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Translation and Transliteration

Transliterating from Uzbek, a language that contains much borrowing from other tongues, into English, a language that similarly assimilates foreign words without difficulty, is no easy task—the results are inevitably imperfect. The system I have chosen attempts to create a consistent representation of the many unique cultural concepts that appear in the novel, while also maintaining accessibility for readers not familiar with Central Asia.

For words that have already been borrowed by English through other contexts—namely, Arabic, Persian, and South Asian languages—I maintain the commonly accepted English standard. For example, I write *imam* instead of *imom*, *pilaf* instead of *palov* or *osh*, and *tandoor* instead of *tandir*. Likewise, names that are known to English speakers through Arabic, Persian, and Turkish contexts, such as Nizami Ganjavi, receive the commonly accepted transliterations minus any diacritics. The larger Central Asian city names also receive their commonly accepted English transliterations. For the names of historical persons and places that are not well known, I often provide internationally accepted transliterations in the footnotes, while using their Uzbek transliteration in the text itself. For concepts specific to the sedentary Central Asian peoples, I transliterate names and those words that I gloss via the Uzbek Latin alphabet established in 1992 with some modifications.

I translate from the original 1936 edition of the text, which was printed in the short-lived 1930s Uzbek Latin alphabet, and from transliterated reproductions of that text. When Cho'lpon's novel was first republished in 1988 and in subsequent editions, the editors transliterated the original into the Uzbek Cyrillic alphabet, which was introduced in the 1940s. That transliteration erases some of the vowel harmony that the 1930s Uzbek literary language still possessed. The 1992 Latin alphabet obscures nothing when transliterating from

Uzbek Cyrillic because each letter possesses a one-to-one transliteration equivalent. The 1992 alphabet in which transliterations appear presents only a few difficulties for the English reader: "o'" is read as an ordinary English "o"; "o" is read as an open, almost full "a" sound; "x" is read as a devoiced "h" sound (often transliterated from other languages as "kh"); "q" is a devoiced guttural velar; and "g'" is the voiced pair of "q." Instead of using a different translation system for the several Russian names that appear here, I have decided to transliterate them through the Uzbek alphabet, the only caveats being that "ы" becomes "y," and the soft sign ("ь") becomes an apostrophe. I use common English equivalents for Russian names, such as Alexander for Aleksandr, only for the tsars and other figures well known in English.

I have modified the 1992 alphabet somewhat to ensure that transliterations in the text will not look unfamiliar to Middle Eastern specialists. The 1992 alphabet prescribes a forward apostrophe to indicate a glottal stop (the Arabic phoneme *ʿayn*). To distinguish them from the glottal stop, the Uzbek phonemes *o'* and *g'* are rendered with a backward apostrophe as *o'* and *g'*. That backward apostrophe, however, looks similar to the turned comma ʻ, which Middle Eastern specialists generally use to transliterate *ʿayn*. To avoid that confusion and maintain consistency with the rest of this translation series, this text uses the forward apostrophe for the Uzbek phonemes *o'* and *g'* and the turned comma for the glottal stop or *ʿayn*.

When citing Russian and Uzbek sources in the footnotes of the text, I use the Library of Congress transliteration system and the 1992 Uzbek Latin alphabet respectively. I do this to ease the burden for those who might look for these sources in a US library.

The glossary that follows the text of the novel provides definitions of lacunae found in the text. In the glossary I explain the terminology relating to rank and cultural customs of sedentary Central Asians that is important to understanding the social and cultural context of Cho'lpon's time. The first appearance of a glossed word in the text, with the exception of Sufi and Fitna, which are used as monikers, is marked in italics to indicate that the reader refer to the glossary. All subsequent uses of glossed words are unitalicized.

Regarding translation, I have tried to retain a feel of the original within the English text. Sometimes this means translating Uzbek-language idioms, of which Cho'lpon uses many, literally—rather than searching for rough equivalents in English. Where idioms or cultural realia require further explanation than given in the text, I indicate their meaning in the footnotes and glossary supplied at the end of the text. Likewise, I tried to maintain some of

the syntax and word order that the author employs. That being said, clarity and rhythm often required that I break up Cho'lpon's frequent long sentences into smaller units.

