

Contents

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2 Letter from the Editor

Forum

3 Identity Crisis?

By Sener Akturk

11 The Need for Prevention Strategies in the Fight against Human Trafficking

By Lance Huang

16 Enforcement of International Laws: A Comparison Between International Trade Law and International Humanitarian Law

By Michael Kapp

18 Dirty Little Secret: Sexual Slavery During WWII-- A Case Study on the "Comfort Women"

By Bindhu Varghese

22 Male and Female Circumcision: The Coalition of Patriarchal Males Controlling Female Sexuality

By Jacqueline Lee

Regional Spotlight

28 Africa Spotlight: A Continent in Crisis

31 The Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Dispute

By Lily Frey

38 Ghana: Traditional Childbirth Visits and their Relationship to Maternal and Child Welfare

By Krista L. Jacobs

44 Uganda's Economic Journey

By Alexander Herbert-Brown

50 Community-Based Wildlife Management in Botswana: Challenges and Outcomes

By Elizabeth F. Pienaar and Charity Kerapeletswe

57 Delayed US Intervention in Rwanda

By Lance Huang

Dialogues

62 Professor Spotlight: Leslie Rabine, Ph.D.

Campus Exposure

63 Campus Exposure

65 A Night with Rigoberta

By Kaveh Azimi

66 The Editors' Report

68 Calendar of Events



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IDENTITY CRISIS?

“ Conversion to Roman Catholicism represented a severe desire to immerse oneself in the Western European (Romano-Germanic) civilization and purify oneself by getting rid of all features of "Russian-ness." ”

By **SENER AKTURK**

Writing on the "Russo-Tatar Polemic over Identity and Cultural Representation," Edward Lazzerini mentions "the utter failure of Communist Party policy to achieve one of its longstanding goals: the shaping of a single identity for all Soviet peoples."¹ Among the many interconnected questions concerning Russian identity, the one regarding "Russian-ness" vis-à-vis Western European civilization has been the fundamental issue around which generations of Westernizers, Slavophiles, and Eurasianists debate. On the other hand, defining the place of Russia's Muslims within the discourse of Russian identity is an equally significant task because after the Soviet Union broke up and the six Muslim republics gained their independence, Muslims still represent the largest minority group in Russia with a population of over seventeen million, corresponding to 12% of the total Russian population.

In this paper, I argue that the role of Russia's Muslims in the debates over Russian identity is a function of the way in

which Russian identity is conceptualized vis-à-vis "Romano-Germanic" European civilization. My comparative review of the way in which Russian identity was conceptualized in the writings of Trubetzkoy, Gasprinskii, Karamzin, Lunin, Solov'ev, Chaadaev, Kozlovskii, and Khomiakov in the pre-Soviet period. In addition, my discussion of the nature of the Soviet Russian state is in relation to the Muslim and colonized peoples, including Mulla Nur-Vahidov, Sultan Galiyev, Lenin, Stalin, and Bukharin, among others. Finally, my brief survey of the current debates in Russia over Russian identity, demonstrate the inextricable link between how Russia is conceptually located vis-à-vis Europe globally, and how Muslims are conceptually located vis-à-vis Christian Russians within Russia.

In developing my argument, I first maintain that the place of Muslims in Russian identity formation cannot be discussed in isolation from the debate over Russian identity vis-à-vis Western European civilization. These two

issues are, in my opinion, inextricably linked to one another. There exists an inverse correlation between the degree to which Russia is considered Western/European, and the degree to which Muslims are considered as a central and constituent part of Russian identity. I further suggest that there is a qualitative similarity between the hostility of Russia's Muslims and the country's westernized elite towards subjects which are considered as quintessentially Russian (i.e. Greek-Orthodox). The elite condescension is not different in its nature, but rather differs in its degree of intensity. Accordingly, I implicitly claim that Russia demonstrates the characteristics of a colonial society with regards to the relationship between its Westernized, European-oriented elite and its Christian and Muslim subjects. Finally, much like Trubetzkoj, I suggest that Russia's identity crisis can best be resolved by a recognition of its Asiatic characteristics, which undoubtedly include Russia's Ural-Altai and Turkic-Mongoloid minorities and its Muslim religious minority. One needs to "decolonize" Russia by bringing its elite into contact with the Asiatic character of its country, and giving up the misguided effort to identify Russia as part of the frontier of European civilization.

Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetzkoj's *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity* is a thorough critique of European civilization and the European orientation of the Russian elite. It also serves as a theoretical groundwork that describes Russia as a "Eurasian" state distinct from and opposed to the Romano-Germanic European civilization.² Trubetzkoj's ideas are representative of what came to be known as the "Eurasianist" school in the debates over Russia's identity.³ In "Europe and Mankind," Trubetzkoj claims that by the terms humanism and cosmopolitanism, Europeans mean "European nations" and "European civilization."⁴ Through their perspective, civilization itself is a

euphemism for Romano-Germanic (i.e. European) culture. Having a historical-cultural approach to social phenomena, Trubetzkoj substitutes "Romano-Germanic" for what is usually considered as "European," which is a deceptively geographic identification, despite the fact that all groups living in Europe are not considered to be part of the European civilization per se (Turks, Russians, Tatars, Chechens, Albanians, etc.). Europe and the "universal civilization" that it espouses are distinctly Greco-Roman in origin, later blended with the contribution of Germanic tribes, but certainly not Russian-Slavic or Turkic-Mongoloid. This subversion of the language by Europeans, whereby they assert their culture and civilization to be universal and inescapable, is denounced by Trubetzkoj as one of the most cunning tactics of Europeans.

In evaluating European cosmopolitanism one must always remember that terms such as "humanity," "universal human civilization," and so forth, are extremely imprecise and that they mask very definite ethnographic concepts. European culture is not the culture of all humanity; it is a product of the history of a specific ethnic group.... In the fertile soil provided by the subconscious sense of Romano-Germanic unity, these ideas gave rise to the theoretical foundations of so-called European cosmopolitanism, which it would be more correct to call quite bluntly pan-Romano-Germanic chauvinism.⁵



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1204271.stm>

Muslims pray in the snow to celebrate Eid-al-Adha, a feast.

Identifying cosmopolitan universalism as "pan-Romano-Germanic chauvinism," Trubetzkoj further asserts that "the Romano-Germans have always been so naively convinced that they alone are human beings, that they have called themselves 'humanity,' their culture 'universal human culture,' and their chauvinism 'cosmopolitanism.'"⁶

Trubetzkoj's rejection of the Romano-Germanic European culture is rooted in his understanding of cultural production, evolution, and progress. Asking whether it is possible for any nation to totally assimilate to a culture created by another nation, he concludes that "assimilation is possible only with an anthropological merger."⁷ Furthermore, he claims that adopting another nation's culture short of total assimilation is tantamount to cultural alienation and infertility, in that, a nation which has adopted another's culture cannot be productive. Its culture stagnates, degenerates, and disappears. This is the basis of his rejection of European culture. "Romano-Germanic culture is in no way better than any other culture, but neither is it essentially worse."⁸ However, emulating another nation's culture is categorically false in that it impedes the creative potential of the emulating nation - in this case, the Russians.

Trubetzkoj thoroughly disparages attempts at Europeanization. "A most grievous consequence of

Europeanization is the destruction of national unity, the dismemberment of a people's national body."⁹ Moreover, "Europeanization occurs from the top down—that is, it first embraces the upper classes," hence creating a civilizational-cultural chasm between the Europeanized elite and the non-European population.¹⁰ According to Trubetzkoy, this is precisely what took place in Russia since Peter the Great. Europeanization of a non-European nation leads to a loss of self-respect as this nation learns to evaluate its own history from the standpoint of the native European, whereby everything that contradicts European culture is perceived as evil and a sign of backwardness.¹¹

In "The Legacy of Genghis Khan," Trubetzkoy lays out his opinion on Russian history and Russian identity. He finds fault with the view generally accepted in history textbooks, namely, that the foundations of the Russian state were laid in the so-called Kievan Rus. Trubetzkoy points to the fact that the Kievan Rus were socio-economically and culturally very different—much more Western—than the following Muscovy state, and that it also corresponds to a mere twentieth of modern Russia in its Western fringes.¹² Instead, he traces the origins of the Russian state to the Golden Horde and the empire of Genghis Khan. One of the most important aspects of Genghis Khan's legacy, which left its mark in later development of the Muscovy state, was what Richard Hellie would call the idea of the "service state." In Genghis Khan's empire, everyone was evaluated on the basis of their service to the state, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or social origins. This idea persisted well into Tsarist Russia.

