

2

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A Particularist Empire: The Russian Policies of Christianization and Military Conscription in Central Asia

[In the Semirech'e oblast before 1917,] peasants who had migrated earlier were governed by the Statute for *Gubernii*s and were under the jurisdiction of the governor [of the oblast]; new settlers were governed by instructions for migrants and the Main Administration of Agriculture; Kirgiz [i.e., Kazakhs and Kyrgyz] were governed by the Steppe Statute and the governor; cities were governed by the City Statute; Cossacks were governed by their special statute and the ataman; Taranchis [Uyghurs] were governed by the Turkestan Statute and the governor.

—From a report of Ataman Ionov of the Semirech'e Cossack Army to Admiral Kolchak, April 30, 1919¹

The above citation reveals how complicated and chaotic the administrative system in Central Asia was under Tsarist rule. The basic administrative structure was based on the territorial principle, but even on the same territory, people were treated differently according to their ethnicity and social estate (*soslovie*). Recently Matsuzato Kimitaka has argued that the Russian Empire was built by a purely territorial (not ethnic) principle, and ethnicity mattered seriously for administrators only where

1 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 1701, op. 1, d. 54, l. 2ob.

“respectful enemies” (such as Poles, Germans, Tatars, etc.) existed.² However, this seems to be an oversimplification. It is more correct to say that territorial, ethnic and estate principles were curiously entangled with each other in the administrative system of the Russian Empire.

I leave detailed examination of the administrative system for a separate investigation. Here, I cite the different approaches of the Russian administration to ethnic groups and estates in order to challenge various traditional views of the Russian Empire: that it was a ruthless “Russifier”; that it pursued the policy of “divide and rule”; that it had a universalistic and harmonious principle for integration, different from the principle of a nation-state; that in its last stage the Russian Empire was transforming itself to a nation-state. All of these views are partly justified but are insufficient to explain the chaotic situation as mentioned above. We have to answer a fundamental question: did Russia have a clear principle for integrating the vast country? If yes, what was the principle, and if no, how can we characterize the Russian policy of governing its “peripheries”?

As Russia officially became an empire as late as 1721, one can assume that it had a mixed character of a classic empire and a modern state. The traditional principle for integrating an empire is usually loose but universalistic, and most typically connected to the divine authority of the emperor. In Russia, the authority of the Tsar was tied to Russian Orthodoxy. On one hand, the empire promoted non-Russian elites who voluntarily accepted Orthodoxy, and on the other, in an attempt to make peoples of the Volga region loyal subjects of the empire, it pursued violent Christianization there in the sixteenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. Although during the reign of Catherine II the political influence of Orthodoxy was curtailed by the idea of Enlightenment, it was reinvigorated from the last years of the reign of Alexander I.³ As Sergei Uvarov, the Minister of Education put it, Orthodoxy constituted one of the three pillars of the educational policy of the empire. The first

2 MATSUZATO Kimitaka, “General-gubernatorstva v Rossiiskoi imperii: ot etnicheskogo k prostranstvennomu podkhodu,” in *Novaia imperskaia istoriia postsovetского prostranstva* (Kazan, 2004), pp. 427–458.

3 Edward C. Thaden, *Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), p. 13.

A Particularist Empire

half of this paper examines how Tsarist officials debated the possibility of Christianization of Central Asians, especially Kazakhs.

While various political and social measures, including education, can be interpreted as “modern” ways of integration, the second part of this paper focuses on military conscription. In the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many states in the world introduced universal conscription, and it served as an instrument for nation building. In Central Asia, where the Russian administration had too little material and human resources to build an elaborate system of universal education for the multilingual population, military conscription could be an easier way for integrating them. As we shall see later, creation of militias was also discussed as a substitution to universal conscription.

If I disclose a part of the conclusion, the Tsarist administration did not fully embark on either Christianization or military conscription. Therefore it is understandable, in a sense, that only a few historians have paid attention to these two topics. Robert Geraci has studied activities of individual missionaries in the Kazakh steppe, but Tsarist officials’ attitudes toward them is almost out of his scope.⁴ Sebastien Peyrouse directs his attention to church-state relations, but he asserts without concrete evidence that Tsarist officials were always indifferent or hostile to the Church’s attempts at Christianizing Central Asians.⁵ Joshua Sanborn analyses the question of military conscription in the Russian Empire as a whole, but his attempt at putting the entire story into the framework of nation building seems one-sided.⁶ Mark von Hagen also has made a concise overview of ethnic aspects of army reforms.⁷ In short, there is no

4 Robert P. Geraci, “Going Abroad or Going to Russia? Orthodox Missionaries in the Kazakh Steppe, 1881–1917,” in Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky, eds., *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 274–310.

5 Sébastien Peyrouse, “Les missions orthodoxes entre pouvoir tsariste et allogènes: Un exemple des ambiguïtés de la politique coloniale russe dans les steppes kazakhes,” *Cahiers du Monde russe* 45, no. 1–2 (2004), pp. 109–136.

6 Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).

7 Mark von Hagen, “The Limits of Reform: The Multiethnic Imperial Army Confronts Nationalism, 1874–1917,” in David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce W. Menning, eds., *Reforming the Tsar’s Army: Military Innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004), pp. 34–55.

detailed study of either Christianization policy or the question of military conscription in Russian Central Asia. This paper aims at discerning the characteristics of Russian colonial policy through the long debates on measures that were never realized.

Christianization Policy in Central Asia

Early Attempts at Proselytism and the Steppe Commission

The first proposal we know for organized proselytism in the Kazakh steppe was the one that was made in 1828 by the Tobol'sk bishop to found a mission there. Ivan Vel'iaminov, the governor-general of Western Siberia, declined it as "premature."⁸ However, at least in the mid-nineteenth century, missionary activities were apparently carried out in a limited scale. According to the Steppe Commission (see below), 127 Kazakhs in the Oblast of the Orenburg Kirgiz (the western part of the Kazakh steppe) were baptized from 1855 to 1864, and 109 Kazakhs in the Oblast of the Siberian Kirgiz (the northern central part of the Kazakh steppe) were baptized from 1860 to 1864. The commission supposed that there were baptized Kazakhs also in the Semipalatinsk oblast in a number no fewer than in the Oblast of the Siberian Kirgiz.⁹

In 1863, a certain Stefan Pshenishnikov, a citizen of Yekaterinburg, proposed that the Orthodox Church open a mission in Petropavlovsk. He believed that the Kazakhs were ignorant of Islamic principles and were interested in Christianity. He argued that only those peoples who believed in the same religion as the Tsar could truly devote themselves to him. Some local officials supported the proposal, but others opposed saying that the Kazakhs, especially the rich and influential, firmly believed in Islam and it would be dangerous to propagate Christianity among them. Finally, both the Tobol'sk consistory and the governor-general of Western Siberia, Aleksandr Diugamel', rejected the proposal.¹⁰

8 Peyrouse, "Les missions orthodoxes," p. 114.

9 RGVIA (Russian State Military History Archive), f. 400, op. 1, d. 120, l. 71ob.

10 TsGA RK (Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan), f. 369, op. 1, d. 1932g, ll. 1-6ob.; RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 120, l. 70ob.; V. Iu. Sofronov and E. L. Savkina, "Deiatel'nost' protivomusul'manskoi missii v Tobol'skoi eparkhii" [<http://www.zaimka>

A Particularist Empire

Soon, however, voices of support for proselytism appeared from the governmental side, when the Steppe Commission (1865–1868) was formed and assigned to study various aspects of Central Asian society in order to draft statutes for administration there. One of the tasks of the Commission was to investigate how to prevent a further growth of the influence of Islam on the Kazakhs and propagate Christianity among them. The government commissioned this assignment because it was interested in the view that the Kazakhs still adhered to Shamanism and were not well disposed to Islam, which was allegedly brought by Tatars and Bashkirs.¹¹

The data produced by the Commission show that Islam had taken root in the Kazakh steppe more deeply than the government had expected. There were 32 official mosques in the districts under the jurisdiction of the Governor-Generalship of Western Siberia, and while there was no officially sanctioned mosque in the localities under the jurisdiction of the Governor-Generalship of Orenburg, there supposed to be a lot of unofficial mosques and mullahs. Among the mullahs there were not only Tatars, but also Kazakhs, including “qojas” (those who claim to be descendants of Prophet Muhammad or the first four Caliphs).¹²

The Commission, however, criticized the pro-Islamic policy since the era of Catherine II, and vigorously advocated thwarting the influence of Islam on the Kazakhs, asserting that it was an important question whether the Kazakhs would connect or forever disunite the Muslims of European Russia and those of Innermost Asia. The Commission cited a work of Shoqan Wälikhanov (Valikhanov),¹³ a Kazakh intellectual who criticized Islam, as an argument for the necessity of alienating the Kazakhs from Islam. The Commission claimed that, while it had been hitherto inexpedient to propagate Orthodoxy because of continuing Kazakh uprisings, now the time was ripe. It recommended that, in order to avoid

.ru/08_2002/sofronov_mission/]. Here and below, all the URLs are valid as of January 10, 2006 unless the date of access is indicated.

11 RGVIA, f. 1450, op. 2, d. 12, ll. 11ob.–12ob.

12 RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 120, ll. 67ob.–68; f. 1450, op. 2, d. 12, ll. 106–107, 243–244, 306–310ob., 327, 370–371ob., 395–396, 415, 448.

13 Chokan Valikhanov, “O musul’manstve v stepi,” in his *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, vol. 4 (Alma-Ata, 1985).

arousing Kazakhs' suspicion, missionary activities be carried out not only by priests but also by lay Christians, and they enter into auls (nomadic villages) as peddlers, teachers or doctors, and use the Bible and other religious literature in Kazakh or Tatar.¹⁴

The anti-Islamic intention of the Steppe Commission was soon realized. The "Provisional Statute for the Administration of Ural'sk, Torghay, Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk Oblasts,"¹⁵ which was drafted by the Commission and came into effect in 1868, removed the Kazakhs from the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly,¹⁶ although left the Tatars in the Steppe under the Assembly's jurisdiction as before. The posts of *ukaznoi mullas* (mullahs licensed by the Assembly and the provincial authorities) for the Kazakhs were abolished, and a volost (canton) was allowed to have only one mullah, elected from Russian-subject ethnic Kazakhs and sanctioned by the oblast governor. *Waqf* (religious endowment) was prohibited in the Steppe. In Turkestan, Muslims also were placed outside the control of any religious board, although *waqf* was permitted to remain.

