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Russian Rule in Turkestan and the Example of British India, *c.* 1860–1917

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> Let it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person until he tucks in his shirt. As an Oriental he is charming. It is only when he insists upon being treated as the most easterly of western peoples instead of the most westerly of Easterns that he becomes a racial anomaly extremely difficult to handle.[1]

IT has long proved difficult for historians to make meaningful comparisons between the Russian Empire in Asia and the Western colonial empires of the nineteenth century. Despite the vast territories she controlled populated by people alien to the Slavs in race and religion, the argument that Imperial Russia was not a 'colonial' power in the same sense that Britain or France was remains attractive. There was something special, symbiotic about the relations between Russians and Turks, Persians, Georgians and Armenians, which distinguished them from the relations between Frenchmen and Arabs or Britons and Indians. Russia's aristocracy fully assimilated the Tatar, Polish and Georgian nobility (the usual example given is that of the Georgian Prince Bagration, who led the Tsar's armies against Napoleon in 1812). Russia was not a 'conquering' or 'imperialist' power in the same way as the Western powers:

> (Russia) either occupied wasteland, or united to itself by a historical route of unforced assimilation such tribes as the *Chud*, *Ves* and *Merya*, or as they are today the *Zyryans*, *Cheremiss* and *Mordvinians*, who had neither the germs of historical life, nor any striving towards it; or, finally, took under its shelter and protection such tribes and peoples who, surrounded by enemies, had already lost their national independence or could no longer defend it, like the Armenians and the Georgians.[2]

This is a persistent theme in writings about Russia and her Empire, leading many to the conclusion that it is impossible to regard the

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[1] Rudyard Kipling, 'The Man Who Was', in *Life's Handicap*, London, 1903, p. 97.
[2] N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa. Vzgliad na kul'turnye i politicheskie otnosheniia slavianskogo mira k Germano-Romanskomu* (1871), Moscow, 2003, p. 45.

Russian and British Asiatic Empires as in any way akin. It is normally argued that, unlike the Western European Empires, the Russian Empire was ruled by a multi-racial elite comprising Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians, Baltic Germans, Georgians, Armenians, Tatars and, in Central Asia, the Khan of Khiva, the Emir of Bokhara and their civil service. This supra-national elite, to a greater or lesser extent, shared a high culture that was equally alien to Russian and to Turkic peasants. Political rights and other privileges did not depend on race, but on one's *soslovie* or position in Peter the Great's table of ranks. Thus, whilst acknowledging that the situation may have been different in Central Asia, Hosking writes of Russian imperial expansion that, 'All this took place without any presumption that ordinary Russians were superior to other peoples of the empire', whilst 'relations between the diverse peoples were markedly less racist than in, say, the British Empire'.[3] Although more sophisticated, this is similar to the Soviet interpretation which held sway from the Second World War until perestroika,[4] of a Russian Empire based largely on class hierarchy. This view stems partly from the paucity of research on those areas of the Russian Empire which most resembled other European colonial possessions, most obviously Turkestan, and partly from the lack of comparative work on Western European and Russian imperialism.

Recent years have seen the appearance of a number of excellent works on Russia's neglected imperial past. Andreas Kappeler's *The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History*, originally published in 1991 but only recently translated from the German, was amongst the first books to attempt to redress the balance between centre and 'borderland' amongst general works on the tsarist empire.[5] *Russia's Orient*, a book from Indiana University Press, contains some extremely thought-provoking work on the development of an idea of imperial citizenship,

[3] Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552–1917*, London, 1997, pp. 39–40.

[4] Early Soviet scholarship regarded the tsarist conquest of Central Asia as an absolute evil, and paid much attention to revolutionary traditions amongst the Central Asian peoples — the work of Galuzo, Alekseenkov and Safarov took a really very radical line on the evils of colonialism and the legitimacy of native resistance that was far in advance of its time. P. G. Galuzo, *Turkestan-koloniia*, Moscow, 1929: Society for Central Asian Studies Reprint series no. 9, Oxford, 1986; G. Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsiia*, Moscow, 1921: Society for Central Asian Studies Reprint series no. 6, Oxford, 1984; P. Alekseenkov, *Revoliutsiia v Srednei Azii*, Tashkent, 1928. Things changed considerably after the Second World War: T. N. Kary-Niiazov (*Ocherki istorii kultury Sovetskogo Uzbekistana*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 41–116) and Z. D. Kastel'skaya (*Iz istorii Turkestanskogo kraia*, Moscow, 1980), are both in full agreement about 'the progressive significance of the uniting of Central Asia with Russia'. For an as yet unsurpassed account of the contortions of Soviet historiography when dealing with the subject peoples of the Empire, see Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalties*, Chapel Hill, NC, 1969, esp. pp. 32–34 and 174–90 on Turkestan.

[5] Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History*, London, 2001 (hereafter, *The Russian Empire*).

and on early colonial ethnographic endeavours and local reactions to the conquest of Central Asia, amongst other things.[6] However, books based on detailed archival research in the former USSR are rare, and those dealing with the Russian Empire in Central Asia still rarer. David Schimmelpenninck's pioneering work on Russian imperial ideology is of enormous value, but relates principally to the Far East.[7] Paul Werth, Robert Geraci, Michael Khodarkovsky and Allen Frank have added greatly to our understanding of relations between the Russian authorities, the Orthodox Church and the Muslim and animist peoples of the Middle and Lower Volga, Orenburg and the fringes of the Steppes, but their work relates only indirectly to Turkestan.[8] Jürgen Paul, Anke Von Kügelgen and others have produced some excellent work on Muslims in tsarist and pre-tsarist Central Asia, which are immensely valuable contributions to Oriental studies, if seldom with a focus on imperial history.[9] The history of the Muslim *Jadid* reformers of Bokhara and the Ferghana Valley is perhaps the only aspect of nineteenth-century Turkestan which is adequately dealt with in the existing literature, in particular by Adeeb Khalid.[10] Virginia Martin's work on the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde in the colonial period is very valuable for its clear understanding of the ways in which *adat* or customary law changed in response to Russian pressures, despite outward continuity.[11] Jeff Sahadeo[12] and Daniel Brower are the only

[6] Daniel Brower and Edward Lazzerini (eds), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples 1700–1917*, Bloomington, IN, 1997.

[7] David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Towards the Rising Sun*, DeKalb, IL, 2001 (hereafter, *Towards the Rising Sun*).

[8] Paul Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827–1905*, Ithaca, NY, 2002; Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde 1780–1910*, Leiden, 2001 (hereafter, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia*); Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky, *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*, Ithaca, NY, 2001 (hereafter, *Of Religion and Empire*).

[9] Anke Von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper et al. (eds), *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* (hereafter, *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia*), Berlin, vols 1–4, 1996–2000.

[10] Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, Berkeley, CA, 1997; S. A. Dudoignon and F. Georgeon (eds), 'Le Réformisme Musulman en Asie Centrale. Du "premier renouveau" à la Soviétisation 1788–1937', *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, 37, 1996, 1–2; Gero Fedtke, 'Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists and the Bukharan Revolution: From an Ideological Debate in the Early Soviet Union', in Von Kügelgen et al. (eds), *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations*, Berlin, 1998, pp. 483–512.

[11] Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 2001.

[12] J. F. Sahadeo, *Creating a Russian Colonial Community: City, Nation and Empire in Tashkent, 1865–1923*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign unpublished PhD thesis, 2000 (hereafter, *Creating a Russian Colonial Community*); id., 'Epidemic and Empire: Ethnicity, Class and Civilisation in the 1892 Tashkent Cholera Riot', *Slavic Review*, 64, 2005, 1, pp. 117–39.

historians thus far to attempt something similar for the settled regions of Central Asia, based upon archival sources. The latter's recent *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* examines Russia's failures in Turkestan in the context of the Empire's general failure to modernize before 1917. Brower also makes some tentative comparisons with British and French imperial ideologies, and refers to Russian interest in other imperial models.[13] I hope to pursue these themes more extensively in this article.

I

If it is still unusual for historians of Russia's Empire to make extended comparisons with the other European Empires of the period (one notable exception is Dominic Lieven),[14] it is still less usual for them to examine contemporary Russian views of the imperial strategies and techniques of their French and British rivals. If a comparison is to be made, then arguably the area under European sway which most resembled Russian Turkestan was French Algeria, a homogenously Muslim territory which was administratively part of the metropolis, and which had large numbers of settlers. Some Russian officers, notably Prince A. I. Bariatinskii, even looked to the French campaigns in North Africa for inspiration during the wars in the Caucasus in the 1850s and 1860s.[15] However, such references to French Imperialism remained relatively rare in the writings of Russian soldiers and administrators in the nineteenth century: to them comparison of the Russian and British Asiatic Empires seemed much more relevant. It was a powerful theme of the nineteenth-century 'Great Game' literature on both sides, as participants and commentators examined the two empires squaring up to each other across the Pamirs and Afghanistan. The Russians desired global dominance, and were thwarted by Britain. The key to Britain's power was universally acknowledged to be India, and hence it was to India that Russian military officers and officials turned their attention, seeking weaknesses to exploit and strengths to imitate, and producing a rich vein of writing on India which, unlike English-language accounts of travel in Central Asia, remains largely untapped.

Lt.-General Terent'ev (1837–1909), the best-known historian of the Russian conquest of Turkestan, devoted an earlier book, *Russia and*

[13] Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, London, 2003 (hereafter, *Turkestan*), pp. 9–14.

[14] Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals*, London, 2000.

[15] D. Yaroshevsky, 'Empire and Citizenship', in D. R. Brower and E. J. Lazzerini (eds), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, Bloomington, IN, 1997, pp. 69–70.

England in Central Asia,[16] to a comparison of the imperial aims and positions of Britain and Russia, with a ferocious refutation of much of the literature in English on the subject:

> Our policy towards subject peoples is that of equal citizens' rights. The inhabitants of cities that have only just been taken, Kuldzha and Tashkent, Samarkand etc. are immediately considered to be as much Russian citizens as those of Moscow, for instance, or perhaps even have greater privileges [...] In this policy, in this Christian cosmopolitanism lies our strength. In this lies our future.[17]

In other words, all subjects of the Tsar enjoyed equal (or rather equally few) rights irrespective of whether they were Russian or not — though as Terent'ev pointed out, some non-Russian areas such as Finland and Poland enjoyed greater rights than Russia itself, whilst the Russian peasant paid much heavier taxes than his Asiatic counterpart who, unlike him, was not liable to be conscripted.[18] General Annenkov's (1835–99) pamphlet, *The Akal-Tekke Oasis and the Road to India*, also contained repeated comparisons of British and Russian policy in ruling Asiatic peoples, mostly unfavourable to the administration of British India.[19] A. E. Snesarev (1865–1937) was a staff officer based in Tashkent who wrote on India and Afghanistan, and later became one of the Soviet Union's leading Indologists: he travelled to India, and wrote a lengthy denunciation of British rule there.[20] V. F. Novitskii (1869–1929), a captain in the Russian army who spent four months as a guest of the Indian army in 1888, wrote vividly about

[16] Lt.-Gen. M. A. Terent'ev, *Rossiia i Angliia v Srednei Azii*, St Petersburg, 1875 (hereafter, *Rossiia i Angliia*), and *Istoriia zavoevaniia Srednei Azii*, 3 vols, St Petersburg, 1906. Terent'ev, a noble from Voronezh province who was educated at the Alexander Military-Judicial Academy, served in Turkestan from 1867 to 1875: M. K. Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye Vostokovedy*, Moscow, 2005 (hereafter, *Russkie voennye Vostokovedy*), p. 233.

[17] Terent'ev, *Rossiia i Angliia*, p. 361.

[18] At approximately 29k per *desiatina* in 1899 the Land Tax in European Russia was much lower than in Turkestan, but it made up only 4 per cent of the total tax burden; peasants had also to make redemption payments for their emancipation and pay *mir* and *zemstvo* levies, and effectively paid over seven roubles for every desiatina they farmed, as opposed to an average of three roubles in Turkestan: Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Uzbekistana (hereafter, TsGARUz) fond I-1, opis 1, delo no. 63, pp. 61–9. See Francis Watters, 'The Peasant and the Village Commune', in W. S. Vucinich (ed.), *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, Stanford, CA, 1968, pp. 149–51.

[19] Gen. M. A. Annenkov, *Akhal-Tekhinskii oazis i puti k Indii*, St Petersburg, 1881 (hereafter, *Akhal-Tekhinskii oazis*).

