsustainable; there would be a “pause for reflection” to verify economic results in 1930-1931. But at the same time, he was already looking beyond the Fergana factory and projecting a scenario for the industrialization of Uzbekistan. Hadn’t Rykov himself – he reminded – talked about industrial development in cotton-growing areas? Hadn’t the “congress of planning workers” itself recognized a gap between agricultural and industrial growth in Uzbekistan’s own original proposals? To those who wanted Uzbekistan to wait one year, enticing it with the bait of more advanced technology, the Uzbek representatives answered that this was the case for all the factories in the Union: why should Uzbekistan be singled out to be left behind?<sup>201</sup> Uzbekistan, Odyli wrote, would not accept being robbed of its slice of the cake by other republics: if the all-Union plan forecast an increase of 400 thousand reels, and 125 thousand were the share of Transcaucasia, nobody could deny an additional one hundred thousand reels over five years to the Uzbek SSR.<sup>202</sup>

These were the arguments that Odyli used to defend the “maximalist” version of the plan. His opponents in Moscow (the Rabkrin and the VSNKh) emphasized the insufficiency of qualified workers and the fact that new technology would become available to exclude or delay such expansion. But even more revealing are two obvious arguments that each side could have wielded but that were, instead, surprisingly neglected. First, Odyli could have noted that, without the addition of more reels and looms, the extra energy produced by the to-be hydroelectric power station on the Isfara-Say would have been superfluous; if the construction of the power station was taken for granted, one had better use it for something. In turn, the Rabkrin and the VSNKh could have mentioned that, in the first phase, the factory was leaving one-third of its productive potential unexploited because of the choice to run the machines on two eight-hour shifts only. The Rabkrin and the VSNKh could have asked the trust to run the factory at its full capacity and only then ask for extra assets. Even admitting that, in this

case, Rabkrin and VSNKh were aware of the difficulty of recruiting and training workers, these two arguments remain conspicuous by their absence.

This absence is telling of the way decisions about investment were taken, in the context of the negotiations between Uzbekistan and Moscow, around the five-year plan: with little or no thought to optimize existing assets on one hand -- and the inability to consider the relations between two or more items on the agenda (here, the textile plant and the hydroelectric power station) on the other. This may reflect the “soft budget constraints” so characteristic of the Soviet planned economy but also, more generally, the continual struggle around limited public resources, which molded investments and, in the end, their returns. Such struggle around resources was ultimately more decisive than any single decision by either the center or the periphery in shaping the outcomes of economic policy. These negotiations were even more crucial on the occasion of the first plan. Odyli and the Uzbek government knew that, if they gave up in 1929, their slice of the cake, so to say, would be smaller not only in this, but also in all subsequent investment plans.

Once built and set in motion, the mill needed textile workers – a pretty rare species in the Fergana valley and even more so in other parts of the Uzbek SSR at the end of the 1920s. *Red Orient's* connections in European Russia proved invaluable here. A first request to use the *Zaraiskaia* to train Uzbek textile workers had been submitted by the Uzbek republican VSNKh as early as 1925 – three years before the foundations of the Fergana factory were even laid. By the beginning of 1929, the trust had sent 372 Uzbek workers (both men and women) to be trained in both its own plants (*Zaraiskaia* and *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia*), as well as in others in the two major textile districts of Ivanovo-Vosnesensk and Klin (north of Moscow), and even in the lair of *Red Orient's* former adversary, the *Egor'evskii* trust.<sup>203</sup> The *Zaraiskaia* factory played the most prominent role. Among other things, its machinery was technically similar to the one Uzbek apprentice workers would find in the Fergana factory. After completing their training in the *Zaraiskaia* factory, the first contingent of textile workers was sent back to Fergana to help with the installation and start-up of the textile machinery of the new plant. About three-quarters of them were ready to take on their jobs by February 1929.<sup>204</sup> The factory was also recruiting Russians and Europeans who

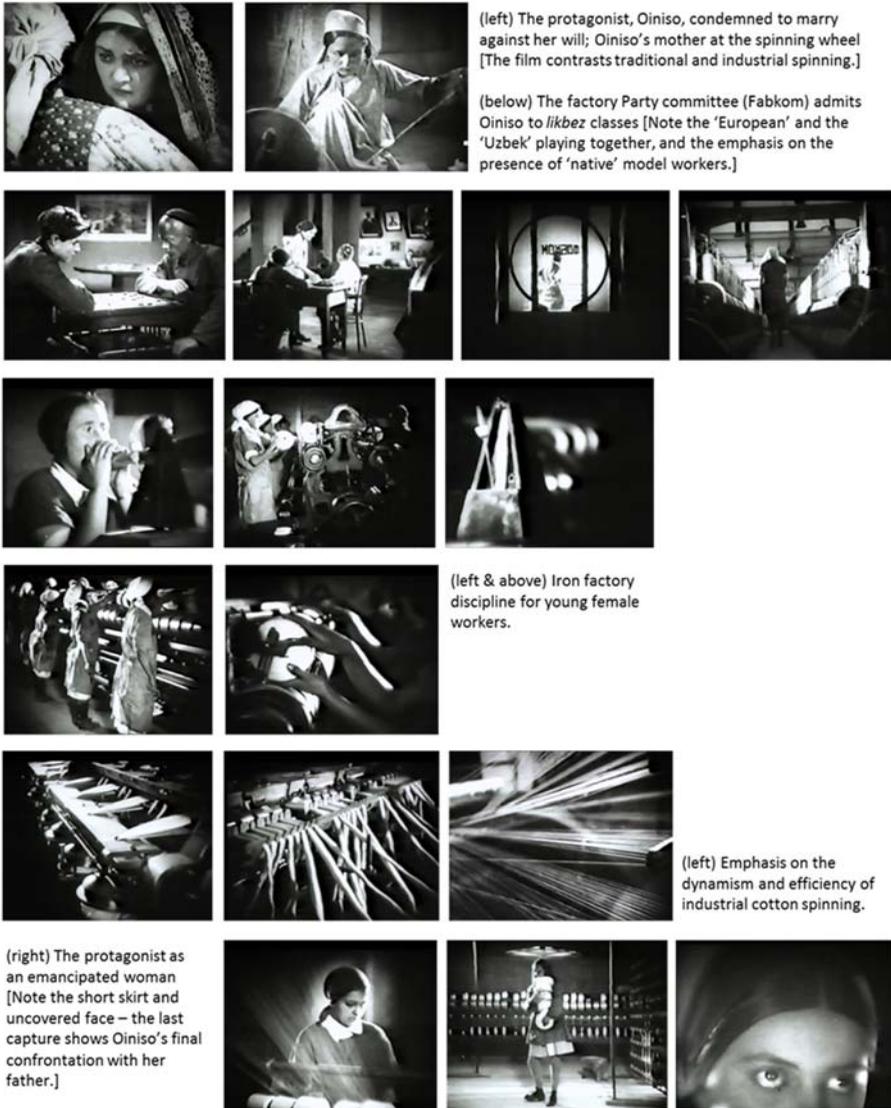
had been evacuated to Central Asia during the civil war. Fergana, formerly known as New Margelan (or Skobelev), was a city founded in the colonial period with a predominantly European population and therefore attracted these sorts of migrants, who were then recorded in the unemployment lists. The native workers and the European recruits from New Margelan, though, would not have been numerous enough to ensure two shifts; this is why two hundred more workers would need to be imported from other industrial districts in the USSR.<sup>205</sup>

As even a Soviet celebratory publication could not fail to acknowledge, the lack of qualified workers and cadres became dramatically clear as soon as the factory started operating, and the situation did not improve quickly. Besides the young Uzbeks who had been trained in Russia and the “immigrants,” many workers needed to learn the job on the spot. At first, the choice fell on the training program known as the “TsIT method” – the acronym referred to the Central Labor Institute (*Tsentral'nyi Institut Truda* in Russian). The results, though, were highly disappointing. Not only was the factory operating below its full capacity, but the number of working looms was even decreasing: under-qualified workers often broke them, and it was impossible either to replace or to repair them. Spare parts had to be produced locally, sometimes using walnut wood rather than metal.<sup>206</sup> In October 1930 (less than six months after the factory had opened), the organ of the republican communist Party, the *Uzbekistanskaia Pravda*, publicly exposed the scarce productivity of labor, which prompted the arrival of more workers and engineers (including some women) from the European parts of the Union.<sup>207</sup>

Despite all these shortcomings, the Fergana textile factory was perceived as (and to some extent *was*) the avant-garde of advancing industrial modernity in the region: it offered, ideally, emancipation from what the Soviets called “feudal-patriarchal relics,” especially for women; it created new forms of sociability; it dragged Muslim young people from the countryside into an embryo of the modern industrial city; and it imposed a regulation of time and organization of labor radically opposed to the agricultural cycle and work in the fields. Shortly after its opening, the Fergana textile factory was used as the set for the second part of an anti-religious propaganda movie, *The Girl of the Ishan*, in which the defiant protagonist (a poor village girl, otherwise destined, because of her father’s

superstition, to a future of sexual and social subalternity) buys her ticket to a radiant future by learning how to load bobbins of yarn on the weaving loom to the implacable rhythm of a metronome (Fig. 3 below).<sup>208</sup>

**Fig. 3** – Screen captures from *The Girl of the Ishan* (1930)



In sum, the establishment of a weaving factory in the middle of the Fergana valley looked like a miniature experiment in Soviet-style social engineering: first, because of the inclusion of Uzbek workers, both men and women; second, because the training of former Uzbek peasants in the vicinity of Moscow surely did not happen without a cultural shock; third, because the factory offered a practical solution to an issue – the presence of “idle,” jobless Europeans – which constituted a mild threat to public order and was surely shameful for the Soviet regime (as, incidentally, the presence of rough, jobless settlers had been an embarrassment to the colonial administration of Russian Turkestan).<sup>209</sup> In these plans, the ethnically European workers from Fergana itself were not envisaged as the leaders of some forcible transformation of backward Central Asia. If *shfestvo* rhetoric played a role, it did not concern these “poor Whites”; only the supplementary imported European workers would pull together and experience the friendship of their Central Asian comrades. As for the Central Asian young men and women who lived in Russia to receive training there, in the absence of local sources we know very little about their experience and the cultural shock it probably involved.<sup>210</sup>