I have no information on the immediate consequences of the Commission's recommendation on Christianization, but in the years when the government and the Church fought against massive reconversion of baptized Tatars to Islam in the Volga region (culminated in 1866), there was certainly a period of increasing missionary zeal. The St. Petersburg Missionary Society proposed to set up a "Kirgiz" (i.e., Kazakh) mission in 1866 and the Holy Synod (the highest governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church) repeated the proposal in 1870, although the Tobol'sk consistory cautioned that it was difficult to propagate Christianity among Muslims, especially the Kazakhs, who were scattered over a huge space.¹⁷

14 RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 120, ll. 67–73ob.

15 M. G. Masevich, ed., *Materialy po istorii politicheskogo stroia Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata, 1960), pp. 323–340.

16 The Spiritual Assembly, when established in 1789, had a close relationship to Russia's Kazakh policy. The first Mufti, Mukhamedzhan Khuseinov, called himself the "Kirgiz-Kaisak Mufti" and had a considerable influence on the Kazakh Junior Juz. See D. D. Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe sobranie v kontse XVIII–XIX vv.* (Ufa, 1999), pp. 29–30, 46–48.

17 Sofronov and Savkina, "Deiatel'nost' protivomusul' manskoi missii."

A Particularist Empire

Missionary activities made a tangible development in Semirech'e among immigrants from China (Kalmyks [Oirats], Daurs, Sibos, Solons, Manchus, Han Chinese). They escaped from Muslim insurgents in Xinjiang and moved to Russian Semirech'e in about 1865–1867. After the visit of the Tomsk bishop, many of them converted to Orthodoxy (721 people by 1872) and were incorporated into the Cossack estate. As reasons of their conversion, Nikolai Ostroumov (a famous pedagogue with a missionary background) cited the endeavor of Orthodox priests; the fear of immigrants that the aid money promised by the government might be revoked if they refused conversion; and the fact that they, familiar with Buddhist pictures, were not bewildered by icons like Muslims were. In Sarkan (Sarkand) village of Kapal uezd (district), the center of the area where immigrants lived, the only missionary priest in Turkestan was appointed. Father Vasili Pokrovskii, the second Sarkan missionary who was called a "Russian lama" by Kalmyks, worked hard for enlightening and improving the life of immigrants, and converted 9 Kazakhs as well.¹⁸

Baptized Kalmyk immigrants also lived near Vernyi (Almaty), the center of the Semirech'e oblast. With the initiative of the military governor Gerasim Kolpakovskii, himself a devout Christian, the Semirech'e Orthodox Brotherhood was founded in 1869 with the aim of aiding Kalmyks and expanding missionary activities. However, priests who were not specialized in missionary activities were unable to maintain regular contacts with Kalmyks, who continued their nomadic lives despite nominally being a part of the Semirech'e Cossack Army and did not well understand Russian, and the knowledge of the new converts about Christianity remained superficial.¹⁹ Even in Sarkan, where multi-ethnic Chinese immigrants mingled with Russian settlers and Cossacks, the lingua franca was said to be Kazakh, and it is hard to say that bap-

18 N. P. Ostroumov, "Kitaiskie emigranty v Semirechenskoi oblasti Turkestanskogo kraia i rasprostranenie sredi nikh pravoslav'nogo khristianstva," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik*, March 1879, pp. 270–271; July 1879, pp. 224–230, 245–259; August 1879, pp. 364–365; V. Koroleva, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Sofonii (Sokol'skogo)," *Prostor* 12 (2003) [<http://prostor.samal.kz/texts/num1203/kor1203.htm> (accessed May 29, 2005)].

19 TsGA RK, f. 234, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 18–19, 69–69ob., 83ob., 85; d. 5, ll. 1–12. The statute of the Semirech'e Orthodox Brotherhood is printed in Ostroumov, "Kitaiskie emigranty," August 1879, pp. 369–375.

tized immigrants were “Russified.” In the second half of the 1870s, the Semirech’e Orthodox Brotherhood remained only on paper.²⁰ In around 1885, most of the former immigrants returned to China. Some of the returnees explained that they had been in debt and servitude to Russian peasants, and that Russian Cossacks were hostile to them.²¹ Thus, conversion to Orthodoxy did not guarantee their welfare.

Il'minskii, Kaufman, Kolpakovskii

In this epoch of active missionary work, Nikolai Il'minskii, a famous pedagogue and missionary, tried to introduce Orthodox education in Central Asia. Although often misunderstood, Il'minskii usually engaged not in proselytizing Muslims, but in preventing apostasy of baptized non-Russians and reducing the influence of Tatar Muslims on other ethnic groups. Thus, this proposal to give Orthodox education to Central Asian Muslims (mainly Kazakhs) was an exceptional case in his biography. He was inspired with hope by the above-mentioned conversion of Kalmyks and the existence of about 100 families of Kazakhs in Chernyi Anui on the Altai, who migrated from the Steppe and converted to Orthodoxy. In 1869, he proposed to the Turkestan governor-general Konstantin von Kaufman to establish Christian alien (*inorodcheskie*) schools to spread Orthodox education among the Kazakhs, and recommended his own disciple at the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy as the director of educational affairs in all Turkestan.²²

Kaufman, who advocated education without religious distinction in order to “make Orthodoxes and Muslims equally useful citizens of Russia,” bluntly rejected Il'minskii's proposal.²³ As is well known, Kaufman thought that Islam in Central Asia, having been supported by state power under khans and amirs, would decay if the authorities neither supported nor provoked it. Therefore, he took a non-intervention approach with Islam and refrained from propagating Orthodoxy in order

20 Ostroumov, “Kitaiskie emigranty,” August 1879, pp. 361–362, 378.

21 V. G. Datsyshen, *Ocherki istorii Rossiisko-Kitaiskoi granitsy vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX vekov* (Kyzyl, 2001), pp. 49–50, 156–160.

22 P. V. Znamenskii, *Uchastie N. I. Il'minskogo v dele inorodcheskogo obrazovaniia v Turkestanskom krae* (Kazan, 1900), pp. 13–20.

23 Znamenskii, *Uchastie N. I. Il'minskogo*, pp. 20–21.

A Particularist Empire

not to antagonize pious (in the wording of those days, “fanatic”) Muslims.²⁴ For him, apparently, Il’minskii’s proposal laid too much emphasis on Christian elements in education.

However, it seems that Kaufman did not always oppose missionary activities among the Kazakhs, who were thought to be less “fanatic” than sedentary people of Central Asia. In 1870, he sent a letter to the military governor of Syr Darya oblast that told about the Holy Synod’s support of the above-mentioned Steppe Commission’s proposal for Christianization, “for information and guidance.”²⁵ Kolpakovskii, whose initiative was instrumental to proselytizing Kalmyks and Kazakhs in Semirech’e, was subordinate to Kaufman, and there is no indication that Kaufman attempted to stop it. The cathedral of the Tashkent-Turkestan diocese (*eparkhiia*) was opened in Vernyi in 1871, because Kaufman did not allow it in Tashkent.²⁶ This judgment also seems to suggest that he differentiated religious policy in Semirech’e with a predominant Kazakh and Kyrgyz population from that in other oblasts with a sizeable sedentary population.

In 1881, the Tashkent-Turkestan bishop proposed to establish a missionary monastery on the shore of lake Issyk-Kul. The plan was realized with the active support of Kolpakovskii, who was then the acting Turkestan governor-general.²⁷ He became the first governor-general of the Steppe (having jurisdiction over Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk and Semirech’e oblasts) in 1882, and continued to advocate Christianization of the Kazakhs. In his report to the Tsar, he wrote that Tatars and Bukharans were propagating Islam among the Kazakhs, who had been indifferent to religions but now were interested in them because the old

24 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 53–56; Daniel R. Brower, “Islam and Ethnicity: Russian Colonial Policy in Turkestan,” in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzarini, eds., *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 115–135.

25 TsGA RUz (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), f. 17, op. 1, d. 2934, ll. 13–13ob.

26 Priests of the diocese demanded the move of the cathedral to Tashkent, and it was realized in late 1916. “Kratkii ocherk po istorii Tashkentskoi i Sredneaziatskoi eparkhii” [<http://www.pravoslavie.uz/histor01.htm>].

27 RGIA (Russian State Historical Archive), f. 796, op. 162, d. 1103, ll. 5–30ob.

tribalistic moral basis had been shaken and a new one had not yet been created. The Orthodox Church, he argued, could also take advantage of the Kazakhs' interest in religions and openly propagate Orthodoxy. He envisioned forming villages of poor baptized Kazakhs, which would become rich with the help of the Church and subsequently, attract more people. In a larger scope, he wanted to assimilate the empire's Asian domains through achieving "spiritual affinity" (i.e., Christianization).²⁸

It should be noted that Kolpakovskii did not think that he was oppressing the Kazakhs by his Christianization policy. He acted as their paternalistic protector, restricting settlement of peasants from other regions of the empire, and seemed to have supposed that Christianization did not contradict his policy of "protecting" Kazakhs from Tatar Muslim culture.²⁹ However, in *Dala Walayatining Gazeti*, a newspaper published with his initiative, there was no article about Christianization, and he probably understood the delicate nature of this matter.

Christianization Policy Loses Its Supporters

Not all of Kolpakovskii's subordinates shared his zeal, and he was compelled to forbid uezd officials from obstructing missionary work in 1885.³⁰ Apparently, there were many officials who regarded missionary activities in the Steppe difficult and even dangerous. After all, few practical measures for Christianization were undertaken before he left the Steppe in 1889.

The second governor-general of the Steppe, Maksim Taube, was much more cautious about propagating Christianity. In 1889, the Tobol'sk-Siberian bishop Avramii visited the Akmolinsk oblast and talked to the Kazakhs, as he felt that they were interested in Christianity. He then

28 "Vsepoddanneishii otchet Stepnogo General-Gubernatora za 1887 i 1888 gody," pp. 43-45 (RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 1292, ll. 23-24).

29 On paternalism of the Governor-Generalship of the Steppe as manifested in *Dala Walayatining Gazeti*, see UYAMA Tomohiko, "A Strategic Alliance between Kazakh Intellectuals and Russian Administrators: Imagined Communities in *Dala Walayatining Gazeti* (1888-1902)," in HAYASHI Tadayuki, ed., *The Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories in Slavic Eurasia* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2003), pp. 237-259 [<http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/sympo/02summer/2002summer-contents.html>].