[20] A. E. Snesarev, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor v Sredne-Aziatskom voprose*, St Petersburg, 1906 (hereafter, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*). Snesarev, the son of a priest from Voronezh who, unusually, was educated at Moscow University as well as the General Staff Academy, was a Lt. General by 1897, and served the Soviets after 1917. Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye Vostokovedy*, pp. 217–18.

the social life of Indian army officers, as well as British military policy.[21] A more sophisticated observer some twenty years later was Senator Count K. K. Pahlen, whose memoirs, *Mission to Turkestan*,[22] are quite well known. He was also author of a famous report on the state of the Turkestan region in the early 1900s, when its administration was notorious for corruption, and of a mass of documentary material, detailing both his sojourn in the Turkestan Governor-Generalship in 1908–09 and his recommendations for its reform, which were heavily influenced by the example of British India.[23]

Lord Curzon's 1889 book, *Russia in Central Asia*, is perhaps the most famous example of the comparative genre on the British side, and in some ways his views chime with those of Terent'ev, though for the rather different reason that he considered the Russians to be barbaric and only semi-civilized, writing that 'the conquest of Central Asia is a conquest of Orientals by Orientals'.[24] Francis Skrine also compared the colonial structures of the two powers, writing 'That so much of the Russian edifice is built on Anglo-Indian models is the strongest proof of their intrinsic excellence. We were pioneers, and had difficulties to encounter with which our neighbours were never perplexed; they have profited by our experience and mistakes'.[25] Skrine was himself an ICS officer, and was advancing this as an argument for resisting the demands of the Indian National Congress. However, most authors in English were more interested in assessing the potential military threat posed by Russia in Central Asia than in examining her colonial policies. Apart from Curzon, the most important book in English describing Russian Central Asia in this period is Eugene Schuyler's *Turkistan*. The American consul at St Petersburg, Schuyler was an acute and well-informed observer, who enquired closely into the fledgling Russian administration which was being established under General Von Kaufman when he made his journey in 1871. References to India litter the pages of his book, and he was well aware that he was witnessing a small part of the wider phenomenon of European conquest and expansion.[26]

[21] V. F. Novitskii, *Voennye ocherki Indii*, St Petersburg, 1899 (hereafter, *Voennye ocherki Indii*). Novitskii was from the nobility of Smolensk guberniia, and educated at the Nikolaevskii Academy of the General Staff. By 1895 he was a Lt. General, and he served in Manchuria and Siberia. In 1917 he voluntarily joined the Bolsheviks: Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye Vostokovedy*, pp. 172–73.

[22] Count K. K. Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan*, trans. N. J. Couriss, Oxford, 1964.

[23] Graf K. K. Pahlen, *Otchet po revizii Turkestanskogo kraia*, St Petersburg, 19 vols, 1909–10.

[24] G. N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, London, 1889 (hereafter, *Russia in Central Asia*), p. 392.

[25] F. H. Skrine and E. Denison Ross, *The Heart of Asia*, London, 1899, p. 414.

[26] Eugene Schuyler, *Turkistan*, London, 1876 (hereafter, Schuyler, *Turkistan*); Adjutant-General Konstantin Petrovich Von Kaufman (1818–82), first Governor-General of Russian Turkestan from 1867–81. He came from a military family of Austrian origin who had long since converted to Orthodoxy, and served at the siege of Kars and as Governor of Vilna Province before being appointed to Turkestan. See 'Kaufman, fon, Konstantin Petrovich', in Ibak and Kliucharev (eds), *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, St Petersburg, 1897, pp. 562–64.

The idea of Russia as an Empire where ethnicity was unimportant, and where there was no significant divide between Europeans and Asiatics is largely derived from the writings of the nineteenth-century intellectuals known as *Vostochniki* or 'Easterners' — who promoted the idea of Russia as a Eurasian power. Of these Konstantin Leont'ev,[27] V. V. Grigor'ev,[28] Nikolai Danilevskii and the poet Fedor Tiutchev are probably the most famous and influential, together with Dostoevskii who wrote a famous polemical article called *What is Asia to Us?* after the massacre of the Turcoman at Geok-Tepe by General Skobelev in 1881.[29] The Vostochniki were normally hostile to Islam[30] and to the Turko-Mongol races which had ruled the Slavs from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, but they were far more sympathetic to fellow Indo-Europeans and, from the 1880s onwards, to Buddhists whatever their race. The relatively insignificant group of Russian subjects who were Buddhists (mainly Kalmyks and Buriats) assumed an ideological importance out of all proportion to their numbers in Russia's claim to be a Eurasian power. India, home to Aryan races that had similarly suffered from Turkic, Islamic depredations and the birthplace of Buddhism, together with Tibet, its strongest surviving home, assumed great significance in the search for a Eurasian alternative to the shallow materialism of the West.

> Slavonic in language and religion, but mixed in blood, and mingled with many foreign elements, Russia, under the pressure of Western Enlightenment, is naturally waking up, and will soon wake still more to consciousness

[27] See K. Leont'ev, *Vostok, Rossiia i Slavianstvo. Filosofskaia i politicheskaia proza 1872–1891*, Moscow, 1996.

[28] V. V. Grigor'ev, *Ob otnoshenii Rossii k vostoku*, Odessa, 1840.

[29] They have attracted a good deal of attention from Russian and Western scholars, but it is fair to say that more interest has been shown in their even dottier 'Eurasianist' émigré successors, some of whose writings can be found in P. N. Savitskii et al., *Iskhod k vostoku/ Exodus to the East: Forebodings of Events: An Affirmation of the Eurasians*, Idyllwild, CA, 1996; N. Trubetskoi, *Nasledie Chingizkhana*, Moscow, 2000. See also, Boris Ishboldin, 'The Eurasian Movement', *Russian Review*, 5, 1946, 2, pp. 64–73; Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, 'The Emergence of Eurasianism', *California Slavic Studies*, 4, 1967, pp. 39–72 (hereafter, 'The Emergence of Eurasianism'); Seymour Becker, 'Russia between East and West: The Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands', *Central Asian Survey*, 10, 1991, 4, pp. 47–64; Milan Hauner, *What is Asia to Us?*, London, 1992 (hereafter, *What Is Asia to Us?*); Marlene Laruelle, *L'idéologie eurasiste Russe ou comment penser l'empire*, Paris, 1999, pp. 47–80, 187–247; S. V. Soplenkov, *Doroga v Arzrum: Russkaia obshchestvennaia mysl' o vostoke*, Moscow, 2000, and articles from the journal *Acta Eurasica*, collected in S. Panarin (ed.), *Evraziia. Liudi i mify*, Moscow, 2003 (hereafter, *Evraziia*).

[30] See Mark Batunsky, 'Islam and Russian Culture in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Central Asian Survey*, 9, 1990, 4, p. 3, and 'Racism in Russian Islamology: Agafangel Krimsky', *Central Asian Survey*, 11, 1992, 4, pp. 75–84.

> as a renovated Eastern world, with which not only the races of nearer Asia, but both the Hindu and the Chinese, have now, and will have in the future, infinitely more interests and sympathies in common than with colonisers of another type, developed by European civilisation during the last four centuries of its history in the West [. . .] In our organic connection with all these lands lies the pledge of the future, in which Asiatic Russia will mean simply all Asia.[31]

On the Russian side, this translated into a powerful critique of British rule in India, which was characterized as irredeemably racist, in distinction to Russian rule in Turkestan:

> While in our country, in the bazaars of Merv and Tashkent, a young soldier, mingling with the throng of Asiatics, behaves towards them in a friendly manner, and never dreams of hating or despising them as savages, in India, the typical representatives of British power and of British prestige, the rank and file of the army, regard the natives as something nearer animals than men, seeming to consider that no special blame can or should attach even to acts of violence directed against them [. . .] the interest lies in a society which, if it does not directly abet acts of violence, certainly brings up its uneducated countrymen in the conviction that a white skin and a black are as far apart as heaven and earth.[32]

In Russian writings on Empire, the foil to their own cosmopolitanism and tolerance in Asia, more often than not, was the British Empire in India.[33] This in itself is unsurprising: what is surprising is that so many of the claims of the 'Easterners' have been taken at face value for so long by historians. Whilst some nineteenth-century travellers and administrators, British and Russian, did indeed espouse this view of Russia's imperial destiny, other contemporaries viewed the Russian Empire in Central Asia very differently. British or Russian, French or American, they did not consider it to be, *sui generis*, a bizarre and unique phenomenon, quite unlike the other Western Empires. They situated it firmly in the context of nineteenth-century European Imperialism, as another manifestation of Europe's *mission civilisatrice* if, perhaps, a more backward one.

[31] Prince E. E. Ookhtomsky, *Travels in the East of Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia when Cesarewitch 1890–1*, trans. Robert Goodlet, London, 1896 (hereafter, *Travels in the East*), vol. 2, pp. 35–36.

[32] Ibid., pp. 55–56.

[33] And indeed it still is in Russia today, at least amongst Indologists. A conversation with Dr Evgenia Vanina, Director of the South Asian Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, in August 2001 suggested this, and her latest publication confirms it: see E. Vanina (ed.) *Indian History: A Russian Viewpoint*, Delhi, 2003 (hereafter, *Indian History*), pp. xii–xiii.

II

The first recorded Russian visitor to the Subcontinent (1466–72) was Afanasii Nikitin, a merchant whose *Voyage over Three Seas*[34] was well known to nineteenth-century Russian Indologists, who remarked proudly that he reached India before Vasco da Gama.[35] Indian goods reached Russia either across the Steppes via Orenburg, up the Volga from Astrakhan to the great fair at Nizhnii Novgorod, or by sea in British and other European ships to St Petersburg and the Black Sea ports. As with the British a hundred years earlier, in the early eighteenth century a newly powerful Russia aspired to trade directly with the Subcontinent without either Central Asian or European intermediaries. The first scouting expeditions sent to the Eastern shore of the Caspian were charged with finding the mouth of the Oxus (wrongly supposed to debouch into the Caspian) and seeing if it could be turned into a navigable route to India.[36] The nineteenth century saw Russian interest in India move beyond this relatively uncomplicated desire for unobstructed trade. Whilst Constantinople remained the greatest imperial prize, as Russia's frontier in the Steppes moved South, some of the wilder spirits in the tsarist officer corps talked of driving the British from India altogether, especially once the war in the Caucasus had finally been brought to an end in 1864. The talk was of British racism versus Russian assimilationism, which was held to have weakened the rule of the former so much that their possessions were ripe for conquest. It translated into an almost unshakeable optimism about the willingness of Indians to rise up against the British in their millions were there to be a Russian invasion (a threat the British took very seriously). These ideas were current even before the Mutiny, which confirmed in Russian eyes the hatred at least of their Muslim subjects for the British,[37] but they could take some rather unlikely turns. In a ferocious minute to the Tsar urging him to an immediate conquest of India to shatter British power in the world, Nikolai Murav'ev, a leading Russian advocate of the 'forward' policy in Central Asia, predicted that the most important support for Russia within India would come from the Anglo-Indian (i.e. Eurasian) population:

[34] V. P. Adrianova-Perets (ed.), *Khozhdenie za tri moria Afanasiia Nikitina*, Leningrad, 1958. An old translation is available in R. H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, London, 1857, pp. 4–32.

[35] E. N. Komarov, *V Rossii i Indii : iz vospominanii i nabliudenii indologa*, Moscow, 1998, p. 116.

[36] See Catherine Poujol, 'Les voyageurs russes et l'Asie Centrale: Naissance et declin de deux mythes, les réserves d'or et la voie vers l'Inde', in *Central Asian Survey*, 4, 1985, 3, pp. 59–73.

[37] See '"Donesenie russkogo voennogo agenta v Londone polkovnika Ignat'eva N. P. voennomu ministru o sipaiskom vosstanii" 26th July 1857', in P. M. Shastitko (ed.), *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia v XIXv.*, Moscow, 1997 (hereafter, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia*), p. 106.

> This class of inhabitants — Half-cast [*sic*] — not enjoying political rights, is clearly revolting against Government policy in India: they demand equal political and citizens' rights with Englishmen, and their petition has been rejected by the English Parliament. The constant degradation of this sufficiently significant class of people, with a full European education, at the hands of those who have come out from the British Isles has rendered them permanent and secret enemies of the British Government.[38]

Equally fancifully perhaps, General Mikhail Skobelev, the 'butcher' of Geok-Tepe, believed that twenty-five to thirty million natives in Upper India could be expected to support his invasion plans of 1876, drawn up when he was in the first flush of his victories in Kokand.[39] Such ideas were fuelled by the claims of Indian dissidents such as Rao Raja Tula Singh Bahadur, Ramchandra Balaji (who claimed to be a relative of the Nana Sahib),[40] Baba Ram Singh and, most importantly, Maharajah Duleep Singh of Punjab, who in a letter to Alexander III, begging him to 'deliver some 250,000,000 of my countrymen from the cruel yoke of the British Rule' asserted:

> I have been deputed by most of the powerful Princes of India to come to Russia and pray to the Imperial Government to take their cause in hand. These Princes possess altogether some 300,000 soldiers in their service and are prepared to revolt [...] I guarantee an easy conquest of India. For besides the promised assistance of the Princes of India with their armies it is in my power to raise the entire Punjab in revolt [...] I am the acknowledged head and sovereign of some 20,000,000 [...] people of the entire Punjab, a country inhabited by the most warlike races of India.[41]

This was because of a prophecy supposedly made by the last Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, in 1725, something which Baba Ram Singh also referred to in his message to the Turkestan-Governor-General. Duleep Singh was a rather sad (not to say unbalanced) figure and, although someone read and annotated his letter extensively, little reliance was

[38] Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereafter, GARF), fond 811, opis 1, delo no. 27, p. 21. Nikolai Nikolaevich Murav'ev-Karskii (1794–1866) (not to be confused with his namesake, N. N. Murav'ev-Amurskii) served in the Caucasus from 1816–28, but made his name in a daring expedition to Khiva across the Turcoman country in 1819–20. See Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye Vostokovedy*, pp. 166–67, and Nikolay Murav'yov, *Journey to Khiva through the Turcoman Country* (Calcutta, 1871), London, 1977.

[39] 'Posmertniia Bumaga M. D. Skobeleva III — Turkestan i Angliiskaia Indiia 1876', in *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 330, p. 225. *Turkestanskii sbornik* (Turkestan Collection) is a collection of 540 scrapbooks of news-cuttings, pamphlets and other publications relating to Turkestan, begun in 1867 and kept in the Navoi State Library in Tashkent.