## 7. Concluding remarks

The fact that, since 1923, the Bukharan People’s Republic and then the Uzbek SSR were managing textile mills in the Moscow region is both intriguing and problematic for the student of early Soviet Central Asia. While this is not sufficient evidence to state that early Soviet rule in the region considered the industrialization of Central Asia a priority, the experience of *Red Orient* both in Russia and later in Fergana shows that this region’s participation in Soviet *industrial* modernization was not an unthinkable option in the NEP period or even during the first five-year plan. The weight of *Red Orient* on the total textile output of the USSR was very small, as was the share of the Uzbek population that was either trained or employed by one of the trust’s plants, including the Fergana Textile Factory. The economy of the Uzbek SSR was, and remained, predominantly agricultural, and in the 1920s, nobody with authority questioned the importance of cotton in it, at least as a rapid way to recover pre-war average

living standards. In a way, *Red Orient*'s emphasis on procuring raw materials from *Uzbekkhopok* confirmed this. The political and symbolic weight of *Red Orient* was nonetheless much greater, and disproportionate to its assets and results, for those who, like Fayzulla Khojaev, harped on it in speeches about the state of the economy or, like the Uzbek representative in Moscow, pleaded for it in front of the VSNKh to obtain 900 more looms. This disproportion was admitted, if not approved, by those who interacted with them about *Red Orient* at the all-Union level; the trust's "national" nature was a legitimate argument in the "wheeling and dealing" that surrounded its activity. The political and symbolic weight of *Red Orient* is also greater than its actual economic importance now, for the student of early Soviet Central Asia, as its existence, when taken seriously, greatly complicates both the narrative of Bolshevik nationality policy (by adding an often neglected economic policy aspect to it) and the standard narrative that sees Soviet rule, in any time and at all levels, as fostering the de-industrialization and the dependency of the region. The story of *Red Orient* cannot, on its own, lead to a new overarching interpretation. It tells us little, for instance, about the theoretical and practical debates about economic planning and cotton monoculture in Central Asia throughout the 1920s. Yet to include *Red Orient* and other "deviant" episodes in the picture may suggest a more nuanced and empirically-based interpretation for future research.

We can view the story of *Red Orient*, its creation, and its relations with other economic actors (producers, consumers, governing bodies) in the NEP period from two different standpoints: that of the business historian or that of the student of modern Russian (and then Soviet) Central Asia or of the USSR in general. The first option is risky because of the dearth of business history literature on the Soviet Union and, *a fortiori*, on its non-European regions. The second is more conventional, especially insofar one chooses to focus on Bolshevik nationality policy and "center-periphery" relations throughout the 1920s.

The story of *Red Orient* shows to what extent the activity of the latter as a state (and even more as a "national") trust went beyond simple production, here to be understood as the physical transformation of raw materials into commodities through the application of capital and labor. In this respect, Vladislav Todorov's statement holds true for *Red Orient* and many other Soviet

industrial conglomerates: the trust was undoubtedly producing a “united-working-class-body” at least as much as it was turning yarn into cloth or printing “Asian-style patterns” on fabric. This was not only the case of the *in vivo* experiment of social engineering at the Fergana textile factory; one could see it also in Beliakov’s political arguments when he pointed at workers’ barracks, training facilities, and orphanages, as if these constituted the most important “output” of the *Zaraiskaia* factory under his management. It was also evident in the fact that the Fergana textile factory, *Red Orient*’s latest core business, was baptized after Dzerzhinskii, before its construction (let alone its production) had even started. Above all, the rhetoric, as well as the practice, of molding the “united-working-class-body” lay at the very foundation of the idea to assign to the Bukharan people’s republic a handful of industrial plants and to enable the government of this “allied” republic to set up a state trust for their management. Thus, it made little difference if the factories were located on Bukharan territory, in the Riazan’ *guberniia*, or even within the city boundaries of Moscow; symbolically and practically, these factories belonged to Bukhara (later, to the Uzbek SSR) and represented its inclusion in the general economy of the USSR even before the “national” delimitation of Central Asia had been completed. Moreover, *Red Orient* and its assets embodied the compact with the Bukharan pro-Bolshevik elites which made up its “council of *nazirs*.” Allowing them to “own” a couple of textile mills meant that those new comrades from the East could experiment in economic planning while calling for help from the all-Union Rabkrin in case something went wrong. Finally, the *Zaraiskaia* and other factories also exemplified the possible destiny of the “Red Orient” they were named after, both within the USSR and immediately beyond its boundaries.

Nonetheless, at least in one respect, *Red Orient* failed to realize this integration into the ideal “united-working-class-body”: if it managed to transform some Uzbek rural dwellers into industrial workers, it probably failed to turn them into consumers of their own manufactured goods. Although Beliakov and others argued for the need to supply the Central Asian cotton-growing peasantry, it seems that *Red Orient*’s Muscovite factories never adapted their output to meet their Uzbekistani costumers’ preferences and only later managed to set up expedient links with local economic organizations for the distribution of

their own manufactured goods. The focus on cretonne and *toile de Nor* (the closest equivalents to local *ikats*) as future products of the new Fergana textile factory also came quite late, after the end of the NEP period, and even then this was more a project than a practical achievement. Between 1922 and 1929, *Red Orient* was a Bukharan, and then Uzbek, trust that catered to a mostly European audience – an audience that probably contented itself with hints of the Soviet “Orient” in stylized “Asian-style patterns.”

The failure to establish a link between *Red Orient* and the reality on the ground in the Uzbek SSR existed both on the demand and the supply sides. In other words, not only did *Red Orient* not work for Uzbek consumers; its purchases of ginned cotton did not reflect any special bond between the *Zaraiskaia* factory and local procurements. In this respect, the difficult relations with the Bukharan state trade organization (Bukhgostorg) in the first years are symptomatic, as they reflect the shortcomings of both the former and the latter in the two directions of their business relations. The attempt to set up a special link with Uzbekkhlopok was equally unsuccessful. Beyond all rhetoric, *Red Orient* was never a fully “national” enterprise. This does not mean, however, that *Red Orient*’s story fits easily in the paradigmatic interpretation according to which the 1920s consisted of an initial trend towards “decolonization,” followed by increasing “centralization.” This paradigm works very well for some events: the land reform of 1920-1922 was a self-aware form of “decolonization,” and historians are right in highlighting how the republic lost control of water management around 1927.<sup>211</sup> In the case of *Red Orient*, one could indeed interpret the trust’s constitution as a “decolonization” measure, or at least a gesture in this direction for the Bukharan “national communists.” Yet, from 1926, the decision to build the Fergana textile factory and its implementation cannot be easily read as forms of “centralization.” The same holds true for the fact that *Red Orient* glided unscathed through the VTS’s “syndicalization” offensive at least until the end of the NEP period.

I argue, first, that *Red Orient*’s experience between 1922 and 1929 shows that, in the NEP period, a variety of actors could play the “national” card with some hope of success in negotiating with the “center” of the USSR. That they did not always succeed (but wasn’t the mere survival of *Red Orient* against all odds a

success?) does not make the “national” card less important. What matters is that many actors behaved as if this was a rational strategy. Second, I contend that, in the case of the Uzbek SSR (and Turkestan and the BNSR before it), this negotiation and its outcomes underpinned a model of development from which industry (and the textile industry in particular) was not excluded from the beginning, although this situation started changing at the beginning of the first all-Union five-year plan (as distinct from previous plans for the regional economy). Third, and last, I would recall that this situation did not imply the rejection of plans to recover and expand the cultivation of cotton in Soviet Central Asia; these plans benefitted from the secondment of local “national” politicians.

The fact that the Bukharan and Uzbek governments could play on the “national” nature of *Red Orient* was a sub-species of a more general phenomenon. Throughout the history of this trust, considerations and mechanisms pertaining to politics (more than to policy-making) became relevant for its economic activity. For instance, the 1923-1924 balance sheet did not only reflect the income-producing activity of the *trest* in that year; negotiations between organizations (from the management of *Red Orient* to the all-Union VSNKh, to the Rabkrin) shaped it at least as much as the actual flow of resources and output. Similarly, the Uzbek government's intervention in the STO arbitration between *Red Orient* and the *Egor'evskii* trust, which the commission considered no more than ordinary administration, highlighted the political dimension of industrial activity. In a liberal context, state institutions define the norms and provide institutions for dispute settlement and contract enforcement. Here, some of the many segments of the Soviet state system intervened as parts of the dispute, or as negotiators on behalf of theoretically autonomous industrial organizations. The more a bureaucratic system is complicated, the more it leaves niches where specific interests can be voiced and put forward.<sup>212</sup> “Wheeling and dealing,” as Shearer puts it, was possible and handy (though not always successful or efficient), when state institutions acted both as referees and players, depending on the circumstances.

This context molded *Red Orient's* difficult relations with other businesses and with factor markets more specifically. Even beyond the cost of recruiting

qualified labor for the Fergana textile factory, it appears that *Red Orient* was constantly the victim of an inadequate market for capital – in the sense of credit, instrumental goods, and circulating capital. As far as the first was concerned, the trust was not only systematically undercapitalized; it had inescapable difficulties managing its cash-flow and had to rely on trade credit and subcontracting to avoid monetary outlays to obtain raw materials. Second, the case of the 900 looms of the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia* factory demonstrates how, in the NEP period, it was not enough to want to buy instrumental goods, and pay for them, to secure them. Third, the difficulties *Red Orient* (and indeed its partners) experienced in securing grey cloth, yarn, and ginned cotton, with the consequent bottlenecks and suboptimal use of machinery, demonstrate to what extent factors of production may have been allocated on the basis of bureaucratic mechanisms already before the advent of the full-scale planned economy.

The Bukharan, then Uzbek, trust demonstrated some ingenuity in its search for solutions to survive, if not thrive. Trade “on the side” was one of them; subcontracting was another. But the most interesting solution was the attempt to integrate several steps of the textile added-value chain “vertically” by acquiring the *Blagushinskaia* and other factories. In the terminology of industrial organization which O.E. Williamson introduced,<sup>213</sup> *Red Orient* reacted to the under-development of the market (both for factors and for final products) with a move towards hierarchy. This strategy did not work, partly because of the lack of economic viability of some of these decisions: factories had to be restored, machinery had to be repaired, and so on. Partly, though, it failed because of the opposition of Moscow-based regional and all-Union organs (MSNKh, Rabkrin). The Rabkrin, the VSNKh, and the MSNKh can hardly be seen as antitrust authorities opposing *Red Orient*’s integration strategy; they seem to have acted on the basis of very different considerations, and they did not, as a rule, oppose the same move in the case of other trusts. In the end, *Red Orient* remained focused on spinning and weaving (in Zaraisk and Fergana) and, to a lesser extent, on printing (in the *Veniukovskaia* factory) while it ultimately discarded dyeing, mercerizing, and twisting. To some degree, it ended up preferring functional specialization to vertical integration, at most playing the card of diversifying its textile products. It is interesting, though, that *Red Orient* (as well as Soviet

organs of economic governance) did not reject the model of the traditional cotton mill, devoted to both spinning and weaving, and explicitly reproduced it in the plans for the Fergana textile factory.