30 TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 5300, ll. 1-4.

A Particularist Empire

proposed opening a missionary post in Shchuchinskaia (near Kokshetau). However, Avramii's visit disturbed the local Kazakhs and some reportedly planned to send a delegation to the Tsar to ask for the appointment of a Mufti who would defend Muslim Kazakhs from being forcefully converted to Christianity.³¹ Taube wrote to Avramii that, although he supported the idea of opening a missionary post (he apparently used diplomatic language), missionary activities needed maximum discretion in order to avoid negative effects such as that made by Avramii's visit. He argued that a missionary must have a perfect command of Kazakh, know Persian and Arabic, fundamentally study the Qur'an and other Islamic prayer books, have a basic medical knowledge, live as the Kazakhs do, and, like a mullah, wander from aul to aul as a healer or merchant.³² Although some missionaries did study Islam (especially at the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy) and the Kazakh language (some of them were baptized Tatars, whose language was close to Kazakh), it is natural to assume that almost no missionary could satisfy all these qualifications.

Avramii did not wait for official permission to establish a missionary post, and ordered the priest in Shchuchinskaia to serve concurrently as a missionary. The priest asked the uezd chief to explain to volost and aul officials that his activities were not dangerous to Kazakhs, and to give him the right of free stagecoach use. But the uezd chief refused, citing the disturbance caused by the visit of Avramii. The oblast governor also wrote that the authorities could not assist the priest because there was no officially admitted missionary post.³³

Missionary activities were also complicated by the fact that various parts of the Kazakh steppe fell under the jurisdiction of different dioceses: Tobol'sk, Tomsk, Tashkent-Turkestan, Orenburg and Astrakhan. Kolpakovskii advocated establishing a Omsk subdiocese of Tobol'sk

31 TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 464, ll. 4–6ob. Up until the October Revolution, Kazakhs repeatedly raised the question either of their reincorporation to the Orenburg Muftiate (Muslim Spiritual Assembly), or of the establishment of their own Muftiate. See, for example, D. Iu. Arapov, ed., *Islam v Rossiiskoi imperii (zakonodatel'nye akty, opisaniia, statistika)* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 302–306, 312.

32 TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 436, ll. 27–32.

33 TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 2192, ll. 2–6ob.

diocese in order to invigorate missionary activities among the Kazakhs.³⁴ In 1895, a full-fledged Omsk diocese was opened, and the “Kirgiz” mission (separated from the Altai mission in 1882) of the Tomsk diocese, as well as the nine missionary posts administered by the Tomsk and Tobol’sk dioceses, were transferred to it.³⁵ It seems, however, that local officials did not give it much support. In his report to the Tsar, Taube wrote about the opening of the Omsk diocese without mentioning its missionary tasks.³⁶

Let us see here the result of missionary activities at the end of the nineteenth century. There are no precise statistics covering all the converts in Central Asia, but the 1897 census gives an approximate answer. The table shows the number of Orthodox Christians who answered that their mother tongue was one of the Central Asian languages and presumably belonged to the corresponding ethnic group. Except Kazakh Christians in Tomsk guberniia (the Altai), the number is modest. It is interesting that there are some Christians among sedentary people (“Sarts,” Uzbeks, Tajiks) proselytizing whom was supposed to be prohibited by the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan, but the circumstances of their conversion are not clear.

34 “Vsepoddanneishii otchet Stepnogo General-Gubernatora za 1883 god,” pp. 36–38 (TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 125, ll. 18ob.–19ob.).

35 Geraci, “Going Abroad or Going to Russia?” pp. 285–286; D. V. Katsiuba, *Altaiskaia dukhovnaia missiia: voprosy istorii, prosveshcheniia, kul’tury i blagotooritel’nosti* (Kemerovo, 1998), p. 34.

36 “Vsepoddanneishii otchet Stepnogo General-Gubernatora za 1885 god” (TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 125, l. 274).

A Particularist Empire

Table 2.1. The number of Orthodox Christians who answered that their mother tongue was a Central Asian language in the 1897 census

	Kazakh	Kyrgyz	Turkmen	"Sart"	"Uzbek"	Others	Total
Ural'sk oblast	65	-	-	-	-	-	65
Torghay oblast	44	-	-	-	-	-	44
Akmolinsk oblast	161	-	-	-	-	-	161
Semipalatinsk oblast	286	-	-	0	-	-	286
Semirech'e oblast	105	-	-	3	-	"Taranchi" 3	111
Syr Darya oblast	31	-	-	8	2	"Turkic" 13 Karakalpak 1	55
Ferghana oblast	-	3	-	104	3	"Turco-Tatar" 3 Tajik 2	115
Samarkand oblast	1	-	-	12	20	Tajik 6	39
Transcaspia oblast	6	-	34	0	0	-	40
Subtotal for Central Asian oblasts	699	3	34	127	25	28	916
Astrakhan guberniia	17	-	4	-	-	-	21
Orenburg guberniia	80	-	-	-	-	-	80
Tobol'sk guberniia	37	-	-	-	-	-	37
Tomsk guberniia	1069	3	3	0	1	-	1076
Subtotal for neighboring guberniias	1203	3	7	-	1	-	1214
Total	1902	6	41	127	26	28	2130

Compiled from the data in: N. A. Troitskii, ed., *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleiiia Rossiiskoi imperii*, 1897, vols. 2, 28, 78, 79, 81-89 (St. Petersburg, 1904-1905).

In the above table, it is possible that some of those who shared their mother tongue with few people in the given oblast or guberniia are not included. This is due to the source material sometimes grouping them into the general category of "Turkish-Tatar (turetsko-tatarskie)" languages. In addition, the language names in quotation marks are either not used today or used in a different manner. "Sart" and "Uzbek" (and probably also "Turkic [tiurkskii]" and "Turco-Tatar [tiurko-tatarskie]") are present-day Uzbek. "Taranchi" is a part of present-day Uyghur. In many of the volumes, Kazakh is called "kirgizskii" ("kirgiz-kaisatskii" in the Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirech'e and Samarkand oblasts,

and “kirgizsko-kaisatskii” in Tomsk guberniia), and Kyrgyz is called “kara-kirgizskii.” However, the volume on the Semirech’e oblast, where many Kyrgyz lived, mentions only Kazakh (“kirgiz-kaisatskii”); I suppose that a part of the 105 “Kazakh”-speaking Orthodox listed in the above table (among others, 17 in Przheval’sk uezd and 13 in Pishpek uezd) were actually Kyrgyz. The volume on Syr Darya oblast lumps Kazakh and Kyrgyz together as “kirgiz-kaisatskii i kara-kirgizskii,” but most people listed in that item were probably Kazakhs.

The End of the Christianization Policy

As we saw through the proposal of the Steppe Commission, a main motive of the Christianization policy in the Kazakh steppe was to caution against activities of Tatar Muslims and the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. This caution had not waned since then. In 1877, the Interior Minister, with the approval of the Tsar, prohibited the use of the Tatar language in official documents in the Steppe and ordered the replacement of the Tatar clerks of volosts with Kazakhs, although the order was based on a misunderstanding: most volost clerks were in fact Russians.³⁷ In 1899, stimulated by the report by the governor-general of Turkestan, Sergei Dukhovskoi, on “Islam in Turkestan,” the Minister of War asked the governor-general of the Steppe to eliminate the influence of the Orenburg Mufti on the Steppe as far as possible. Some officials discussed the possibility of removing the Tatars in the Steppe from the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly.³⁸ It seems that the Mufti really had a considerable authority not only among the Tatars, but also among the Kazakhs. According to the chief of the Petropavlovsk uezd, when the Mufti visited there in 1900, a lot of influential Kazakhs from remote places in the Steppe came to see him.³⁹

There is, however, no indication that officials of the Steppe region thought of confronting Islam and the Tatars with Orthodox missionaries any longer. In Turkestan, Dukhovskoi severely condemned the Tashkent-Turkestan bishop when the latter said in 1900 that the time was ripe for missionary activities. He cited the Boxer Rebellion in China as evidence that missionary activities could provoke a harsh reaction, and judged that, if missionaries were powerless in relation to the Volga

37 TsGA RK f. 369, op. 1, d. 2040a.

38 TsGA RK f. 369, op. 1, d. 3696, ll. 1-108ob.

39 Ibid., l. 73ob.

A Particularist Empire

Tatars surrounded by Christians, they had no chance in Turkestan, one of the centers of the Islamic world. He wrote that it was necessary to make local Muslims believe that the Tsar treated all his subjects with paternalistic care irrespective of faith. He regarded, however, the missionary activities in Semirech'e as permissible.⁴⁰

By the last years of the nineteenth century, the pace of the Kazakhs' Christianization had not greatly increased in comparison with the period before the organization of missions: the "Kirgiz" mission of the Omsk diocese baptized about fifty or sixty Kazakhs per year,⁴¹ although this figure may be exaggerated. Moreover, most of the few Kazakh converts were *jataqs* (poor people without livestock who constituted a marginal part of Kazakh society). Apparently, they accepted the new faith in the hope of receiving economic privileges. There were also cases where people, including criminals, who had bad relations with their relatives and neighbors, escaped to towns and converted to Christianity.⁴²

The Tsar's manifesto of religious toleration (April 17, 1905), which conditionally sanctioned conversion from Orthodoxy to other faiths, dealt a near-fatal blow to the missionaries. Not only baptized Kazakhs, but also Tatars, Chuvash and even some Russians in the Steppe petitioned for permission to convert to Islam, although not all of them received permission.⁴³ According to a correspondence from Semipalatinsk to a Muslim newspaper in St. Petersburg in 1911, almost all the baptized Kazakhs there went back to Islam and no Kazakh had been newly converted after 1905.⁴⁴

Still, the Church tried to expand missionary activities, and founded an anti-Muslim mission in Tashkent in 1912 under circumstances unknown

40 RGVA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 2689, ll. 1-5.

41 Geraci, "Going Abroad or Going to Russia?" p. 291.

42 TsGA RUz, f. 17, op. 1, d. 3026, ll. 1, 4.

43 TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 3885. Abandonment of Orthodoxy was observed widely in the empire then. According to the information collected by the Holy Synod, 36,229 people converted from Orthodoxy to Islam in 14 guberniias in the Volga-Urals and Western Siberia from April 17, 1905 to December 1907. Conversion to Catholicism in the west of the empire was even more large-scale. See M. A. Volkhonskii, "Natsional'nyi vopros vo vnutrennei politike pravitel'stva v gody Pervoi russkoi revoliutsii," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 5 (2005), p. 52.