[40] T. N. Zagorodnikova, 'Nana Sahib's Nephew in Russia', in E. Vanina, *Indian History*, pp. 17–26.

[41] GARF, fond 677, opis 1, delo no. 476, 10 May 1887, pp. 2–0; see also '"Iz pis'ma dulipa Singkha sovetniku russkogo posolstva v parizhe E. Kotsebus predlozheniem svoei pomoshchi Rossii, v Izgnanii anglichan iz Indii" 22nd June 1886', in Shastitko, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia*, no. 112, pp. 265–66.

placed in his assertions, or those of the others mentioned.[42] Nevertheless, St Petersburg welcomed the pressure which the army was now able to apply on India's northern frontiers, making Britain much more amenable in the Balkan sphere. It suited the tsars to let the British believe they had serious imperial ambitions in India, and there is little doubt that many in Russia's military believed it as well.

Together with this interest in India as a potential field of conquest, some Russian intellectuals and administrators came to see Asia in general and India in particular as playing a crucial role, political and moral, in the working out of Russia's destiny. Army officers and colonial officials showed immense interest in the way the British ran their empire, as well as in the peculiarities of Anglo-Indian society (an interest that was not reciprocated, by and large). Britain was the world's greatest power and the key to that power, as was almost universally acknowledged at the time, was her control of India. Ivan Pavlovich Minaev (1840–90), a distinguished scholar of Indian religion, wrote in his account of a trip to India and Ceylon in 1876–77 that detailed knowledge of this, Britain's wealthiest and most important overseas possession, would be crucial in Russia's rivalry with her in Asia.[43] Although his trip was ostensibly for purely scholarly purposes, he produced detailed reports on the political and military situation in India for the General Staff, together with (largely negative) assessments of the prospects for a serious revolt amongst the Sikhs.[44] This thirst for knowledge about India was widespread amongst Russian officials and soldiers in the East, and not merely for military reasons.

Russians were both admiring and critical of this great enterprise, and they saw in it many lessons for their own rather later attempts at profitable control over large populations of settled Asiatic peoples. The Asiatic press, published in Siberia and in Tashkent, took considerable interest in Indian affairs (especially in the nationalist or 'revolutionary' movement as the 1890s progressed),[45] and these reports,

[42] See '"Dokumenty missii Kniazia Rao Radzhi Tuly Singkha Bakhadura s pis'mami indiiskikh kniazei russkomu Tsariu" 1858–1860', nos 41–43, pp. 121–27; '"Dokumenty o prebyvanii v Rossii Indiitsa Ramchandra Baladzhi, vydavavshego sebia za plemiannika Nana Sakhiba" 1878–81', nos 85–93, pp. 209–18; '"Poslanie Baba-Ram-Singkha i glavy gosudarstva sikkhov turkestanskomu general-gubernatoru" 1879', no. 101, pp. 243–44; all in Shastitko, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia.*

[43] I. P. Minaev, *Ocherki Tseilona i Indii iz putevykh zametok russkogo*, St Petersburg, 1878 (hereafter, *Ocherki Tseilona i Indii*), vol. 1, p. iv. His best known work is probably *Mahavyupatti*, translated and published in English *c.* 1911. He also wrote a standard Pali Grammar which appeared in English in 1882.

[44] '"Dokumenty o poezdkakh professora Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta I. P. Minaeva v Indiiu" 1874–1886', in Shastitko, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia*, nos 73–78, pp. 181–201.

[45] In 1907, for instance, *Turkestanskie vedomosti* reported the arrest of Lajpat Rai after a disturbance in Lahore. See *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 436, pp. 9–13.

mostly translations of articles from *The Times of India*, *The Englishman* and the Lahore *Pioneer* were widely read by colonial officials and collated in the Turkestan Public Library in Tashkent.[46] Some made the journey and returned with accounts of what it was like. They included some subalterns sent to India as part of a staff course in Hindi, together with more senior officers, officials and academics.[47] The great divide in almost all nineteenth-century Russian thought — that between Slavophiles and Westernizers — is present here also; whilst some commentators saw lessons for Russia's own Asiatic colony of Turkestan in Britain's modernization of India through railways and the introduction of western education, others mused on the mystical links of sympathy binding Russians and Indians together as fellow Asiatic peoples, and mourned the prevalence of tawdry imports from the West in Indian culture. Whether they came from a Slavophile or a Westernizing angle, it hardly needs to be said that these observations proceeded from rather mixed motives: the subtext was not that Indians should be free to rule themselves, but that Russians would make much better imperial masters either because of their greater sympathy with Asian modes of thought or because they were more whole-hearted modernizers than the British. India was thus an obsession for metropolitan Vostochniki and military officers alike; they saw it as the key to Russia's imperial future as the world's greatest power, both temporal and spiritual.

III

The attractions of *Vostochnik* thought, or 'Asianism' as it is sometimes known, to the Russian intelligentsia are obvious. Prominent authors, intellectuals, publicists and politicians fell under the spell of an ideology that gave promise of more than imperial greatness, the ability to change the moral destiny of the world, and which did not render Russia backward in comparison to Western Europe. Eventually Nicholas II would allow himself to be influenced by the Vostochniki at court (themselves under the influence of a quack Buriat doctor called Badmaev) into embarking on ill-fated adventures in the Far East.[48] By far the most important of the Vostochniki to write about India was

[46] Many are now to be found in *Turkestanskii sbornik*, where they were collected for the edification of officers in the Turkestan Public Library.

[47] See 'Raport poruchika A. I. Vygornitskogo Upravliaiushchemu delami Voenno-Uchenogo Komiteta o ego komandirovke v Indiiu', no. 140, 4 March 1897, and no. 141, in Shastitko, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia*, pp. 305–11.

[48] See Riasanovsky, 'The Emergence of Eurasianism', pp. 58–61; Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Towards the Rising Sun*, pp. 42–49, 199–200.

Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomskii ('Ookhtomsky') (1861–1921), the owner of several newspapers, a chief promoter of the Trans-Siberian Railway and tutor to the future Nicholas II, then tsarevich, whom he accompanied on his grand tour of Asia in 1890–91, publishing an enormous, lavishly illustrated account of the journey. Their route took them from the Black Sea to Greece, Egypt, Aden, India, China and Siberia (where the Tsarevich turned the first sod at the eastern end of the Trans-Siberian Railway) before returning overland. However, the bulk of the book (which was translated into English in 1896) is devoted to India, and it is here that Ukhtomskii allows himself his most extravagant flights of fancy:

> the confused, benighted, intimidated people come running in crowds and collect along the road to gaze upon the unknown great Guest, who, so they have been told, has come here from the unknown, incomprehensible but powerful North, where the White Tsar rules. There is something about many of the natives, men and women, which in general reminds one of our common people: the favourite red colour of their clothes, the knotted shawls of the womenfolk, framing their faces — why in the various details does there seem to be something familiar and close to the spirit? Is it all coincidence, are there no grounds for suggesting that we are still little changed by Western culture. And they, frozen in an almost prehistoric antiquity, are not only our brothers by blood, but also because of an internal imprint applied both to us and to them?[49]

As if that were insufficient, he adds:

> The supposed brotherhood between the Anglo-Saxon race and the Aryan elements of part of India, deduced from minute philological investigations, is no more than a sentimental fiction; but if one speaks of the bonds, historical and ethnographic, which unite the Russian people with Iran and Turan, from the Caspian to the Ganges and the Deccan, then the question finds its correct and lawful foundation in the past and present life of the lands just mentioned.
>
> The community of character expresses itself even in details! Our words *shooba* and *shoogai* are identical with the names of the corresponding articles of clothing in the north-west of India. Both there and in Russia it is the custom for many men, on superstitious grounds, to wear a ring in the ear, and so forth. Are there not also many points of contact in certain peculiarities of Hindu and Russian peasant life?[50]

Rather than the construction of 'otherness', it is the assertion of kinship with Indians which would legitimate Russian rule (a tactic

[49] Kniaz Esper Esperovich Ukhtomskii, *Puteshestvie na Vostok ego Imperatorskogo Vysochestva Gosudaria Naslednika Tsesarevicha 1890–91*, Leipzig, 1893, vol. 1, p. 9. For a short biography of Ukhtomskii, see Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Towards the Rising Sun*, pp. 42–49.

[50] Ookhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, vol. 2, p. 102.

which, he notes, some Britons used as well, playing on ideas of 'Aryan Brotherhood'). Ukhtomskii is, no doubt, an Orientalist essentializer of the worst possible type, but he is quite happy to essentialize himself and the remainder of the Russian people, and he is certainly not interested in establishing 'difference': 'Is it in name alone that the mysterious and little studied *tewkalshchicks* or "stranglers" among our dissenters resemble the Thugs?'[51] Even *Thuggee*, or the Anglo-Indian view of it, is in this vision a badge of kinship and of 'Asian' pride. Ukhtomskii complained of the paucity of Indians at the official gatherings he and his charge attended; they met only a few Princes and Parsees (it is perhaps worth noting that Curzon made precisely the same observation about Russian official society in Tashkent in his *Russia in Central Asia*),[52] The Prince was also convinced that the British reliance on native troops would lead to their downfall. He found it almost incomprehensible that Sepoys had taken part in the attack on the Kashmir gate during the siege of Delhi, thus bringing the mutiny to an end,[53] and had similar feelings at Lucknow where he asked why there was no memorial to the mutineers who had remained true to their salt. Ukhtomskii was undoubtedly an eccentric, with some truly bizarre ideas about the Indian past. Like many European travellers he had an obsession with the rather titivating idea of *thuggee*; he believed that Nizamuddin Auliya had founded the sect and, on his arrival in Calcutta, cheerfully populated the banks of Garden Reach with vicious stranglers, whom he imagined had been common there only thirty or forty years before![54] But the heart of his creed was always the idea of Eurasian kinship, something the Russians shared on a spiritual level with Asiatics, but the British could not.

> For the English [. . .] that most important side of the question, the spiritual life of the races they govern, remains as yet, and must always remain, a sealed book. While feeling a deep and sincere respect for England's skill in ruling foreign lands, no unprejudiced Russian can, and no patriotic Russian dare, close his eyes to the radical contrast between her systematic and our own extremely unsystematic modes of procedure within the confines of the same vast and populous Asiatic continent. For the former it is the precarious occupation of lands so favoured by the sun that labour is to be obtained there incredibly cheap. For the latter it is the extension everywhere of the patriarchal principle, insufficiently as yet incarnated in the native life of the people. It is for this reason that British India is all as fixed and as formal as a schedule, and as sharply defined as a mutinous sepoy bound to the mouth

[51] Ibid., p. 11.
[52] Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 239–40.
[53] Ookhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, vol. 1, p. 334.
[54] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 50.

> of a cannon;[55] while beyond the Himalayas, from Erzeroum to the shores of the Pacific, there is a complete absence of antipathy between the so-called victors and the vanquished — a growth and energy of popular life which has no need to fear for the future since it personifies the future itself. Russia, in reality, conquers nothing in the East, since all the alien races visibly absorbed by her are related to us in blood, in traditions, in thought; and we are only knitting together closer the bonds between us and that which in reality was always ours.[56]

Ukhtomskii's view of Russian imperial relations, which but for the religious references could have been written by a Soviet propagandist, is a common one. There were many others, intellectuals, generals and *chinovniki*, who, if they were not as flamboyant as Ukhtomskii, at least paid lip-service to the idea of racial harmony in the tsar's dominions, contrasting it with the intolerance and discrimination practised by the British. Minaev simply wrote: 'The people do not like and do not understand them. The "Niggers" (thus do white Britons refer to black Indians) strongly dislike Englishmen and know little of them.'[57] Writing a few years later the explorer and administrator Colonel Veniukov shared this view — that racism was British India's greatest weakness, whilst, conversely, the Russian's genius for mingling and assimilation was his greatest strength:

> We are not Englishmen who in India do their utmost to avoid mingling with the natives, and who, moreover, sooner or later, may pay for it by the loss of that country, where they have no ties of race. Our strength on the contrary lies in the fact that up to the present time we have assimilated subject races, mingling affably with them.[58]

Meanwhile, General Annenkov, in *The Akal-Tekke Oasis and the Road to India*, remarked on the heavy burden of taxation wiping out any possible benefits that might flow from the introduction of European 'civilization'. It is clear that Annenkov was not very well informed about India — his description of a civil service manned by aristocratic younger sons busily enriching themselves was fifty years out of date, based on Burke's speeches and Macaulay's essays on Clive and Warren Hastings, which were read with interest by other Russian officers as well.[59] He too condemned British aloofness from their Asiatic subjects, whilst claiming that 'In Turkestan an acquaintance quickly sprang

[55] Very likely a reference to Vasilii Vereshchagin's famous painting, *Vzryvanie iz pushek v Britanskoi Indii*, 'Blowing from guns in British India' (1882–85).
[56] Ookhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, vol. 2, pp. 54–55.
[57] Minaev, *Ocherki Tseilona i Indii*, vol. 2, p. 15.
[58] Quoted in Hauner, *What Is Asia to Us?*, p. 43.
[59] Snesarev, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*, pp. 46–47.