It is uncertain to what extent *Red Orient's* experience can be generalized. It is particularly regrettable that we lack studies of other “national” trusts, as well as of single industries in the non-European republics of the USSR in the same period. Until such a *corpus* of scholarship is built, one hesitates to extend these conclusions on *Red Orient's* achievement, shortcomings, and industrial strategy to other industrial or proto-industrial activities. Similarly, we do not yet know whether the relation between Bukhara (later, Samarkand) and organs of economic governance in Moscow was the same as between the latter and, say, Baku or Tbilisi. This case-study is itself an invitation to take local experiences, individual cases, and chronological distinctions into account when examining the history of non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union.

Yet the vicissitudes of *Red Orient* demonstrate the interest of a history of business and accounting practices in the crucial early years of the Soviet Union. The relevance of private initiative during NEP, the political or neutral nature of Soviet auditing, and the process of “syndicalization” that led to wholesale planning (just to mention a few) are issues that we can better grasp by looking at management practices and decisions within each trust, or enterprise, than by limiting ourselves to the chronicle of Soviet legislation or administrative measures on industry, normalization of bookkeeping, and so on. In addition, the story of *Red Orient* (and that, less known, of *Turkmenmanufaktura*) casts light on what one could call the “economic side” of Bolshevik nationalities policy and nativization (*korenizatsiia*): learning how to administer a trust (whose factories happened to be located in the Moscow region) was, in a way, a form of *praktikanstvo*, an opportunity for the “natives” (or, more exactly, a few of them) to learn some policy-making and management skills.<sup>214</sup> This was even truer for the training of the first generation of Uzbekistani textile workers, a real, albeit small, avant-garde of the national proletariat worth depicting as a social model in propaganda movies. While it is impossible to gauge what would have happened if such an involvement and training had not taken place, it is quite sure that, from Fayzulla Khodjaev’s viewpoint down to that of the young workers in their Zaraisk

dormitories, *Red Orient* was meant to represent (and to some extent was) a foundational experience of what the rule of Soviet Moscow on Central Asia meant, and its differences from the previous regime.

1. This paper was first circulated and presented at the annual conference of the BASEES Study Group on the Russian Revolution (University of East Anglia, Norwich, January 2013). It had originally been a paragraph of *Terre et coton au Turkestan et au Caucase. Regards croisés sur deux périphéries russes et soviétiques (1850-1930)*, which I presented at the EHESS (March 2011); then it became a short section of *On the Consolidation of Soviet Rule on the Uzbek Economy in the NEP period*, for the XII ESCAS conference (Cambridge, September 2011). On neither occasion was there enough time to read out the parts on *Krasnyi Vostok*, which I subsequently decided deserved a paper of their own.

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2.. V. Todorov, *Red Square, Black Square: Organon for Revolutionary Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994); here from L.H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2008),36.

3.. International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), *World Cotton Database* (<https://icac.generation10.net/index/index>, last accessed June 1,2014). The 2013-2014 data refer to the 2013 harvest. ICAC has published projections for the 2014 harvest, too: according to them, 45% of Uzbekistani cotton is being processed *in situ*. More exact data will become available at the end of the 2014-2015 year.

4.. ICAC, *Country factsheet*, [2011?] ([https://www.icac.org/econ\\_stats/country\\_fact\\_sheets/fact\\_sheet\\_uzbekistan\\_2011.pdf](https://www.icac.org/econ_stats/country_fact_sheets/fact_sheet_uzbekistan_2011.pdf), last accessed 28th August 2013). It seems that most international organizations (e.g.,Unctad) rely on the ICAC for their data, but the website does not explain how and by whom these data have been collected.

5..Thomas M. Skallerup, “Artisans Between Guilds and Cooperatives: A History of Social and Economic Change in Russian Turkestan and Soviet Central Asia 1865-1928” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1990). This dissertation makes a substantial contribution in

that it critically summarizes the existing literature, but the author could not use archival sources. See also: Ol'ga A. Sukhareva, *K istorii gorodov Bukharskogo khanstva (Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki)*, Tashkent, Iz-vo Akademii Nauk SSR, 1958, pp. 124, 138-139; *eadem*, *Bukhara XIX-nachalo XX v. (Pozdnefeodal'nyi gorod i ego naselenie)*, Moskva, Iz-vo "Nauka" (Glavnaia redaktsia vostochnoi literatury), 1966, p. 46; I.K. Narzikulov, *Kratkie svedeniia o dorevoliutsionnoi kustarnoi promyshlennosti Tadzhikistana* AN Tadzhikoskoi SSR, Trudy, t. LXXXI, Stalinabad 1957; Zukhra Faizieva, *Kustarno-remeslennoe proizvodstvo v Turkestane vo vtoroi polovine XIX-nachale XX vv.*, Avtoreferat ... k.i.n., AN UzSSR – Institut Istorii, Tashkent 1979 (with ample bibliography); Alfred Leix, *Turkestan and Its Textile Crafts* (Basingstoke: The Crosby Press, 1974, originally published in *CIBA Review*, 40 (Basel, August 1941), 24-29. Standard research on "industry" in the pre-revolutionary period, though, neglects weaving workshops, however large or factory-like, and fails to discuss to what extent they embodied a new attitude to labor. This approach is consistent throughout Soviet historiography and does not depend on the accuracy of research itself: e.g., Gurtovenko A.S., *Iz istorii razvitiia promyshlennogo kapitalizma i vozniknoveniia proletariata iz korenno naseleniia v Uzbekistane kontsa XIX i nachala XX veka*, Avtoreferat ... k.i.n., AN UzSSR – Institut Istorii i arkheologii, Tashkent 1955; cf. Abdurakhman Dekhkanov, *Istoria fabrichno-zavodskoi promyshlennosti i rabochego klassa v Ferganskoi doline (konets XIX-nachalo XX v.)*, Avtoreferat ... k.i.n., AN UzSSR – Institut Istorii, Tashkent, 1981.

6.. For instance, in chronological order: John Whitman, "Turkestan Cotton in Imperial Russia," *American Slavic and East European Review* 15, no. 2 (1956), 190-205; Maks I. Veksel'man, *Rossiiskii monopolisticheskii i inostrannyi kapital v Srednei Azii (konets XIX-nachalo XX v.)*, Tashkent, Izdatel'stvo "Fan" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1987, *passim*; Bakhtiër Mirkamilov, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitiie khlopkovodcheskogo khoziaistva Turkestana (konets XIX-nachalo XX vv.)*, Avtoreferat ... k.i.n., AN UzSSR – Institut Istorii, Tashkent, 1988; Stuart Thompson, "Russian Imperialism and the Commercialization of the Central Asian Cotton Trade," *Textile History* 26, no. 2 (1995): 233-257. On the Soviet period: B.Z. Rumer, "Central Asia's Cotton Economy and its Costs," in *Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. W. Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 62-89; A. Razzoqov, *O'zbekistonda paxtachiligi tarixi*, Toshkent, O'zbekiston, 1994; J. Michael Thurman, *The "Command-Administrative System" in Cotton Farming in Uzbekistan: 1920s to present* (Bloomington: Indiana University:

Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1999); Richard Pomfret, “State-Directed Diffusion of Technology: the Mechanization of Cotton Harvesting in Soviet Central Asia,” *Journal of Economic History* 62, no. 1 (2002): 170-188. This list is obviously not exhaustive. See also note 17 below for studies written between the 1880s and the 1920s.

7.. *Promyshlennost'Uzbekistana. Kratkii ocherk razvitiia (1913-1938)*, Tashkent, Fan, 1941; more specific: S.I. Abdullaev – I.M. Vainer, K.K. Kasymov, *Ferganskaia tekstil'naia*, Tashkent, “Uzbekistan,” 1975.

8.. For instance, on nationalities and delimitation: A. Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2003); Gero Fedtke, “Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists and the Bukharan Revolution: From an Ideological Debate in the Early Soviet Union,” in vol. 2 of *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*, ed. A. von Kügelgen, *et alii* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), 483-512; Chika Obiya, “When Fayzulla Khojaev Decided to be an Uzbek,” in *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia*, eds. S. Dudoignon and H. Komatsu (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 99-118; N. Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera* (Roma: Viella, 2009), 231-243; on collectivization, by an Uzbek scholar: Rustam Shamsutdinov, *O'zbekistonda Sovetlarning quloqlashtitish siyosati va uning fojiali oqibatlari*, Toshkent, Sharq, 2001; idem, *Qishloq fojiasi: jamoalashtirish, quloqlashtirish, surgun*, Toshkent, Sharq, 2003; on collectivization and sedentarization in Kazakhstan: Niccolò Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera: Colonizzazione Agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905-1936)*, (Roma: Viella, 2009); Isabelle Ohayon, *La sédentarization des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline*, Paris, IFEAC-Maisonneuve & Larose, 2006.

9.. For instance: Tirthankar Roy, *Traditional Industry in the Economy of Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also below, note 169.

10.. See: Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Ottoman De-Industrialization, 1800-1913: Assessing the Shock, Its Impact and the Response,” *Economic History Review* (Special Issue: *Asia in the Great Divergence*), 64 (S1) (2011): 159-184; Laura Panza, *Globalization and the Ottoman Empire: A Study of Integration Between Ottoman and World Cotton Markets* (La Trobe University – School of Economics, Working Paper no. 1, 2012); eadem, “De-Industrialization and Re-Industrialization in the Middle East:

Reflections on the Cotton Industry in Egypt and in the Izmir region,” *Economic History Review* 67, no. 1 (2014):146-169; eadem and J.G. Williamson, *Did Muhammad Ali Foster Industrialization in Early 19th Century Egypt?*, CEPR Discussion Paper no. 9363, 2012.