Trubetzkoy considers the Turkic-Muslim groups in Russia to be fundamental elements of Russian identity, in that they, in large part, distinguish Russia from Western Europe. He claims that the Russian nation is made of an anthropological merger of eastern Slavic and Turanian (Turkic and

Mongoloid) peoples, and as such, cannot be considered as fully Slavic, let alone as fully Indo-European or Western. The fact of Russian nation's mixed Slavic-Turkic genealogy is one of the fundamental features that distinguishes it from Romano-Germans.

Overall, the Russian culture, founded as it is on a Slavic-Turkic partnership, constitutes a distinctly "Eurasian" civilization, separate from and in opposition to the "European" civilization that is founded upon a Romano-Germanic culture. On the basis of such an understanding of Russian identity, Trubetzkoy even goes as far as advocating a Pan-Eurasian nationalism, whereby Slavic, Turkic, Mongolian, Iranian, and other related Asiatic ethnic groups unite in their common affinity for each other and in their common opposition to European culture, which seeps into their territory under the disguise of "universal civilization."

Unfortunately for the Russian nation and the Slavic-Turkic Eurasian civilization in general, beginning with the reforms of Peter the Great, the Russian state adopted a course of Westernization-Europeanization, whereby the monarchy and the elite emulated European customs, alienating themselves from their Asiatic subjects in due process.

Thus, Peter set the tone for the entire course of Russia's subsequent history. He initiated a new period, the era of antinational monarchy. The bases of Russian life were radically altered...the ideological foundations of the for-



<http://mosnews.com/images/g/religion.shtml>

A Muslim sits in a Moscow Mosque studying his Koran.

mer Russian state system had been overturned and trampled upon...¹³

The processes of Westernization created an elite that was increasingly and inherently hostile to everything and anything that was genuinely Russian and/or Eurasian. As such, the post-Petrine period was also a period of increasing hostility towards Turkic-Muslim peoples of the Russian empire. The Westernized elite considered these peoples to be signs of Russia's Asiatic character, and they, in their efforts at creating a European state out of Russian/Eurasian material, were ashamed of Muslims.

One interesting feature of Trubetzkoy's conceptualization of Russian identity is his insistence on labeling pan-Slavism/Slavophilism as a European influence that has no place in the historically "Eurasian" Russian soul. He considers Pan-Slavism to be the result of Westernized Russian intellectuals' desire to emulate the chauvinistic nationalisms of Europe, which have no place in the historical legacy of the Eurasian "service state" descending from the time of Genghis Khan. Moreover, since Russian identity itself is not fully Slavic, but rather Slavic-Turkic-Mongoloid, advocating Pan-Slavism would be tantamount to destroying the unity of the Russian

peoples.

If Trubetzkoy interprets Russian history in such a way as to recognize Turkic Muslims as an integral element of Russian identity, Ismail Bey Gasprinskii (Gaspirali) does something very similar from the opposite point of view. Namely, he conceptualizes Turkic-Muslim identity in such a way as to include coexistence with the Russian peoples as one of its fundamental tenets. He expressed this view most clearly in 1896 in his essay entitled *Russkoe vostochnoe soglasenie*, in which he wrote:

Muslims and Russians can plow, sow, raise cattle, trade, and make their livings together, or side by side.... We think that sooner or later Russia's borders will include within them all of the Tatar peoples.... If Russia could have good relations with Turkey and Persia, she would become kindred to the entire Muslim east, and would certainly stand at the head of Muslim nations and their civilizations, which England is attempting so persistently to do.¹⁴

Gasprinskii's idea that Russia could, should, and will incorporate all the Tatar peoples, become kindred to the entire Muslim east, and lead the Muslim nations and their civilizations, is an essentially Eurasianist idea, which is incredibly similar to the pan-Eurasianist nationalist ideas expressed by Trubetzkoy a quarter century later. Indeed, Gaspirinskii may be considered, with some reservations, the counterpart of Trubetzkoy in his aspiration towards a Slavic-Turkic-Muslim union of peoples in Eurasia.