up between Sarts[60] and Russians, who visit each other and support friendly relations, which on the Russian side have no shadow of contempt for the vanquished'.[61] However, the areas which he criticized or found it hard to understand are extremely interesting. Annenkov wondered why the British had not colonized India to strengthen their position, as the Russians were doing in Turkestan (his suggestion was that Irish emigrants should have been settled there instead of allowing them to go to America and Australia). This might seem a ludicrous idea to those with a background in South Asian history, but it is a question that is actually well worth asking. The ideological and practical reasons why India never became a colony of settlement have been far too little explored. The Russians always considered Britain's hold on India to be tenuous, because the number of Europeans there was so tiny — they did not think the immense disparity in numbers between rulers and ruled was anything to be proud of: 'It does not seem to have occurred to anyone to direct colonization to India. It is difficult to determine what were the real reasons why colonization never took place, but this fact is indubitable.'[62]

Annenkov was most interested in comparing the military capacity of the two Empires, and he espoused the usual Russian view that the British had made a grave error in relying on native troops in India. Though with 200,000 men the Indian army far outnumbered the 30,000 or so Russian troops stationed in Turkestan, it was normally assumed that the Indian troops would prove unreliable in time of war as they had in 1857 and that, in any case, European soldiers would possess a moral and physical advantage. He believed firmly, along with most other administrators and soldiers in Turkestan, that European rule in Asia could only be secured with European troops and European colonists. Minaev had come to the same conclusion in 1878: 'There are no colonists here, there are no settled Englishmen here. A third

[60] The Russians were not consistent in their use of ethnic and linguistic labels in Central Asia, but 'Sart' was most commonly employed as a general term for the natives of Turkestan. There was a great deal of debate over what this actually meant and it seems to have been a slightly derogatory term used by nomads to describe settled people and town dwellers, from an Indic root meaning a merchant or caravan-leader. Barthold writes that 'To the Kazakh every member of a settled community was a Sart whether his language was Turkish or Iranian', V. V. Barthold, 'Sart', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 4, S–Z, Leiden and London, 1934, pp. 175–76; N. P. Ostroumov (1846–1930) was firm in his conviction that it was not an ethnic definition but an occupational one, and he backed this up by quoting some (apparently common) native sayings: 'A bad Kirghiz becomes a Sart, whilst a bad Sart becomes a Kirghiz'. N. P. Ostroumov, *Sarty — etnograficheskie materialy*, Tashkent, 1890 (hereafter, *Sarty — etnograficheskie materialy*), p. 7; see also id., *Znachenie nazvaniia 'sart'*, Tashkent, 1884, p. 48.

[61] Annenkov, *Akhal-Tekhinskii oazis*, p. 25.

[62] Ibid.

generation Englishman in India is a rarity',[63] which in his eyes meant that the British rule in India was necessarily fragile. Paradoxically, although they deplored British racism, the Russians considered their dependence on Indian subordinates and collaborators an inherent weakness, and did not believe that indirect rule as espoused by the British could be a firm basis for rule in Asia. In 1898 the General Staff in Turkestan published a translation of an interview with a Russian General (name unknown) who was on a hunting expedition near Lake Balkhash, taken from the Lahore *Pioneer Mail.* The General was puzzled by British policy on the North-West Frontier, saying that he could not understand why, if the *Maliks* (tribal leaders and landowners) who acted as British agents in the region were found to have been conniving at tribal raids, they were not immediately executed, rather than wasting time on judicial proceedings. Had he been in General Lockhart's shoes, he said, he would have crushed the Afridis with an 'iron fist', expelled them from their lands and settled them with 20,000 Cossacks.[64]

IV

Russian officers also took a keen interest in the growth of Indian Nationalism. There was more than a touch of *schadenfreude* in some of these descriptions of British travails with its increasing militancy. A. E. Snesarev wrote in *Golos pravdy* in 1908:

> The situation in India is developing into a long drawn-out nightmare. In Macaulay's day one Englishman could put thousands of Bengalis to flight, and today these same 'black cowards' are starting to put to flight not only the police, but also mounted troops of Britons, stinging the English Civil Servants; they have learnt to make, and have the audacity to throw bombs. In short, India in recent years has become unrecognizable.[65]

Snesarev's *India as the Main Factor in the Central Asian Question* was largely devoted to analysis of the gulf that had grown up between the rulers and the ruled in India owing to British brutality and racism. He cited a series of anecdotes gleaned from other Russian travellers and German and Italian residents in India designed to demonstrate just how peculiarly racist the British were: one, for instance, concerned

[63] Minaev, *Ocherki Tseilona i Indii,* vol. 2, p. 16.

[64] Podpolkovnik Grul'ev (ed.), 'Anglo-Russkiia otnosheniia na severo-zapadnoi granitse Indii (interv'iu s russkim generalom)', *Svedeniia, kasaiushchiiasia stran, sopredel'nykh s Turkestanskom voennym okrugom,* vypusk 4–1, Tashkent, 1898, pp. 16–17.

[65] A. E. Snesarev, 'Angliia i Avganistan', *Golos pravdy,* 1908, no. 782, *Turkestanskii sbornik,* vol. 465, p. 27.

a Captain's wife who had refused to be taken into dinner by the Maharajah of Kashmir at one of Lord Ripon's Viceregal receptions, describing him as a 'dirty Hindu'. He also referred to Madame Blavatskii's scurrilous *The Durbar in Lahore* as evidence of British mistreatment of Duleep Singh.[66]

> British rule in India appears to be the predatory, commercial rule of foreigners, who consider the people they rule over to be inferior intellectually, physically and morally. As a result of this system a loathing and disrespect for their conquerors has sprung up amongst the natives, which has made the freedom of the country from the British yoke a subject of the most fervent desire of the best portion of the native population.[67]

Snesarev was confident that the military despotism of the British in India, based as it was on the loyalty of Indian troops, would prove to be their Achilles heel. He drew attention not only to rising radicalism amongst the educated classes, but also to British unease when, as happened with increasing frequency, they were defeated at cricket or polo, 'a matter of life and death to the sons of Albion'.[68] Although they greatly underestimated the resilience of British rule in the face of what they always referred to as the 'revolutionary movement'[69] in India, the Russians were strangely unconcerned at the prospect of such ideas spreading to the native population of Turkestan, even after the Persian constitutional revolution of 1906, which was also very widely reported. Instead they concentrated on thwarting the pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic threat from their 'fanatical' Islamic subjects (something which became their chief fear after the Andijan uprising of 1898), assuming that the revolutionary movements were confined to the Russian railway workers and urban classes in Turkestan.

Most Russian observers accepted unquestioningly British Radical and Indian Nationalist arguments about India's impoverishment under British rule. Snesarev cited Montgomery Martin and Dadabhai Naoroji in calculating that 'since the time of Clive' Britain had extracted £450 million pounds, or 4.5 billion roubles, from India.[70] He further added, perhaps somewhat wistfully, that had Russia been in receipt of such largesse she could have met all her government expenditure for fifteen years without raising a penny of tax. S. Glinka, writing for the right-wing newspaper *Russkaia zemlia*, wrote in a similarly censorious manner:

[66] Snesarev *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*, pp. 139–41.
[67] Ibid., p. 37.
[68] Ibid., p. 129.
[69] 'Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie'.
[70] Snesarev, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*, pp. 46–61.

> And what has become of once wealthy India? Notwithstanding the fertile soil, the southern climate and bountiful harvest, the Indians periodically suffer from famine and tens of thousands die from extreme hunger. The people are enslaved and cannot even dream of some sort of equality with the victors. They are given over to exploitation by English firms, and the entire administrative establishment is adapted to the needs of the English with the minimum possible expenditure by the English themselves.[71]

He went on to contrast the British record in India unfavourably with Russia's great civilizing record in Turkestan, and her policies of racial equality, whilst in Lucknow Ukhtomskii met Sayyid Muhammad Hussein, the author of a pamphlet entitled *Our Difficulties and Wants*, who gave an account of crushing rural poverty and a recent famine in the north-western provinces. He used this as the basis of a financial critique of British rule, which is very similar to that of contemporary Indian Nationalists. Also echoing Naoroji,[72] the Prince makes much of the drain of remittances to England in the form of pensions and interest payments:

> all the profit of the foreign trade disappears across the sea, while at the same time the resources of the country diminish. It does not grow any the richer for its near relations with its powerful guardian and protector, but gradually loses whatever vital energy it possessed before. It has been estimated that from thirty to forty million pounds sterling annually leave India.[73]

V

Criticism of the British record in India was not confined to Russian travellers — the Frenchman, Pierre Loti, for instance, expressed similar sentiments regarding British racism and their exploitation of India and Burma.[74] What perhaps sets some Russian accounts apart is their claim to kinship with Asiatics, and their frequent assertions that racial relations were better in their own possessions. However, not all Russian officers who travelled in India shared the enthusiasm of the Vostochniki for unsullied Asiatic culture and ideas of kinship with Indians. For all his denunciations of British rule, Snesarev concluded that there was some 'fundamental element' missing from the Indian

[71] S. Glinka, 'Nashi Liberaly', *Russkaia zemlia*, 1908, no. 685, in *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 465, p. 72.

[72] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty of India*, London, 1878. It is not clear whether he did this consciously or not.

[73] Ookhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, vol. 2, p. 58.

[74] Pierre Loti, 'L'Inde — sans les Anglais' and 'Les Pagodes d'Or', in *Voyages 1872–1913* (1899–1900), Paris, 1991, pp. 649–843, 860.

psyche, which had made them feeble, passive and ripe for conquest over the previous 1,000 years; he attributed this to the admixture of Dravidian blood in the Aryan stock of the upper classes.[75] Captain V. F. Novitskii, who spent four months in India in 1888 as a guest of the Indian army, wrote a fascinating account of his travels where some rather endearingly bemused observations on polo, *punkahs*, cricket and whisky and soda mingle with more trenchant criticisms of British policy in India, military and otherwise.[76] Although he remarked on the unfailing hospitality of his hosts, he found them socially stand-offish and lacking in technical training.[77] One thing he thought utterly incomprehensible was the British officers' insistence on learning local languages (when, as he rather sneeringly remarked, none of them knew any European ones) and never addressing natives in English.[78] On his way up to Simla he shared a *tonga* with a Rissaldar-Major of the 1st Central India Horse, one Bahauddin Khan Bahadur, and was absolutely horrified to find that, despite having served in the Indian army since 1851, the old man did not speak a word of English. He wrote:

> This circumstance sufficiently illustrates the insufficiencies of the British system for ruling India, in not obliging the natives to learn the language of Government [...] this meeting made an unpleasant impression on me. Before me was a crude, totally uneducated native, bearing no trace of any kind of cultural influence [...] and after all, this old officer was a member of the Viceroy's suite, and for that reason constantly in the company of Englishmen [...] It is not surprising that the British do not bring them into their society, but set them to one side, as people who are inadequate both in their cultural development, and in their inability to follow the immutable rules of British society [...] it is possible therefore to blame them for the fact that, ruling India for such a prolonged period, they either were unable or unwilling to raise these people to their level.[79]

He went on to criticize the British for not making the Indian army a school for the civilization of the natives, as in the Russian army, where conscripts were taught to read and write. In general the attitude of Russian administrators towards the 'civilization' of Asiatic peoples was far more straightforward and less contradictory than that of the British official classes, whose loathing for the urbanized, anglicized native, and sentimental attitude towards the 'uncorrupted' (i.e. uneducated) peasantry is well known. Such a meeting with a loyal and elderly representative of the Indian 'martial races' (in this case a Punjabi

[75] Snesarev, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*, p. 71.
[76] Novitskii, *Voennye ocherki Indii*, pp. 10–12, 91.
[77] Ibid., p. ii.
[78] Ibid., p. 104.
[79] Ibid., pp. 50–51.

Muslim), had it come from the pages of Kipling or some other Anglo-Indian observer, would have been replete with expressions such as 'robust', 'sturdy' and 'salt of the earth'.[80] It is unlikely to have occurred to most British officers and civil servants that they were neglecting their imperial duty by not teaching such men English (the attitudes of missionaries and other unofficial Europeans in India are another matter). Novitskii returned to Ferghana overland, via Kashmir and Chinese Turkestan, producing another book describing his travels. He quite liked Murree, which he described as a *dachnoe mesto*,[81] similar to those in the hills near Tashkent, however he was not very enamoured of Indian food, particularly not the egg curry which was apparently all his bearer knew how to prepare.[82] His further encounters with natives in Kashmir did nothing to raise his opinion of Indians, as he was thoroughly fleeced by two merchants in Srinagar, with one of whom, Samad Shah, he ended up staying.[83] It was not a happy experience:

> One of the natives would hang around my room all day, one looking over my things, another asking me where I had come from, where I was going, why I was making this journey and what for, and yet another simply staring at me whilst I went about my business. I had barely got out of bed in the mornings when a light knock would be heard at my door, and I heard either Samad Shah or one of his sons bidding me 'Good Morning'; occasionally a few natives would gather in my room, and chatter about something or other amongst themselves, looking with surprise at the Russian characters in my letters and diaries. It clearly never occurred to these Asiatics that a fellow needs to rest, that sometimes he can want to spend a little time alone.[84]

One wonders how long Ukhtomskii's ideas of Asiatic brotherhood would have survived under such scrutiny — but he only saw Indians from his carriage window. Novitskii concluded that Indians were right to resent the presence of the British in their country because their rulers had made far too *little* effort to Westernize them and thus raise their cultural level, although he did concede that Europeanization had progressed much further there than in Turkestan.[85] As a Vostochnik,

[80] See, for instance, Rudyard Kipling, 'A Sahib's War', in *Traffics and Discoveries*, London, 1904, pp. 76–102, a fictionalized account of such a meeting with a loyal, monoglot Sikh of the 141st Punjab Cavalry on a Railway Station platform during the South African War.

