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TERRITORY AND THE CHANGING SHAPE OF TATAR ISLAM IN TSARIST AND SOVIET RUSSIA

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Summary

Historical examinations of Islam in Russia's Middle Volga Basin often have reflected a nationalist predisposition that reduces religious politics in the region to an ideology-based struggle between empire and a minority ethno-confessional "nation." More recent histories, in transcending statements of ideology and instead investigating actual state practice as promulgated under individual rulers, reveal a more nuanced picture of Tsarist- and Soviet-era religious politics *vis-à-vis* the Volga Tatars. This article builds on this more recent body of literature through an explicit consideration of the relationship between territory and group identity, showing how shifting territorial circumstances influenced the changing form and function of Islam in the Middle Volga in the Tsarist and Soviet periods.

Key words: Tatar, Islam, territory, religious politics, Tsarist, Soviet, Middle Volga, Russia.

Much Anglophone historical research on Islam in Russia's Middle Volga Basin reflects a nationalist predisposition that reduces religious politics in the region to a struggle between empire and a minority ethno-confessional "nation." For example, Rorlich contends that Muscovy's conquest of Kazan in the mid-sixteenth century was foremost driven by missionary zealotry that posed an existential threat to Tatar "national" culture:

When, in 1552, Kazan was conquered and destroyed by the armies of Ivan IV, the very existence of its people as a different national, cultural, and religious entity was in danger. This danger was nowhere better illustrated than by Ivan IV's own statement: "Let the unbelievers receive the True God, the new subjects of Russia, and let them with us praise the Holy Trinity for ages unto ages."^[1]

The empire's goal of converting the Tatars to Orthodox Christianity, she continues, "remained unchanged until the Revolution."^[2] Likewise, Bennigsen and Lemerrier-Quellejey frame the emergence of Jadidism, the Tatars' nineteenth-century religious reform movement, as a response to Russian Orthodox hegemony, saying that "for centuries the Muslim community had been struggling for survival under the direct rule of the 'infidels.'"^[3] These and other theses^[4] positing the empire's perennial aim of converting its Muslim subjects (or, conversely, a colonized Muslim nation unified against infidel rule) often rest upon an undo focus on isolated statements of ideology, witnessed in Rorlich's citation of Ivan IV ("the Terrible"), as evidence of the Russian Empire's anti-Islamic, anti-Tatar policies.

Closer examination of actual state practice, as presented in more recent histories, reveals a more nuanced picture. Kappeler, for instance, argues that Moscow inherited the Golden Horde's traditions of religious tolerance, a legacy that contributed to what he terms "pragmatic flexibility" *vis-à-vis* Muslims of the Middle Volga in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.^[5] The Kremlin's traditional tolerance, Kappeler contends, was vanquished with the top-down modernization of Peter I ("the Great"), leading thenceforth to "early absolutism and Western intolerance of the non-Christian world serving as models."^[6] On the other hand, Werth argues that the empire's confessional politics fluctuated throughout its history between periods of missionary activity of varying intensities and periods of varying levels of tolerance. These fluctuations, he says, "corresponded to changes of rulers and the overall imperatives facing the imperial government at the time."^[7] Crews concurs and points to the nineteenth century as an especially auspicious period for the Tatars, when their religious leaders sought and received the active support of state officials in efforts to uphold preferred notions of Islamic piety in the region.^[8] This spirit of cooperation, Crews says, resulted from policies enacted by enlightened rulers and attests to "an imperial consciousness" having emerged among the Tatars.^[9]

The attention to actual state practice by Kappeler, Werth, Crews, and other historians of religious politics in Russia and the Middle Volga region^[10] is a welcome counterweight to the nationalist teleology of previous efforts. Still one should be somewhat skeptical of the focus of this body of work on the influence of individual rulers in determining the shape of Islam in the region. Kappeler and Crews both discuss the Westernization set forth by Peter I, but they draw different conclusions about its effects on Russia's Muslims. Their diverging conclusions, at least in part, result from their ignoring territory and its relationship to identity as part of the modernization initiated in Petrine Russia. If one considers the form and function of Islam in the Middle Volga in relationship to the question of territory, a certain logic is added to the analysis of Kappeler, Crews, and others without resorting to qualifiers such as "enlightened" or "autocratic" in providing explanation based on a single monarch's relative impact.