Additionally, punctuation posed something of a challenge. Cho'lpon makes ample use of ellipses in the original text in ways that would confuse a contemporary English-language reader. He uses ellipses 1) to indicate a speaker is trailing off; 2) to indicate that something has been left unsaid by either the narrator or the characters (this is often sexual innuendo or the act of sex itself); 3) to indicate an impending contradiction, often at the end of chapters or sections, creating suspense; 4) to simulate stream of consciousness when the narrator enters the minds of characters; and 5) to denote the narrator's incomplete sentences, which are often used when describing the layout of a new space or room. I have retained ellipses in the first case and rarely in the cases of numbers two and four.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Xotam Mirzaxo'jaev, Cho'lpon's nephew, and his family for kindly providing the rights to publish this translation. Unfortunately, Mr. Mirzaxo'jaev passed before this translation could be printed. I would also like to thank Dr. Naim Karimov for aiding me in deciding the textological questions that arose from the many different editions of Cho'lpon's novel. Iskandar Madgaziev of the Andijan Region Literary Museum kindly helped me locate a copy of the 1936 edition of the text and shared with me a number of notes and documents on the novel's various republications. Nabi and Zahiriddin Jaloliddin were of great assistance in liasoning with contacts in Andijan. Adeeb Khalid, Zulxumor Mirzaeva, Iqbol Mirzo, Isajon Sulton, Xosiyat Rustamova, Dildora Isoqova, Yulduz O'rmonova, Sohiba Solieva, and Mohlaroy Ahmedova deserve special thanks for providing consultation over some of the more difficult passages of the text. I would also like to thank the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their generous support that made this publication a success. My wife, Elena Fort, has demonstrated infinite patience with this project, and through the reading of many drafts, I hope she has come to love the novel as much as I do. If not, I hope she at least still loves me. Finally, Dr. Oleh Kotsyuba and Dr. Rebecca Gould have been a tremendous help. This project would not have been a success without their insight, drive, and scholastic acumen.

Figure 1. Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon. Photograph taken in 1925.

An Introduction to Cho'lpon and his *Night and Day*

Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon (1897–1938) is best known as the most outstanding Uzbek poet of the twentieth century. When he emerged on the literary scene in the years following the Russian February Revolution of 1917, he became a leading voice for the new Turkic lyric that came to dominate Uzbek poetry in the 1920s. He developed a reputation for an elegiac style punctuated with colorful imagery and an innovative use of traditional symbols and metaphors. In the late 1920s, as Bolshevik-trained Uzbek intellectuals took over the literary sphere in Uzbekistan, Cho'lpon's poetic fame transformed into notoriety. He became a political pariah, the subject of constant attacks in the press. In 1934, attempting to reconcile with Soviet power, he submitted the present novel, the first book of a planned dilogy *Night and Day*, to a Soviet literary contest. Three years later, Cho'lpon was arrested by the NKVD (the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs—Stalin's secret police) as part of Stalin's Great Terror (1936–1938). The work translated here, *Night*, was pulled from the shelves and banned; the sequel, if it existed, was likely destroyed by the NKVD. *Night* circulated in Uzbekistan in secret, influencing new generations of Uzbek litterateurs. Only with glasnost was the novel republished. It now stands as an exceptional piece of Uzbek prose. In the minds of Uzbek readers, *Night* tends to be overshadowed in the canon by the first Uzbek novel, Abdulla Qodiriy's *Bygone Days* (*O'tkan kunlar*, 1922), but Cho'lpon's chef d'oeuvre is arguably the superior work.