[81] 'Place for *dachas*', or country cottages. He was probably referring to Chimgan near Tashkent, where in the 1880s Ostroumov writes a hundred or so Russian families were in the habit of spending the months of June, July and August to escape the heat: Ostroumov, *Sarty — etnograficheskie materialy*, footnote to p. 171.

[82] V. F. Novitskii, *Iz Indii v Ferganu*, St Petersburg, 1903, pp. 4, 16.

[83] Ibid., pp. 21–25.

[84] Ibid., p. 42.

[85] Novitskii, *Voennye ocherki Indii*, p. 202.

Ukhtomskii was less than enthusiastic about cultural and educational imports from Europe in India. Shortly after his arrival in Bombay he noted, with considerable regret, how firmly European civilization seemed to have taken root in India, singling out the University for particular opprobrium as an exotic and alien institution.[86] However, many Russians considered British India to be a model for their own attempts to spread rational enlightenment by means of education and, although the balance of Russian writing on India was negative, it was not uniformly so. Ukhtomskii himself admired British efforts at famine prevention, both in the extension of irrigation and in the construction of railways, observing that they put Russian efforts in Turkestan to shame. Minaev, despite his dislike of the British and their relations with Indians, wrote in 1878 that

> Whoever has seen British rule on the spot in India, avoids being carried away by patriotic misunderstanding, and does not close his eyes to all the good which the British have done there, will find himself far from any thoughts of the possibility of a new foreign hegemony over the Indians.[87]

The author of an 1883 article on the need for secular schools for the natives of Turkestan in *Vostochnoe obozrenie* was extremely admiring of the Anglo-Indian network of Government technical schools which did not impart religious instruction:

> The British Government is convinced, and entirely justly, that sooner or later enlightenment, understood by these rational means, will unite the many nations and tribes of Hindustan and will engender cultural well-being amongst them.[88]

In 1886 the Turkestan administration looked to British India for a model of agricultural reform, as A. I. Gippius produced a document entitled *The Resolution of the Problem of the Decentralization of Agriculture in British India*, which quoted, amongst others, John Stuart Mill and Sir Henry Maine, as part of the attempted land reform programme in Turkestan after the Girs Commission's report.[89] Even Snesarev was

[86] Ookhtomsky, *Travels in the East*, vol. 1, p. 187. Minaev also thought that it represented 'a curious spectacle of European influence'. Ivan Pavlovich Minayeff, *Travels in and Diaries of India and Burma*, trans. Hirendranath Sayal, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 45–46.

[87] Minaev, *Ocherki Tseilona i Indii*, vol. 1, p. iv.

[88] 'Russkiia Shkoly dlia Musul'man v Turkestane', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 1883, no. 38, in *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 358, p. 1550. This was a famous Siberian journal, published in Irkutsk from 1882–1906. Many of the contributors were soldiers and administrators serving in the East.

[89] TsGARUz, fond I-1, opis 27, delo no. 1526, *Reshenie zadachi detsentrilizatsii zemskogo khoziaistva v Britanskoi Indii*, pp. 34–36. The Girs Commission made recommendations for the reform of Turkestan's administration after the death of Von Kaufman in 1881. See F. K. Girs, *Otchet', Revizuiushchago, po vysochaishemu uzveleniiu, Turkestanskii krai, tainogo sovetnika Girsa*, St Petersburg, 1884.

forced to admit that the British had invested almost £200 million in building railways in India, and £29.5 million on irrigation, sums which the administration in Turkestan could only dream of. He also noted that in 1899–1900, 675 daily newspapers and 465 periodicals were published in India, together with 1,164 books in English and 6,724 in native languages.[90] At that time there were only two newspapers in Turkestan, both Government-run, although the number increased when the censorship laws were relaxed after 1905.[91] Many of Count K. K. Pahlen's recommendations for Turkestan's internal reform were heavily influenced by the example of British India. He saw in the devolved powers of the Viceroy and the existence of a dedicated, educated Civil Service in India a model for Russian attempts to reform the corrupt and over-centralized system in Turkestan, which was staffed by untrained soldiers seconded from their regiments: 'These insufficiencies present themselves especially clearly on comparison of our system for ruling the area with that of other Governments over Asiatic possessions, especially with the most prominent and extensive — the British Indian Colony.'[92]

In India, he wrote, the Viceroy and his council were given extremely extensive powers: only matters of high policy were decided by the Secretary of State in London, and this decentralization and reliance on local initiative continued right the way down to the lowest levels of the Indian Civil Service. During his reforming mission, Pahlen also attempted (unsuccessfully) to create a single code of sharia law for the *narodnye sudy*, or *Qazis*,[93] who still dealt with the bulk of judicial work in Turkestan. Believing that Indian jurisprudence offered the solution, he chose as his model Wilson's code of Anglo-Muhammadan law, translated into Russian.[94]

[90] Snesarev, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*, p. 64, note to p. 73.

[91] Adeeb Khalid, 'Printing, Publishing and Reform in Tsarist Central Asia', *International Journal of Middle-Eastern Studies*, 26, 1994, p. 188.

[92] Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (hereafter, TsGIA), fond 1396, opis 1, delo no. 437, pp. 31–33.

[93] A traditional Muslim Judge. The Qazis' courts were retained by the Russians in Turkestan after the conquest and only abolished by the Bolsheviks after 1924.

[94] 'Sbornik Anglo-Magometanskogo prava, sostavlenii professorom Kembridzhskogo Universiteta R. Uil'sonom, polozheny v osnovu rabot Tashkentskogo s'ezda po vyiasneniiu norm mestnogo material'nogo prava Turkestana'. TsGIA, fond 1396, opis 1, delo no. 362; Scott Alan Kugle, 'Framed, Blamed and Renamed: The Recasting of Islamic Jurisprudence in Colonial South Asia', in *Modern Asian Studies*, 35, 2001, pp. 257–315. Wilson's code was largely based on a single work of Islamic jurisprudence called the *Hedaya*. Pahlen failed dismally, as the council of Qazis he summoned in Tashkent stated that this sharia was like nothing they had ever encountered before.

VI

Russian encounters with Anglo-Indian Officers on the Afghan Frontier, in the Pamirs and in Turkestan itself, are somewhat more familiar territory in the study of their views of India and its rulers, and help to underline the fact that ultimately both powers were engaged in a common enterprise. The best-known of such meetings was probably that between Francis Younghusband and Captain Gronbchevskii in the Pamirs in October 1892, when they 'sat down to a very substantial repast of soups and stews, washed down with a plentiful supply of vodka'.[95] Vodka is, indeed, a recurring theme in accounts of these meetings, which became ever more frequent in the years leading up to the First World War. Although Gronbchevskii was forced to expel Younghusband from the Pamir plateau, informing him that it had just been annexed by the Tsar, the two men parted on terms of mutual esteem. They met as fellow Europeans, and fellow Imperialists, engaged on a common task, and it is quite clear from Younghusband's account (Gronbchevskii never seems to have written one)[96] that this bond was rather more important than those each man had with his accompanying train of Asiatics — Gronbchevskii also had a troop of Cossacks, of whom Younghusband remarked that they were 'Fair in complexion, thoroughly European in appearance and resembling very much our English country labourers'. (Presumably he had been in some doubt on this point hitherto.) Both men, in other words, were linked not just by civilization but by class. Gronbchevskii, in turn, was most impressed by Younghusband's escort of Gurkhas, as he had hitherto supposed that Indian native troops were no more than irregulars (a common Russian misperception). Younghusband concluded:

> I thoroughly enjoyed that meeting with a Russian Officer. We and the Russians *are* rivals, but I am sure that individual Russian and English Officers like each other a great deal better than they do the individuals of nations with which they are not in rivalry. We are both playing one big game, and we should not be one jot better off for trying to conceal the fact.[97]

Less well known, but perhaps equally revealing of the way representatives of these two ruling races felt about each other, is this account of a dinner near Merv at the time when the Anglo-Russian boundary

[95] Francis Younghusband, *The Heart of a Continent*, London, 1904 (hereafter, *The Heart of a Continent*), p. 235.

[96] He did write an interesting account of an earlier trip to Kashgaria after the fall of Yakub Beg: Lieutenant B. L. Gronbchevskii, *Otchet o poezdke v Kashgar i iuzhnuiu Kashgariiu v 1885g (Sekretno)*, New Margelan, 1886.

[97] Younghusband, *The Heart of a Continent*, p. 238.

commission was delineating the Afghan frontier with the Russian Empire. The officers of an Indian Lancer regiment invited their erstwhile Russian attackers to their temporary mess and one of them, under the *nom de plume* of 'Varenik' (literally 'boiled one' or 'dumpling') wrote this account of the proceedings for a local paper:

> To the right of the entrance stood a table with *zakuski*, this in an obvious desire to conform to our tastes, as the English themselves do not snack [lit. 'have a little bite'] before dinner, and this was obvious from the *zakuski*: dishes of rancid caviar, cream and bread smeared with butter — that was all; next to it stood some strong Spanish white wine, brandy and our own vodka 'Widow Popov', bought from us in camp [...]
>
> For the first dish they gave us some sort of soup, in which swam green peas, olives and some other berries as well. It seemed to us to be tasteless and so bitter, from the enormous quantity of Indian spices, that it positively burned the mouth from unfamiliarity: in all there were 15 dishes, with more sauces, tasting strongly of pepper, cinnamon and cloves. There was plenty of wine, but they drink mostly champagne, which begins after the first course. Dessert was the immutable pudding. This dish is as much of a delicacy to the English as the various types of *rastegai* and *korovai*[98] are to the Russians (though they are of course sweet). After all this, to our surprise we were brought sardines, with corned beef, Cheshire cheese and caviar. This was beyond our powers, and we declined it to a man [...]
>
> As the English usually do, they proposed a toast to the health of our ruler the Emperor and the welfare of Russia, a friendly '*Hip-Hip hooray! Once more! Hooray!*' mingled with our 'Ura' in reply to them.[99]

It is hardly novel to write about the representatives of rival imperial powers, especially in the nineteenth century, meeting and fraternizing in this way while their governments feuded, and they themselves might find themselves shooting at each other the following day. As Colonel Sobolev put it to Charles Marvin in 1881, 'Why should two great European powers quarrel over a few Asiatics?'.[100] Whilst he was in India, under the wing of the megalomaniac Ukhtomskii (who did not like curry either), Nicholas II seems to have spent most of his time playing billiards and smoking with Indian army officers. Such things are the stuff of imperial myth, and it is hardly controversial to suggest that class loyalties and shared culture could easily cut across national divisions when Europeans found themselves surrounded by people so much more alien than they were to each other. The men who served on the ground in Russian colonial possessions were in this respect little different from the officials and soldiers of other European powers.

[98] *Rastegai* are a sort of small pie, *korovai* are a type of bread.

[99] 'Varenik "S Russko-Avganskoi granitsy"', *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 411, 1907, pp. 189, 192.

[100] Charles Marvin, *The Russian Advance Towards India*, London, 1882, pp. 88–89.

They were interested in India insofar as it was a military rival, and the British experience might have lessons for their own experiments in ruling Muslims. They did not look on either their own imperial subjects or Britain's in India as brother Asiatics, with whom they should unite against the forces of Westernization.

VII

How far then was Turkestan's administration free from racism, that besetting vice of the British in India bemoaned by so many Russian travellers? Some notion can be gleaned by examining the treatment of minorities in Turkestan, most notably the Bokharan Jews, and Indians themselves. Occasionally Indian 'defectors' would arrive in Turkestan claiming to have knowledge of British military dispositions, although their reception was not always very sympathetic. When Shah Abad ul-Majit, a converted Sikh who claimed to have worked in the *Cutcherry*[101] in Peshawar and to have fled his infidel masters when he adopted Islam, arrived in Karshi in August 1880 he was immediately locked up as a spy.[102] Otherwise the views of Russian officers were conditioned by contact with the Sindhi Hindu moneylenders and merchants who were present in every major Turkestani town.[103]

According to an oblast survey undertaken in Samarkand in 1870 there were thirty-three Indians in the small town of Katta-Kurgan, on the frontier between the Bokharan Protectorate and Russian Turkestan. One was from Jammu and the remainder from Shikarpur. All but eight were moneylenders, and of those one was a priest, one lived off the charity of the others and the remainder were merchants — many had been there since the 1840s, well before the Russian conquest. Even the much smaller town of Peishambe had a population of twenty-three Hindus,[104] and there is no reason to suppose that the numbers present in the Samarkand oblast were in any way unusual — indeed there were at least 5,000 Indians resident in neighbouring Bokhara.[105] The Russians treated the Shikarpuris and Multanis of urban Turkestan much as they did Russian and Bokharan Jews — with suspicion and contempt. They were seen as parasites battening onto the industrious Muslim peasantry:

[101] Revenue Office.
[102] TsGARUz, fond I-5, opis 1, delo no. 530, p. 1.
[103] Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 57–109.
[104] TsGARUz, fond I-22, opis 1, delo no. 31, pp. 33, 44.
[105] The Emirate, that is, not the city. M. S. Kalandarova, 'The Indians in Bukhara in the 19th Century', in Vanina, *Indian History*, p. 9.