Islam in Pre-Territorial Middle Volga

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the period Kappeler identifies with Moscow's policy of "pragmatic flexibility" *vis-à-vis* Islam, were part of a pre-territorial (in the modern sense) age. The Kazan Khanate, like Muscovy, had no discretely defined borders. However, the Kazan citadel was similar to a Russian kremlin in that it formed the seat of state power, protected the realm's most important temples, and was the area's central site of religious learning – a guarantor of a certain "high Islam." The official clergy of the Kazan Khanate adhered to the *Hanifimadhhab* of

Sunni Islam, which was introduced to the region in 922 in connection with trade and diplomatic relations with Baghdad.^[11] Muscovy's 1552 conquest of Kazan, resulting in Muslims being forced from the city, most immediately affected the form and function of Islam in the region by relegating it to a rural faith lacking an educated clergy. Suddenly inhabitants of an Orthodox Christian state, Muslims became classified as *inorodsty* ("aliens" or "others," i.e. non-Orthodox).

However, because most of the region's Muslims were already rural (as was the case with rural Russians and Europeans at the time), they identified primarily with local spatialities of social interaction. Also, much like Russian peasants who called themselves *krestiane* – "Christians" – Tatars self-identified as *musul'mane* – "Muslims." It was not until the start of the twentieth century that Tatars actually began calling themselves "Tatars."^[12] Muslim villages were, for all intents and purposes, self-ruled and independent of state institutions. At the head of villages were *abyzes* ("elders"), who were liaisons with Russian officials and, in the absence of a formal clergy, often served as clerics. *Inshans*, respected Sufi leaders, also played an important role in the social and spiritual life of Muslim villages.^[13] In this period, following the loss of urban centers of religious learning, Islam in the region became an exclusively "folk" religion, deeply embedded in local and ethnic traditions.^[14]

Periodic missionary activity of low intensity was carried out in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but Orthodox conversions were only successful among the animist Finnic peoples in the region. Forced conversions of Tatars, creating the *starokreshchennye* ("old converts"), were largely failures.^[15] They produced either revolts or quick apostasy, not surprising for a people who self-identified primarily as "Muslims" and were in no way institutionally integrated into society outside of their villages.

Islam in the Middle Volga and the Empire's March Toward Territory

By the end of the seventeenth century, Moscow was the capital of by far the largest contiguous state in Europe. Yet, even a half century after 1648 treaties of Westphalia gave birth to the modern conception of territory in Western Europe,^[16] Russia had no coherent territorial ordering of its vast lands and its leaders lacked any real knowledge of its shape, terrain, or resources. In short, Russians had no sense of territory. The Westernizing Tsar Peter I changed this situation. He attached *imperiia* to his state's name, making it explicit that Russia was a now European power, and then started the process of transforming his empire into a Westphalian-like territory through the Cartesian arts of surveying, mapping, and border drawing. Indicative of his new sense of territory and the importance Peter gave it as an expression of Russian power, he expanded the traditional demarcation of Europe and Asia from the Don River far out to the Ural Mountains.^[17] Orthodoxy was understood as European and Islam was seen as Asian in the *Petrineweltanschauung*. This reconfigured meta-geography, following the logic of the Westphalian principle *cuius regio, eius religio*,^[18] would have significant consequences for Muslims of the Middle Volga.

In the drive to standardize territory and its inhabitants – to fulfill the rearranged meta-geography of European Russia – renewed missionary activity started under Peter's watch. It greatly intensified in 1740 with the creation in Kazan of the Office for the Affairs of the New Converts (*Kontoranovokreshchenykhdel*). Over the next quarter century, this office converted more than 400,000 non-Christians in the Middle Volga.^[19] These converts to Orthodoxy became known as

novokreshchennye (“newly baptized”). The office was also responsible for the physical destruction of hundreds of mosques in the region, thereby clearing the landscape of Islamic traces.^[20] Many Volga Muslims, in response to this pitched missionary spirit, revolted or fled into dense forests. Others migrated to freer Bashkir lands and even into Central Asian.

Catherine II (“the Great”) pushed Russia into the age of what Sunderland terms “high territoriality”,^[21] taking particular interest in the concepts of province (*guberniia*) and population (which she ordered to be located and inventoried through surveys and questionnaires). To rationalize the two, she had the provincial borders drawn to match population distributions; each province was to contain approximately the same number of people. A critical step Catherine took in rationalizing the use of population was the enfranchisement of her non-Orthodox Christian subjects. She forbade the Orthodox Church from engaging in conversion and then issued a 1773 edict granting Muslims religious tolerance.^[22] This law permitted local authorities to make decisions on the construction of mosques, along with the *mektebs* (Islamic primary schools) and *medresses* (Islamic secondary schools) usually attached to them. The Empress followed this edict by creating the institution of the Muslim Spiritual Board in the city of Ufa in 1788. Roughly replicating the hierarchical administrative structure of the Orthodox Church, the Muslim Spiritual Board was established to register state-approved clergy and monitor all mosque activity in Middle Volga. The *Hanafimadhab* was recognized as the region’s sole official form of Islam.^[23] *Medresses* and *mektebs*, where Tatars traditionally received their education, were also placed under the Spiritual Board’s purview.