In post-Soviet Uzbekistan, Cho'lpon is perhaps equally well-known as a so-called "national caretaker" (*millatparvar*). In the second decade of the twentieth century, Cho'lpon and like-minded reformers, often called *jadids*, embraced a reformist discourse that involved, among other dimensions, an interest in European technology and the idea of the nation alongside traditional Islamic critiques of societal decline. The jadids implored their fellow urban Turkestanis

to awaken themselves to the dangers of Russian colonialism and restore the lost glory of their people. Despite what modern Uzbek critics and Cold War-era Western researchers assert, these reformers' main rhetorical and political opponent was not Russian imperialists but the religious elite, the *ʿulama*, whom the jadids felt impeded their nation's progress towards modernity. For jadids, the Russian conquest of Turkestan was a result but not the cause of the decline of Islamic civilization.[1] At the end of the present volume as Cho'lpon's character Razzoq-sufi, so named for his duty to perform the call to prayer,[2] loses his grip on reality, the voices around him poignantly ask, "who is crazy? The Russians or us?" These rhetorical questions direct the reader to first seek fault for the novel's tragedies in Turkestani backwardness. Naturally, educated reformers like Cho'lpon presented themselves as the people best suited to lead Central Asia in the twentieth century, a strategy which brought them into direct competition with the *ʿulama* for the ears of ordinary people. Russian colonial administrators, for their part, bridled jadid ambitions, consistently siding with the *ʿulama* in all disputes to maintain their rule over Central Asian society.

The Russian revolutions of 1917, February and October, profoundly transformed the jadids and Cho'lpon. Whereas the Russian imperial state supported the traditional religious class, Lenin and the Bolsheviks found temporary allies in jadids. The Bolsheviks never trusted their native partners completely, knowing they were not Marxists. Nevertheless, the communists temporarily granted jadids the state tools to enact a jadid vision of modernity. As their power grew, jadid ideas and philosophies transformed dramatically. The Turkestani Muslim nation they intended to revive before the revolution became a specifically Turkic nation.[3] Before 1917, jadids wrote in both the local Turkic tongue and in Persian, often mixing the two languages. Soon after October, under the influence of Ottoman modernizers and Turkic reformists of the Russian Empire, jadids began to see Turkic culture as more suited to modernity than Persian. Cho'lpon, one of the more active proponents of this view, introduced new Turkic meters and Turkified the lexicon of local poetry. By 1924, when Stalin ordered the national delimitation of Central Asia, splitting the

1 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 191.

2 Razzoq-sufi is indeed a Sufi *murid* (see the glossary for more on Sufism and *murids*), but his sobriquet refers to his duties as a muezzin, the person who performs the call to prayer. In Central Asia, the sobriquet Sufi referred to a muezzin.

3 Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 15.

territory into the contemporary five republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), jadids had come to a consensus on the Turkic nature of their nation, calling the culture Uzbek, a name with Turkic origins, and the territory—Uzbekistan.

After the revolution, women's liberation became another critical part of the jadid program and one of Cho'lpon's main concerns. Jadids, like modernizing intellectuals in many other neighboring Muslim societies such as Turkey and Iran, were influenced by European concepts of sexual morality and domesticity and began to agitate for their society to adopt them. They championed monogamous marriages based on romantic love and in turn attacked polygamy, pedophilia, homoeroticism, prostitution, and adultery. While the jadids may have exaggerated the prevalence of these phenomena in their society, they were no doubt as in evidence here as in any other society. The jadid solution was to open women up to the world, to release them from the confines of their "four walls" (a common metaphor for women's internment in the home), and put them on more, though not completely, equal footing with men. Cho'lpon's 1920s elegies and later his prose in the novel therefore often take readers inside local women's sequestered lives, invading, with the reader, the intimacy of their homosociality in order to eliminate it. As a narrator, he mourns women's innocence and failure to recognize their own imprisonment.

As several scholars have noted, the jadid vision for women's liberation was far more limited than that of the Bolsheviks.[4] In their literary portrayals, Cho'lpon and his fellow reformers rarely acknowledged women's agency.[5] Cho'lpon's narrator often bewails Uzbek women's captivity but simultaneously relies on it for protection of the "innocent" femininity he feels is crucial to the preservation of Uzbek cultural heritage. Like many other reformers in the Islamic world at this time, Cho'lpon saw women as mothers of the nation whom it was men's duty to protect, thus his advocacy of women's liberation was often at odds with his advocacy of the nation. At yet another level, Cho'lpon entraps his female characters: he fetishizes women's misunderstanding of their environment, transforming their ignorance into an aesthetic.