> A significant proportion of the speculators and moneylenders in Turkestan are Hindus. It is rare to meet a Hindu engaged in trade, or some sort of craft, because it is indisputable that all Hindus, without exception, devote all their skill and all their soul to the most horrible usury. Woe betide the unhappy native who is seduced by their deceitful promises! Easily hooked, the poor soul can only free himself at a heavy cost, namely, the loss of all his property.[106]

This could almost be a British District Commissioner in Punjab writing about the exploitation of his sturdy Jat peasantry by wily Hindu moneylenders.[107] In fact it is N. Stremoukhov, another contributor to *Vostochnoe obozrenie* of pronounced paternalist and anti-Westernizing views.[108] He went on to complain that the new Russian legal system introduced into the area was unduly favourable towards Indian moneylenders. Previously under Sharia law the faithful had been properly protected against these infidels, but although Qazis still existed under Russian rule and frequently gave judgements against Hindu moneylenders in cases of debt, these decisions were then overturned on appeal to the Russian military courts where, so Stremoukhov claimed, the Hindus easily hoodwinked the judges by bribing the *perevodchiki* (translators) to distort the evidence.[109] Some Sarts certainly appealed directly to the Russian authorities to be relieved from the necessity of paying their debts to Hindu moneylenders, but usually without success.[110] The Shikarpuris also frequently lent money to Russian officials, something which might help explain their distaste for them; in 1884 one Dilboramulya was attempting to recover a debt of 2,000 roubles from a clerk called Fedorov attached to an artillery depot in Samarkand. He was fobbed off with 25 roubles after being told that his signature on the note-of-hand was invalid because it was in Sindhi.[111] In 1882 General Kolpakovskii, during his brief tenure as acting Governor General, issued an *ukaz* designed to further curb the activities of Indian moneylenders, describing them as deceitful exploiters carrying on extensive trade in cattle under the guise of money-lending, and demanding that

[106] N. Stremoukhov, 'Turkestan i ego zhizn'', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 1882, no. 19, in *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 331 (hereafter, 'Turkestan i ego zhizn''), p. 51.

[107] See S. S. Thorburn, *Musalmans and Moneylenders in the Punjab*, Edinburgh, 1886.

[108] Nikolai Petrovich Stremoukhov (1861–1938) became a Lt. General on the General Staff, and fought in the Russo-Japanese War. He also published a novel in three parts, dealing with the travails of a Russian caravan from Orenburg in Bokhara in 1859–60, which first appeared in the journal *Svet* in 1883. It was later republished, see N. P. Stremoukhov, *V Bukharu. Roman-byl'*, St Petersburg, 1905. It seems probable that this article was written by him, rather than by his father P. N. Stremoukhov, who was director of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1864–75.

[109] Stremoukhov, 'Turkestan i ego zhizn'', p. 53.

[110] TsGARUz, fond I-5, opis 1, delo no. 1498, p. 1.

[111] TsGARUz, fond I-5, opis 1, delo no. 1517, pp. 7, 230–4.

their activities be more heavily taxed.[112] Sympathy for Indians amongst the officers actually working in Turkestan was thus limited. There were repeated attempts to expel the Shikarpuris, culminating in 1892 when it was decided that all those without British Indian passports would be forcibly repatriated. Many had no kind of documentation, having arrived in Turkestan thirty or more years before when it was still under Muslim rule. Eventually all but ten of the Shikarpuris in the Samarkand oblast were able to obtain the necessary papers through relatives back in Sindh, but those who had failed to do so were expelled, including a pandit from Katta-Kurgan.[113]

Initially the Russians liked to represent themselves as the 'liberators' of the Central Asian (Bokharan) Jews, claiming the conquest had freed them from daily persecution and humiliation under Bokharan rule.[114] In fact their treatment of them was little different. The Department of Police regularly requested reports from uezd *nachalniks*[115] on the number of Jews living in their districts and the amount of property they owned, receiving remarkably detailed replies.[116] When the first survey of the number of houses and villages in the Katta-Kurgan uezd was carried out in 1870, the administration was careful to enumerate the number of Jews in the region, which amounted to forty households in Katta-Kurgan and sixty-nine in Peishambe, all of whom were required to register with the authorities (they signed their names with Hebrew characters).[117] In 1884 when the land market was opened up, Acting Governor-General Grodekov introduced measures strongly reminiscent of the Punjab Land alienation act to prevent Jews from becoming landowners at the expense of Muslims:[118]

> When land is sold in this way a significant quantity may find its way into the hands of Jewish moneylenders, Bokharan immigrants, enriching them and bringing ruin to the poorer agricultural classes. I have found it necessary, in order to eliminate the harmful influence of the Bokharan Jews on the native population of the region, to protect them from the exploitation of Bokharan Jews.[119]

[112] TsGARUz, fond I-1, opis 5, delo no. 157, p. 12.
[113] TsGARUz, fond I-22, opis 1, delo no. 452, pp. 80–11, 133–39.
[114] L. F. Kostenko *Puteshestvie v Bukharu russkoi missii v 1870 godu*, St Petersburg, 1871, p. 19. Captain Lev Feofanovich Kostenko (1841–91) was an author and geographer who took part in the Khiva campaign of 1871–72, and produced a number of standard early works on Turkestan's society and administration. See Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye vostokovedy*, pp. 127–28.
[115] Officer in charge of an *uezd*, a district which in Central Asia could contain upwards of 150,000 people.
[116] TsGARUz, fond I-5, opis 1, delo no. 1565; fond I-1, opis 5, delo no. 175, p. 20.
[117] TsGARUz, fond I-22, opis 1, delo no. 31, pp. 46, 51–52.
[118] See M. Mufakharul Islam, 'The Punjab Land Alienation Act and the Professional Moneylenders', *Modern Asian Studies*, 29, 1995, 2, pp. 271–91.
[119] TsGARUz, fond I-5, opis 1, delo no. 1362, p. 1.

A statute first suggested by Governor-General K. P. Von Kaufman in 1877 was enforced, whereby Jews were obliged to sell land acquired from Muslims in settlement of debts within six months of its acquisition. By 1899 there were 104 Jewish families, a slight decrease since 1870, only eight of which had succeeded in emigrating from Bokhara, though had it not been for severe Russian restrictions there could have been many more.[120] In 1898 the Turkestan Governor-General despatched a circular to all the military governors, informing them that:

> The Military Governor of the Syr-Darya oblast [...] has informed me of the harmful activities of the Bokharan Jews who live in the region and systematically exploit the natives, provoking petitions asking for measures to free the population of the oblast from the heavy economic oppression of these Jews.
>
> Because of this I have simultaneously proposed to the Political Agent at Bokhara [...] not to give any of the Bokharan Jews licence to enter Turkestan.[121]

Appeals by Bokharan Jews to be made Russian subjects, and be granted the right of residence in Turkestan, normally fell on deaf ears. As Acting Governor-General, Matsshevskii said in 1904, 'The immigration here of Bokharan Jews must be recognized as extremely harmful and undesirable'.[122] He concluded that their attempt to gain Russian citizenship was merely a cynical ploy to get round the restrictions placed upon them by Bokharan law.

VIII

Russian treatment of the Sunni Muslim majority in Turkestan was different from that of the religious minorities, but by no means based upon ideas of equality between rulers and ruled. Islam, or to use the phrase most commonly employed by the Russians 'musulmanskii fanatizm', in the view of most officers represented the single greatest threat to the stability and order of the Tsar's new possessions in Turkestan, and by far the greatest obstacle to the ultimate goal of *sblizhenie*,[123] or assimilation of the region to the rest of the Empire. Although Turkestan was a new and unfamiliar territory, Russia's relations with Islamic cultures were of long standing and can be traced

[120] TsGARUz, fond I-22, opis 1, delo no. 691, pp. 2, 3–15.
[121] TsGARUz, fond I-18, opis 1, delo no. 4390, p. 1.
[122] TsGARUz, fond I-1, opis 27, delo no. 1647, pp. 3–0.
[123] See Brower, *Turkestan*, esp. pp. 3–25, 90–113 for a more detailed account of Russian problems with Central Asian Islam, and official attempts to overcome this perceived obstacle to the modernization of the region.

back at least to the fall of Kazan′ in 1552. The enlightened absolutist state under Catherine the Great espoused a policy of toleration of Islam, creating a muftiate and Muslim religious assembly at Ufa, and cooperating with the Tatar and Bashkir mullahs whom they considered to be a civilizing influence upon the Kazakh Inner Horde.[124] More recently though, Russia's principal encounter with Islam was in the Caucasus, in the long and bitter war against the Chechens, Circassians and Daghestanis which had been waged since the 1780s, and came to an end only in 1864, the year before the fall of Tashkent. It had a profound impact on Russian colonial policy and, in particular, Russian attitudes to Islam. General Ermolov, in a series of brutal campaigns from 1817 to 1827, espoused a scorched earth policy which drove an ever-deeper wedge between the Russians and the inhabitants of the Northern Caucasus.[125] The earlier policy of co-opting aristocratic elites became largely ineffective as Naqshbandi Sufi leaders and their Murids were the backbone of resistance to Russia, and all attempts to win them over failed.[126] Ermolov's cruelty provoked a general uprising in Chechnya in 1825, which ultimately produced the greatest hero of the anti-Russian struggle, Imam Shamil. A deep suspicion of Islamic elites was created, and a loss of faith in the tactic of absorbing local aristocracies which had served Russia so well in the past. As the Moscow paper *Birzhevskie vedomosti*, put it:

> The example of the Caucasus should be particularly instructive for us. The Caucasus showed us clearly the necessity of an extraordinarily careful and deliberate policy when dealing with Muslims, as also the possibility for some energetic individual, skilfully provoking the fanatical Muslim people into surprising behaviour and unusual belligerence, the suppression of which will cost Russia enormous sacrifices in gold and lives.[127]

The writer went on to assert that Turkestan was still more dangerous, as it was surrounded by Sunni Muslim neighbours. Many officers who took part in the Turkestan campaigns had served in the Caucasus,

[124] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, p. 147. It was a common (but false) Russian belief that the Kazakhs were only very superficially Islamized in the nineteenth century, an assertion repeated by many modern scholars including Martha Brill Olcott. See Allen J. Frank, 'Islam and Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde: Muslim Cossacks, Tatar Merchants and Kazakh Nomads in a Turkic Manuscript 1870–1910', in Von Kügelgen et al., *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia*, vol. 2, pp. 234–36; Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia*, pp. 275–82, 314–15.

[125] J. B. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, London, 1908, p. 130; Thomas Barrett, 'Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the Northern Caucasus', in J. Burbank and D. L. Ransel (eds), *Imperial Russia. New Histories for the Empire*, Bloomington, IN, 1998, p. 166.

[126] Chantal Lemercier Quelquejay, 'Co-optation of the Elites of Kabarda and Dagestan in the Sixteenth Century', in M. B. Broxup (ed.), *The North Caucasus Barrier*, London, 1992, p. 41; Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar*, London, 1994, pp. 41–42.

[127] 'Proekt novogo administrativnogo razdeleniia Turkestanskogo Kraia', *Birzhevskie vedomosti*, no. 38, 1873, in *Turkestanskii sbornik*, vol. 43, St Petersburg, 1873, p. 155.

including Cherniaev, Von Kaufman and Skobelev, and the lessons of the conflict were not lost on the Russians in Turkestan. Greater care was taken not to offend Muslim sensibilities, and in general they behaved with considerably less brutality (with the notable exception of Geok-Tepe in 1881). Nevertheless, the Caucasus campaign engendered a lasting suspicion of all Muslims, and in particular the Sufi brotherhoods, as 'fanatics', together with pessimism over the prospects for conversion: by 1860 Bariatinskii had concluded that any attempt to convert the Chechen and Daghestani mountaineers from Islam to Christianity would be fruitless and needlessly inflammatory.[128] This suspicion was also extended to the Tatars and Bashkirs of Kazan', Orenburg and Ufa, with the Crimean Tatars the most developed Muslims of the Empire, with what many considered to be an unhealthy Islamizing influence over the Kazakhs of the Steppes. In 1866 General Kryzhanovskii (1818–88), Governor of Orenburg, wrote of the 'Kirghiz' under his jurisdiction that: 'The Muslim fanaticism of the local population is not merely constantly increasing and strengthening, but is being introduced throughout the whole Orenburg region by means of propaganda from the Bashkirs.'[129] This meant that Russian soldiers and administrators arrived in Turkestan with their attitudes to Islam already substantially formed, with a strong belief that it was not just undesirable, but dangerous. Stories of Bokharan brutality under Emir Nasrullah, and the massacre of Prince Bekovitch-Cherkasskii's expedition to Khiva in 1736 reinforced this impression and suggested that Turkestan's Muslims were, if anything, fiercer and more fanatical than those the Russians had hitherto encountered.[130] The failure of the Emir of Bokhara's appeals to the Ottoman Sultan in 1866, and the derisory results of the attempted jihad against the Russians during the conquest, did nothing to dispel this impression. The feebleness of the resistance encountered by the Russians at Tashkent and the Zerabulak heights was offset by such incidents as the fierce siege of Ura-Tyube,[131] or the attack on the small Russian garrison of the Samarkand citadel by the Emir of Bukhara's rebellious son, the Bek of Shahrisabz, and the population of the city. Together with 'fanaticism', the backwardness engendered by Islam was also a common theme amongst Russian officers and travellers in Central Asia. Kostenko wrote that: 'There are no favourable outcomes from Islam, unless it be through the intervention of outside elements. Islamism petrifies its people, so that not only are they incapable of development, but on the