44 *V mire musul'manstva* 16 (August 5, 1911).

to researchers, with little or no result.⁴⁵ At the Kazan Missionary Congress in 1910, some missionaries discussed how to revitalize their activities in the Steppe independently from the administrative authorities, but they did not find an answer. They faced obstacles with not only policy change, but also with the attitudes of ordinary Russians. One missionary attributed the apostasy of baptized Kazakhs to the hostility they encountered from their Russian neighbors.⁴⁶

The Issyk-Kul monastery, a souvenir of Kolpakovskii, proved almost incapable of doing missionary work among the surrounding Kyrgyz population.⁴⁷ During the revolt of 1916, Kyrgyz rebels attacked the Issyk-Kul monastery and killed seven monks.⁴⁸ When Kyrgyz and Dungan rebels approached the city of Przheval'sk, the city church rang the bell as an alarm, and citizens (ethnic Russians) rushed into the church square with arms and prayed to God.⁴⁹ This scene is highly symbolic in the sense that the Orthodox Church, after all, belonged to the Russians, not the native peoples of Central Asia.

In order to carry out activities in unfamiliar places, and also because of their close relations with state policy, missionaries needed the assistance and permission of the authorities. However, permission was often given after much delay or was not given at all. The Orthodox Church itself had a hierarchical and bureaucratic structure, and could not work flexibly. By contrast, Muslim mullahs went into the Steppe as peddlers and healers without bureaucratic procedures, and could easily adapt themselves to the local society. As documents of the Steppe Commission and General Taube suggest, officials were aware of the advantage of the style of mullahs' work, but it was not easy for Orthodox missionaries to imitate them. Missionaries at the Kazan Missionary Congress in 1910 admitted that Tatar mullahs ate food, spoke the language, and wore the

45 Peyrouse, "Les missions orthodoxes," p. 134.

46 Frank T. McCarthy, "The Kazan' Missionary Congress," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 14, no. 3 (1973), pp. 321-322, 327-329.

47 "Zhitie prepodobnomuchenikov Serafima i Feognosta" [<http://www.orthodox.kz/article.php?razd=27&publid=45>].

48 "Zhitie prepodobnomuchenikov."

49 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 11, d. 89, l. 287ob.

clothes of the Kazakhs, while Orthodox priests did none of these things. None of the priests of the “Kirgiz” mission at that time knew the Kazakh language.⁵⁰

One of the characteristic points of officials’ and priests’ discussions was that they always differentiated nomads (the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz) from sedentary people, and the Steppe oblasts (including Semirech’e) from Turkestan. The expectation, however, that the Kazakhs were ignorant in Islam and could be baptized relatively easily, proved erroneous. Arrival of missionaries sometimes disturbed Kazakhs as was the case with Avramii, and there were also many cases when parents refused to send their children to Russian schools, fearing that they would be baptized. Advocators of the Christianization policy were right when they thought that Central Asian nomads were not so familiar with Islamic doctrines as their sedentary neighbors, but they failed to differentiate between doctrines and identity. Judging from their attitudes to Christian missionaries and the Muslim Mufti, many Kazakhs and Kyrgyz had a clear Muslim identity. As the famous intellectual Mırjaqıp Dulatov wrote, Kazakhs widely held the view that Tsaritsa Anna had promised not to infringe on the Kazakhs’ religion and land when khan Äbılkhayır (Abulkhair) pledged allegiance to Russia in 1731.⁵¹

Moreover, the fact that many of the few baptized Kazakhs were either poor people in the town or those who had damaged relations with their kinsmen suggests that, as long as Kazakhs held normal positions in their own communities, it was difficult for them to abandon Islam. Kolkovskii’s idea of setting up villages of poor Kazakhs to make them the nuclei of expanding Christian communities was unrealistic, and baptized Kazakhs always remained marginal.

In the political context, those officials who advocated the Christianization policy in the Steppe were motivated by, except their personal devoutness, the intention to prevent further increase of the influence of Islam and Tatar Muslim culture on the Kazakhs and to draw them to the side of the Russians. A number of officials, however, feared that missionary activities could provoke unrest of the Kazakhs, and supporters of the Christianization policy decreased over the time. In other words,

50 McCarthy, “The Kazan’ Missionary Congress,” pp. 321, 327.

51 Mir-Ya’qub Dulatof, *Oyan, qazaq!* (Ufa, 1910), p. 9.

assimilation of Central Asians to the Russian Empire was certainly a desirable goal for the part of officialdom, but its priority was so low that it was easily abandoned when attempts at doing so were faced with difficulties or dangers.

Discussions on Military Conscription and Formation of Militias in Central Asia

Central Asians Serving in the Russian Army

From early times a considerable number of non-Russians in eastern Russia performed military service, mostly in irregular armies such as the Cossack ones. It is well known that Bashkirs participated in the battles against Napoleon and went to France. A few Kazakhs also participated in these battles, and it was quite common for descendants of Kazakh khans to become Russian officials and generals at least until the 1870s.⁵² Central Asians also accompanied Russian armed forces conquering Turkestan as *jigits* (horsemen who served as reconnoiterers and messengers) and sometimes even participated in such difficult battles as the suppression of the Kokand rebellion in 1876 and the Akhal-Teke (Turkmen) expedition in 1880–1881, and were highly praised by Russian officials.⁵³

Generally, however, the military service of non-Russians in irregular forms was gradually cut down with the modernization of the Russian Army. The Bashkir irregular army and the Buryat Cossack regiments were abolished in 1865 and 1871, respectively. The Bashkirs became subjected to military conscription⁵⁴ together with the Tatars, while the

52 *Istoricheskiĭ opyt zashchity Otechestva: Voennaia istoriia Kazakhstana* (Almaty, 1999), pp. 83–97. Examples of Kazakh officers and generals include: captain Shoqan Wälikhanov, the famous scholar; Cavalry General Ghübaydulla Jänggırov, a son of the last khan of the Bökey Horde; Major General Seyıtjapar Asfendiarov, an interpreter of the governor-general of Turkestan who was engaged in diplomatic relations.

53 RGVA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, ll. 30–31ob.; TsGA Ruz, f. 1, op. 1, d. 1931, ll. 2–4. One of the Turkmen leaders of resistance to the Russian army, Magtımguĭ Khan, himself later became a Russian colonel. TsGA Ruz, f. 1, op. 2, d. 1215, ll. 1–2ob.

54 Conscription was called “recruit obligation (*rekrutskaiia povinnost'*)” and was assigned

A Particularist Empire

Buryats and Kalmyks, except those who continued to serve in the Cossack armies, were exempted from military service as *inorodtsy* (“aliens”). Whereas old irregular armies were a convenient way to use the services of those ethnic groups who were not capable of paying taxes in the same way as the most Russians, the imposition of or exemption from universal military service indicated the actual or expected level of integration of those groups into the empire. When Russia conquered Turkestan and reformed administration in the Kazakh steppe, the question emerged as to whether Central Asians—in the first place, Kazakhs—should be recruited to the army or not.

From the 1860s to the 1880s: the Steppe Commission and the Sino-Russian Relations

In 1865, the Steppe Commission was assigned “to consider whether we should support martial spirit of this population [the Kazakhs], or, on the contrary, make efforts to accustom them to peaceful life and disaccustom them from arms; to make the regulations for the formation of a Kirgiz [Kazakh] militia for interior police work and exterior military service.”⁵⁵ After more than two years of investigation, however, the commission concluded: “The conditions of military service radically contradict the mode of life of nomads who are accustomed to unlimited freedom. The Kirgiz, therefore, fear recruitment and . . . mere rumors about a census, which they regard as a herald of recruitment, have led them to disorders.” It also pointed out that they would greet the formation of a militia with suspicion, regarding it as a transitional measure to the introduction of military conscription.⁵⁶

The first governor-general of Turkestan, Kaufman, considered that the natives of Turkestan generally lacked enough trustworthiness (*blagonadezhnost'*) to fulfill the task of defending Russian interests. At the same time, however, he thought that the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were more fit-

through communities until 1874; after that it was called “military obligation (*voinskaia povinnost'*)” common to every subject of the empire, although there were numerous categories of people who were exempted from it.

55 RGVIA, f. 1450, op. 2, d. 12, l. 8ob.

56 RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 120, ll. 62ob.-63.

ted to military service than the Tajiks and “Sarts,” and that they could form splendid regiments of light cavalry. After the revolt of the Kazakhs of the Junior Juz (1868–1870), however, he found the idea inappropriate for the moment.⁵⁷

In 1874, when the law on universal conscription was introduced, the War Ministry proposed commanders of military districts where the *ino-rodtsy* lived to examine the possibility of their military service. All the district commanders (posts held by the governor-generals concurrently) in Central Asia made negative replies in 1879–1880. Kaufman was now totally negative. According to him, experiences of campaigns showed a low level of combat ability and trustworthiness of Muslim militias and irregular cavalries. He argued that militiamen were prone to plunder and were fitted to an annihilatory war that could occur on Russia’s western border, but in Central Asia, the Russian army battled against future subjects of the empire or its protectorates, and its tactics should be and was actually “humane.”⁵⁸ He warned that military service would give the population instructors for possible insurrections, expressing his belief that “our main concern now should be directed to make the native population of the district peaceful farmers, manufacturers and merchants, . . . but not warriors in any case.” He added that one should not forget that by acquiring Turkestan, “we broke into the heart of the Muslim world that still regards us as strangers and conquerors who disturb its millennium-old, though barbarous, order by our civilization.”⁵⁹

In 1883, when Sino-Russian relations were still strained soon after the St. Petersburg treaty was signed, the military governor of the Semirech’e oblast, Aleksei Fride (Friede), proposed forming an irregular cavalry from all the nationalities (Russians, Dungans, “Taranchis,” Kazakhs and Kyrgyz) of the oblast. Although considering it necessary to limit the

57 Cited from the minutes of the commission of the Ferghana oblast army headquarters in 1895 (see below). RGVIA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, l. 7ob.

58 Not all Russian generals shared this “humanistic” view. General Mikhail Skobelev, who conducted atrocities in the Ferghana valley and the Akhal-Teke oasis, told, “in Asia the duration of peace is in direct proportion to the slaughter you inflict upon the enemy. The harder you hit them, the longer they will be quiet afterwards.” Charles Marvin, *The Russian Advance towards India: Conversations with Skobeleff, Ignatieff, and Other Distinguished Russian Generals and Statesmen, on the Central Asian Question* (London, 1882), pp. 98–99.