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4 Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 32–52; Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 197–208.

5 Shawn Lyons, "Otabek's Return: Ignoring the Lessons of Jadid Reformism in Modern Uzbekistan," *Journal of Central Eurasian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2000): 2–13; Shawn Lyons, "Resisting Colonialism in the Uzbek Historical Novel Kecha va Kunduz (Night and Day), 1936)," *Inner Asia* 3 (2001): 175–192.

Cho'lpon's novel, as I will show in the analysis to follow, is full of the ignorance and indecisiveness that characterizes his poetry, setting it apart from many of the prevailing literary trends in the Soviet Union. Writing his novel in the early 1930s before Socialist Realism, the official literary method of the Soviet Union, had been canonized and defined, Cho'lpon proceeded along a different path. His characters do not come to the class consciousness that would be demanded by Stalinist critics in the late 1930s; rather they are "unconscious" in their indecisiveness, ignorance, and constant doubt. They misunderstand, misrecognize, and commit mistakes, always receiving epiphanies that are endlessly redacted. His characters are, in a word, incomplete beings, always deferring final judgment to another time, matching, perhaps only by a convenient coincidence, the incomplete form of the dilogy *Night and Day* (*Kecha va kunduz*). I use these characters and the structure of the novel to argue that Cho'lpon was himself undecided in his relationship to the Soviet Union, incomplete, like his novel, in his convictions, and thus always available for reinterpretation by future readers.

By bringing out the ambiguity in Cho'lpon's text and his biography, I intend to challenge the uncritical reception of jadids in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Since Uzbekistan gained its independence in 1991, its intellectuals have done little in the way of rethinking the legacy of jadids and the larger Soviet system itself. Instead, they have largely inverted the Soviet historical narrative. Whereas the Soviet narrative held that the October Revolution freed Uzbeks from tsarist colonial oppression, gave birth to Uzbekistan, and guided its national culture to modernity, the post-Soviet narrative explicitly asserts Uzbeks' transhistorical victimization under Russian imperial and Soviet rule. According to this account, the Russian Empire and the Soviets alike stalled Uzbek development and repressed Uzbek native culture in favor of Russian culture. Cho'lpon plays a major role in both narratives: he was reviled in the Soviet Union from the late 1920s up to glasnost as an enemy of the people, but now he is unequivocally celebrated as a national hero. Both narratives lack nuance and rely more on teleology than facts. They each attribute complete conviction to their actors, effacing the ambiguity intrinsic to any indeterminate future. An examination of ignorance in Cho'lpon's characters helps us grasp the author's own inconclusive musings on the Soviet state, which consequently permits a more dynamic and exciting engagement with Uzbek literature and history.

Here I offer a biographical sketch of Cho'lpon's life and times, the history of the novel, and an analysis of its contents. Cho'lpon left no diary or other material giving an account of his life, and thus any biography of him is nothing more than a sketch that relies on the self-censored testimonies of relatives and memoirs of

friends. I fill in the gaps in the biographical record by introducing the reader to the historical context of Cho'lpon's life and his poetic oeuvre. For these same reasons, we know little about the process of writing the novel. Cho'lpon left no authorial explanations about his intentions with the work and the sequel that he is rumored to have written. I therefore make abundant use of historical and literary context to form an argument about the author's goals with *Night and Day*.

CHO'LPON'S LIFE AND TIMES

Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li, better known by his penname Cho'lpon, was born in 1897 in Andijan, a city in the Ferghana valley of modern-day Uzbekistan. The Russian Empire had annexed the city with its conquest of the Kokand Khanate in 1876, incorporating it into the colonial administrative unit of Turkestan. Cho'lpon's life spanned Russian colonialism, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Stalinist purges. His views and literary oeuvre were inevitably affected by his confrontation with both the racial and religious hierarchy of empire and revolutionary calls for radical equality.