11.. A second, much bigger, textile plant started being built in 1932 in Tashkent (*Tashkentskii tekstil'nyi kombinat*). By 1941, the number of reels in Tashkent was almost five times that in the first Fergana factory: *Promyshlennost' Uzbekistana*, pp. 81-83; cf. E.T. Alekseev, *Tashkentskii tekstil'nyi kombinat detishche stalinskikh piatiletok*, Tashkent, Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo UzSSR, 1950. esp. pp. 4-10. The Tashkent Textile Plant has recently been demolished.

12.. On nativization, the standard reference is Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

13.. See: Chris Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers and the New Economic Policy: Shop-floor Culture and State Policy, 1921-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

14.. Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers*, 4.

15.. See in particular on this topic: Mark Neuweld, “The Origins of the Communist Control Commission,” *American Slavic and East European Review* 18, no.3 (1959): 315-333, esp. 326-331; Thomas Remington, “Institution Building in Bolshevik Russia: The Case of ‘State Control,’” *Slavic Review* 41, no.1 (1982): 91-103; E.A. Rees, *State Control in Soviet Russia: The Rise and Fall of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, 1920-34* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987).

16.. Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers*, 7.

17.. In particular: L.N. Suvorova, “Mnogoukladnaia ekonomika, rynek i gosudarstvo v Rossii v 1920-e gg.,” in *NEP: ekonomicheskie, politicheskie i sotsiokul'turnye aspekty*, eds. A.S. Seniavskii, *et al.* (Moskva: Rosspen, 2006), 96-120, here 96-99.

18.. Among the studies of the cotton sector produced by agricultural experts and economists who had witnessed its pre-war development, one can mention: V.I. Massal'skii [*sic*], *Khlopkovoe delo v Srednei Azii (Turkestan, Zakaspiiskaia oblast', Bukhara i Khiva) i ego budushchee* (Sankt-Petersburg: Tipografiya V. Kirshbauma ministerstva finansov, 1892); idem, *Khlopkovodstvo, oroshenie gosudarstvennykh zemel' i chastnaia predpriimchivost'* (Sankt-Petersburg, 1910); A.I. Knize – V.I. Iuferev, “Istoriia vozniknoveniia i razvitiia khlopkovodstva v Turkestane”, in: G.V. Glin'ka, ed., *Aziatskaia Rossiia*, tom 2, SPb, Izdanie Pereselencheskogo Upravleniia, 1914, pp. 293-294; V.I. Iuferev, *Khlopkovodstvo v Turkestane* (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1925); A. P. Demidov, *Ekonomicheskie ocherki khlopkovodstva, khlopkovoi torgovli i promyshlennosti v Turkestane* (Moskva: Izdanie Tsentral'nogo Upravleniia Pechati VSNKh CCCP, 1926). For historiography, see note 6.

19.. Ekaterina Pravilova, *Finansy imperii*, Moskva, Novoe Izdatel'stvo, 2006, pp. 289-291; for more detail: Beatrice Penati, “The Cotton Boom and the Land Tax in Russian Turkestan (1880s-1915),” *Kritika* 14, no. 4 (2013): 741-774.

20.. In this respect, one sees no substantial change in historiography: Alim Muminovich Aminov, *Ėkonomicheskoe razvitie Srednei Azii (so vtoroi poloviny XIX stoletii do pervoi mirovoi voiny)*, Tashkent, Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo UzSSR, 1959; idem, and Abdusamad Khanturaevich Babakhodzhaev, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie posledstviia prisoidineniia Srednei Azii k Rossii*, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1966; A.M. Yuldashev, *Agrarnye otnosheniia v Turkestane (konets XIX – nachalo XX v.)*, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1969; Kazym Fazyzbekovich Kasymbekov, *Iz istorii narodnykh dvizhenii v Fergane v kontse XIX-nachale XX veka*, Tashkent, Iz-vo “Fan” UzSSR, 1978. A similar line can be found, with some interesting nuances, in *Turkestan v nachale XX veka: k istorii istokov natsional'noi nezavisimosti*, Tashkent, Shark, 2000, pp. 9-11. This work, while deprecating the “modernization from the outside” that colonialism brought about, portrays the economic situation of late colonial Turkestan as one of “stagnation,” where living standards had declined for all by the eve of the revolution.

21.. By 1908, many observers were noting that the future of cotton, as well as that of public order in Turkestan, would be doomed if the State did not intervene to unblock the possibility to set up a system of cheaper rural credit accessible to Muslim households. E.g., S. Poniatovskii, “K voprosu ob oblozhenii sredne-aziatskogo volokna”, *Torgovo-*

*promyshlennaia gazeta*, no. 61, 1908, in: *Turkestanskii Sbornik* (hereafter: *TS*), vol. 460, pp. 96-98; idem, “Kto platit novyi nalog na khlopok?”, *Turkestanskii Sbornik*, no. 3, 1910, in *TS*, vol. 533, pp. 142-145.

22.. “Sovietology” has been strongly criticized for the past twenty years or so because, in using the same categories as Soviet sources, it reproduced the same mistakes. A milestone in this criticism to “Sovietology” in the study of Islam in the former USSR is: Devin DeWeese, “Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: A Review Essay on Yaacov Ro'i's *Islam in the Soviet Union*,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 13, no.3 (2002): 298-330.

23.. On the role of the State, in particular in Turkestan's cotton sector, see S.N. Abashin's peremptory formulation: “it was the State that played the role of ‘motor’, *i.e.* of ideologue, money-man, and manager ... State power, in the person of officers [*chinovniki*], set up the plan of transformations, implemented it itself and by itself controlled its execution.” *Tsentral'nai Aziia v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii*, eds., S.N. Abashin, D.Iu. Arapov, and N.E. Bekmakhanova (Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), 148 (this chapter is authored by Abashin). Compare: Veksel'mann, *Rossiiskii monopolisticheskii i inostrannyi kapital*.

24.. For a typical example of the study of this nexus, see: Taironov R. Ėkupzhon, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia deiatel-nost' turkestanskikh predprinimatelei v nachale XX veka*, avtoreferat ... k.i.n., Institut Istorii – AN RUz, 2011 (with bibliography). On “Jadidism” in Central Asia, see in particular: Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

25.. Nel'ia Iur'evna Potapova, *Istoriia predprinimatel'stva v Turkestane (vtoraia polovina XIX – nachalo XX vv.)*, Tashkent, Universitet Mirovoi Ekonomiki i Diplomatii, 2011.

26.. Wendy Carlin, Mark Schaffer, and Paul Seabright, “Soviet power plus electrification: What is the long-run legacy of communism?” *Explorations in Economic History* 50, no. 1 (2012): 116-147.

27.. Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

28.. The most recent work on the 1916 revolt, with a focus on Semirechie, is Jörn Happel, *Nomadische Lebenswelten und Zarische Politik. Der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010). Early accounts of the events are those of Turar R. Ryskulov, e.g., “Vosstanie tuzemtsev Turkestana v 1916 godu,” first published in *Ocherki revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Srednei Azii. Sbornik statei*, Moskva 1926, pp. 46-122, then reprinted (among others) in *Vosstanie kirgizov i kazakhov v 1916 godu*, Bishkek, Uchkun, 1991. The full text of this version is available online: [http://literatura.kg/uploads/vosstanie\\_1916\\_god.doc](http://literatura.kg/uploads/vosstanie_1916_god.doc) (last viewed August 31, 2013).

29.. See in particular: Marco Buttino, *La rivoluzione capovolta: l'Asia Centrale tra il crollo dell'impero zarista e la formazione dell'URSS*, (Napoli, l'Ancora del Mediterraneo, 2003); this book has been translated into Russian (2007); Marco Buttino, “Turkestan 1917: la révolution des Russes,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 31, no.1 (1991): 61-78.

30.. E.g., G. Skalov, “Sotsial’naia priroda basmachestva v Turkestane”, *Zhizn’ natsional’nostei*, no. 3-4 (1923): 51-62; cf. S.B. Ginsburg, “Basmachestvo v Fergane,” *Novyi Vostok* no. 10-11 (1925): 142-152.

31.. Data on the urban population are not available for 1917. See: M. Buttino, “Study of the economic crisis and depopulation in Turkestan, 1917-1920,” *Central Asian Survey* 9, no, 4 (1990): 59-74, here 65.

32.. Report by Fayzulla Khodjaev at the XIII Plenum of the SredAzBiuro, *stenograficheskii otchet*, [late May 1928], RGASPI, f. 62, op. 1, d. 224, l. 75.

33.. Gero Fedtke, “Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists and the Bukharan Revolution: From an Ideological Debate in the Early Soviet Union,” in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia*, vol. II (*Inter-regional & inter-ethnic relations*), eds. Von Kügelgen *et al.* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998): 483–512; Adeeb Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917–1920,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, eds. Ronald Grigor

Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): 145-164; among recent works on the Bukharan coup, see: Vladimir L. Genis, “*S Bukharoi nado konchat*”: *K istorii butaforskoii revoliutsii*, (Moskva, Tsentralnii strategicheskikh i politicheskikh issledovanii, 2001).

34.. Niccolò Pianciola, “Décoloniser l’Asie centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč’ e (1920-1922),” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 49, no. 1 (2008): 101-143; idem, *Stalinismo di frontiera. Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905-1936)* (Roma: Viella, 2009), 170-192.

35. Adeb Khalid, “Central Asia Between the Ottoman and the Soviet Worlds,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 2 (2011): 451-476, here 451.

36.. Adeb Khalid, “The Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic in the Light of Muslim Sources,” *Die Welt des Islams* 50, nos. 3-4 (2010): 335-361. The citation is from the abstract.