The creation of the Muslim Spiritual Board enfranchised Muslims, but it also kept them institutionally segregated from non-Muslims. Muslims were spatially socialized, in worship, education, and many other social activities, within the institutional context of the Muslim Spiritual Board. This cultivated a group identity associated with and loyal to the state (worship included blessing the Tsar as a recognition of his sovereignty) and with other Volga Muslims, but it encouraged no idea of nationhood outside of one’s confession. No institutions existed to socialize a people across religious lines. Crews is correct in asserting that the Tsarist state’s “commitment to ruling through religious practices and institutions and the policing of orthodoxy – the *confessionalization* of the population and empire – allowed the state to govern with less violence, and with a greater degree of consensus.”^[24] But this *confessionalization* of society, continuing more or less until the fall of the empire, maintained long-standing traditions of exclusion that, as we will see soon, certain Muslims would battle to overcome as they sought greater representation and participation *within* the institutions of the empire.

The Empress’s religious politics were not driven by her devotion to Enlightenment ideals of human dignity, as some have suggested in discussing her edict on religious tolerance. Rather, her “legalization” of Islam was informed by a similar territorial logic that underpinned the mass conversions of non-Orthodox Christians earlier in the century. Her formulation of religion and territory was configured differently, though. Whereas the Petrine definition of European was Orthodox Christianity, Catherine equated European with Orthodoxy, be it Christian or Islamic. The Muslim Spiritual Board, a mechanism of state control over territory, institutionalized a preferred understanding of Islam in the Middle Volga. Although billed as the *Hanafimadhab*, the Islam that was governed by the Muslim Spiritual Board – and by extension the state – was in fact Orthodox Islam, meaning Russian in the territorial sense, above all loyal to the state. Catherine and her successors made an “Orthodoxy” of all religions in the empire and thereby built Russia into a

confessional state.^[25] Because of the numbers of its faithful and its historical claims to the region, Islam commanded most intervention to ensure it remain Orthodox.

Catherine's decree on religious tolerance, coupled with the creation of the Muslim Spiritual Board, was therefore what Russians call "a stick with two ends" for the Tatars. One end of the stick allowed them to build mosques and practice their religion. The other end determined, to a significant degree, the shape of their religion. Unofficial – "unorthodox" – Islamic practices were viewed with suspicion and often seen as a threat to the state. The new territoriality of Islam, the first example of the "state-centered construction of society"^[26] for the Volga Muslims, severely disrupted the social and spiritual structures of local self-rule that had taken hold after 1552. Denied state sanctification, *abyzes* and *inshans* were sidelined as the guardians of Muslim tradition.^[27] "Folk" Islam, mixed as it was with local and ethnic traditions, was decried by the state-approved clergy as being riddled with *bid'ah* (illicit innovation). The state became the ultimate arbiter in disputes among Muslims over the meaning of Islamic tradition in the empire, and the state ensured a significant degree of standardization of Islam in the Middle Volga.

Tatar Islam Meets Tatar Nationalism

The religious freedoms implemented by Catherine opened the door to several waves of apostasy among the *kreshchennye* ("baptized") Tatars, beginning in the early years of the nineteenth century and continuing until the mid-1860s. Non-Tatars in the region were also being drawn to Islam and, consequently, to the Tatar language that was the region's *lingua franca*. Imperial officials responded by implementing new education policies that taught local populations in both Russian and their native languages. This bilingual education policy, known as the Il'minskii system (after its founder N.I. Il'minskii), simultaneously aimed to Christianize local populations and weaken Tatar influence in the region.^[28] As Lazzarini informs, "Crucial to all of this was an appropriate representation of Islam ... a critique of *magometanstvoin* its mid-nineteenth century circumstances,"^[29] meaning the faith's comparative "backwardness" *vis-à-vis* Christianity. Il'minskii was challenged by other state officials, who were anxious his program would promote nationalism among non-Russians. He responded to his detractors:

If from fear of separate nationalities, we do not allow the non-Russians to use their language in schools and churches, on a sufficient scale to ensure a solid, complete, convinced adoption of the Christian faith, then all non-Russians will be fused into a single race by language and faith – the Tatar and Mohammedan. But if we allow the non-Russian languages, then, even if their individual nationalities are thus maintained, these will be diverse, small, ill-disposed to the Tatars, and united with the Russian people by the unity of their faith. Choose! But I believe that such diverse nationalities cannot have any solid existence, and in the end the very historical movement of life will cause them to fuse with the Russian people.^[30]

The Il'minskii system that was implemented in the 1870s, influenced by Western European ideas of nationalism that were at that time the force behind the creation of Germany and Italy, introduced ideas related to nation and nationality to the Middle Volga, where religion previously was the primary foundation of group identity. The Il'minskii system led to the development and/or promotion of the Chuvash, Mari, Udmurt, and Komi literary languages.^[31] The simultaneous

Russification (religious) and nationalization (linguistic) of local populations, combined with the increasing presence of Russians in the Middle Volga,^[32] in turn forged a Tatar national consciousness. Tatarism found its earliest articulation in a religious reform movement known as Jadidism (from Arabic for “new way”). Although Jadidism at first was a critique of the outdated teaching methods and curriculums of the area’s traditional *mektebs*, the Kazan-based intellectuals who formed the movement’s core in the Middle Volga were at the forefront of defining the Tatar nation and its place in the Russian Empire.

An early Jadidist was a cleric named Marjani (1818-1889), who developed the first modern Tatar national history. He traced the Tatar nation back to the Hunnic Bolgar Kingdom of the Middle Volga that arose in the eighth century, accepting Islam as the realm’s official religion in 922. His version of Tatar national history also claimed the legacies of both the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate.^[33] He was first and most forceful in urging his people to call themselves “Tatars” instead of “Muslims,” asking them, “If you are not a Tatar, an Arab, Tajik, Nogay, Chinese, Russian, French, ... then, who are you?”^[34] Although a member of clergy himself, Marjani, like European nationalist historians of the nineteenth century, emphasized the role of language in shaping and preserving the nation. Islam remained vital to the nation, but, because the religion was shared with other nations throughout the world, language became the basis of Tatarism. Islam beyond the Middle Volga, the worldwide *umma*, was of only a peripheral concern to the Tatar Jadidists.

Jadidists were active in many parts of the empire, among many different Muslim groups. Their ideas of nationhood and political goals, often at odds, were shaped by their local contexts. Some espoused Pan-Turkic ideas, while others talked of Pan-Islamism. Most saw their future within Russia. The Kazan-based Jadidists, however, generally rejected ideas of Pan-Turkism or Pan-Islamism.^[35] Their focus was the development and modernization of the Tatar nation within Middle Volga. Most of the prominent Volga Jadidists, Yemelianova informs, were united in the “belief in the political integrity of the Russian state as the precondition for the national prosperity of Russia’s Muslims.”^[36] For them, Russia was Europe and therefore a transmitter of modernity. Appreciative of the historically tolerant interaction between the Tatars and Russians, they saw knowledge of the Russian language as critical to their social and economic development. Their goal was greater participation and representation for the Tatar nation in the social and institutional life of the empire.^[37]

Limiting the Tatars’ national development, the Jadidists claimed, were the outdated religious doctrines and practices enforced by the conservative Kadimists who filled the ranks of the Muslim Spiritual Board. Specifically, they opposed the rote memorization of Arabic and Persian texts and blind fealty to the Hanafi *madhhab*.^[38] The Jadidists insisted the gates of *ijtihad* (independent interpretation of the Koran and Sunnah) remain open and that Muslims should return to the Koran and reinterpret the text with a consideration of their geographical context and place in time. The Tatar Jadidists called for religious texts to be translated into Tatar, which they had made into a standardized literary language, and advocated the introduction of secular subjects, especially Russian, to the curriculum of *mektebs* and *medresses*. The Kadimists rejected all these ideas. They saw their political future firmly within Russia, acknowledged the mutual tolerance between Russians and Tatars, and were grateful to the Tsar. They nonetheless feared that the study of Russian, greater social and spatial integration with non-Muslims, and religious reform would lead to their cultural Russification and destruction of their Islamic way of life.^[39] The Kadimists appreciated the semi-detached existence that was safeguarded by the state-supported Muslim Spiritual Board based

in Ufa.