As in other European colonies with majority-Muslim populations, Russian colonial administrators in nineteenth-century Turkestan ruled from a distance. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, most Europeans believed that Islam was in its death throes as a religion. Muslims would soon see the superiority of Christian peoples and abandon their faith. Imperial rulers needed only to not provoke their colonized subjects, lest a sudden burst of fanatic revolt breathe new life into the dying creed. Therefore, Russians minimized the so-called "civilizing mission" that justified their colonial conquest in the first place. They banned Christian proselytization, left Islamic law intact, and isolated themselves in Russian quarters of major cities such as Samarqand and the Russian regional capital, Tashkent.[6]

Annexation into the Russian Empire greatly increased the fortunes of Cho'lpon's merchant father, Sulaymon *mullah* Muhammad Yunus o'g'li. While the Romanov Empire left many aspects of Central Asian life untouched, commerce changed dramatically. With new trade routes and modes of transportation, Sulaymon expanded his textile trade routes as far north as Orenburg.[7]

6 Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 35; Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 20.

7 Naim Karimov, *Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon* (Toshkent: Fan, 1991), 9.

Russia's imperial presence changed Sulaymon's social and cultural outlook as well. Sulaymon was well versed in Islamicate high culture. He participated in poetry gatherings with learned men, *mullahs* and *eshons*, and even compiled his own *divan* (poetry collection), under the penname *Rasvo*, meaning "base" or "foul," a sign of humility before God. In educating his eldest child, Cho'lpon, he proceeded in the fashion traditional for precolonial Central Asia and much of the premodern Islamic world. His father sent him to a *madrasa*, a secondary school where select students train to become Islamic learned men. There, Cho'lpon learned Arabic and Persian, and was initiated into the world of Islamicate high culture.[8] However, Sulaymon soon reconsidered his son's future prospects and enrolled Cho'lpon in a Russian school. Colonial administrators, beginning in the mid-1880s, established so-called "Russo-native" schools, which taught Russian and local native languages to Central Asians. The goal of these schools was to create a class of native intermediaries to administer colonial rule in Turkestan.[9] In this school, Cho'lpon learned the basics of the Russian language, arithmetic, geography. He also received some of the native instruction typical of the *maktab*, a primary school in Central Asia, and the *madrasa*.

Cho'lpon's education at a Russian school was rare for his time. Most Turkestani parents did not trust the Russian schools, and enrollment was always low. Russian imperial administrators could often resort to drastic measures. Notably, they sometimes forcibly enrolled children from poorer members of the community in order to fill classrooms.[10]

In the late 1890s, yet another type of school, associated with a movement of progressive Muslim reformers, was introduced in Central Asia.[11] Jadids, named for the pedagogical method they advocated in these new schools, *usul-i jadid* (new method), promoted a novel means of learning the Arabic alphabet in which the local tongue, called Turki or Chagatai, was written. While traditional maktabs taught the alphabet via the syllabic method whereby students memorized syllabic combinations of letters, jadid new-method schools trained students with a phonetic method, teaching them the sounds that each of the letters represented. As a result, jadid-school students could read new, unfamiliar texts, not just a prescribed corpus of memorized texts.

Jadids may have received their name for this pedagogical method, but their interests expanded far beyond the classroom. The classroom was simply

8 Karimov, *Abdulhamid Sulaymon*, 10.

9 Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, 69.

10 Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867–1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 216.

11 Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, 164–167.

a natural starting point because of the relative freedom the Russian colonial state allowed for religious minorities to regulate their own educational and religious affairs. The jadids' interest in pedagogy was logically connected to their other ideas for reform. They believed that a new kind of literacy would lead to a social and political awakening. Through newspapers and theater—the production and consumption of which jadids' functional literacy made possible—they proceeded to "awaken" their fellow Turkestanis to their ignorance by articulating a new interpretation of Islam compatible with European ideas of industry, economic growth, democratization, sexual morality, and women's rights. Driving this was an ardent belief in their Turkestani Muslim nation and a desire to return it to the glory that it supposedly possessed in a previous age, which both jadids and their intellectual rivals located in the fifteenth-century rule of Tamerlane and his descendants. To "restore" their nation, they promoted a cultural revival of the arts and new forms of political engagement with the Russian imperial state. One of their chief achievements was the creation of a public sphere; newspapers and theater created new forums to challenge traditional authorities.[12] That vibrant culture of public debate continued into the 1920s until it was severely circumscribed by the arrival of Stalinism.