59 TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 5838, ll. 1–31; f. 25, op. 1, d. 2280, ll. 1–29ob.

A Particularist Empire

number of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz because of their high proportion to the general population, he thought that they were “devoid of fanaticism” unlike the sedentary population of Turkestan (as proof, he referred to the “quite frequent” cases of their conversion to Christianity) and had “never been a warlike people.” He therefore proposed that the measure was safe. In his opinion, this would “influence their Russification (*obrusenie*) in the most powerful way.”⁶⁰

The governor-general of the Steppe, Kolpakovskii, agreed to the proposal in principle, arguing that while Russia had not earlier conscripted the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz for fear of inducing disorder that could be supported by the Central Asian khanates, now these khanates had been subjugated and the fear lost its foundation. He seemed to have considered, however, that this question concerned all of the oblasts under his jurisdiction, and asked officials of the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts for their opinions.⁶¹ The opinions were divided, but were generally negative. Chiefs of three uezds in the Akmolinsk oblast wrote in 1884:

. . . The Kirgiz [Kazakhs] live in closed tribal circles that are almost beyond the reach of outside influence and have little sympathy with general interests of the state. This absence of solidarity of interests of the Steppe region with those of the whole empire is supported by the nomadic mode of life of the Kirgiz, the economic situation of the region, and the low level of *grazhdanstvennost'*⁶² of the present-day Kirgiz. . . . Continual colonization of the Steppe by Russians and increasing taxes in the form of *kibitka* (household) tax and local tax cannot but provoke . . . doubt of the Kirgiz about these measures [i.e., conscription].

. . . [Even] those Kirgiz who received some Russian education and entered the army as officers proved to be far from being qualified for their assign-

60 TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 5845, ll. 2-21ob.

61 “Vsepoddanneishii otchet Stepnogo General-Gubernatora za 1883 god,” p. 52 (TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 125, l. 26ob.); TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 5845, l. 1.

62 While the word *grazhdanstvennost'* (literally, civicness) was used in manifold meanings, it was mostly used, at least in discourses of Russian officials on Central Asia, in the sense of the cultural or civilizational level of an ethnic group. There was also the phrase “*rusaskaia grazhdanstvennost'*,” which was used in the sense of cultural or political influence of Russia on a non-Russian people. See L. Kostenko, *Sredniaia Aziia i vodvorenie v nei russkoi grazhdanstvennosti* (St. Petersburg, 1870), pp. 42, 104.

ments. . . . Nomadic life and the very low mental level of comprehension cannot be favorable for making them disciplined warriors. . . . The low level of their intellectual development does not allow them to have the idea of duty, obligation and honesty.

. . . . Conscription of the Kirgiz . . . will be expedient only when this nationality makes the transition from nomadic to settled life and accordingly consolidate their economic condition to some extent, and when Russian culture and Russian *grazhdanstvennost'* permeate them together with settled life and fusion (*sliianie*) of the Kirgiz people with the Russians has been accomplished. . . .

They also pointed out that the Kazakhs had not forgotten the days when they lived with more freedom and neighboring countries gave them gifts to find their favor, and that although the Steppe became surrounded by Russian territories by the conquest of Turkestan, this ring around the Steppe was far from being strong.⁶³ In these words, we can see both their contempt for Kazakh nomads and their consciousness of the weakness of Russian rule, which had not brought welfare to the Kazakhs.

Kolpakovskii, after all, admitted in 1885 that the time was not ripe for conscription of the *inorodtsy* of the three oblasts.⁶⁴ By this time, the need of forming special cavalry in Semirech'e objectively lessened as Sino-Russian relations had eased.

From the 1890s to the 1900s: the Possibility of a War with the British and Afghans

In Turkestan, tensions between Russia and Afghanistan inspired a plan to form a cavalry. In 1895, the Minister of War Petr Vannovskii showed an interest in the idea of forming militia units of Turkestan natives for reconnaissance work as a partial substitute for Cossacks, and the headquarters of the Turkestan military district asked the army commanders (positions served concurrently by the governors) of the oblasts for their opinions.⁶⁵ The acting army commander of the Samarkand oblast, Ionov,

63 TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 5845, ll. 23–42.

64 TsGA RK, f. 369, op. 1, d. 2089, ll. 26–32ob.

65 RGVIA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, ll. 1–2ob.

supported this idea, believing that Russian intelligence officers could not properly carry out their work because Muslims, even Russian subjects, would conceal information from them, and intermediation of local horsemen loyal to Russia was indispensable. He argued that while twenty years of peace after the Russian conquest had weakened the combat abilities of the "Sarts," nomads who fought daily against the harsh nature could work as excellent *jigits*, as before.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, a commission established by the Ferghana oblast army headquarters supposed that Muslim militias would be harmful in case of war with their coreligionists, with the exception of Turkmen militiamen (see below) who regarded warfare as their profession and fought with any one or groups. It pointed out that the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz repeatedly rebelled against Russia under the leadership of Kenesari (who led a Kazakh revolt in 1837-1847), Sadiq (Kenesari's son), 'Abd al-Rahman Aftabachi ("avtobachi" in Russian sources; the Kipchak leader of a revolt in the Kokand khanate in 1876) and others. The commission emphasized that they maintained relations with their kinsmen in China, and that all the nomadic population of the steppe stretching to the Chinese Wall constituted "a single Mongolian tribe and was once the core of large armies of Chingis Khan and Tamerlane." The commission asked rhetorically: "Should we awake the sleeping militant tribe to new fighting activities? Should we renew the deplorable epoch of the Mongol invasion?" However, the oblast army commander, Aleksandr Povalov-Shveikovskii, wrote that the fear of awakening nomads' militancy was greatly exaggerated.⁶⁷

Aleksandr Vrevskii, the governor-general of Turkestan, concluded in 1896 that native militia units were not necessary.⁶⁸ It seems, however, a strong opinion in support for strengthening cavalry remained inside the headquarters of the Turkestan military district. After Dukhovskoi succeeded Vrevskii in 1898, some officers of the headquarters, as if they had waited for the opportunity, wrote a detailed report in favor of introducing conscription among the natives or forming native cavalry.⁶⁹ Their

66 Ibid., ll. 30-32.

67 Ibid., ll. 6-19.

68 Ibid., ll. 23-23ob.

69 I have found four versions of the report. Some of them are not dated, but judging

main points were as follows:

- At present, the Russian cavalry in Turkestan is much smaller than the Afghan and Indian cavalries. Strengthening of the cavalry, “a thunderous weapon of gods,” would give Russians the possibility of a seizing initiative, and its invasion of Afghanistan would disturb all of India. Oghuz Khan, Mahmud of Ghazni, Chingis Khan and Tamerlane all went through this area with local cavalry, and the mountainous terrain here would not impede the cavalry’s movement.

- Central Asian nomads remain daring horse-riders (“Militant instincts, engrafted for millenniums, cannot fade out so rapidly”). At the same time, there is no reason to fear riots of the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz because their former solidarity over a vast space has been lost thanks to delimitation of state borders, and Russia had consolidated order in the Steppe. Although there are some plunderers among them, a useful way to combat plunders is to draw troublesome elements into military service and detract them from criminal activities. Above all, the army is the best school that educates people in the idea of public order of the state.

Precisely at this time, in May 1898, a major revolt took place in Andijan. In the second and later versions of the report, however, officers continued to emphasize the importance of military education, claiming that “the Andijan incident . . . showed that we had taken too little care of educating our Asian *inorodtsy* in the idea of the unity and order of the state.”

The first version of the report advocated the introduction of a universal conscription for the reason that militias were more costly and less disciplined. The second version stated that at least a part of the population should be conscripted to the regular army, but formation of militias was also acceptable. The third and fourth versions wrote about the formation of the militias only. Someone (possibly the chief of the district headquarters, which should not be confused with the governor-general)

from their contents and also the documents filed before and after them, they were most probably written in the following order: 1) RGVIA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, ll. 44–51ob.; 2) Ibid., d. 756, ll. 60–62ob. (August 1898); 3) Ibid., d. 768, ll. 1–8 (1898); 4) Ibid., d. 756, ll. 95–101ob. (January 1899).

A Particularist Empire

repeatedly wrote comments in the margin of the report and expressed strong doubt on the trustworthiness of the *inorodtsy*. This is probably the reason the authors of the report had to abandon the idea of forming a cavalry on the basis of universal conscription.

Formation of a “Kirgiz” cavalry was also discussed in the newspapers. Some articles are bound in a file together with the above-mentioned report, and officials of the headquarters undoubtedly read them. One of the articles’ authors was Maslov, a former chief of the headquarters of the Omsk military district, who praised the splendid quality of “Kirgiz” horses and horsemen, and supported the formation of a mixed “Kirgiz”-Russian cavalry on the basis of universal conscription. He wrote: “Military conscription is a heavy burden for a highly industrialized population, but it is entirely useful for nomads who do nothing throughout the year, and gives them occupation and development. It is especially important that it inculcates them with a sense of belonging to the Russian state,” and “for warlike nomadic peoples, war is a desirable and familiar environment, and the blood shed on the battle field will entirely serve to make them loyal servants of the Tsar and the Fatherland more rapidly.”⁷⁰ Sultan Vali-Khan (apparently, a descendant of the Kazakh khan, Wāli) also basically supported the formation of a Kazakh cavalry, however saying that compulsion should be avoided.⁷¹

It is unknown whether the governor-general read any of these discussions. Another reason, however, slightly moved the matter forward. Already in 1894, the military governor of the Ferghana oblast, Povaloshveikovskii, proposed the formation of a mounted police, and repeated the proposal three times in 1897. He was worried by the situation in Ferghana where robbers, including armed ones, frequently appeared, and which could develop into such a disturbing situation as existed in some parts of the Caucasus. He wrote that the native administration of volosts and villages, which was assigned to perform police functions, was not only powerless to stand against robbers but even formed an “impermeable curtain” and hindered the Russian authorities from knowing Muslim life; thus he expected the mounted police to break the “curtain.” The then governor-general, Vrevskii, rejected the proposal for

⁷⁰ *Russkii invalid*, June 7, 1898 (RGVIA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, l. 73).