Jadidism in many ways might seem similar to the *salafiyamovement*^[40] in which religious reformers/modernizers in the core of the Islamic world, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), were involved at about the same time, as some have pointed out.^[41] The movements are similar in the rejection of *madhhabs* and returning to the primary text for independent interpretation. But the Tatar Jadidists were conditioned by a different political-territorial context than experienced by Middle Eastern Muslims and therefore part ways with the likes of al-Afghani. Jadidism arose not as a reaction *against* the empire, but as a movement for greater participation and representation *within* the empire. Their drive to modernize Islam was foremost a program to develop the Tatar nation, not an effort to adapt modernity to Islam. For the Jadidists, modernity was understood as a universal phenomenon coming from Europe – and for them Russia was European – not a phenomenon to be resisted, but rather a phenomenon to be integrated. A comparison more apt than al-Afghani might be Martin Luther, whose demand the Bible be printed in the language of the people undermined the power of the backward-looking guardians of faith and society.

Collapse and Reconstruction

In the aftermath of the Tsarist Empire's collapse in 1917, the Kadimists straightaway dismissed the Bolsheviks' enticements of territorial autonomy. They advocated a return of the monarchy and even fought on the side of the Whites, seeing the Tsar as the only guarantor of stability and peace between the religions.^[42] There appears to have been no overwhelming desire among a significant amount of Tatars for territorial autonomy, not to mention sovereignty or independence. While a real national sense had developed among some groups of Tatars, notably those like the Jadidists, there had been no institutions within the Tsarist Empire set up to reinforce a sense of territory at the sub-state level. Up until the collapse, most of the Jadidists sought greater access within the empire, not opt-out solutions of territorial autonomy, sovereignty, or independence. For instance, a primary goal of *Ittafak* ("Alliance"), a Jadidist-led Muslim political party that formed after the 1905 revolution, was securing "democracy and civil and equal religious rights for Muslims" within the empire.^[43] Even after the collapse, the majority moderate wing of the Jadidists only sought cultural autonomy within a unitary Russia. In light of this ambivalence, it seems reasonable to agree with Crews' assertion that a "realm of an imperial consciousness"^[44] – a sense of imperial territory – had developed among the Volga Muslims. In short, after the fall of the monarchy, nobody was invoking the injustices of 1552 to rally people around the idea of reconstructing the Kazan Khanate; that would happen only toward the close of twentieth century for reasons related to the territorial reconfiguration of empire.

In the fight to reconfigure a post-Tsarist Russia, some Muslims discussed a Pan-Turkic state, while others discussed a Pan-Islamic formation. Proponents of these approaches, however, were marginal voices. Accusations (usually false or exaggerated) of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism in the Russian context, with its historical Orthodoxy of confessions, have long been ploys to discredit an opponent or mobilize authorities against any enemy.^[45] A territorial project with real potential took force when groups of Tatar and Bashkir nationalists joined ranks and campaigned for the formation of an Idel^[46] - Ural state that would have united the Middle Volga's various Turkic peoples inside an ethno-federal Soviet Russia and within which the Tatar tongue would have been the *lingua franca*. The Tatar-Bashkir national leaders formed a government and in January 1918 drafted and adopted a

constitution. While initially indicating support for the Idel-Ural state, Lenin and Stalin ultimately changed course and carved the Middle Volga region into several ethnic homelands, including those for the Mari, Mordovians, Chuvash, and the Udmurt – peoples who previously expressed no territorial aspirations.^[47]

In creating the Tatar, Bashkir, and other Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSRs) within Russia, Lenin and Stalin intended to harness the mobilization force of nationalism by giving various non-Russian peoples certain “forms of nationhood.”^[48] With the formation of the ASSRs, the Bolsheviks implemented the policy of *korenizatsiia* (“indigenization”), giving unprecedented support to new educational and cultural institutions that promoted the ethno-national development of the titular groups of the ethnic autonomies. For instance, in the 1920s the Tatars were permitted to convert their language from its original Arabic script into a Latin-based script, a move that echoed the modernizing vision of the Young Turks in Istanbul. Moreover, the Tatar language was given preference over Russian in schools and governmental environs of the Tatar ASSR. The policy of *korenizatsiia* also led to the development of national elites who were trained and promoted into leadership positions in the government, communist party, educational centers, and industry of each ASSR.^[49] The overriding goal of *korenizatsiia* was to cultivate Soviet national cultures that, in Stalin’s famous formulation, were “national in form, socialist in content.”^[50] The fact that Stalin never sufficiently elaborated on this formulation, according to the historian Terry Martin, was intentional, since “Bolshevik plans for the social transformation of the country did not allow for any fundamentally distinctive religious, legal, ideological, or customary features.”^[51] Although the ASSRs were created as part of a *de jure* multinational federation, all decision-making powers *de facto* were concentrated in Moscow. The “national form” of the ethnic autonomies above all was intended to avoid the impression that Soviet Russia was an empire and thereby contribute to USSR’s political-territorial integration and centralization.^[52]