Cho'lpon did not study at a jadid school, but in the mid-1910s, he began his literary career by publishing in jadid journals and joining discussion and poetry circles with these men. In 1914, he produced his first prose stories, "A Victim of Ignorance" (Qurboni jaholat) and "Doctor Muhammadiyor" (Do'xtur Muhammadiyor), both of which, like many jadid stories and articles of the time, employ characters without much depth to demonstrate the potential catastrophes of ignorance and the benefits of secular education in medicine, the natural sciences, and the humanities.[13] These stories are largely didactic and lack aesthetic ornamentation. Towards the February Revolution, he met and became close friends with Abdurauf Fitrat (1887–1938), the most prominent jadid of the 1920s, who remained a mentor to Cho'lpon throughout his life.[14] Fitrat pushed the younger man to engage more in poetry and reportedly suggested to him the pen name Cho'lpon—meaning "morning star" or "Venus"—because as a poet he stood out among his peers.[15]

12 Ibid., 114.

13 Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, *Asarlar*, vol. 2 (Toshkent: Xazina, 1998), 461.

14 Naim Karimov, *Cho'lpon: Ma'rifiy roman* (Toshkent: Sharq, 2003), 63.

15 Naim Karimov, *XX asr adabiyoti manzaralari* (Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2008), 207. In another work, Karimov alternatively suggests that Munavvar Qori, another jadid leader, gave Cho'lpon the name. See Karimov, *Cho'lpon: Ma'rifiy roman*, 63–64.

When the February Revolution came, Cho'lpon and his fellow jadids were quick to embrace it. Muslims reformers saw in the revolution a chance to increase Turkestan's autonomy within a new federation containing the territories of the former Russian Empire that would devolve power to the regions and champion democracy. Post-Soviet Uzbek historiography emphasizes that Cho'lpon and other jadids' eventual goal was independence, not simply autonomy, but this interpretation ignores jadids' precarious position in their own society. Jadids did not advocate independence because if Turkestan separated from the Russian state, they feared they would be left to the mercy of the ʿulama, who enjoyed more popularity among the masses than jadids.[16] Because of jadids' socially marginal position and their understanding of history as expressed in their literature, Cho'lpon and his compatriots' literary works at this time portray the February Revolution as something of a *deus ex machina*: it appeared as a sudden and unprecipitated solution to their problems. In a country moving to the left, suddenly the jadids were on the right side of history.

Cho'lpon's first published poem celebrated the February Revolution and socialist movements for these very reasons, seeing revolution as salvation from without. Published in 1918 but written in April of 1917, this excerpt from "Red Banner" (Qizil bayroq) demonstrates the poet's interest in the democratic and anti-imperial politics promised by socialism.[17] It is important to remember that the poem by no means signals support for the Bolsheviks, who were one among many socialist parties at the time. I have translated the below excerpt in a fashion that somewhat captures the caesura-inflected style of the original. The original contains fifteen syllables per line and is read with slight pauses every four syllables (4–4–4–3). The rhyme scheme, which I have not captured here, is abab.

> Red banner!
> There, look how it waves in the wind,
> As if the *qibla* [direction that a Muslim should face when praying] wind
> is greeting it!
> It is not glad to see the poor in this state,
> For the poor man has the right because it is his.
> Has the red blood of the poor not flown like rivers

16 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 17.

17 Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon, *Asarlar: To'rt jildlik*, vol. 1 (Toshkent: Akademnashr, 2016), 331.

To take the banner from the darkness into the light?
Are there no workers left in Siberian exile
To take the banner to the oppressed and weak people?

You, bourgeoisie, conceited upper classes, don't approach the red banner!
Were you not its bloodsucking enemy?
Now the black will not approach those white rays of light,
Now those black forces' time has passed!