The views expressed by Trubetzkoy and Gasprinskii, however, were not representative of mainstream Russian or Tatar Muslim opinion. On the contrary, both of them were representative

of a minority opinion, and in the case of Trubetzkoy's Eurasianism, even of a marginal portion of émigré Russian intellectuals. As Adeeb Khalid eloquently demonstrates in his *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, Jadids, who were reformist Muslims, were outnumbered by their traditionalist (ulama, qadimci, etc.) rivals in almost every region of Turkic-Muslim concentration, with the possible exception of Crimean and Volga Tatars.¹⁵

These Westernizers, to the extent that they despise and abhor Russian culture itself, also despised and abhorred the Muslim peoples, thinking of them as reminders of Russia's backwardness and of its Asiatic character.

A brief survey of the leading Western/ European oriented intellectuals' writings reveals the stunning precision of Trubetzkoy's analysis of their psychology. These Westernizers, to the extent that they despise and abhor Russian culture itself, also despised and abhorred the Muslim peoples, thinking of them as reminders of Russia's backwardness and of its Asiatic character. The frequent references to the devastating impact on the Tatar yoke testify to this assertion. Seymour Becker, in his "Russia between East and West: the Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands," undertakes a major effort to expose the basic tenets of Westernizers.

Becker maintains that "history and geography... linked Russia to Asia as well as to Europe, a fact that Peter the

Great's cultural revolution could not cancel," hence agreeing with Trubetzkoy on the alienating cultural rupture that Peter the Great's reforms represent in the course of Russian history and identity formation.¹⁶ Karamzin conceived of Russia as the frontier and one of the two leaders (the other one being Spain) of the European civilization. This is precisely because Russia was civilizing the non-European savages in the European and Asian steppes.¹⁷ Similarly, Solov'ev also "depicted Russia's historic and geographic destiny as the expulsion of Asiatic nomadism from Europe and the conquest of the transitional steppe zone between Europe and Asia for the superior, sedentary civilization of the West."¹⁸ Orlov, Murav'ev, Lunin, Turgenev, and other Decembrists also possessed an idea of Russia defined by its opposition to a civilizing mission towards the savage, nomadic, mostly Turkic-Muslim peoples of the East. In this respect, Lunin "argued that Russia's expansion was much more important in this region than on the

shores of the Baltic, for the Caucasus wars were an agent of civilization, profiting less advanced peoples."¹⁹

Peter Chaadaev, on the other hand, is undoubtedly the prototypical Russian Westernizer, best representing the mentality of Westernizers to its full extent. Chaadaev "blames Russia's isolation [from Europe and the "universal civilization"] on her reception of Christianity in 988 from Byzantium," and on the deleterious influence of Tatar/Mongol/Turkic yoke.²⁰ These two factors led to Russia's significant "backwardness," placing her on the fringes of European civilization, but certainly not outside of it. "Despite his strong desire to differentiate Russia from Europe, as a means of urging upon his compatriots the need for radical change, Chaadaev could not avoid identifying Russia, in the last analysis,

as an Occidental rather than an Oriental nation."²¹ Identifying Russia as an Oriental, Asiatic nation could make any prospect of civilizing improvement impossible, since the only way in which an Asiatic people can improve is by total annihilation of its own self and its assimilation and incorporation into the European core. "The expulsion of the Moors from Spain, the destruction of the American [Indian] populations, the annihilation of the Tatars in Russia... [and the imminent] fall of the Ottoman Empire" were examples of the inevitable fate of all non-Western societies.²² Although Peter the Great's reforms certainly constitute a great leap forward in Europeanizing Russia, according to Chaadaev, "Russia's claim to membership rests on her Christian faith, however 'disfigured' in its Byzantine variant, not on Peter the Great's cultural revolution."²³ In this respect, Russia's Muslims certainly represent an entity that must be excluded and exterminated if possible, if Russia is to gain full membership into European civilization.