37.. This is one of the topics in which the critical contribution of recent, post-Soviet historiography has been most decisive. As an example of the “old school,” see: R. Vaidyanath, *The formation of the Soviet Central Asian republics; a study in Soviet nationalities policy, 1917-1936* (New Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1967); for the “new school,” see: Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Central Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Chika Obiya, “When Faizulla Khodjaev Decided to Be an Uzbek,” in *Islam and Politics in Russia and Central Asia (early 18th to late 19th centuries)*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 99-118; Gero Fedtke, “How Bukharans Turned into Uzbeks and Tajiks: Soviet Nationalities Policy in the Light of a Personality Rivalry,” in *Patterns of Transformation in and around Uzbekistan*, eds. P. Sartori and T. Trevisani (Reggio Emilia, Diabasis), 19-50. Specifically, on the formation of the Turkmen SSR, Adrienne Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

38.. V.Ia. Laverychev, “Sozdanie tsentral’nykh gosudarstvennykh organov upravleniia tekstil’noi promyshlennost’iu v 1918 g. (iz istorii ‘Tsentrotekstilia’),” in M.I. Stishov, B.G. Verkhoven’, and M.I. Kheifets (esd), *Iz istorii Velikoi Oktiabrskoi Sotsialisticheskoi*

*revoliutsii*, Moskva, Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1957; William B. Husband, *Revolution in the Factory. The Birth of the Soviet Textile Industry, 1917-1920* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

39.. In particular: Chris Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers and the New Economic Policy. Shop-floor culture and state policy, 1921-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

40.. Laverychev, "Sozdanie tsentral'nykh organov," 116-117; Husband, *Revolution in the Factory*, 34.

41.. Laverychev, "Sozdanie tsentral'nykh organov," 119, 122, 124; Husband, *Revolution in the Factory*, 34.

42.. On the birth and work of the *glavki* during War Communism: S. Malle, *The Economic Organization of War Communism, 1918-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 202-282.

43.. Laverychev, "Sozdanie tsentral'nykh organov," 144-146.

44.. Paul R. Gregory and Robert C. Stuart, *Russian and Soviet Economic Performance and Structure*, 7th ed.rev. (Boston: Addison Wesley, 2001), 45.

45.. Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers*, 15.

46.. See: Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists. The Nepmen, 1921-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 154-157.

47.. On the governance of the economy and the *glavki* at the end of NEP, see: D. Shearer, "Wheeling and Dealing in Soviet Industry: Syndicates, Trade, and Political Economy at the end of the 1920s," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 36, nos. 1-2 (1995): 139-160; and A. Graziosi, "Building the first system of state industry in history': Piatakov's VSNKh and the crisis of the NEP, 1923-1926," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 32, no. 4 (1991): 539-580.

48.. Ward, *Russia's Cotton Workers*, 18.

- 49.. Arup Banerji, *Merchants and Markets in Revolutionary Russia, 1917-30* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 109, based on: *Ekonomicheskaiia zhizn'*, no. 196 (2617), 30.8.1927, p. 2.
- 50.. Beatrice Penati, "Le Comité du Coton et les autres. Pouvoir économique et secteur cotonnier en Ouzbékistan (1922-1927)," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 52, no. 4 (2011): 555-589.
- 51.. K. Yusupov, *Vosstanovlenie sel'skogo khoziaistva Uzbekistana (1921-1928 gody)*, PhD dissertation (*kandidatskaia dissertatsiia*), Tashkent, 1962, 41.
- 52.. Whether they could intervene in the regulation of the industrial transformation of some cotton by-products, such as seeds, into cotton-seed oil, soap, and semi-hydrogenated fats, was a more controversial question. Even more troubling was the issue of who (among the *Glavkhlopkom*, the *Glavtekstil'*, or the all-Union Textile Syndicate) should govern the ginning of raw cotton. On the cotton committees, in Moscow and Central Asia, see: Penati, "Le Comité du Coton."
- 53.. The Austro-Marxist notion of self-determination is formulated in Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1907); a recent complete translation into English of the more common 1924 second edition is O. Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, trans. J. O'Donnell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
- 54.. See: Arno Meyer, *Wilson vs. Lenin. Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1964); for a non-historian's perspective: Antonio Cassese, *Self-determination of Peoples. A Legal Appraisal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 14-18, with bibliography.
- 55.. Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-1923* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 241.
- 56.. Terry Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 9.
- 57.. Smith, *Bolsheviks and National Question*, 104-105.

58.. B.L. Oroniuk and P.S. Temirkhodzhaev, *Tsentr-Turkestanu: Pomoshch' Rossiiskoi Federatsii trudiashchimsia Turkrespubliki v sotsialisticheskom stroitel'stve (1917-1924)* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1989), 95; based on: TsGARUz, f. r-25, op. 1, d. 821, l. 145.

59.. Letter by Fayzulla Khodzhaev to Ya.E. Rudzutak, 30 January 1923, in *Izbrannye trudy v trëkh tomakh*, t. 1, Tashkent, "Fan," 1970, pp. 434-435 (originally in: TsGARUz, f. r-48, op. 1, d. 180, l. 70).

60.. It is well known that high-count (i.e., thin, high-quality) cotton yarn cannot be spun if the climate is too dry, as the fibres will not stick together.

61.. Abdullaev, Vainer, and Kasymov, *Ferganskaia tekstil'naia*, 5-6.

62.. SNK UzSSR, *doklad o polozhenii mestnoi promyshlennosti UzSSR*, Autumn 1927, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2097, ll. 3-47, here l. 4; see also: Fayzulla Khodzhaev, *Izbrannye trudy v trëkh tomakh*, t. 1, Tashkent, "Fan," 1970, note 131, p. 480. This is confirmed by a document from the people's commissariat for the nationalities (Narkomnats), which Smith referred to: J. Smith, *Bolsheviks and National Question*, pp. 104-105, on the basis of GARF, f. 1318, op. 3, d. 1, l. 35. He also mentions (possibly mistakenly) the transfer of two textile factories (*Krasnyi Vostok* and *Zaria Vostoka*) not to Bukhara, but to the Turkestan republic.

63.. Letter by Fayzulla Khodzhaev to L.M. Karakhan, April 5, 1922, in *Izbrannye trudy v trëkh tomakh*, t. 1, Tashkent, "Fan," 1970, pp. 423-429, cit. p. 429.

64.. Letter by Fayzulla Khodzhaev to Ya.E. Rudzutak, January 30, 1923, in *Izbrannye trudy*, t. 1, pp. 434-435.

65.. Letter by Fayzulla Khodzhaev to Ya.E. Rudzutak, January 30, 1923, in *Izbrannye trudy*, t. 1, pp. 434-435.

66.. SNK UzSSR, *doklad o polozhenii mestnoi promyshlennosti UzSSR*, Autumn 1927, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2097, ll. 3-47, here l. 4.

67.. That neither Bukhara nor the Uzbek SSR wanted to move the plant to Central Asia is clear from the fact that originally the all-Union government had "suggested"

[*predpolagalo*] that the machinery of the *Zaraiskaia fabrika* be transferred, while the buildings would remain “at the disposal of the MSNKh”; not only did the BNSR not second this “suggestion,” but the Uzbek government was even asking, in 1926, that the buildings *too* be assigned to the republic: Presidium UzVSNKh, *protokol*, no. 24 (copy), March 27, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 856, ll. 132-136, here l. 134.

68.. Ibid.

69. Or *Shveitsarskoe Anonimnoe Obshchestvo*. See: decision of the STO arbitration commission (AKSTO), November 19, 1925, GARF, f. 5674, op. 6, d. 1807, ll. 8-12.

70. *Ob"iasnenie pravlenia Egor'evsko-Ramenskogo ob"edineniia*, August 16, 1923, TsGAMO, f. 1567, op. 1, d. 3544. The bigger “trust” derived its name from the city of Egor'evsk in the Riazan' *gubernia*, where it had existed as a private company at least since 1893. After the revolution, its name became *Ramen-Egor'evskii trest*. Pazhitnov, *Ocherki istorii teksti'noi promyshlennosti dorevolutsionnoi Rossii*, vol. 2, p. 115; W.B. Husband, *Revolution in the Factory*, 134.

71. To understand what 600 thousand rubles meant in 1923, one could mention the fact that the joint stock of the Turkestani “cotton committee” (also a *paevoe tovarishchestvo*) was 20 million rubles, while that of the Uzbek cotton committee was 22.5 million: *Otchet o deiatel'nosti GKKh*, vol. 4 (October 1, 1924–October 1, 1925), M.-L., Promizdat, 1926.

72. Oroniuk – Temirkhodzhaev, *Tsentr-Turkestanu*, p. 95; based on: TsGARUZ, f. r-25, op. 1, d. 786, l. 240.

73. Ibid., without any source reference.

74. Certainly the experience the young republic might have acquired in this way was not mentioned when the first Uzbek textile factory began to be built in Fergana (see below).

75. Ties between Reutov and the Turkmen SSR lasted longer than those between Zaraisk and the Uzbek SSR (see below). In 1967, the Turkmen film director Yazgel'dy Seidov dedicated a short movie (*kinoocherk*), *Ashkhabad-Reutovo*, to the relation between the two cities, and in 1974 the street where the textile factory stood was renamed

“Ashkhabad street.” For recent photos of the “Turkmen manufacture-Reutov” factory and its annexes (workers’ dorms, etc.), see this Russian blog: <http://zabyg17.livejournal.com/115023.html> [last viewed November 10, 2013].

76. *Istoriia Sovetskogo Turkmenistana*. Chast’ 1 (1917-1937 gg.), “Pobeda velikoi oktiabr’skoi revoliutsii i postroenie sotsializma,” Ashkhabad, Izdatel’stvo “Ylym,” 1970, p. 261; A.A. Annaklychev, *Razvitie promyshlennosti Turkmenistana za gody Sovetskoj valsti (1921-1937 gg.)*, Ashkhabad, Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk Turkmenskoi SSR, 1959, p. 19. This latter work reports that the Turkmen SSR was also hiring two more weaving factories, one of them in the Ivanovo-Vosnesensk district, but I have found no corroboration for this statement.

77. Dziga Vertov (dir.), *Shestaia chast’ mira* (USSR, 1926). The factory appears at 53’45” of the DVD edition prepared by the Österreichischer Filmmuseum (Wien) in 2010.

78. Abdullaev, Vainer, and Kasymov, *Ferganskaia tekstil’naia*, p. 9.

79. F. Khodzhaev, “K istorii revolyutsii v Bukhare” (2nd edition), in idem, *Izbrannye trudy v trëkh tomakh*, t. 1, Tashkent, “Fan,” 1970, pp. 69-317, here p. 257 (see also note 131, p. 480). And: Yu.A. Poliakov – A.I. Chugunov – A.I. Zevelev, *Basmachestvo : vozniknovenie, sushchnost’, krakh*, Moskva, Nauka, 1981, p. 134.

80. *Ezhemesiachnye blanki*, July 1921-January 1922, TsGAMO, f. 1567, op. 1, d. 2576.

81. Ward, *Russia’s Cotton Workers*, 11-12.

82. Commission for the registration of the patrimony of *Krasnyi Vostok*, February 20, 1925, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 200, ll. 1-2, here l. 1.