The red banner, in scarlet red blood, that blood—the blood of workers,
Those oppressive executioners, those haughty classes, have spilt that blood,
The oppressed love more than anything that call to unite and awaken,
While those murderers, those upper classes, plug their ears!

Oh, seize the flag, wave it high over the oppressed,
The oppressed who have given their blood and lives.
From the workers, soldiers, and the downtrodden there will be greetings,
From the evil merchants, the bourgeoisie—only pain, sorrow, and grief.
From the angels—justice and satisfaction.
And from my pen, my paper, and myself—love![18]

As is typical of jadid literature at this time, Cho'lpon underplays Central Asian agency in the toppling of the Russian Empire by showing the February Revolution here as an event to which Central Asians have contributed little. As the first stanza indicates, Cho'lpon describes the revolution, the red banner of socialism, as the active observer of a passive Muslim East. The banner is blown in the direction of the *qibla*, the direction of Mecca, suggesting that the socialists of Petrograd must take their revolution to the Muslim world. The conclusion of the second stanza highlights the passivity of Central Asians in the revolution by calling on the workers imprisoned and in exile in Siberia, outside Central Asia, to bring the banner to the "oppressed and weak people," by which Cho'lpon means his own community. The reference to the blood and lives given by the oppressed to the red banner in the final stanza, in keeping with the view of Central Asians as passive, indicates that the revolution is not so much the product of their sacrifices as it is a cosmic gift given in redemption of their suffering.

18 Cho'lpon, 1:17.

Throughout the poem, Cho'lpon adapts Chagatai poetic language to the politicized times by recasting traditional images used in mystical poetry into new roles. Blood, often used as a metaphor in Sufi poetry for mystical experience, is literalized here as "red blood" and becomes a call to political action, identified with the revolutionary cause.

Cho'lpon's poetic persona of the 1920s was rooted in the complex intersections of ethnicity, class, and revolution in 1917 Central Asia. After the February Revolution, Russians and native Muslims, both ʿulama and jadids, jockeyed for power in Tashkent until October 27, 1917, when the Tashkent soviet, a committee of socialist railroad workers and soldiers allied with the Bolsheviks, took power in the city by force and declared itself sovereign over all of Turkestan. The soviet and its supporters were entirely European and therefore hardly representative of majority-Muslim Turkestan.[19] While the ʿulama tried to negotiate with the soviet, which denied all Muslim claims to authority because there were no Muslim proletarians, many jadids left for the Ferghana valley city of Kokand where on November 27, 1917, they established the short-lived Kokand Autonomy. Cho'lpon, like other reformist Muslim poets, wrote several poems celebrating the formation of the Autonomy as a rebirth of his Turkic nation. In less than three months, once the Tashkent soviet could afford the expedition, it destroyed the Autonomy, killing thousands in the process.

After this juncture in 1917, Cho'lpon's poetic output increased greatly. He spent much less time on marches and odes. Instead, contemplative and elegiac lyric made up the bulk of his poetic oeuvre in the 1920s. Perhaps his most famous work of this period is his 1921 lament "To a Devastated Land" (Buzilgan o'lkaga), an elegy for the destruction of Turkestan caused by the outbreak of war between the Red Army and Basmachi, the Central Asian fighters opposed to Soviet power.[20] The following is a prose translation of an excerpt from the poem, which, like the previous poem, is written in a syllabic meter that alternates the number of syllables in each stanza. In the first part of the excerpt below there are fifteen syllables per line read this time with a caesura after the first eight syllables (8–7 and sometimes 8–4–3). The second part of the excerpt contains twelve and eleven syllables, read 4–4–4 and 4–4–3 respectively. The

19 Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 71.

20 Historians of the Cold War era and modern Central Asia have looked to the Basmachi as a national or religious movement against the Bolsheviks, but recent accounts offer a more informed picture. See ibid., 86–89; Kirill Nourzhanov, "Reassessing the Basmachi: Warlords without Ideology?" *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 41–67.