As it is manifest in Chaadaev's reasoning, Westernizers' abhorrence of Muslims is intertwined with their utter repulsion to Eastern (Byzantine) Christianity. Many of them indeed despised Russia as such and opted for conversion to Catholicism. John McErlean analyzes the life of such a Russian Westernizer in his revealingly titled article "Catholic, Liberal, European: A Critic of Orthodox Russia, the Diplomat Prince P. B. Kozlovskii (1783-1840)." According to McErlean:

Kozlovskii was a part of the early nineteenth-century phenomenon of Russian nobles who were born into the Russian Orthodox Church but fascinated by Roman Catholicism... Many such Russians had converted to Roman Catholicism, while others, most notably P. Ia. Chaadaev, were very interested

but stopped short of conversion.²⁴

Conversion to Roman Catholicism represented a severe desire to immerse oneself in the Western European (Romano-Germanic) civilization and to purify oneself by getting rid of all features of "Russian-ness." This, in turn, represents Asiatic backwardness in one way or the other and is undoubtedly a manifestation of utter cultural alienation on the part of the Western oriented Russian elite. Hence, we may partially conclude by saying that abhorrence of Russianness went hand in hand with abhorrence of Muslims, at least among the Russian Westernizers, which dominated the cultural scene.²⁵

Returning to Seymour Becker's assessment of the intra-elite struggles over the question of Russian identity, we find that the Slavophiles, "whom Chaadaev criticized for insisting that 'we are of the East,' that the East 'is the home of knowledge and of great ideas,' and that Russia should return to its Oriental roots, were hardly guilty as charged," albeit in a slightly different way than the Westernizers.²⁶ This is precisely because they also subscribed to a Eurocentric view of history and civilization, wherein they located Russia squarely in the European camp. The writings of Khomiakov, which dealt most directly with the question of Russia's relationship to Europe and to Asia, are infused with a "yearning for Russia's acceptance as an equal by the West."²⁷ Although Slavophilic in its praise for the Slavic peoples, Khomiakov's Slavophilism is based on the assumption that the Slavs, in fact, "were the original sedentary inhabitants of Europe, subsequently driven away or enslaved by Celtic and



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Russian Muslims gathered together at Red Square.

German conquerors except in its eastern borderlands."²⁸ Hence, Slavophiles' praise of the Slavic race is based on their conceptualization of the Slavs as being quintessential Europeans--more European than Romano-Germanic peoples themselves--and certainly not because of their association with Asia or their connection with the Turkic-Muslim peoples of the East. Thus, Muslims do not seem to occupy a more favorable place in the Slavophiles' conceptualization of Russian identity either.

As a partial conclusion, among the Westernizer, Slavophile, and Eurasianist narratives of Russian identity preceding the Soviet period, only the Eurasianist approach genuinely embraces or celebrates Muslims as an indispensable and fundamental element of Russian identity. If one seeks to find a correlate of Eurasianism in Trubetzkoy's and Gasprinskii's understanding, one undoubtedly has to consider Mulla Nur-Vahidov and Sultan Galiyev's "Muslim National Communism," as well as Lenin's earlier conceptualization of the Bolshevik state as a voluntary union of Russian and non-Russian peoples. At the same time one must assume the role of Asiatic peoples' leader in their struggle against Western (European/ Romano-Germanic) imperialism. Thus, Lenin appealed to Russia's Muslims with a

powerfully worded document:

Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirgiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and Mountain People of the Caucasus, and all you whose mosques and prayer houses have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled upon by the tsars and oppressors of Russia: Your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are forever free and inviolate. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, are under the mighty protection of the Revolution and its organs, the Soviet of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants.²⁹