By the 1930s, according to Suny, it was becoming apparent to Stalin that the policy of *korenizatsiia* was “leading to the nationalization of Bolshevism, rather than the Bolshevization of nationals.”^[53] In a bid to counteract this trend, Russian was made a compulsory subject in all non-Russian schools in 1938,^[54] and the following year Stalin forced upon the Tatars a Cyrillic script in the name of “internationalism.” The Tatars were also promised religious freedoms after the creation of their namesake ASSR, but those rights, too, were revoked in the 1930s as the Soviet authorities instituted and executed a policy of “militant atheism.” For much of the existence of the Soviet Union, Islam once again became, for the most part, something akin to the “folk” religion that took hold after 1552, practiced in secret or led by untrained, semiliterate clergy who could only carry out basic rituals.^[55] Thus, the Tatars, along with other titular nationals of ASSRs, were subject to what Kappeler aptly terms “the simultaneity and interdependence of nation building and nation destroying” for the duration of the USSR.^[56] Territorialized institutions that were previously employed to nationalize the Tatars, such as schools and government, became vessels through which *de facto* Russification took place. Yet the ASSRs *de jure* remained nationally defined territorial entities, contributing to what Suny calls an “indigenization from below”^[57] – nation-building that continued out of inertia within the territorially defined institutions – which became apparent in the 1970s and grew in strength up until the fall of the USSR.

Concluding Remarks

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the previously existing institutions of the Tatar ASSR have been re-empowered to counter the previous decades of Russification. In essence, a new policy of *korenizatsiia*— this time controlled by the Kazan-based Tatar political elite itself – was implemented. Many prerevolutionary institutions have been given renewed powers. One of them is the Muslim Spiritual Board. The dispute between Jadidists and Kadimists has also resurfaced, playing out through new institutions and in a different political-territorial context. In light of the ways in which changing territorial conditions have shaped Islam in the Middle Volga in the Tsarist and Soviet eras, as shown in this article, current examinations of the Tatars’ post-Soviet Islamic revival would potentially provide greater utility with an explicit consideration of the influence on religious expression of the dramatic restructuration of the Russian Federation that has taken place over the past two decades.

^[1]Rorlich, Azade-Ayse, *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1986), p. 37.

^[2]Ibid., p. 38.

^[3]Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 33.

^[4]See e.g. Nadir Devlet, “Islamic Revival in the Volga-Ural Region,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1991), pp. 107-116; Alexei Zverev, “‘The Patience of a Nation is Measured in Centuries’: National Revival in Tatarstan and Historiography,” in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Secession, History and the Social Sciences* (Brussels: Brussels University Press, 2002), pp. 69-87.

^[5]Andreas Kappeler, “Czarist Policy toward the Muslims of the Russian Empire,” in Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon and Georg Brunner (eds.), *Muslim Communities Reemerge* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 146.

^[6]Ibid.

^[7]Paul Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia’s Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 18.

^[8]Robert Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

^[9]Robert Crews, “Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (2003), pp. 54.

^[10]See e.g. Robert Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky (eds.), *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca:

Cornell University Press, 2001).

^[11]See Н. Г. Гараева, “К проблеме распространения ислама на территории России (анализ сведений арабских историков),” подредакцией Рафика Мухаметшина, *Ислам и мусульманская культура в Среднем Поволжье: история и современность* (Казань: Академия наук Татарстана, 2006), с. 6-27.

^[12]Хабутдинов, Айдар, *Отобщины к нации: татары на пути от средневековья к новому времени (конец XVII - начало XX вв.)* (Казань: Татарское книжное издательство, 2008), с. 4.

^[13]Galina Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam: A Historical Survey* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 40.

^[14]Рафик Мухаметшин, “Ислам в татарском обществе: поиск путей выживания и обновления,” подредакцией Рафика Мухаметшина, *Ислам и мусульманская культура в Среднем Поволжье: история и современность* (Казань: Академия наук Татарстана, 2006), с. 134.

^[15]Muslim nobles, however, often voluntarily converted to Orthodoxy in order to maintain their privileges and enter the ranks of state service. Rafael Khakim, “Russia and Tatarstan at a Crossroads of History,” *Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1998), p. 40.