[128] Firouzeh Mostashari, 'Colonial Dilemmas: Russian Policies in the Muslim Caucasus', in Geraci and Khodarkovsky, *Of Religion and Empire*, p. 236.
[129] GARF, fond 678, opis 1, delo no. 622, pp. 90–91.
[130] See N. A. Khanikoff, *Bokhara, Its Amir and People*, London, 1845, pp. 260, 295–314.
[131] M. Zinov'ev, 'Osada Ura-Tiube i Dzhizaka. Vospominaniia ob osennei ekspeditsii 1866 goda v Turkestanskoi oblasti', *Russkii vestnik*, nos 3, 4 and 5, N.D.

contrary they regress still further into a type of ignorance.'[132] Terent'ev was also hostile, writing indignantly that he had never been admitted to the Orenburg Mosque, built by Bashkirs, on any of his visits to that city. 'The Koran is the enemy of innovation, the enemy of study, the enemy of progress in matters of science.'[133] This distrust of Islam is normally associated with General Von Kaufman, but predated his appointment as Governor-General in 1867. Kryzhanovskii, who at that time had responsibility for the new Turkestan oblast, reported to the Tsar in 1866 that:

> It is extremely difficult to determine with any certainty whether we can expect the Muslim population of the oblast to emerge from a condition, which, whilst far from savage, is, what is worse, wrongly developed [...] It is easier to foresee, that already for a long time the Sarts of the Turkestan oblast will remain as traders, without energy, without will, without love of their fatherland and without all those higher feelings and qualities which are necessary for the creation of anything durable, true and rational.[134]

IX

This contemptuous attitude towards Central Asian Muslims as culturally inferior, savage, fanatical and backward, is strongly reminiscent of the racial and religious prejudices of the British, and had similar consequences in creating an ethnic and religious division between rulers and ruled. Perhaps paradoxically, Russian fear of Muslim 'fanaticism' also meant that Christian proselytization was banned in Turkestan, whilst there was almost no interference in the waqf endowments upon which mosques and madrasahs depended and efforts to regulate the Haj were half-hearted.[135] A policy of *ignorirovanie*, perhaps best translated as an official 'blindness' towards Islam, was introduced by General Von Kaufman, and led to the preservation of a number of Muslim institutions such as the Qazis' courts until 1917 and beyond. However, this was founded upon a profound distrust of the local population, and ensured that little or no attempt was made to co-opt the local aristocracy in Turkestan as had happened in other parts of the Empire.[136] It is true that there were many more Muslim officers (mostly

[132] L. F. Kostenko, *Sredniaia Aziia i vodvorenie v nei russkoi grazhdanstvennosti*, St Petersburg, 1871, p. 85.
[133] Terent'ev, *Rossiia i Angliia*, p. 347.
[134] GARF, fond 678, opis 1, delo no. 622, p. 56.
[135] For a more detailed account of the latter, see Daniel Brower, 'Russian Roads to Mecca: Religious Tolerance and Muslim Pilgrimage in the Russian Empire', *Slavic Review*, 55, 1996, 3, pp. 567–84.
[136] For a more detailed examination of these issues, see: Alexander Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India*, University of Oxford unpublished DPhil thesis, 2005, pp. 88–113.

Tatars) in Russian service than was the case in British India. Eugene Schuyler reported that one of the principal reasons the administration was functioning well when he visited Samarkand in 1871 was because:

> The Prefect of the city was, at that time, Captain Syrtlanof, a Mussulman gentleman of Bashkir origin, speaking Kirghiz, Turki and Persian with great fluency [...] the inhabitants were well pleased with him, not only because he was a Mussulman, but because he was able to listen himself to their complaints and to decide their disputes, and was, what is rare enough to deserve mention, thoroughly honest.[137]

This was a resource which the British in India could not call upon to anything like the same extent by the 1860s, and men like Syrtlanof were the Russian military administration's best intermediaries with the local population. One well-known later example was Lt. General Alikhanoff (1846–1907), a Lesghian from Daghestan who was instrumental in bringing about the annexation of Merv, and acquired a tremendous reputation amongst Anglo-Indians.[138] In 1910 the officer commanding the Samarkand Garrison was Colonel Mir Hidayat Ullah Kasimovich, the son of a Bokharan Hadji.[139] From the 1880s there was considerable debate in India on the advisability of opening the commissioned ranks of the army more generally to 'native gentlemen' and Eurasians, partly provoked by the example of Alikhanoff, who at that time was a member of the Afghan Boundary commission.[140] The British also made limited used of such intermediaries amongst their officers: the best-known example is probably that of Colonel Sir Robert Warburton, the product of a marriage between a British officer and an Afghan noblewoman during the first Afghan War. Fluent in Pushtu, he was placed in charge of the Khyber garrisons from 1879 to 1898.[141] Had the Russians exploited this possibility to the full, it could

[137] Schuyler, *Turkistan*, vol. 1, p. 267.

[138] Alexander Marshall, *Dar al-Harb: The Russian General Staff and the Asiatic Frontier 1860–1917*, University of Glasgow unpublished PhD thesis, 2001, pp. 93–94; Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 122–25. The latter pointed out that, whilst most British commentators envisaged Alikhanoff as a turbaned oriental, he actually looked rather Scottish, and had a healthy contempt for the barbarous Turcoman.

[139] Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv (hereafter, RGVIA), fond 1396, opis 3, delo no. 268.

[140] Chandar S. Sundaram, 'Reviving a "Dead Letter": Military Indianisation and the Ideology of Anglo-India 1885–91', in P. S. Gupta and A. Deshpande (eds), *The British Raj and Its Indian Armed Forces, 1857–1939*, Delhi, 2002, p. 60. A memorandum from Kimberley to Lord Dufferin discussing Alikhanoff's propaganda value to the Russians and the impact of his prominence on attitudes in India is referred to: Oriental and India Office Collections (hereafter, OIOC) MSS Eur. F.130/3.

[141] OIOC, P/1299, July 1879, no. 6a, *Khyber Pass Arrangements*, pp. 725–26; Col. Sir Robert Warburton, *Eighteen Years in the Khyber*, London, 1900, esp. pp. 1–14 on his family background. After the second Afghan war the British envoy to Kabul was normally the son of one of India's Muslim rulers, commissioned into the Indian Army for the purpose.

potentially have transformed the nature of the military bureaucracy in Turkestan, but Alikhanoff remained a relatively isolated example. In Samarkand at least, Muslim officers rapidly fell foul of Russian suspicion of Islam. By 1876, when his book was published, Schuyler had to write that: 'Unfortunately both for the population and for the best interests of the Russian Government, Captain Syrtlanof is no longer there. The Governor-General got an idea into his head that he was a fanatic, and removed him.'[142]

The incident which led to Syrtlanof's dismissal appears to have taken place during public prayers in a Samarkand mosque during the festival of Bairam in 1873, when a number of Muslim officers, including the nachalnik of the city, attended wearing turbans and khalats[143] and exchanged gifts with the chief Qazi. This was condemned in an article published in issue no. 126 of the *St Petersburg Gazette* of that year, which was forwarded to all members of the Samarkand administration. D. Borzna, the *Gazette*'s correspondent, posed a number of questions:

1) Do serving officers and soldiers of the Muslim faith have the right, when taking part in public prayers, to change their uniform for a khalat and turban?
2) Is it an insult to the Russian uniform thus to exchange it for a khalat and turban, publicly before the natives?
3) Does it breach the discipline of soldiers to wear a khalat and turban in public?
4) Do soldiers have the right to accept khalats as gifts from the Muslim Qazi?
5) Will similar demonstrations have a baneful influence on the understanding of the natives, in relation to their disgust towards Russians/Kafirs? And
6) Should we, therefore, have Muslim officers occupying administrative posts, who through their fetishism could reinforce the antipathy of the natives towards Russians?[144]

The Governor-General wrote to General Abramov,[145] nachalnik of the Zeravshan okrug, to ask for an explanation. Syrtlanof was reprimanded, and it seems likely that this led to his dismissal. Von Kaufman's almost pathological suspicion of Tatars and Bashkirs meant that it was rare for Muslims to be given positions of real responsibility

[142] Schuyler, *Turkistan*, vol. 1, p. 267.
[143] A ceremonial robe, rather like a dressing-gown, with great honorial significance at Timurid courts. The term came to mean any gift in reward for service.
[144] TsGARUz, fond I-5, opis 1, delo no. 228, pp. 1–0.
[145] Major-General A. K. Abramov (1836–86) distinguished himself under General Cherniaev at the fall of Tashkent, and led the assault on the Samarkand citadel in 1868. Shortly thereafter he became nachalnik of the newly-created Zeravshan okrug created around the city of Samarkand, and remained in that post until 1877.

in the administration of Turkestan. Apart from the Emir of Bokhara and the Khan of Khiva, who were privileged for sound political reasons, there is no evidence to suggest that the local elite in Central Asia were viewed as equals by the Russian aristocracy, or indeed the officer class. V. P. Nalivkin,[146] always the most frank of Russian writers on Turkestan, gives the following little scene at a post-station on the Orenburg-Tashkent road to illustrate the attitude of upper-class Russians towards the natives:

> Now a large tarantass approaches the station, from which descends a Russian Tura,[147] his wife and children. They all enter the room for travellers. The lady looks tired, and sitting on the hard, padded cover of the divan, gazes with disgust at the Sarts and says something to the caretaker in their incomprehensible language. Very indulgent before, the elder suddenly becomes very rude and, without allowing them to finish their tea, drives the Sarts into the courtyard. There after long deliberation they come to the conclusion that, if the higher authorities are trying to persuade them of their equal rights with the Russians, as subjects of the White Tsar, then [...] this equality must be understood merely as a theoretical tendency.[148]

It could of course be argued that a travelling officer and his lady would probably have behaved in the same way to Russian peasants, but then the same could be said of the British, whose treatment of Indians frequently combined class and race prejudice.[149]

Until the 1890s, there were relatively few lower-class Russians within the Turkestan Governor-Generalship, but by the beginning of the twentieth century Turkestan had become a colony of settlement, with large numbers of peasant settlers flowing into the region along newly-constructed railway lines (that between Orenburg and Tashkent

[146] V. P. Nalivkin (1852–1918) was a leading educationalist in Turkestan, and perhaps more than any other the voice of the 'Third Element' in that region. From the nobility of the Moscow guberniia, he was educated at the Pavlovsky Military Academy and entered the Orenburg Cossack brigade in 1871. After leaving military service with the rank of Staff-Captain in 1878 he served in the military administration as a civilian in various capacities, spending many years as an administrator in the Ferghana oblast, in charge of the Russian-Native schools from 1885–90, and at one point becoming the Governor-General's secretary. However, he was an outspoken critic of Russia's record in Turkestan, heading the Provisional Government's Committee after the February Revolution, before joining the Tashkent Soviet in 1917 and briefly controlling its armed forces. He committed suicide on the grave of his wife in 1918: see Natal'ia Lukashova, 'V. P. Nalivkin: eshche odna zamechatel'naia zhizn'', in Panarin, *Evraziia*, pp. 72–94; Baskhanov, *Russkie voennye Vostokovedy*, p. 170.

[147] *Tura*, together with *Taksir*, seems to have been the normal mode of address for natives speaking to Europeans, the equivalent of 'Sahib'.

[148] V. P. Nalivkin, *Tuzemtsy, ran'she i teper'*, Tashkent, 1913 (hereafter, *Tuzemtsy*), p. 81.

[149] See Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793–1905*, London, 1980 (hereafter, *Race, Sex and Class*), p. 97 on.

opened in 1906). The proportion of Europeans rose from 3.74 per cent in 1897 to 6 per cent in 1911, a total of 407,000, although over half of these were settled in Semirechie, around the cities of Verny and Pishpek, rather than in the densely-populated oases to the south, where the proportion of Russians was closer to 2 per cent.[150] Peter Weisensel, in a recent study of Russian-Muslim relations in Turkestan, concludes that, whatever official rhetoric might have been, in reality Orthodox and Muslim peasants treated each other with suspicion, contempt and violence, and that inter-marriage was extremely rare.[151] Nalivkin wrote of the impression made on Sarts by the poorer classes of Russian:

> The most unfortunate impression was made by accounts of the Russian lower orders, of the so-called 'Mudzhuk' (Moujiks) with whom a significant proportion of the natives quickly became acquainted on the spot, in Turkestan, and under circumstances that were not inducive to friendly relations.[152]

These ethnic tensions were to culminate in the Central Asian Revolt of 1916, when the slaughter of Russian settlers by the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs who inhabited Semirechie was matched by equally brutal reprisals on the part of the settlers, who referred to the native population as 'dogs'.[153] Although the events of that time offer perhaps the most compelling evidence against the rosy picture of pre-revolutionary class solidarity in Central Asia painted by Soviet historians, it is too extensive a topic to be discussed in detail here. Given the lack of European settlers in India, and the fact that this conflict was largely fuelled by competition for land and water resources, it is not really directly comparable with the British experience in the subcontinent.[154]

[150] Kniaz´ V. I. Masalskii, *Turkestanskii krai*, in V. P. Semenov Tian-Shanskii (ed.), *ROSSIIA. Polnoe geograficheskoe opisanie nashego otechestva*, vol. 19, St Petersburg, 1913, p. 360 (the figures are from the 1897 census); Richard Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, Berkeley, CA, 1960, p. 137. Further statistics (and little else) for Russian settlement in the Semirechie and Syr-Darya oblasts can be found in George Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan 1896–1916*, Bloomington, IN, 1969, pp. 51–121.