The Bolsheviks also made other overtures to Muslims. In December 1917, the Council of the People's Commissars transferred that most venerated relic of Islam, the Quran of Osman, from the Petrograd National Library to the Muslim Congress [in Kazan]. A little later, a government decree put at the disposal of the Kazan Socialist Committee, the Suyum-Bike tower, which had great symbolic importance for the Kazan Tatars.³⁰ However, this sympathetic period did not last long. Around the time Sultan Galiyev attended the Twelfth Party Congress in April of 1923, the local communist newspapers launched a campaign against him, and in that same month he was arrested for the first time. In a conference of the Russian Communist Party on June 1923, which Stalin chaired, Galiyev was "thoroughly vilified, accused of deviations and treason, and ejected from the Communist Party."³¹

Oguz Saban Duman, in his *Dogubati Meselesi ve Sultan Galiyev* ("East-West Debate and Sultan Galiyev"),

develops an essentially cultural-historical argument in explaining the hostility of Russian Bolsheviks toward Sultan Galiyev and Muslim National Communists. Quoting Zeki Velidi Togan's impressions of the First Congress of the Peoples of the East,³² Duman maintains that in this Congress, "Zinovievs and Radeks [i.e. Russian Bolsheviks] treated the Eastern delegates as if they were a herd of sheep, and they further spied on these later by assigning many secret policeman for their surveillance, further proving their mistrust, and by way of shouting and insulting in the sessions, they have alienated a good portion of these friends of the Soviet Union in the East."³³ Demonstrating that Galiyev himself accused the Russian Bolsheviks of mismanaging the global tactical-strategic dimensions of the Revolution, and that he attributed this mismanagement to their ignorance of and prejudice against the Eastern peoples, Duman further mentions that Mao Zedong later accepted as his own, some of the fundamental tenets of Galiyev's Muslim National Communism. This included Galiyev's emphasis on anti-imperialism and the colonized Asian and African peoples as the real mobilizing force behind the

However, when we contextualize Khrushchev's détente with the West as a climax of a trend towards Russian-Western co-existence, then the particular alliances and affinities between China and the Third World regimes and the Soviet's insistence on denouncing such alliances and "building socialism in one country" makes much more sense. Linking Russian Bolsheviks' negative attitude toward Muslim National Communists concludes that the Soviet period in Turkestan and Transcaucasia amounted to an era of "social imperialism" in which the customs, traditions, and cultures of Russia's Muslims were suppressed and their territories were administered with a colonial mentality.³⁶

Bennigsen, Henze, Tanham, and Wimbush also argue that Lenin, and before him, Marx, had a very negative and Eurocentric view of the Muslim World.³⁷ While discussing India, for example, Marx asserts that

A country not only divided between Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium

In Genghis Khan's empire, everyone was evaluated on the basis of their service to the state, regardless of their ethnic, religious, and social origins. This idea persisted well into Tsarist Russia.

worldwide socialist revolution.³⁴ It is worth noting, then, that as the only socialist country with a Third World economy in Europe, Albania under Enver Hoxha, eventually allied with China in a hard-line, anti-Western camp, which Khrushchev, in turn, "denounced...as dogmatic 'Left adventurists' willing to unleash war."³⁵

resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest?³⁸

Lenin, on the other hand, "saw Europe as the political center of the

World." Accordingly, he used the Islamic World and the colonized peoples, in general, as a bargaining chip in his dealings with the West, his ultimate objective being the acceptance of the Soviet Union into the community of European nations. In this respect, "M. N. Roy's adventures could be readily called to a halt when the opportunity arose for a deal with the British that opened up broad horizons for Moscow-trade, political recognition, legitimacy for the Soviets in Europe."³⁹ The cultural-historic understanding of the Bolsheviks' relationship with and prejudices against Muslim National Communists and the Third World nationalists do not contradict or exclude, but rather complement, the argument linking the change in Soviet attitude to the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement of 1921. The Bolshevik leadership, possessing traditional "orientalist" attitudes of the Russian elite towards Russia's Muslims and towards the dark skinned, colonized peoples of the world, might have reconceived this set of beliefs in its understanding of Marxism by stubbornly insisting on Western Europe as the prospective location of socialist revolution, and by dismissing plausible alliances with the colonized peoples as being deviations from Marxist-Leninist ideology.