83. Rozental’ (representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government) to Presidium VSNKh, June 12, 1926, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, 1081, l. 3.

84. Ibid., l. 1; see also: F. Khodjaev, “K istorii revolyutsii v Bukhare,” note 131 p. 480 (only mentions dyeing). For Efros’s initials and the inclusion of printing as one of the plant’s activities, I used: <http://his.1september.ru/article.php?ID=200601604> [last viewed November 7, 2012]. I have not been able yet to elucidate the relation between

*Krasnyi Vostok* and the *trest* called *Turkestanskaya manufaktura* (see below): cf. Karimov, *Uzbekistan v period vosstanovleniia*, p. 90.

85. Commission for the registration of the patrimony of *Krasnyi Vostok*, February 20, 1925, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 200, ll. 1-2, here l. 10b; compare: *Zakliuchenie PRK po balansu pravleniia tresta Kizil-Shark na 1-e oktiabria 1925g.*, March 23, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 208, ll. 10-37, here l. 11; the latter document defines this factory as *krasil'no-appreturnaia i krutil'naia*; the second term refers in Russian to any finishing process (for yarn or fabric), but because here it is used in conjunction with “dyeing” and “twisting,” it is a safe guess to think that finishing concerns the yarn, and mercerization was the most common yarn finishing process for cotton in Russia since the late 1890s. But see also: rent contract of the *Blagushinskaia mekhanicheskoi-tkatskaia i krasil'naia fabrika* [April 1926], TsGAMO, f. 1567, op. 5, d. 47.

86. Rabkrin to the BNSR government and to the trade and industry *nazir*, Ataev, June 28, 1924, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, ll. 30-33.

87. Rent contracts [April 1926] and February 29, 1928, TsGAMO, f. 1567, op. 5, d. 47, ll. 3, 64, 78-79. There is the possibility, of course, that *Krasnyi Vostok* was renting only one section of the factory.

88. *Doklad o rezul'tatakh...*, cited, here l. 60b; also: *Zakliuchenie PRK*, cit., here l. 110b. The latter plant was located in the village of Zubovo, on the bank of the Lutosnia river. It was originally founded in 1837. See: <http://xn--h1addj.xn--p1ai/gorod/story/> [last viewed November 7, 2012]. Someone has posted a photo of the factory as it looks now: <http://foto-planeta.com/photo/128998.html> [same as above].

89. Ibid. (mentioning five *sovkhozy*, two more mills within them, and an additional brick factory); five *sovkhozy* “owned” by the *trest* also according to: Commission for the registration of the patrimony of *Krasnyi Vostok*, February 20, 1925, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 200, ll. 1-2, here l. 2; see also: *Kratkoe soderzhanie iz doklada po obsledovaniiu Krasnogo Vostoka*, [after January 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 441, ll. 1-4, here l. 3.

90. *Doklad o rezul'tatakh obsledovaniia Bukharskogo promyshlennogo predpriiatia priadil'noi-tkatskoi manufaktury "Krasnyi Vostok"* [end of 1924-January 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 441, ll. 5-14, here ll. 5-6.
91. *Protokol*, Presidium UzVSNKh, August 21, 1925, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 1079, ll. 7-9, here l. 7.
92. For all this part, see: *Doklad o rezul'tatakh obsledovaniia Bukharskogo promyshlennogo predpriiatia priadil'noi-tkatskoi manufaktury "Krasnyi Vostok"* [end of 1924-January 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 441, ll. 5-14, here ll. 5-6.
93. Barry M. Richman, *Management Development and Education in the Soviet Union* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1967), 9-10, 45-47.
94. We know very little about A.A. Beliakov, besides his management style (see below) and the fact that he had been a party member since 1894: GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, l. 59.
95. Among others, see: Kangas, *Faizulla Khodzhaev*, 137.
96. Information from the online edition of the biographical dictionary compiled by Sh. Kadyrov, on the basis of: RGASPI f. 62, op. 4, d. 700, l. 55, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person2.php?&st=1096055757> [last seen on May 14, 2011]. Fayzulla Khojaev alluded to the purge in the second part of his account of the revolution in Bukhara, justified it with the above mentioned "surge of capitalist elements," leading to "the corruption of the top of our [State] apparatus," and explained that the administration of the Bukharan economy had improved with the arrival of Soviet specialists borrowed from Tashkent: "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniiia v Srednei Azii" (2nd ed., 1926) *Izbrannye trudy v trëkh tomakh*, t. 1, Tashkent, "Fan," 1970, pp. 71-308, here p. 242. For more information on the purge itself, I am indebted to Adeeb Khalid (private email communication, December 2, 2013). See also: Khalid, "Bukharan People's Soviet Republic," p. 358. As for the alternation in the management of *Krasnyi Vostok*, though, a third source suggests that Beliakov lost his position only at a later date in 1925, as a consequence of one Rabkrin inquiry and that he was not replaced by Ata-Khojaev Pulatovich but by a tandem made up of a Bukharan

(Sattar Khojaev) and a Russian Jew (Rappoport), on which see below. See: anonymous letter to the Rabkrin, counterfeited handwriting, [late 1925?], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 200, l. 103.

97. Balance sheet for the year 1924-1925 (closed October 1, 1925), GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 200, ll. 139-145.

98. The report mentioned *biaz'* (uncolored rough calico) and *tik* (thick cloth, typically used for mattresses and other sturdy covers): chair of the revision commission, *doklad*, March 20, 1924, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, ll. 2-27, here l. 2.

99. This is a possible reference to twisting and possibly mercerization, dyeing, or bleaching: hence the supposed strategic importance of the *Blagushinskaia fabrika* mentioned above: *Ibid.*, here l. 11.

100. *Ibid.*, l. 17, cit. l. 2.

101. President of the Rabkrin permanent revision commission (Udal') to the *komfraktsia* of *Krasnyi Vostok* [late spring 1924], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, ll. 39-41, both cit. l. 41.

102. Chair of the revision commission, *doklad*, March 20, 1924, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, ll. 2-27, here l. 17. The expression *u Khrista za pazukhoi* could also be rendered as "He feels as if he were God's gift" – it implies a sense of entitlement, not only of beatitude.

103. Indeed, the word *dumping* had already been assimilated by the Russian language, at least since the first decade of the century. For instance, this term was used in the press to designate the behavior of Knoop's companies on the market of textile goods in 1909: V. Shimanovskii, "Khlopchatobumazhnyi *coup d'état*," *TPG*, 1909, in *Turkestanskii sbornik* 505: 1-3.

104. *Biuro registratsii vnebirzhevyykh sdelok*, Moscow Stock Exchange, to NKRKI, *Torgovaya inspektsiia*, May 9, 1924, GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 376, ll. 1-2.

105. *Doklad o rezul'tatakh obsledovaniia Bukharskogo promyshlennogo predpriiatia priadil'noi-tkatskoi manufaktury "Krasnyi Vostok"* [end of 1924-January 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 441, ll. 5-14, here l. 5.

106. Ibid., here l. 6ob.

107. Ibid., here l. 13.

108. Ibid., here l. 9.

109. Ibid., here l. 10.

110. Fayzulla Khodzhaev, "Khoziaistvennoe polozhenie Uzbekskoi SSR i perspektivy ego razvitiia," in *Izbrannye trudy*, t. II, Tashkent, Izdatel'stvo "Fan" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1972, pp. 11-62, here p. 43 (original ed. Tashkent, UzGIz, 1925). This document erroneously calls the *Blaguchinskaia* factory "Blagoustenskaia."

111. Chair of the inspection commission, *doklad*, March 20, 1924, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, ll. 2-27, here ll. 10ob, 13-13ob, 8.

112. Chair of the inspection commission, *doklad*, March 20, 1924, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 201, ll. 2-27, here ll. 10ob, 13-13ob, 8.

113. Beliakov to NKRKI (Kuibyshev) and Politbiuro TsK VKP(b), *Dokladnaia zapiska*, April 26, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 1396, ll. 3-22, here l. 13.

114. Beliakov's behavior (in particular the fact that he opposed Ata-Khojaev to Fayzulla Khojaev) and the turnover in the Bukharan "supervisors" of *Red Orient* in Moscow may even suggest the existence of political transactions around this trust *within* such Bukharan leadership. This, however, cannot be demonstrated by the documents I have had access to.

115. Beliakov, reporting the estimate of the Tax Commission of the Moscow *oblast'*: Beliakov to NKRKI (Kuibyshev) and Politbiuro TsK VKP(b), *Dokladnaia zapiska*, April 26, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 1396, ll. 3-22, here l. 13.

116. This is what Beliakov said the Rabkrin auditors had estimated: Beliakov to NKRKI (Kuibyshev) and Politbiuro TsK VKP(b), *Dokladnaia zapiska*, April 26, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 1396, ll. 3-22, here l. 6.
117. Version approved by the Presidium VSNKh, January 21, 1926, published in *TPG*, no. 35, February 12, 1923, p. 4.
118. Zakliuchenie *PRK po balansu pravlenia tresta Kizil-Shark na 1-e oktiabria 1925g.*, March 23, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 208, ll. 10-37.
119. Beliakov, reporting the estimate of the Tax Commission of the Moscow *oblast'*: Beliakov to NKRKI (Kuibyshev) and Politbiuro TsK VKP(b), *Dokladnaia zapiska*, April 26, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 1396, ll. 3-22, here l. 13.
120. A balance sheet can be compared to a snapshot of the situation at the end of the economic year; an income statement reflects the difference between the situation at the beginning and at the end of the year. The first shows “stocks”; the second shows “flows.”
121. *Zakliuchenie Ugroma UzVSNKh po otchetu Krasnogo Vostoka 1923-4 g.*, [late 1925 or early 1926], GARF, f. 374, op. 28, l. 1396, ll. 23-42, here ll. 26-30.
122. Beliakov to NKRKI (Kuibyshev) and Politbiuro TsK VKP(b), *Dokladnaia zapiska*, April 26, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 1396, ll. 3-22, here l. 4.
123. Version approved by the Presidium VSNKh, 21.1.1926, published in *TPG*, no. 35, February 12, 1923, p. 4.
124. Because there is no precise information about the single sections of the previous versions, it is hard to say how this result was achieved. It seems that the new managers slightly eroded the liabilities side, for instance by subtracting some seven thousand rubles from the provisions. The assets side also grew by eleven percent, possibly by revising the estimate of the circulating capital upwards. Compare: *TPG*, no. 35, February 12, 1923, p. 4; and: *Zakliuchenie Ugroma UzVSNKh po otchetu Krasnogo Vostoka 1923-4 g.* [late 1925 or early 1926], GARF, f. 374, op. 28, l. 1396, ll. 23-42, here ll. 26-30.

