

# SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

“A Tragic Experiment”

Boris Z. Rumer

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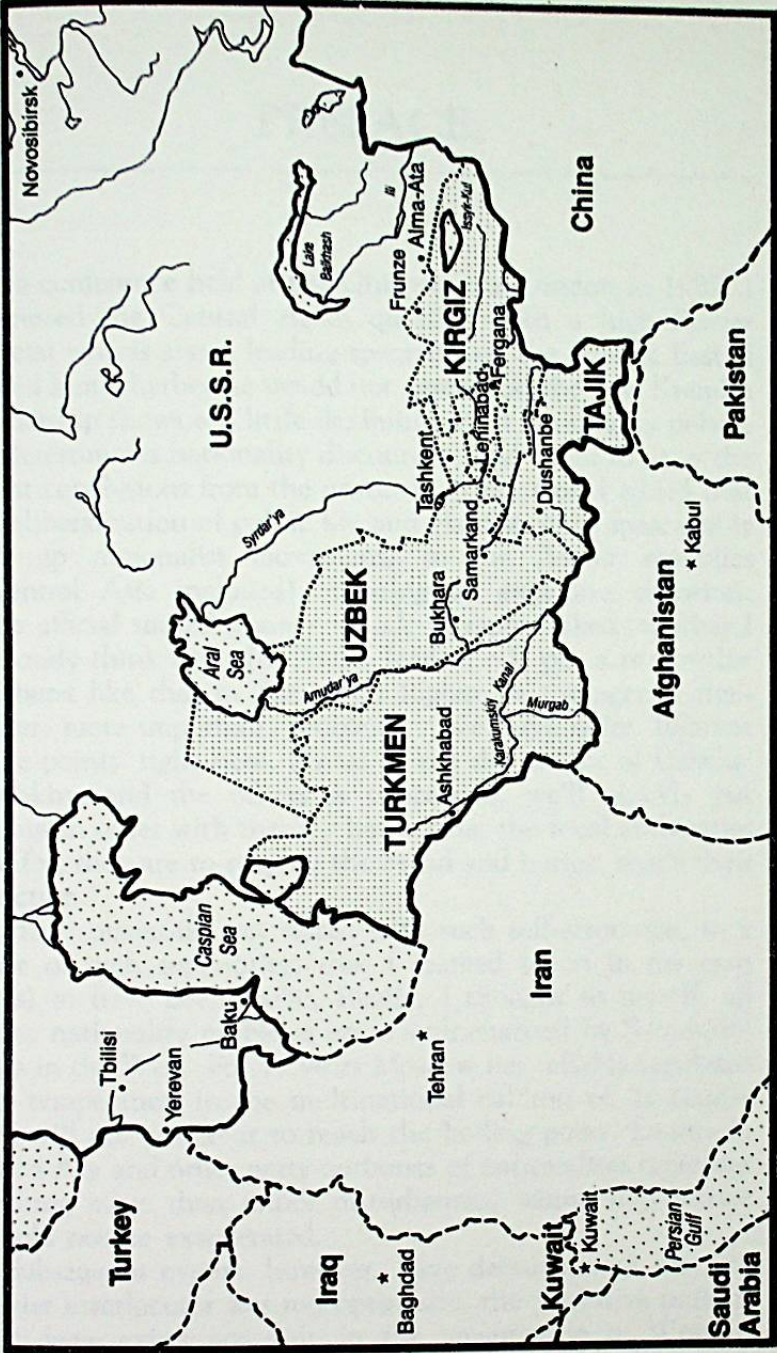
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Soviet Central Asia

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***Investment and***

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***Soviet Economy (1984) and***

***Soviet Steel Industry (1989).***



Of all the problems confronting the Gorbachev leadership, hardly any is more serious, more intractable, more explosive than that of minority nationalities in the USSR. Even the official press, once so reticent on this subject, has begun to treat the ethnic problem not only with candor, but from the perspective of nationalities that have suffered under Moscow's policies. Surely one of the most victimized areas has been Central Asia. The Soviet literary weekly, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, has aptly described Moscow's policies for economic development in Central Asia as "a tragic experiment."

In *Soviet Central Asia: "A Tragic Experiment,"* Boris Z. Rumer explores the economic development of the four republics that comprise this troubled region (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kirghizia). Arguing that Central Asia serves as a prime example of the failure of Soviet regional economic development policies, Rumer examines the special role of Central Asia in the Soviet economy and such key issues in the Central Asian economy as industrial development, cotton production, water resources, and labor. He then moves on to address the social ramifications of the underdevelopment of the region's economy and the impact of new policies under Gorbachev, concluding with prospects for future development in Central Asia. This timely study will be essential reading not only for economists and Sovietologists, but also for anyone interested in the recent changes in the Soviet political system and the special challenges posed by Central Asia.

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