[151] Peter Weisensel, 'Russian-Muslim Inter-Ethnic Relations in Russian Turkestan in the Last Years of Empire', in J. Morison (ed.), *Ethnic and National Issues in Russian and Eastern European History*, London, 2000, pp. 47–60. Further confirmation is found in the petitions received by the Pahlen Commission from peasant settlers in Semirechie, which frequently express naked hostility towards the Kazakhs: TsGIA, fond 1396, opis 1, delo no. 45, p. 238; delo no. 46, p. 21. This matter requires further study, not least because such racial hostility is rare in Central Asia today.

[152] Nalivkin, *Tuzemtsy*, p. 99.

[153] Daniel Brower, 'Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge, 44, 1996, 1, p. 49.

[154] The standard (and rather circumspect) Soviet account of the Revolt is Kh. Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v srednei Azii i Kazakhstane*, Tashkent, 1962.

Prior to the arrival of peasant settlers, however, the principal representatives of the Empire's European lower classes in Turkestan were, as in India, the soldiery. For all Ukhtomskii's prosing about Russian soldiers making friends in the bazaars of Merv and Tashkent, there were numerous incidents which recall the crass behaviour of British other ranks towards Indians. In 1877 a group of soldiers in Katta-Kurgan chopped down several trees for firewood in a Sart's garden, whilst others assaulted and robbed a native of six roubles as they were returning to barracks. Although they were punished, this was for drunkenness and breaking bounds rather than for the robbery.[155] More serious were instances of murder which were tried in the military courts: in 1873 five men of the 2nd Orenburg Line Battalion, led by their under-officer, Andrei Afanin, attacked and robbed two Sarts, killing one of them.[156] In 1883 a group of men, led by under-officer Ivanin, assaulted and killed a Sart called Radzhab.[157] A particularly nasty case concerned the garrison of Ura-Tyube, where the soldiers were in the habit of roughing up the Sarts in the bazaar, and demanding goods with menaces. In 1901 this spilled over into serious violence when private Pzhedbora shot and killed a Sart called Sharif Tursun Bakiev with a revolver as he emerged from a brothel where Bakiev was the bodyguard. As his commanding officer said, it was important to take measures to prevent the unprovoked shooting of natives by soldiers of the Ura-Tyube garrison as it caused some resentment amongst the local population.[158] Whilst there is no suggestion that these incidents were typical of the behaviour of Russian troops, they were every bit as unpleasant as the anecdotes about British troops in India repeated by Russian officers such as Snesarev, who seemed to assume that their men were incapable of such actions. Similarly in his denunciation of British treatment of Duleep Singh, Snesarev seemed oblivious to the obvious parallel with Ibn-Yamin Bek, youngest son of the last Khan of Kokand, who was deprived of his 'inheritance' and sent to a Russian school against his family's will.[159]

A more general test of attitudes towards the native population amongst the Russians in Turkestan came in 1917, when the Provisional Government in Petrograd granted full citizenship to the local population in Turkestan, introducing zemstvo and municipal government and allowing the region equal representation in the proposed constituent

[155] TsGARUz, fond I-22, opis 1, delo no. 182, pp. 21, 33.
[156] TsGVIA, fond 1396, opis 28, delo no. 5.
[157] Ibid., opis 8, delo no. 253.
[158] TsGARUz, fond I-18, opis 1, delo no. 1,661, pp. 14–150, 17–0, 21.
[159] Snesarev, *Indiia kak glavnyi faktor*, p. 143; Ostroumov, *Sarty — etnograficheskie materialy*, pp. 168–74.

assembly. Even liberal and revolutionary Russians objected to this, asking for special exemptions, such as separate dumas for the Russian and native quarters of cities, and separate electorates to the Assembly to ensure preponderant Russian representation.[160] This division between Russian and native was clearly reflected in the construction of *dvoinye gorody*[161] outside the old native towns: Tashkent, Samarkand, Chardjui, Marghelan and many others all acquired a European 'twin', normally separated from the old town by the railway line or, as in Samarkand and Tashkent, by a canal. These were almost indistinguishable from the *nouvelles villes* of French North Africa and the Cantonments of British India, except that the new towns were sometimes built some distance away from their native counterparts as at Skobelev (now Fergana) and Novaya Bukhara (now Kagan). As Curzon put it, (unconsciously prefiguring Prince Ukhtomskii's comments about Bombay) in Tashkent:

> A Valley bisects the two portions of the town, which are as separate in every particular as are the lives of the double element of the population, neither interfering nor appearing to hold communication with the other. In the capitals of India, at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, there is far greater fusion, both in public and private life, the Parsees at Bombay, the resident princes and noblemen at Calcutta, and the most influential native merchants in all three, mingling habitually in Anglo-Indian society, and taking a prominent part, in some cases in government, in others in the management of public institutions. In Tashkent, on the other hand, several obstacles preclude a similar amalgamation – the purely military character of the administration, the dearth of any wealthy or capable men among the natives, and the recency of the Russian conquest.[162]

Clearly, claims to a magnanimous cosmopolitanism were a popular rhetorical gambit for British Imperialists as well. The reality in both cases was somewhat different, at least outside the world of official receptions. As early as 1871 the Governor General's Chancellery was complaining that natives were building houses in the Russian half of Tashkent, using land near the Kokand Gate of the old city, which belonged to the *Aksakal*[163] of Sabzar: instructions were issued for them to be evicted.[164] Evgenii Markov describes the system in unambiguous terms:

[160] Adeeb Khalid, 'Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan', *Slavic Review*, 55, 1996, 2, p. 279.
[161] Twin towns.
[162] Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 239–40.
[163] Lit. 'White-beard', an Elder, in this case of an urban *mahalla* (neighbourhood) but more normally a village headman, with responsibility for 200 households or so under Russian rule.
[164] TsGARUz, fond I-1, opis 16, delo no. 224, pp. 5–70.

> The living requirements of the Russian and the Asian are so dissimilar to one another [...] that one could not imagine anything better than that these beasts of different species should live, as it were, in separate cages, without disturbing one another [...] Russian Samarkand has the sort of charms that one would not expect to find in this land of barbarism.[165]

X

Strana varvarstva, poludikie aziaty[166] — such phrases are encountered just as often in nineteenth-century Russian writing on Central Asia as in British writing on India. Taking all these examples into account, overall just how stark was the difference in racial and cultural attitudes between British India and Russian Turkestan? Leaving aside the degree to which a genuine dialogue existed between Indian and British culture at some levels of society (exemplified by the respective popularity of cricket and curry in each country today), it is a commonplace that snobbery was at least as important as racism in the hierarchies of the British Empire. The Indian Princes were as much a part of the British imperial ruling class as the Emir of Bokhara was of the Russian, rewarded with honours and titles in much the same way.[167] The British soldier was at the bottom of the social heap in India despite his skin colour, just like his Russian counterpart. It is true that the number of poor Europeans in India was very small (the Indian Government spent large sums of money annually sending European vagabonds and ne'er-do-wells back to Britain or to Australia, so that they would not tarnish the image of the ruling race) whilst by the early 1900s the Steppe regions of Turkestan had a substantial settler population. However, the presence of relatively large numbers of poor Russians in Central Asia does not override the fact that the Russian regime in Turkestan was 'colonial', in the commonly-understood sense of the term, its higher administration overwhelmingly Christian and European, its population Muslim and Asiatic. Terent'ev was being more than a little disingenuous in asserting that there was a policy of 'equal citizens' rights' throughout the Russian Empire. In fact there was a clear administrative distinction between European Russia and the Asiatic areas under military rule, where the zemstvos, or provincial elected assemblies, together with the independent civilian courts which had been created by Alexander II's reforms after 1864, did not exist.

[165] E. Markov, *Rossiia v srednei Azii*, St Petersburg, 1901, pp. 421–22.
[166] 'Land of barbarism', 'Half-wild Asians'.
[167] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, London, 2001, is merely the latest contribution to this debate, and not the most original. See, for example, Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class*.

This was matched by the distinctions made between Slavs and Asians, on grounds of religion and, if not race, of 'inferior culture', a synonym used extensively by the British as well. The Russian Empire certainly practised some legal discrimination on both religious and racial grounds. Most non-Slavs were classified as *inorodtsy*, or aliens, a term which first came into use in the late eighteenth century in place of *inovertsy*, or 'differently believing'.[168] (In practice in Turkestan the term *tuzemtsy* or 'natives' was universally employed.) Arguably the only reason the Georgian aristocracy were absorbed so easily was because they were Orthodox: Russian aristocratic families of Tatar origin, such as the Stroganovs and Iusupovs, had all converted to Christianity. Furthermore this assimilation took place at an early date, when many of the British in India were still living as Asiatics and taking Indian wives.

There is no trace of a *Vostochnik* ideology in the actual treatment of Indians and Bokharan Jews in Russian Turkestan and, more importantly, almost none in the conduct of Russian colonial policy, or the attitudes of most Russians who lived in Turkestan towards the Sarts and other subject peoples. It may seem that this point has been overly laboured, but whilst specialists in the history of Central Asia under Russian rule are mostly well aware of the colonial nature of the enterprise,[169] the exotic talk of Asian brotherhood and Eurasian identity beloved of many nineteenth-century Russian authors, and those who study them, has tended to dominate mainstream analysis of how the Russians saw their, and others', empires. Soviet historians and their Russian successors had their own reasons for promoting the notion that Russian imperial ideologies had always been free of the taint of racism, that even the imperial predecessor to the Soviet empire was a 'voluntary association' of peoples and not taken by conquest. Many Western Sovietologists and ex-Sovietologists, perhaps rather too enamoured of the notion of Russian uniqueness, swallowed this idea whole, and this has been compounded of late by the postmodern fascination with discourses, as opposed to facts, which leads to far too great a weight being attached to the writings of metropolitan commentators on Empire, and far too little attention paid to how Russia actually governed her Asiatic possessions. Consequently this recurrent theme of tsarist, and later

[168] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, p. 169. See John W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of Aliens in Imperial Russia', *Russian Review*, 57, April 1998, pp. 173–90, for a discussion of the changing meanings of this term as it evolved as a legal category. Its most consistent meaning was that of subjects of the tsar who were not Orthodox Christians.

[169] See Sahadeo, *Creating a Russian Colonial Community*, which makes numerous comparisons with the British and French Colonial Empires.

Soviet, propaganda is commonly repeated in current historiography, most recently in Orlando Figes's *Natasha's Dance.* Figes, in his chapter on the Russians as 'The descendants of Genghis Khan', describes Volkonskii, a late eighteenth-century Governor of Orenburg with a harem of Bashkir wives, who was fond of wandering round in a native khalat, as if there was something uniquely Russian about this. He writes of this blurring of cultural boundaries that 'Such a thing would never have occurred in the overseas empires of the European states'.[170] There are in fact many parallels which could be drawn with Britain's empire in India, such as the eccentric home life of Sir David Ouchterlony who was British resident at Delhi forty years later, and who supposedly went one step further by providing each of his thirteen Indian wives with her own elephant.[171] Similarly, Potemkin's 'mosque-like' palace in Tauride does not display a peculiarly Russian affinity with the Orient:[172] it is of no greater (and no less) significance than the Brighton Pavilion.

Conclusion

Prince Alexei Obolenskii told the Imperial State Council in 1909 that 'It is completely impossible to solve the national question in Russia by following the example of Western European colonial policy'.[173] Many would (and did) agree with him, and to attempt to compare all the non-Great Russian areas of the Russian Empire with the Western colonial Empires would be foolish: the Empire was too vast and too diverse for a single model of imperial rule to be feasible. In Turkestan, however, and in parts of the Caucasus, we do indeed see 'the example of Western European colonial policy' being followed, albeit with some distinctive twists.

Thus in comparing the Russian and British Empires the stark race/*soslovie* dichotomy is far from all-encompassing. Russia may herself have been an 'Oriental Despotism', as Trotskii and other Marxists would have it, and there may have been a thriving intellectual tradition that portrayed her as bridge between East and West, but the mystical semi-Asiatic strain in Russian thinking was only present in intellectual debates *within* Europe, between Slavophiles and Westernizers. In Central Asia, on the other hand, it was the fact that Russia was a European power, and that Russians were Europeans, that came to the fore. It is

[170] Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*, London, 2002 (hereafter, *Natasha's Dance*), p. 381.
[171] William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, London, 2003, pp. 31–32.
[172] Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, p. 382.
[173] Dominic Lieven, *Russia's Rulers Under the Old Regime*, New Haven, CT, 1989, p. 274.

perhaps worth remembering what Dostoevskii actually wrote in *What is Asia to Us?*: 'In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, whereas to Asia we shall go as masters. In Europe we were Asiatics, whereas in Asia we, too, are Europeans.'[174] The distinction is not absolute, but the (mostly military) men who formulated Russian colonial policy and had day-to-day dealings with Asiatics normally had no time for Vostochnik ideas: they were in Asia as representatives of superior Western civilization, and their job was to spread it. The mystic musings and indignant rantings of journalists in Moscow, the intrigues of Vostochnik adventurers at court, the trumpeting of kinship with the East by the wealthy and influential Ukhtomskii — all these are very prominent discourses, but in the last resort merely fantasies about Russia's relationship with Asia, which crumble when brought into contact with the harsh realities of imperial rule.

[174] Quoted in Hauner, *What Is Asia to Us?*, p. 1.