⁷¹ *Novoe vremia*, July 29, 1898 (RGVIA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, l. 76).

formalistic reasons. The next governor-general, Dukhovskoi, having received a report on the matter, wrote, "I heard it for the first time!" and called the rejection by the former governor-general "Strange?!" He gave his secretariat directions: "These measures are indispensable and urgent. It is necessary to set up a troop like the Teke battalion [i.e., the Turkmen battalion; see below] in every oblast."⁷²

The matter was, however, handed over to the headquarters of the military district, which drew up a totally different plan to form a militia or guard composed of ethnic Russians, and to distribute arms to the whole ethnic Russian population in case of disturbances of the natives. This was an idea to expand the arming of Russian settlers started by the proposal in 1892 of Nikolai Grodekov, the then military governor of the Syr Darya oblast. In July 1899, however, the district headquarters decided to stop all these matters for the time being.⁷³

The situation abruptly took a new turn in 1903, when the Finance Minister raised the question of introducing a war tax (a substitute for military service) in Turkestan. Governor-general Nikolai Ivanov proposed using a part of the tax revenue for the formation of "native militia troops (*tuzemnye militsionnye sotni*)." Volunteers from the native population were supposed to become ordinary militiamen (*jigits*) and would be encouraged to study Russian, while sergeants and officers would be Russians and obliged to know one of the local languages. The main motive of the formation of these troops was the need to strengthen the police force. The district headquarters repeated the words of Povalov-Shveikovskii about the fear of Caucasization of Ferghana and the "impermeable curtain" formed by native administration. Meanwhile, military functions of the militia also were not set aside, and it was expected to carry out reconnaissance and rapid attacks in wartime.⁷⁴

Tsar Nicholas II read Ivanov's report and supported his idea. The Main Headquarters of the Ministry of War, however, took a negative

72 RGVA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, ll. 84-87ob.

73 RGVA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, ll. 157-166ob., 171-172, 188, 199, 207. On the arming of Russian settlers, see P. G. Galuzo, *Vooruzhenie russkikh pereselentsev v Srednei Azii* (Tashkent, 1926); G. S. Sapargaliev, *Karatel'naia politika tsarizma v Kazakhstane (1905-1917 gg.)* (Alma-Ata, 1966), pp. 70-75.

74 RGVA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 3165, ll. 1-20.

attitude to it, citing the threat of Muslim “fanaticism,” Pan-Islamism, and the lack of trustworthiness of the Turkestan natives, allegedly proved by the Tashkent cholera riot (1892) and the Andijan uprising (1898). It also referred to the unsuccessful experience of the militia in the Terek oblast (North Caucasus), where militiamen could not reduce crimes and even participated in a revolt in 1877–1878 and the army was compelled to send divisions to suppress them in the middle of the Russo-Turkish war.⁷⁵

Minister of War Aleksei Kuropatkin practically neglected the Main Headquarters’ report, and wrote instructions to set up a militia troop composed of “Kirgiz” in every oblast in Turkestan. Soon, however, the Russo-Japanese war started and Kuropatkin was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the Manchurian army. His successor, Viktor Sakharov, asked Finance Minister Vladimir Kokovtsov for his opinion, saying that the War Ministry was supportive of creating militias. Kokovtsov, however, opposed this idea for the reason that using a war tax for a specific region contradicted budget regulations, and also because the introduction of a war tax in Turkestan had been postponed. The Main Headquarters forwarded this answer to the new governor-general of Turkestan, Nikolai Teviashev, who responded that he was in favor of leaving this matter for the time being. In January 1905, Sakharov submitted to the Tsar a note that the creation of militias would be postponed until more favorable conditions would emerge.⁷⁶ As was often the case, support of the Tsar alone could not change the intentions of the bureaucrats and formal regulations, notwithstanding that Russia was an autocratic state.

The conditions after the Russo-Japanese war proved no more favorable for the formation of the militias. In 1907, the Anglo-Russian entente was formed, and the need to create a cavalry for a possible war with Afghanistan and Great Britain disappeared. Later, governor-general Aleksandr Samsonov proposed again to set up a horse militia from Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in his report to the Tsar for the year of 1909,⁷⁷ but it seems that the proposal did not become the subject of serious discussion.

⁷⁵ Ibid., ll. 21ob.–27.

⁷⁶ Ibid., ll. 21, 32–38ob.

⁷⁷ Kh. T. Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Tashkent, 1962), p. 183.

The Turkmen Cavalry Regiment

Here, it bears mentioning that there existed only one militia, or irregular army force, of Central Asian natives. It was the Turkmen horse militia established in February 1885, which was reorganized into the Turkmen cavalry irregular battalion in 1892, and renamed to the Turkmen cavalry battalion in 1911, the Turkmen cavalry regiment in 1914, the Teke cavalry regiment in 1916, and existed until 1918.⁷⁸ Its rank-and-file members were Turkmen (mostly from Teke tribe), while most of the officers were ethnic Russians. In peacetime, it was engaged in local police work and border guarding, and was dispatched to neighboring countries for reconnaissance as well.⁷⁹

It is strange, at first glance, that most Central Asian peoples were kept away not only from the regular army but also from militias, while Turkmen, who had resisted Russian conquerors most fiercely, were invited to form a militia four years after the battle of Gökdepe and when the annexation of southern Turkmenistan had not yet been finished. Following the logic of Russian officials, the Turkmen could be considered as having low “trustworthiness” and *grazhdanstvennost’*, because they were famous for their engagement in plunder (*alaman*) in Iran and other neighboring countries, and Russian culture hardly penetrated them.

As a matter of fact, Russian generals and officers were simply fascinated by the splendid quality of the Turkmen as warriors that they had demonstrated at Gökdepe and other places. As the above-mentioned words of the commission of the Ferghana military headquarters show, the Turkmen gained a reputation as warriors who fought in any severe conditions and with any enemies. There was also an idea that it was useful for maintaining order to incorporate people who liked war and plunder into the army.⁸⁰ Another probable reason for the formation of the Turkmen cavalry was the geopolitical significance of the Transcaspia oblast (Turkmenistan): the majority of the Russian border (excluding its protectorate, the Bukharan emirate) with Afghanistan and Iran belonged

78 RGVIA, f. 3639, op. 1, predislovie.

79 RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 1408, ll. 3–12ob., 46–47.

80 RGVIA, f. 1396, op. 2, d. 756, ll. 9–9ob.

to this oblast. To be sure, the Turkmen cavalry was formed on a voluntary basis, and the Turkmen were exempted from universal conscription in the same way as other *inorodtsy* in Asiatic Russia.

In February 1915, at the height of World War I where the Turkmen cavalry regiment courageously fought with the Austrian and German armies, the main administration of the General Headquarters proposed to include "Kirgiz" volunteers in a reserve squadron of the Turkmen regiment. Then the head of the Asian department of the Main Headquarters of the Ministry of War fiercely opposed the proposal. He asserted that, while the "Kirgiz" were pure nomads, the mode of life of the Turkmen, especially the "Akhali" (i.e., Teke) Turkmen was close to sedentary, and it was difficult for the two to work together. Moreover, he claimed, "the Turkmen are a first-class material for cavalry, whereas the Kirgiz . . . are rather second-class," and although the "Kirgiz" were tireless horsemen, one could not call them brave warriors, and their incorporation would lower the quality of the Turkmen squadron.⁸¹ Thus, although the semi-nomadic Turkmen had an intermediate character in the mode of life between the nomadic Kazakhs-Kyrgyz and the sedentary Uzbeks-Tajiks, and were less familiar with Russian culture, they were placed higher than anyone in Central Asia in military affairs.

The Teke cavalry regiment, in August 1917, joined the Kornilov revolt against the Provisional Government together with the so-called "Savage Division" (formally the Caucasian Native Cavalry Division, formed by volunteers from the North Caucasus and Azerbaijan), and some of its members fought against the Bolsheviks afterwards.⁸²

The 1910s: Russians' Feeling of "Unfairness" and the Revolt of 1916

Let us return to the discussions around 1910. At that time, voices of support for conscription of the *inorodtsy* appeared in the Ministry of War and the State Duma. They derived from the rightists' view that the central part of the empire had been becoming impoverished (*oskudenie*), and ethnic Russians were at a disadvantage in the whole empire. They were

81 RGVIA, f. 400, op. 1, d. 4413, ll. 11-13.

82 O. Gundogdyev and Dzh. Annaorazov, *Slava i tragediia: Sud'ba Tekinskogo konnogo polka (1914-1918)* (Ashgabat, 1992).

of the opinion that Russians bore an unjustly heavy burden in defending the empire, and drafting non-Russians would kill two birds with one stone by lessening the burden on Russians while Russifying non-Russians.⁸³ A part of those nationalities that had been exempted from conscription expressed their readiness to undertake military service. Khalilbek Khasmamedov, an Azerbaijani deputy, made a speech at the Duma in November 1911, saying that exempting Transcaucasian Muslims from military service (unlike Christians in the same region) and levying instead a special tax made them feel that “they were not sons of the common motherland, but its stepsons.”⁸⁴ In any case, exemption of a significant part of the population from “universal” conscription was surely an anomaly.

In Central Asia, the military governor of Semirech’e, Mikhail Fol’baum, mentioned the need for conscripting the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in his annual report to the Tsar for the year 1910, and Nicholas II wrote: “We need to arrive at this [conclusion].” The governor-general of Turkestan, Samsonov, however, said that they were not trustworthy enough to fight as Russian soldiers and it was premature to conscript them, because they had become discontented by the Russian government’s land confiscation to benefit Russian peasants.⁸⁵

From then on, conscription was discussed not only inside the governmental bodies but also among the Kazakhs. At that time that a small number of Kazakhs were changing to settled life, some feared that they would be conscripted. In the newspaper *Qazaq* of May 1913, the prominent Kazakh intellectual Älikhan Bökeykhan (Bukeikhanov) enumerated laws that stipulated exemption of the Kazakhs from conscription, and explained that no amendment had been proposed either to the Duma or the State Council, and that those who changed to settled life would not be drafted if they were not incorporated into the peasant estate by their own will.⁸⁶

83 Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation*, pp. 71–74.

84 *Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Tretii sozyv: Stenograficheskie otchety, 1911 g., Sessiiia piataia, chast’ 1* (St. Petersburg, 1911), pp. 2933–2936.

85 Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916*, pp. 181–184.

86 Qır balası [Ä. Bökeykhan], “Qazaqtan saldat ala ma?” *Qazaq* 13 (May 8, 1913), p. 1. Article 12 of the Statute for the administration of Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirech’e,

A Particularist Empire

When the war began, the Ministry of War was seriously examining the possibility of extending the draft. The ministry, in a secret report submitted to the Council of Ministers in July 1914, claimed that it was unfair to lay the burden of military service on the population of the center of the state on behalf of the peripheries, which were allegedly “developing and getting rich” at the expense of the center. In the case of the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, however, the ministry called for keeping exemption for the following reasons: first, although their exemption increased the burden on the Russians, it was compensated by the expropriation of their land for the interest of the Russians; second, they would fall ill by serving in an environment where they could not obtain familiar food and kymyz (fermented mare’s milk), which sustained their health; third, they were untrustworthy and dangerous. It also pointed out that they considered themselves exempted from military service forever by special charters of Tsars for having been subjugated without bloodshed and revolts. The ministry considered it appropriate to keep exemption of the sedentary population of Turkestan for similar reasons and also for fear of their betrayal in a war with the Ottoman Empire, while regarding the highlanders of the North Caucasus suited for military conscription thanks to their quality as warriors.⁸⁷

Muslim deputies to the Duma and editors of Tatar newspapers such as *Waqf* (Orenburg) and *Turmush* (Ufa) supported the conscription of nationalities who had been exempted from it, especially the Kazakhs, because they were the most numerous among them and their exemption could evoke discontent of mobilized peoples. They told that performing military service as a civic duty would be useful for the Kazakhs to gain the right to have *zemstvoos* (local self-government bodies), to regain the right to elect deputies to the Duma, and to attain religious and land rights. They also claimed that military service would allow the Kazakhs to see the world and raise their cultural level. In response, editors of the

Ural’sk and Torghay oblasts stipulated that the *inorodtsy* who converted to Orthodoxy could be registered in cities or villages of ethnic Russians, but were exempted from military service for life. *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 2nd ed., kniga 1-ia (St. Petersburg, 1913), p. 1165.