125. This was embedded in a document by the Party's Revision Commission (which monitored and, on occasions, corrected the Rabkrin's decisions) dated March 1926; it showed perfect budget parity at the end of 1923-1924. The assets and liabilities amounted both to some 7,844,218 rubles, compared to 8,809,557 for the assets in the official published version. To reach perfect parity, assets had slightly diminished (in particular the estimation of machinery and buildings, and commercial and documentary credit) while, on the liabilities side, the working capital was increased by around nine percent. All this looked, once again, strangely artificial. The purpose of this document seems to have been limited to the comparison of economic results between the years 1923-1924 and 1924-1925, when nobody doubted the existence of a small income of 60,641 rubles. See: *Zakliuchenie PRK po balansu pravlenia tresta Kizil-Shark na 1-e oktiabria 1925g.*, March 23, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 208, ll. 10-37.

126. Anonymous letter to the Rabkrin [1926], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 856, l. 103. Note the use of the word "Narkomfin" to express what should have been "*nazirat finansov.*" Besides the counterfeited handwriting, this letter was also written in poor Russian.

127. Materials in: GARF, f. 374, op. 28, d. 203. This *delo* is included in the materials of the Rabkrin inspection to *Krasnyi Vostok*. "Financial Administration" (*Finansovoe Upravlenie*) may be a clumsy translation for the "finance *nazirat.*" For information about Sattar Khojaev, I thank Adeeb Khalid (private email communication, December 2, 2013).

128. *Mostrikotazh*, which was meant to receive the *Blagushinskaia fabrika*, was refusing to pay for the machinery; MSNKh had to mediate the transfer of the *Zubovskaia fabrika* to *Rosstovar* because the repair work was exceedingly expensive: *Krasnyi Vostok* [?] to UzVSNKh, report [summer 1925, but before August 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 1-35, here ll. 4-5.

129. Advertisement for *Krasnyi Vostok's* yarn, *TPG*, no. 12, January 15, 1925, p. 6.

130. Commission on the trading activity of *Krasnyi Vostok*, report [after October 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 105-105ob.

132. SNK UzSSR to STO SSSR, September 13, 1926, GARF, f. 5674, op. 6, d. 974, l. 2.

133. VSNKh uzSSR to NKRKI UzSSR, October 6, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 856, l. 5; compare: *Zakliuchenie PRK po balansu pravlenia tresta Kizil-Shark na 1-e oktiabria 1925g.*, March 23, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 208, ll. 10-37, here ll. 11-110b.
134. From a *Krasnyi Uzbekistan* advertisement, *TPG*, no. 27, February 3, 1925, p. 6.
135. *Krasnyi Vostok* to UzVSNKh, report, [summer 1925, before August 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 1-35, here l. 7.
136. Presidium UzVSNKh, *protokol*, no. 20, April 25, 1928, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2096, ll. 182-189, here l. 183.
137. Shearer, “Wheeling and Dealing.”
138. *Spravka* on AKSTO’s deliberation [before July 1925], GARF, f. 5574, op. 5, d. 1309, ll. 11-13; STO, excerpt from the *protokol*, no. 166, July 22, 1925, *Ibid.*, l. 14.
139. The problem the commission had to rule on concerned the value of the yarn which *Red Orient* had sold at credit to the *Egor’evskii trest*: the latter claimed that it had paid more than it owed; *Red Orient* disagreed. The commission’s decision, on the other hand, could not touch upon the issue of the failure to pay its shares by the *Egor’evskii trest*: Decision of the AKSTO, November 19, 1925, GARF, f. 5474, f. 6, d. 1807, ll. 8-12; permanent representative of the Uzbek SSR to STO, January 16, 1926, *Ibid.*, ll. 1-2; AKSTO to STO, January 25, 1926, *Ibid.*, ll. 4-5; *Egor’evskii Trest* to STO, February 25, 1926, *Ibid.*, l. 14; AFK (Administrative-Financial Commission), excerpt from the *protokol*, April 22, 1926, *Ibid.*, l. 19. Even before the final decision, *Red Orient* had already decided to comply.
140. Exactly at the same time (March to May 1926), the AFK and the STO were considering two other issues pertaining to the Uzbek republican budget. In both cases, the Uzbek SSR seems to have benefitted from a direct communication line with the deputy chair of the STO, Kuibyshev: see documents in GARF, f. 5446, op. 7, d. 75; f. 5446, op. 7a, d. 430, esp. l. 14. It is possible that the three cases were considered “in a bundle” by STO organs, and maybe a bargain arranged with Samarkand, but no evidence

of either can be found in the archives – at any rate, those paralegal arrangements would have left no paper trail.

141. See: Penati, “Le Comité du Coton et les autres.”

142. *Krasnyi Vostok* to UzVSNKh, report [summer 1925, before August 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 1-35, here ll. 23-24.

143. *Krasnyi Vostok* to UzVSNKh, November 23, 1925, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 110-113.

144. See Penati, “Le Comité du Coton.”

145. *Vypiska iz protokola*, SNK SSSR, October 18, 1926; GARF, f. 5674, op. 6, d. 974, l. 7; presidium VSNKh SSSR to STO, September 28, 1926, *Ibid.*, l. 4; *vypiska iz protokola*, STO SSSR, November 5, 1926, *Ibid.*, l. 8.

146. Rabkrin, *Dokladnaia zapiska* on the execution of the Kollegiia NKRKI of June 11, 1925, April 20, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 856, ll. 9-11.

147. From a *Krasnyi Uzbekistan* advertisement, *TPG*, no. 27, February 3, 1925, p. 6.

148. *Krasnyi Vostok* to UzVSNKh, report [summer 1925, before August 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 1-35, here l. 10.

149. Penati, “Le Comité du Coton.”

150. *Krasnyi Vostok* to UzVSNKh, report [summer 1925, before August 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 1-35, here l. 15.

151. *Krasnyi Vostok* to UzVSNKh, report [summer 1925, before August 1925], GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 1-35, here l. 15.

152. *Krasnyi Vostok* to uzVSNKh (Khamutkhanov, chair), January 7, 1926, GARF, f. 374, op. 12, d. 440, ll. 90-91.

153. SNK UzSSR to STO SSSR, September 13, 1926, GARF, f. 5674, op. 6, d. 974, l. 2.
154. “Torgovaya deiatel’nost’ tresta ‘Kizil-Shark,’” *TPG*, no. 115(1249), May 22, 1926, p. 4.
155. “Eshche o treste ‘Kzyl-Shark,’” *TPG*, no. 119(1253), May 27, 1926, p. 4; “Dostizhenia tresta ‘Kzyl-Shark,’” *TPG*, no. 184(1318), August 14, 1926, p. 3.
156. “Sinditsirovanie sbyta khl.-bum. tkanei,” *TPG*, no. 250(1384), October 30, 1926, p. 4.
162. Left: *TPG*, no. 12, January 15, 1925, p. 6; right: *TPG*, no. 27, February 3, 1925, p. 6. Note that, in the first advertisement, *Krasnyi Vostok* is still “Bukharan” despite the completion of the national delimitation. This circumstance, together with the presence, in its management, of “recycled” elements from the pre-1923 BNSR government, is suggestive of the special links between this venture and Bukharan mercantile and political circles, rather than of a link with the Uzbek SSR as such.
157. “Obrabotka khlopka tekstil’noi promyshlennost’iu,” *TPG*, no. 46(1180), February 25, 1926, p. 3.
158. See for instance: intervention by Dunaev (chairman of the UzGosplan), in *Pervyi vseuzbetskii s’ezd sovetov rabochikh, dehkanskikh, i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov UzSSR. Stenograficheskie otcheti* [February 1925], Tashkent, Uzbekskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo, 1925, here p. 43.
159. Rozental’ (representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government) to the Presidium VSNKh, June 12, 1926, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 1081, l. 3; note for Kviring (president of VSNKh SSSR), to be forwarded to Rozental’, June 29, 1926, *Ibid.*, l. 5; *trest* “Kzyl Shark,” VSNKh of the UzSSR, to the “National policy department” [*sic*], VSNKh SSSR, July 21, 1926, *Ibid.*, ll. 1-2. Incidentally, “900 looms” was probably an exaggeration because in mid-1921 the factory only contained forty looms and a 20 HP engine; it may be that the higher count yielded by the Uzbeks included obsolete machinery that had been discarded even before 1921. See: *Ezhemesiachnye blanki* for the *Boriso-Lopasnenskaia fabrika*, 1921, TsGAMO, f. 1567, op. 1, d. 2515, esp. ll. 1, 7.

160. Rozental' (representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government) to Presidium VSNKh, June 12, 1926, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, 1081, l. 3.

161. Emmanuil Ionovich Kvirng (1888-1937), from 1923 to 1925 first secretary of the Ukrainian communist party, between 1927 and 1931 was the deputy chair of the all-Union Gosplan. In this capacity, he also dealt with the *ex post* accounts for the land reform in Uzbekistan (1925-1926). Shot in 1937, he was rehabilitated in 1956.

163. "Torgovaya deyatel'nost' tresta 'Kizil-Shark,'" *TPG*, no. 115(1249), May 22, 1926, p. 4.

164. Indeed, *Krasnyi Vostok* kept asking for the looms in the Summer of 1926: report, *Trest « Kzyl Shark »*, VSNKh of the UzSSR, to the "National policy department" [*sic*], VSNKh SSSR, July 21, 1926, *Ibid.*, ll. 1-2.

165. "Eshche o treste 'Kzyl-Shark,'" *TPG*, no. 119(1253), May 27, 1926, p. 4; "Dostizhenia tresta 'Kzyl-Shark'," *TPG*, no. 184(1318), August 14, 1926, p. 3.

166. The *trest Krasnyi Vostok*, however, was not explicitly mentioned: "Ukrupnenie khlopchato-bumazhnykh trestov," *TPG*, no. 142(1276), June 25, 1926, p. 3.

167. Information from the webpage of the city of Chekhov: <http://www.chekhov-town.ru/history.php> [last seen on April 5, 2011].