In sum, the progressive rhetoric of the Marxist-Leninist ideology might have been utilized as a cover, an excuse, or a euphemism for the Russian Bolsheviks to display their otherwise ancient prejudices against colonized peoples of the East in general and Russia's Muslims in particular. Muslim National Communism, an otherwise intelligible and creative reformulation of Marxist-Leninism, might have been dismissed within this context. Instances like the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement and Khrushchev's détente, and other instances of Soviet initiated efforts at coexisting with the West, might be understood in continuity with the historical Western orienta-

tion of the Russian elite since the time of Peter the Great.

Dmitri Glinski, in his article, "Russia and Its Muslims: The Politics of Identity at the International-Domestic Frontier," demonstrates that, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Western/European orientation of the Russian elite continued to plague the debates over Russian identity and serve as a socio-psychological pretext for marginalizing Russia's Muslims socially, culturally, and politically.

The description of the Russian elite's

The Moscow establishment, with its at times fanatical desire to Europeanize and Americanize Russia at whatever cost, did virtually everything possible to antagonize and radicalize those ethnic and cultural groups that did not fit into the new standards... as the Russian elite felt that it was slipping to the periphery of the global system--in economic, military, and, most painfully, cultural terms--it adopted a form of psychological denial by claiming a fundamental, civilizational superiority with regard to other peripheral actors, including its own internal periphery. The "market Bolsheviks" saw themselves as a spiritual frontier of the West... these Westernizers... implicitly count on Western "civilizational" solidarity... Moscow elite opted for Samuel Huntington instead of Karl Marx...equating "modern" with Euro-American, and the latter with "Christian."⁴⁰

Euro-American attitude clearly demonstrates what we have encountered most explicitly in the preeminent Westernizer Peter Chaadaev's conceptualization of Russian identity, which was among the most exclusionist and hostile towards Russia's Muslims. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that the elite's perception of Russian identity 'degenerated' into the level of igno-

rance and intolerance towards Muslims, a state that it occupied almost two centuries ago.

Samuel Huntington, in his world famous essay on "The Clash of Civilizations," asserted that Russia is a "torn country." Huntington defined a "torn country" as follows:

Some other countries have a fair degree of cultural homogeneity but are divided over whether their society belongs to one civilization or another. These are torn countries. Their leaders typically wish to pursue a bandwagoning strategy and to make their countries members of the West, but the history, culture and traditions of their country are non-Western. Globally the most important torn country is Russia. The question of whether Russia is part of the West or the leader of a distinct Slavic-Orthodox civilization has been a recurring one in Russian history.⁴¹

My analysis of the debates of Russia's identity within the intelligentsia offered in this paper clearly concurs with Huntington's thesis to the extent that we both locate the rupture between a predominantly Westernized Russian elite and a non-Western Russian population at the center of our discussion. In addition, in both Huntington's and my assessments of the discussion, it is implicitly or explicitly revealed that the Russian people belong to a broadly defined Eurasian civilization, and thus cannot be considered as part of Europe.

Following Huntington's writing and the current trends in Russia with regards to the debate of the country's identity, one finds reason to be hopeful and optimistic about the future incorporation of Muslims into conceptions of Russian identity. Huntington notes with an implicit discomfort "the new popularity of the ideas of Petr Savitsky, who in the 1920s argued that Russia

was a unique Eurasian civilization."⁴² Savitsky, of course, was a leading figure of the Eurasianist school, second maybe only to Trubetzkoy in the sophistication and popularity of his writings on Eurasianism.