87 M. Zakharov, “Tsarskoe pravitel’stvo i voennaia sluzhba gortsev i zhitelei Srednei Azii,” *Voennyi vestnik: voenno-politicheskii ezhenedel’nik* 20 (May 30, 1925), pp. 8–10.

newspaper *Qazaq* wrote that, although their opinions were based on goodwill, they did not know the situation of the Kazakhs: they had no certificates of birth, and aul chiefs wrote villagers' ages arbitrarily in family lists, therefore it was impossible to determine who was at the draft age. Editors of *Qazaq* added, however, that a volunteer system could avoid this problem.⁸⁸

From July to August 1915, Duma deputies again discussed extending the draft at a closed meeting. Deputy Tregubov, an Octobrist and priest, said that the Russian people were bearing their cross in the great war, and it was necessary to place the same demands on other subjects of the empire, even if they did not understand what was at stake in the war. Deputy Andrei Shingarev, a Cadet, also urged conscription of the *ino-rodtsy*, although using idioms of nation building: "There are many elements in our nation [*natsiia*], which is rich with separate peoples and ethnicities [*narody i narodnosti*], and many elements do not sufficiently know Russian, but upon entering the army, they gradually learn it . . ." ⁸⁹

Partly under the pressure of the deputies, the Ministry of War submitted to the Council of Ministers a bill on extending the conscription in November 1915. It minutely examined cases of each regional and ethnic group that had been exempted from conscription. Of ethnic Russians in the peripheries, those in northernmost Siberia were to remain exempted from conscription, while those in the three "core" oblasts of Turkestan (Syr Darya, Samarkand, Ferghana)⁹⁰ and Sakhalin were to be drafted. Concerning Central Asian peoples, the bill contained paradoxical statements: while citing the same negative conditions as in the secret report

88 "Qazaqtan saldat alu," *Qazaq* 153 (October 15, 1915), p. 3; "Qazaqtan saldat alu turali," *Qazaq* 154 (October 22, 1915), pp. 1-2; "Qazaqtan saldat alu mäselesinde noghay gazetarining fikiri," *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

89 Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation*, p. 77.

90 The reason why ethnic Russians in these three oblasts and the Bukharan emirate was exempted from conscription is not completely clear, but it perhaps derived from the idea that it was essential to maintain scarce Russian elements here. The bill of 1915, on the contrary, advocated the need to give them experience in military service so that they could defend themselves against the natives. There were confusions, however, in determining who was exempted, as Russians frequently migrated between the three oblasts and other regions of the empire. Russians in Semirech'e and Transcaspia oblasts were subject to conscription. TsGA RUz, f. 1, op. 2, d. 1099.

A Particularist Empire

of the previous year, it concluded that their conscription was necessary because it would be one of the most effective ways of rapprochement (*sblizhenie*) of the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz (as well as Turkmen) with the Russians. Their possible disturbances could be rapidly suppressed, whereas the “Sarts” and other peoples were “not at all warlike” (and therefore, would not resist). On the whole, the bill envisaged drafting almost all the ethnic groups within the empire, except the Fins, Turkish and some ethnicities in Siberia. The Council of Ministers, however, decided not to be hasty after the Vice-Minister of Interior, Stepan Beletskii, said that conscription would cause disturbances because the *inorodtsy*, especially the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, did not regard Russia as their motherland.⁹¹

Without being informed of these discussions inside the government, some Kazakhs received information that a bill on conscription would be brought to the Duma in the next session that was to start in February 1916. Various opinions were sent to the newspaper *Qazaq*, including proposals that conscription be conditioned on the establishment of Kazakh units commanded by themselves, a return of the right to elect deputies to the Duma, and the introduction of *zemstvo*s and universal education.⁹² According to Dulatov, common points of many of the opinions included: 1) not to conscript the Kazakhs during this war; 2) to put [the Kazakhs] under the jurisdiction of the Muftiate before conscripting them in order to make correct birth certificates; 3) if conscription is inevitable, then not as infantrymen but as cavalrymen, and to give them the same land and water rights as the Cossacks. In short, Kazakhs were far from enthusiastic about conscription, but sought to use it, in case it was unavoidable, as an opportunity to improve their rights. In order to communicate these opinions to the government and the Duma, Bökeykhan, Akhmet Baytürsinov (Baitursynov) and Nisanghali Begimbetov went to Petrograd.⁹³

Bökeykhan, who met with the Minister of War Aleksei Polivanov and Duma deputies, reported to *Qazaq* that there was no bill on conscription,

91 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 11, d. 89, ll. 1-27.

92 “Saldattiq mäselesi,” *Qazaq* 166 (January 24, 1916), p. 1.

93 M.D. [M. Dulatov], “G. Duma häm saldattiq mäselesi,” *Qazaq* 168 (February 9, 1916), p. 1; *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazakhstane (Dokumenty i materialy)* (Alma-Ata, 1947), p. 22.

Muslim deputies did not strongly support conscription and conscription during this war was not expected. However, it was probable that a bill would be submitted for future conscription of the *inorodtsy*, because Octobrist and Russian nationalist deputies advocated it. He explained that there were three categories of soldiers—infantrymen, cavalrymen and Cossacks—and the life of Cossacks was similar and familiar to the Kazakhs. Therefore, he argued, the Kazakhs had to appeal to the Duma for their conscription as Cossacks.⁹⁴ A contributor to *Qazaq* objected, however, that it was better to serve as infantrymen, because service as Cossacks would require that they prepare uniforms, horses and harness by themselves, which was more burdensome for them.⁹⁵

Irrespective of the opinions of Central Asians, the government suddenly changed its course. A special council of the Headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief declared on April 24, 1916 that the labor shortage amounted to one million people, and the headquarters negotiated with the Minister of War, Dmitrii Shuvaev, who promised to provide 40,000 laborers. Then, on May 3, 6, and June 14, the Council of Ministers discussed the matter and decided to employ the *inorodtsy* not as soldiers but as laborers, deeming such mobilization safer because it would not give them arms.⁹⁶ On June 25, 1916, an imperial ukase ordered a draft of the male *inorodtsy* for the construction of defense works and communication lines in the rear of the fighting forces.

It was true that the labor shortage behind the front lines had become much more acute than the shortage of soldiers, as the total of mobilized soldiers reached 10,168,000 on September 1, 1915 and 14,293,000 on November 1, 1916.⁹⁷ This seemingly rational decision, however, was made in a great haste without consultation not only with the *inorodtsy* but also even with governor-generals and other local administrators in violation of the normal procedures, and had a disastrous effect. The sudden order to mobilize a large work force to distant places during the farmers' busy

94 "Petrograd khati, I. Saldat alar ma?" *Qazaq* 171 (February 29, 1916), p. 1; "Petrograd khati, II. Ne isteuge?" *Qazaq* 172 (March 9, 1916), pp. 1-2.

95 Q., "Åsker als," *Qazaq* 177 (April 17, 1916), pp. 2-3.

96 Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda*, pp. 185-189; *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima: stenograficheskie otchety doprosov i pokazanii, dannyykh v 1917 g. v Chrezvychainoi Sledstvennoi Komissii Vremennogo Pravitel'stva*, vol. 7 (Leningrad, 1927), pp. 290-295.

97 *Rossiiia v mirovoi voine 1914-1918 goda (v tsifrakh)* (Moscow, 1925), p. 17.

season shocked the population.

Moreover, before the text of the ukase reached distant villages, rumors were already circulating. Many people firmly believed that they were being taken as soldiers. Explanation by officials and intellectuals about the real tasks of laborers failed to change their conviction. Some Russian peasants told Kazakhs that laborers would dig trenches while gunfire between the German and Russian forces was exchanged.⁹⁸ As editors of *Qazaq* had earlier pointed out in relation to possible conscription, the lack of birth certificate caused serious troubles, and people attacked native administrators who arbitrarily decided who were subject to labor mobilization. A revolt erupted in Khujand on 4 July, and spread to almost all Central Asia. The Ministries of Interior and War showed such a level of irresponsibility that they put the blame on each other in anticipation of censure by the Duma for the grave situation.⁹⁹

In Turkestan, the newly appointed governor-general and a former Minister of War Kuropatkin dealt with the revolt. He had earlier worked in Central Asia for a long time (intermittently from 1866 to 1897), and his attitude to Central Asians contained some elements of paternalism, but at the same time, he was one of the prominent nationalists who took issue with the "disadvantaged" position of the Russians in the empire. He had wrote the book *The Tasks of the Russian Army*, where he claimed that non-Russians of the empire (Jews, Poles and Germans, among others) as well as foreigners were exploiting Russia's wealth, and advocated Russia's renaissance with the slogan "Russia for Russians."¹⁰⁰ In an order given on August 23, he urged Central Asians to carry out labor, saying, "in these hard times experienced by the Russian people, the native population of Turkestan should remember the Russian government's cares of them and the sacrifices the core Russian population made for their prosperity."¹⁰¹ At the same time, he was preparing to assign roles to Central Asian peoples according to their ethnic characters. In the same order, he prescribed that Turkmen laborers from Transcaspia, unlike

98 M. Tynyshpaev, *Istoriia kazakhskogo naroda* (Almaty, 1993), p. 41; *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 496, 504.

99 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 11, d. 89, ll. 322-331ob.

100 A. N. Kuropatkin, *Zadachi russkoi armii*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg), 1910.

101 TsGA RUz, f. 1044, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 10-11ob.

other ethnic groups, should work in arms as guardsmen. He also nourished an idea, as he wrote in his diary, that the Kyrgyz should be deported from the territories where Russian blood was shed, but as “born nomads” they should not be sedentarized but be tasked to breed army horses and sheep, and to join cavalry.¹⁰²

Discussions of military service by Central Asians, which continued for more than half a century, reveal characteristic ways of thinking of Tsarist officials. Many of them thought that military service in either the regular army or militias would give the *inorodtsy* the sense of national unity and Russify them. At the same time, however, there was also a widely shared view that Russia could not allow the *inorodtsy* to participate in national defense because they lacked a sense of belonging to the Russian state, their trustworthiness and *grazhdanstvennost'* was low, and introduction of military service itself could provoke disturbances. The discussion took the character of a chicken-and-egg problem: would military service enhance their *grazhdanstvennost'* and Russify them, or did military service require a sufficiently high level of *grazhdanstvennost'* and Russification? Eventually, officials who mistrusted the *inorodtsy* always managed to block conscription proposals.