^[16]For an insightful examination of the inception of territory in the modern sense, see Stuart Elden, “Land, Terrain, Territory,” *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 34, No. 6 (2010), pp. 799-817.

^[17]Willard Sunderland, “Imperial Space: Territorial Thought and Practice in the Eighteenth Century,” in Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hage and A.V. Remnev (eds.), *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 43.

^[18]“He who rules decides the faith of his realm.” This principle was first articulated in the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 that halted the violence among the German princes that resulted from the Protestant Reformation and subsequently formalized the treaties signed at Westphalia in 1648.

^[19]Figure cited in Werth (2002), p. 22. Werth explains that this was accomplished through a combination of force and incentives, such as exemption from military service and direct cash payments. This last incentive was added via a 1740 decree promising the non-Orthodox who became baptized “bronze crosses, shirts, caftans, footwear, and cash payments that varied on the convert’s age and sex.” Perhaps not surprisingly, Werth says, cash “was the single most important factor in drawing non-Russians to the baptismal font.” Paul Werth, “Coercion and Conversion: Violence and the Mass Baptism of the Volga Peoples, 1740-55,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2003), p. 552.

^[20]A 1744 government report informs that 418 of 536 mosques in the region were destroyed under the office’s watch. Figure cited in Khodarkovsky (2001), p. 133.

^[21]Sunderland (2007), p. 45.

^[22]Geraci and Khodarkovsky (2001), p. 6.

[23] Yemelianova (2002), p. 40.

[24] Crews (2006), p. 8.

[25] Crews (2003).

[26] Jouni Häkli, "In the Territory of Knowledge: State-Centered Discourses and the Construction of Society," *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2001), pp. 403-422.

[27] Mukhametshin (2006), p. 136.

[28] See generally Paul Werth, "From 'Pagan' Muslims to 'Baptized' Communists: Religious Conversion and Ethnic Particularity in Russia's Eastern Provinces," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2000), pp. 497-523.

[29] Edward Lazzerini, "Defining the Orient: A Nineteenth-Century Russo-Tatar Polemic over Identity and Cultural Representation," in Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon and Georg Brunner (eds.), *Muslim Communities Reemerge* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 38.

[30] Quoted in Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, "One or More Tatar Nations?" in Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon and Georg Brunner (eds.), *Muslim Communities Reemerge* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 46.

[31] For an informative analysis of the Il'minskii education program and its effects on the Mari, a Finnic people endemic to the Middle Volga region, see Seppo Lallukka, *From Fugitive Peasants to Diaspora: The Eastern Mari in Tsarist and Federal Russia* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2003).

[32] According to Russia's 1857 census, Russians accounted for 42 percent of Kazan's population. In other provinces in the region, they formed majorities: 81 percent in Viatka, 72 percent in Simbirsk, and 53 percent in Orenburg. Figures cited in Werth (2002), p. 18.

[33] This interpretation of Tatar national history is dominant among Tatars even today.

[34] Quoted in Rorlich (1994), 63.

[35] Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), p. 236.

[36] Yemelianova (2002), p. 80.

[37] Crews (2003), p. 50.

[38] See generally Рафаэль Хаким, *Джадидизм (реформированный ислам)* (Казань: Институт истории Академии наук Татарстана, 2010).

[39] See Galina Yemelianova, "The National Identity of the Volga Tatars at the Turn of the 19th

Century: Tatarism, Turkism and Islam,” *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1997), pp. 543-572; Стефан Дюдяньон, “Элементы социологии мусульманского традиционализма в татарском мире и в Мавераннахре (конец XVIII - начало XX вв.),” под редакцией Рафаэля Хакимова, *Ислам в татарском мире: история и современность (Материалы Международного Симпозиума, Казань 29 апреля - 1 мая г.)* (Казань: Институт истории Академии наук Татарстана, 1997), с. 57-69.

[40]The forerunner to today’s puritanical Salafist movement, leaders of the nineteenth-century *salafiy* movement advocated a return to the “pure” Islam that was practiced in the time of the prophet and the virtuous forefathers.

[41]See e.g. Yemelianova (2002), p. 76.

[42]Ibid., p. 99.

[43]Kappeler (2001), p. 337.

[44]Crews (2003), p. 54.

[45]Crews (2006), pp. 300-316.