In conclusion, throughout this paper, I argued that the role of Russia's Muslim in the debates over Russian identity is a function of the way in

which Russian identity is conceptualized vis-à-vis "Romano-Germanic" European civilization. I reviewed the way in which Russian identity was conceptualized in the writings of Trubetzkoy, Gasprinskii, Karamzin, Lunin, Solov'ev, Chaadaev, Kozlovskii, and Khomiakov, in the pre-Soviet period, and my discuss the nature of the Soviet Russian state in relation to the

Muslim and colonized peoples. My brief survey of the current debates in Russia over Russian identity, demonstrates the inextricable link between how Russia is conceptually located vis-à-vis Europe globally, and how Muslims are conceptually located vis-à-vis Christian Russians within Russia.✻

Endnotes

1. Edward J. Lazzerini, "Defining the Orient: A Nineteenth Century Russo-Tatar Polemic over Identity and Cultural Representation," in *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, ed. Edward Allworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 33-45.
2. Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity*, ed. Anatoly Liberman (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1991).
3. Eurasianism was elaborated in the 1920s by "White Guard" Russian émigrés in Europe. The most prominent among them, apart from Trubetzkoy, was Petr Savitsky. Also notable is Nikolai Nikolaevich Alekseev. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eurasianism experienced an upsurge in popularity, especially through the efforts of contemporary Eurasianists like Aleksandr Dugin. For Dugin's views on Russian identity, please refer to the "Foundations of Geopolitics," in *Osnovy geopolitiki: geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* (Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity*).
4. Ibid, 1-64.
5. Ibid, 6-7.
6. Ibid, 7.
7. Ibid, 36, 44.
8. Ibid, 44.
9. Ibid 49.
10. Ibid, 49.
11. Ibid, 51.
12. Ibid, 161.
13. Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and Other Essays on Russia's Identity*, 201.
14. Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 103.
15. Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
16. Soymour Becker, "Russia Between East and West: the Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands," *Central Asian Survey* 10, no. 4 (1991): 47-64.
17. Becker, "Russia Between East and West: the Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands," 49.
18. Ibid, 50.
19. Ibid 51.
20. Ibid, 52.
21. Ibid, 53.
22. Ibid, 52.
23. Ibid 52.
24. John M. McElean, "Catholic, Liberal, European: A Critic of Orthodox Russia and the Diplomat Prince P.B. Kozlovskii (1783-1840)," in *Religious and Secular Forces in Late Tsarist Russia*, ed. Charles Timberlake (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).
25. To assess and evaluate the salience of Westernizers vis-à-vis Slavophiles and others in Russian cultural and intellectual life is a task too expansive within the constraints of this paper, but at least judging on the examination offered by McElean and in view of the general trends of Russian history, we can say that the Westernizers (Decembrists, etc.) were the dominant force in Russia at least during the 1830s.
26. Becker, "Russia Between East and West: the Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands," 53ff.
27. Ibid, 53.
28. Ibid, 54.
29. Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejey, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), 82.
30. Bennigsen and Lemerrier-Quelquejey, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 82.
31. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 83.
32. Zeki Velidi Togan was the leading Bashkir nationalist in the early 20th century. He founded and was the president of the independent Bashkir republic, till this country was reincorporated into the (Soviet) Russia. He then fled to Central Asia, joined the Basmachis in fighting the Bolsheviks, and finally sought refuge in Turkey, where he served as the Dean of the Turkic Studies Division at Istanbul University.
33. Oguz Sabah Duman, *Dogu-Bati Meselesi ve Sultan Galiyev* (Istanbul: Turk Dunyasi Arastirmalari Vakfi, 1999), 20.
34. Duman, *Dogu-Bati Meselesi ve Sultan Galiyev*, 23ff.
35. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 412.
36. Duman, *Dogu-Bati Meselesi ve Sultan Galiyev*, 46-51, 148.
37. Alexandre Bennigsen et al., *Soviet Strategy and Islam* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).
38. Alexandre Bennigsen et al., *Soviet Strategy and Islam*, 5-6.
39. Ibid, 12.
40. Dmitri Glinski, "Russia and Its Muslims: The Politics of Identity at the International Domestic Frontier," *East European Constitutional Review*, Winter/Spring 2002 (2002): 73
41. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 42-43.
42. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," 43.

Sener Akturk received his B.A. in Political Science and International Studies at the University of Chicago, where he also received his M.A. from the Committee on International Relations. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley. He has published articles in *Ab Imperio*, *Insight Turkey*, *Alternatives*, *Hemispheres*, and *Journal of Academic Studies*, as well as book reviews in *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, *Nationalities Papers* and *Rethinking Marxism*. He can be reached at sakturk@berkeley.edu