168. Ispolbiuro TsK KP(b)Uz, *protokol no. 73*, March 6, 1927, RGASPI, f. 17 op. 27, f. 10, ll. 57-58.

169. This distinction is important in the discussion of de-industrialization in India, where Tirthankar Roy has thoroughly demonstrated the importance of small industry and "labor-intensive industrialization." For a brief introduction, see: T. Roy, *The Economic History of India, 1857-1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 190-192 (with bibliography). On Central Asia, we have: Skallerup, *Artisans between Guilds and Cooperatives*. See also the works mentioned in note 4. Precious information on craftsmanship, its cultural-religious implications, and the identity of craftsmen themselves can be found in Jeanine E. Dağyeli, *Gott liebt das Handwerk: Moral*,

*Identität und religiöse Legitimierung in der Mittelasiatischen Handwerks-risâla* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag 2011).

170. This is what Thompson's influential article seems to imply by saying that "a modern textile industry in Turkestan ... was banned": Thompson, "Russian Imperialism," 251.

171. *Promyshlennost' Uzbekistana*, pp. 6, 81; Ibragimdzhan Iskanderov, *Tekstil'naia promyshlennost' Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, Izdatel'stvo "Uzbekistan," 1974, p. 22. Cf. Thompson, "Russian Imperialism," 254.

172. See in particular: Veksel'mann, *Rossiiskii monopolisticheskii i inostrannyi kapital*, p. 129. When referring to this passage, Thompson ("Russian Imperialism," 54) does not make it clear that the problem was that the investors were foreigners, not that they were interested in industry.

173. S.K. Zhakupbekov, *Pervaia fabrika Kazakhstana (istoriia Kargalinskogo sukonnogo kombinata)*, Alma-Ata, "Kazakhstan," 1989; V.V. Zaorskaiia – K.A. Aleksander, *Promyshlennye zavedeniia Turstanskogo kraia*, Vyp. 1, Petrograd, Ekaterinskaia tipografiia, 1915, pp. 334-335.

174. *Protokol soveshchaniia po voprosu o poluchenii khlopka iz Turkestana i o snabzhenii Turkestana khlebom i manufakturoi*, January 24, 1919, GARF, f. 7659, op. 1, d. 191, ll. 29-31.

175. Radiogram, Rudzutak, Katkyn, Matveev to Rykov, Tsiurupa (NKProd), Negin (Glavtekstil'), [February 1920], RGASPI, f. 122, op. 1, d. 95, l. 107.

176. Telegram, Briukhanov (deputy NKProd) to Turkkomprod [April 1920?], RGASPI, f. 12, op. 1, d. 95, l. 130.

177. V.A. Suvorov, *Turkestanskaia ASSR nakanune vosstanovite'nogo perioda*, Tashkent, Izdatel'stvo TsK LKSM Uzbekistana "Ësh gvardiia," 1966, p. 146.

178. TsSNKh Turkrepubliki, *dokladnaia zapiska*, Andijan, December 8, 1919, RGASPI, f. 122, op. 1, d. 95, ll. 16-21.

179. Suvorov, *Turkestanskaia ASSR*, p. 99.

180. TsSNKh Turkrepubliki, *dokladnaia zapiska*, Andijan, December 8, 1919, RGASPI, f. 122, op. 1, d. 95, ll. 16-21; cf. A.M. Katkyn (Presidium VSNKh), report, *Ekonomicheskoe sostoianie Fergany k nachalu 3-go goda Sovetskoii vlasti*, December 2, 1919, RGASPI, f. 122, op. 1, d. 94, ll. 3-19.

181. Karimov, *Uzbekistan v period vosstanovleniia*, p. 90.

182. Karimov, *Uzbekistan v period vosstanovleniia*, p. 90.

183. SredAzBiuro, note on *Osnovnye cherty khoziaistvennykh planov Sredneaziatskikh respublik na 1925-1926*, 1925, RGASPI, f. 62, op. 2, d. 212, l. 44. The same note is also classified as attachment to the minutes of the VII Plenum SredAzbiuro, July 1925, RGASPI, f. 62, op. 1, d. 39.

184. Presidium UzVSNKh, *protokol*, no. 63, August 21, 1925, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, l. 1079, ll. 7-9, here l. 8.

185. Presidium UzVSNKh, *protokol*, no. 53, July 10, 1926, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 1079, ll. 30-35, here l. 32. Compare: "Novaya tekstil'naya fabrika v Fergane", *TPG*, no. 188(1322), August 19, 1926, p. 3.

186. *Promyshlennost' Uzbekistana. Kratkii ocherk razvitiia (1913-1938)*, p. 81.

187. SNK UzSSR, *doklad o polozhenii mestnoi promyshlennosti UzSSR*, Autumn 1927, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2097, ll. 3-47, cit. l. 41.

188. *Ibid.*, here l. 6.

189. This situation cropped up almost every month in the summary OGPU reports on the situation in Central Asia, for instance: *Obzor no. 3 politiko-ekonomicheskogo sostoianiiia Srednei Azii za mart 1928 g.*, RGASPI, f. 62, op. 2, d. 1349, ll. 170-192, here l. 177; *Obzor no. 10 ... za oktiabr' 1928 g.*, RGASPI, f. 62, op. 2, d. 1352, ll. 1-83, here l. 6.

190. Resolution, *2-ia partkonferentsiia Tashokrug*, October 27-November 4, 1927, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 27, d. 259, ll. 41-45, here ll. 41-42.
191. SNK UzSSR, *doklad o polozhenii mestnoi promyshlennosti UzSSR*, Autumn 1927, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2097, ll. 3-47, here p. 4.
192. Attachment to: Ispolbiuro TsK KP(b)Uz, *protokol no. 6*, March 26, 1929, RGASPI, f. 17 op. 27, f. 17, ll. 96-97.
193. Abdullaev, Vainer, and Kasymov, *Ferganskaia tekstil'naia*, p. 5.
194. See, for many examples: S. Meller, ed., *Russian Textiles: Printed Cloth for the Bazaars of Central Asia* (New York: Abrams, 2007). On the terminology of different types of locally woven cotton and silk-and-cotton blended fabrics, see: M. Ashrafi *et al.*, "Applied arts: textiles and carpets," in Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib, eds., *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. V (*Development in Contrast: From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*) (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 657-700, esp. 670.
195. "K voprosu o Kauchinskom sakharnom zavode," *Pravda Vostoka*, no. 12 (289), January 16, 1924, p. 2. In 1924, the main objection was that the old Kauchi plant was located in a cotton-oriented area, where sugar beet culture was undesirable. In the *rayon* of Turkestan, then in the Kyrgyz ASSR (now Kazakhstan), sugar beet could complement cotton culture, and the construction of a sugar plant was not prejudicially opposed in 1926: Fatyanov, "O postroike sakharnykh zavodov v Srednei Azii," *TPG*, no. 76(1210), April 3, 1926, p. 3. In the republican five-year plan for 1926-1927 to 1930-1931, on the contrary, the expansion of the cultivation of sugar beet in the vicinity of Kauchi was encouraged: SredAzEkoso, materials on the five-year plan 1926-1931, submitted to the SredAzBiuro TsK VKP(b), May 22, 1927, RGASPI, f. 62, op. 1, d. 222, l. 182.
196. Presidium UzVSNKh, *protokol*, no. 53, November 4, 1928, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2393, ll. 21-23.
197. First project: SredAzEkoso, materials on the five-year plan 1926-1931, submitted to the SredAzBiuro TsK VKP(b), May 22, 1927, RGASPI, f. 62, op. 1, d. 222, l. 180; second

project: representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government, to the Rabkrin SSSR, February 2, 1929, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2393, ll. 9-14, here l. 110b.

198. Abdullaev, Vainer, and Kasymov, *Ferganskaia tekstil'naia*, p. 7.

199. *Promyshlennost' Uzbekistana*, p. 81.

200. Representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government, to the Rabkrin SSSR, February 2, 1929, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2393, ll. 9-14, here l. 10.

201. Representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government, to the Rabkrin SSSR, February 2, 1929, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2393, ll. 9-14, here l. 110b.

202. *Ibid.*, here l. 13.

203. Odyli (representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government) to Presidium VSNKh, April 8, 1929, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2393, ll. 1-10b.

204. *Ibid.*, here l. 8.

205. Abdullaev, Vainer, and Kasymov, *Ferganskaia Tekstil'naia*, p. 8.

206. Representative of the UzSSR to the all-Union government, to the Rabkrin SSSR, February 2, 1929, RGAE, f. 3429, op. 3, d. 2393, ll. 9-14, here l. 8.

207. Abdullaev, Vainer, and Kasymov, *Ferganskaia Tekstil'naia*, p. 18.

208. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

209. *Avlië qizi* (Uzbek SSR, 1930), directed by O. Frelikh; I am much indebted to Cloé Drieu for having allowed me to view this document. For background information and an analysis of the movie, refer to: Cloé Drieu, *Fictions nationales. Cinéma, empire et nation en Ouzbékistan (1919-1937)* (Paris: Karthala, 2013), 172-177.

210. Cf. J. Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 109-120; on the Russian unemployed as a threat to

public order in the cities, see: *doklad* by Islamov, *Otchet pravitel'stva UzSSR*, [Samarkand], Izdanie TsIKa Sovetov UzSSR, 1926, pp. 52-54.

211. I have tried in vain to track down documents about the factory or about Zارايسк in general; they are not in the State archive for the Moscow *Oblast'* (TsGAMO; Zارايسк is now located in the Moscow region) or in the one for the Riazan' *Oblast'* (GARO; in the 1920s Zارايسк was in the Riazan' province). I thank Elena Korchmina for having checked the latter's reading-room guidebook.

212. See, respectively: N. Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera*; idem, "Décoloniser l'Asie Centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semirech'e (1920-1922)," *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, 49, no. 1 (2008):101-144; C. Teichmann, "Canals, Cotton, and the limits of de-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941," *Central Asian Survey*, 26, no. 4 (2007): 499-519.

213. Curiously, inspiration for this last sentence comes from a description a scholar gave me of the functioning of the French *Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique*.

214. See: Oliver E. Williamson, *Markets and Hierarchies: Analysis and Antitrust Implications. A Study in the Economics of Internal Organization* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1983, first published 1975). The literature inspired by this work and by the economics of transaction costs in general is immense in all the social sciences.

215. Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 132-141.