[46]Idel is Tatar for Volga

[47]The creation of the various ethnic homelands in many ways appears to be an updated version of the Il’minskii system that had Christianized people through their linguistic nationalization, with the main goals being to undermine Islam and Tatarism in the Middle Volga and reconstruct the Russian Empire (only this time, the Bolsheviks added territory to nationalism with similar goals). Indeed, for much of the Soviet era, variations of the divide-and-conquer argument were put forth and formed a dominant stream of thought in the study of Soviet nationalities policies. See e.g. Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997 [1954]); Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay (1967); Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Rorlich (1986); Ronald Wixman, “Applied Soviet Nationality Policy: A Suggested Rational,” in Ch. Lemercier-Quelquejay, G. Veinstein and S. E. Wimbush (eds.), *Passe Turco-Tatar – Present Sovietique: Etudes Offertes a Alexandre Bennigsen* (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 1986), pp. 449-468. However, some basic assumptions of the divide-and-conquer thesis have been challenged in more recent investigations that draw on archival documents and other primary-source data previously unavailable to researchers. See especially Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Ronald Suny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: The Soviet State and Its Peoples in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ronald Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” in Ronald Suny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: The Soviet State and Its Peoples in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 23-66. While more recent studies generally recognize that the baseline goal behind the creation of the ethnic homelands in the Middle Volga, and other parts of the USSR, was preserving the territorial integrity of the old Russian Empire and enabling the construction of a new centralized, socialist state, newer research complicates notions that the

Bolsheviks' division of the Tatar-Bashkir lands was motivated foremost by the same concerns held by the Tsarist-era officials (such as Il'minskii) who feared Tatar assimilation and Islamization of neighboring peoples. Shafer, for instance, draws on extensive archival work to show that the birth of the Republic of Bashkortostan in 1919-20 likely did not result from careful, long-term planning intended to stem Tatar hegemony in the region, but instead appears to be a case of "improvisation" amid the chaos of the civil war. The declarations of the Idel-Ural state and then separate ethnic homelands, he argues, did indeed represent a policy of *divide et impera*; however, the enemy that Lenin and Stalin sought to divide was not a Tatar-dominated Turko-Islamic nation-in-becoming, but rather the enemy was the more immediate threat of the anti-Bolshevik movement as a whole. Daniel Schafer, "Local Politics and the Birth of the Republic of Bashkortostan, 1919-1920," in Ronald GrigorSuny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: The Soviet State and Its Peoples in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 165-190. While Shafer and other researchers in the post-Soviet era have challenged some basic assumptions of the previously held divide-and-conquer thesis, they have not satisfactorily considered the logic of territory. Notably, none has, in my reading, addressed the issue of the "poorly" drawn borders that weakened Tatar influence in the region and diluted Bashkir influence within their own autonomous republic.

[48]Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*(2001), p. 3.

[49] See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 23-54.

[50]ИосифСталин, *Марксизм и национально-колониальныйвопрос* (Москва: Партиздат, 1934), с. 158.

[51]Martin, "An Affirmative Action Empire"(2001), p. 74.

[52]For relevant discussions see Brubaker (1996); Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*(2001).

[53]Suny (2001), p. 12.

[54]The historian Peter Blitstein contends that the "intent" of the 1938 law decreeing mandatory study of Russian was not linguistic or cultural Russification, but rather was aimed at strengthening Russian as the *lingua franca* of the USSR. Peter Blitstein, "Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938-1953," in Ronald Suny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: The Soviet State and Its Peoples in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 253-274. He points out that the law did not eliminate native-language education. Indeed, the requirement that titular nationals attend native-language schools remain in place until 1958,when, he points out, non-Russians were given the "choice"to educate their children in Russian rather than in their native languages. Whereas the Stalin-era native-language requirement acted as a brake against linguistic Russification, he continues, the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras witnessed great numbers of non-Russian parents "choosing" to send their children to Russian schools. On the face of it, the explicit "intent" of Russian-language education indeed may not have been linguistic and cultural Russification, and non-Russians may have "chosen"to send their children to Russian schools. However, this line of argumentation ignores the fact that the ASSRs enjoyed no real territorial autonomy. The national elites had no power to create conditions conducive to the development of non-Russian languages. The shift toward greater *de*

facto Russification in the USSR, Blitstein's analysis fails to consider, follows the territorial logic of the modern nation-state.

[55] Dilyara Usmanova, InurMinnullin and Rafik Mukhametshin, "Islamic Education in Soviet and Post-Soviet Tatarstan," In Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika and Stefan Reichmuth (eds.), *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 46-47.

[56] Andreas Kappeler, "Book Review," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (2004), p. 245.

[57] Suny (2001), p. 16.

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