The way of discussing the subject varied depending on the personal views of the officials, Russia's relationships with the Great Britain, Afghanistan and China, as well as ongoing wars. The fact that the only ethnic military unit was formed from Turkmen, whose trustworthiness and *grazhdanstvennost'* was questionable, and the preparation of a bill on the *inorodtsy* conscription during World War I suggests that the usual way of thinking based on internal policy could be altered by serious military considerations.

Another conspicuous feature of the discussion was that courageousness, war-likeness, trustworthiness and *grazhdanstvennost'* were considered to be characters of ethnic groups (or groups defined by their modes of life such as nomadic and sedentary people) rather than qualities of individuals. Moreover, although different officials evaluated ethnic groups differently, the overall tendency of evaluation did not change

102 “Vosstanie 1916 g. v Srednei Azii,” *Krasnyi arkhiv* 34 (1929), pp. 60–61.

significantly from the 1860s to the 1910s. Talking about the character of nomads, they frequently referred to the past: Chingis Khan, Tamerlane and revolts of some decades ago.

During the revolutions of 1917, the civil war, and the first years of the Soviet period, the possibility of conscripting Central Asians was discussed from time to time. After some hesitation, the Soviets introduced universal conscription throughout the country in 1925 without serious confusion. Although political and social change from 1916 to 1925 was enormous, this seems to suggest that discussion based on fixed “ethnic characters” was not valid.

Conclusion: Russia’s Distrust of Its Own Subjects and Orientalistic Particularism

In the discussions both on Christianization and military conscription, many officials shared the view that it was desirable to Russify Central Asians. There was, however, hardly any resolute determination to carry out Russification. Fear of inciting disturbances by careless measures was much stronger. Officials could not dispel their distrust of the empire’s own subjects—Central Asians and Tatars in our case, and also Jews, Poles, Germans, etc.,¹⁰³ in varied contexts. They were interested in the passive maintenance of stability rather than the active integration and Russification. Ordinary Russians also hampered Russification of non-Russians by exploiting baptized non-Russians and incited Central Asians’ mistrust of the authorities by telling them provocative rumors.

Naturally, the situation changed as time went on. The desire to Christianize Central Asians steadily declined by 1905, while demands for the *inorodtsy* to assume the same obligations as the Russians increased in the last years of the Tsarist period. In a limited sense, this tendency represented an attempt at getting rid of the old imperial practice of conciliating non-Russians by giving them privileges, and making transition to a nation-state that imposes equal obligations on all citizens. In the back-

103 For the case of the Poles, see MATSUZATO Kimitaka, “Pol’skii faktor v Pravo-berezhnoi Ukraine s XIX po nachalo XX veka,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2000), pp. 91–106.

ground, however, one can easily discern Russian nationalists' negative thinking that anything deemed "advantageous" to non-Russians had to be abolished, regardless of the possibility that the abolition would further alienate them. In the particular case of the Kazakh steppe, the mass influx of Russian peasants weighed heavily. In the nineteenth century administrators pretended that they were defending the Kazakhs from the Tatars, and poor Kazakhs from the rich,¹⁰⁴ but in the early twentieth century, they explicitly gave priority to the settlement of Russian peasants which was to the detriment of the Kazakhs.

Even when non-Russians declared their readiness to fulfill their expanded obligations with the aim of improving their rights, the government's reaction was dull. The government was reluctant to accept offers by national intellectuals and Duma deputies to mediate between it and ordinary people. The government maintained secretive practices of decision-making. Thus, simultaneously promoting half-hearted nation-state building and Russian ethnonationalism, and maintaining autocracy, the government produced the indiscreet ukase of June 1916.

Another extremely important feature of the discussions was the fact that officials always made distinctions between the "Kirgiz," "Sarts" and Turkmen, and between Central Asians and Tatars, peoples of Siberia, the Caucasus and, needless to say, Western parts of the empire. The situation was not such that diverse conditions in the empire naturally produced diverse systems of administration, but that officials were obsessed with the idea that they had to discuss the pros and cons of a policy measure in relation to every single region or ethnic group. They believed that failure to adopt particularistic ways to implement measures would lead to revolt and other tragic situations.

Particularism partly derived from the character inherent in autocratic empires. In these empires, a subjugated country or people pledged allegiance separately to the monarch, and were given peculiar privileges and obligations. This system was sometimes related to the estates, and in Russia, some ethnic groups were incorporated into the military estate of the Cossacks, while others were exempted from military service well before the period we discussed. However, particularism from the

104 Uyama, "A Strategic Alliance," pp. 244-249, 253-255.

A Particularist Empire

mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries went further. It was supported by various stereotypes that sedentary Muslims were “fanatical”; the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were “half-Muslims” (and therefore relatively easy to Christianize); nomads were “warlike,” and so on.

These stereotypes were not simple prejudices held by illiterate officers, but something produced and reproduced in quasi-academic discourses. In fact, the wall between the military and scholarship was far from impermeable: governor-generals Kaufman and Dukhovskoi were renowned patrons of academic research; general Grodekov and captain Wälikhanov were themselves prominent scholars; officers in the Asian department of the Main Headquarters were acknowledged experts on Asiatic Russia. Their attitude to attach excessively great importance to ethnic and regional characters was a product of Orientalism, whereby the West wielded “the power to say what was significant about him [the Other/Oriental], classify him among others of his breed, put him in his place.”¹⁰⁵

The “(confusedly) classifying mind” is also characteristic of colonial states, which invented, in an ostensibly rigorous manner, pseudoethnic categories that did not correspond to identities of local people themselves.¹⁰⁶ The British stressed the diversity of India on every occasion.¹⁰⁷ British administrators in Africa, who respected their own “tradition,” looked with favor upon what they took to be traditional in Africa, and invented such “tradition” as tribes and customary law.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Russian officials transformed or “invented” Kazakh customary law,¹⁰⁹ and

105 Michael Dalby, “Nocturnal Labors in the Light of Day,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 39, no. 3 (1980), p. 489. Edward Said emphasizes that the West otherized the East as a whole, but also acknowledges that one of the elements that prepared the way for modern Orientalist structures was “the whole impulse to classify nature and man into types.” Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 119.

106 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 165.

107 Bernard S. Cohn, “Representing Authority in Victorian India,” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 166, 184, 193–194.

108 Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” *ibid.*, pp. 212, 247–260.

109 Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), pp. 3–8, 166.

published pieces of oral literature that allegedly proved the stark distinction between Kazakh and Tatar cultures. Thus, we can properly understand the particularism of the Russian Empire by putting it in the contexts of both autocracy and Orientalism/colonialism.

Officials sometimes used universalistic idioms such as *grazhdanstvennost'*, among others. This word, however, was highly deceptive. They often used it not in its literal meaning of "citizenship," "civicness" or "civic-mindedness," but in the sense of a level of cultural development, as an argument for not applying general rules to underdeveloped peoples. In addition, ethnic characters were only partially associated with universal developmental stages, such as nomadic and agricultural ones. Two major sedentary Muslim peoples, Tatars and Uzbeks, were never confused.

Officials also compared various regions of the empire, and when they discussed problems of Central Asia, often drew lessons from experiences in the Volga-Urals and the Caucasus. However, they usually referred to negative cases, and wrote that if missionaries were powerless in relation to the Tatars, they had no chance in Turkestan, and also cited the unsuccessful experience of militias in the North Caucasus. As far as I know, they never said that the limited success of Christianizing Muslims (Ossetians, Abkhaz, Kists) in the Caucasus¹¹⁰ was a good example for proselytism in Central Asia, and never questioned why "untrustworthy" Tatars could be conscripted, while Central Asians could not.¹¹¹

It is true that not all Tsarist officials supported particularism. There were sometimes attempts at adopting a unified policy throughout the empire. It was obstructed, however, by the practice of stopping the decision-making when there was a strong objection of any high-ranking official, and deeming it natural for the successor official to revoke the predecessor's course. Ministers, governor-generals, governors and other high-ranking officials made policy decisions through slow exchange of letters with each other, and it was difficult to realize new initiatives. Moreover, despite such a complicated and particularistic decision-making

110 See Sanikidze's paper in this volume.

111 Although "otherized" in discourses, the Volga Tatars had deeper interaction with the Russian state than the Central Asians, through such institutions as the army, *zemstvo*s, schools, and the Muslim Spiritual Assembly. See Naganawa's paper in this volume.

A Particularist Empire

system, the adopted measures were often not suited to local actual conditions. Governor-generals were supposed to grasp local realities by collecting opinions of governors, who collected opinions and information from uezd chiefs, who, in turn, collected information from volost heads. However, due to lack of confidence between officials of the uezd level and higher, on one hand, and native administrators of volosts and villages, on the other, volost heads were perceived as “impermeable curtains,” and the grasp of local situations by Russian officials was shaky.

The native intellectuals’ reactions to Russian policy were also remarkable. More often than not, Kazakh intellectuals did not directly challenge but tried to make use of particularistic discourses, though not always successfully. In the late nineteenth century, following Russian officials, they alleged the Tatars’ negative influence and stressed the originality of Kazakh culture.¹¹² Defending the Kazakhs’ religious rights and exemption from military service, they referred to privileges allegedly given by Tsars to them. During World War I, they sought to advance the Kazakhs’ rights on equal terms with the Cossacks, who had special privileges as a military estate.

Finally, as Yuri Slezkine has discussed “ethnic particularism” of the Soviet Union,¹¹³ I have to explain the difference between it and particularism of the Russian Empire. In the Soviet Union, ethnic boundaries were made clear and ethnicities were given territorial autonomies, but the system of ethnoterritorial formation (Union republics – autonomous republics – autonomous oblasts) was common throughout the country, and peculiar ethnic characters were not used, at least explicitly, as reasons for privileging or discriminating some ethnic groups. In the Russian Empire, ethnic boundaries were confused and ethnoterritorial autonomy was not acknowledged, but there was no common policy for integrating diverse ethnic groups, and peculiar ethnic characters were extensively cited as reasons for adopting particularistic policies.

112 Uyama, “A Strategic Alliance,” pp. 253–255.

113 Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994), pp. 414–452.