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COMRADES IN ARMS?: RUSSIAN & MUSLIM SOLDIERS IN THE RED ARMY DURING
WORLD WAR II

by

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B.A. University of North Florida, 2010

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in History
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Major Professor: Vladimir Solonari

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the perceptions of Muslim soldiers regarding their military service during World War II. To thoroughly analyze Muslim soldiers' attitudes, the thesis explores the total experience of Muslim military service through the Soviet Union's and Red Army's policies toward Muslims and how Russian soldiers viewed their Muslim counterparts. To achieve this, the thesis summarized current scholarship on Soviet and Red Army policies toward Muslims. The thesis analyzed the oral histories and written accounts of Muslim soldiers and Russian soldiers to understand the perceptions of Russians and Muslim soldiers. A hierarchy of cultural backwardness underlined Soviet policies in both the Red Army and the larger Soviet system. Soviet authorities viewed Russians and other Slavic peoples as more highly advanced and therefore could progress 'backward' minorities through the Marxist teleology. Muslim soldiers who were able to communicate in Russian with Russian soldiers forged primary bonds with them. Muslim soldiers who did not form these relationships correlated the Russian soldiers with the Soviet state. Russian soldiers downplayed the contributions of Muslim soldiers while glorifying their central role to the Red Army's victory as the 'Slavic Backbone.' Immediate post-war interviews focused on the difficulties of serving with Muslims including poor communication, self-injury, & desertion. However, the post-soviet interviews described the Muslim members of their primary groups as integral parts of their units. Their successful service stood tall when balanced against the larger perception of Muslim ineffectiveness.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Historiography	3
Sources.....	7
Methodology.....	9
Content of the Chapters	10
“A MUSLIM SOVIET MAN”: SOVIET POLICY TOWARD MUSLIM CITIZENS	11
Imperial Period	12
Re-conquest and New Economic Policy, 1917-1928.....	13
Cultural Revolution-Socialist Offensive, 1928-1932.....	21
1932-1941	27
World War II- 1941-1945	29
THE RED STAR AND THE GREEN CRESCENT: MUSLIM SOLDIERS IN THE RED ARMY.....	35
Imperial period.....	36
Civil War and the Development of the Territorial System	37
Cadre System (1935-1941)	40
World War II and its effect	43
Conclusion	52
SEPARATE PEOPLES, SHARED SACRIFICE: MUSLIM SOLDIERS’ PERCEPTION OF RED ARMY SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II.....	53
Introduction	53
Memory	55
Primary Group Cohesion	56

Nationality's relations in Primary Groups	60
Perceptions of the relationship between Russians and the Soviet Regime	61
Collective Memory on Nationality Relationship	63
Communication Barrier	64
Religious Discrimination's Impact on Primary group	66
Institutional Bonding	67
Language's Military Value and Career Opportunities	70
Conclusion	73
HIERARCHY OF SACRIFICE: RUSSIAN SOLDIERS' PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIM SOLDIERS	74
Wartime Brotherhood	75
'Slavic Backbone':	78
Rationale behind the 'Slavic Backbone.'	80
Tatar Yoke	84
Divergent voices	86
Active Cooperation with German Forces	87
Primary Groups and the Muslim Soldier.	89
Conclusion	92
CONCLUSION	95
Further Research.....	97
REFERENCES	99
Primary Sources:.....	99
Secondary Sources.....	100

INTRODUCTION

A lone Red Army soldier planted the Soviet flag atop the Reichstag- the German parliament. The flag spread out and shrouded the bombed out German buildings below. Appearing to dwarf the city, the lone Red Army soldier personified the whole victorious army and country. This iconic photograph became synonymous with the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. Like the Iwo Jima flag-raising picture, this photo was staged but came to symbolize the collective Soviet victory over Nazi forces. Interesting, that soldier's identity, and the three others who assisted in his mission, was unknown for much of Soviet history.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the photographer revealed the identities of the soldiers on the rooftop. Of the four, one was Russian; one was Ukrainian, and two were Muslims. The flag-raising Soviet soldier in the center of the picture is Abdulkhakim Ismailov, a Dagestani, who fought in Stalingrad and throughout the Eastern Front. While not photographed Raqymzhan Qoshqarbayev, a Kazakh, fought with the 1st Rifle Battalion throughout Germany and the Battle of Berlin.

In 1942, a fortified apartment building held for nearly two months in the Battle of Stalingrad. The Soviet soldiers in the building withstood several attacks a day and held this critical juncture near the Volga River. The siege ended when Soviet counter attacks retook the building. After the war, this building- named Pavlov's House- became a symbol of the indomitable spirit of Soviet soldiers in the face of Nazi attack. Although, Pavlov and the officers leading the defense were Russian; Ukrainians and Georgians defended this building as well as 4 Muslim soldiers: a Tajik, an Uzbek, a Tatar, and a Kazakh. Again, these four Muslims represent a small share of the overall number who served throughout this period. However, the mountain

of Russian soldiers concealed Muslim and other non-Russian soldiers. Russian soldiers constitute the clear majority of Soviet soldiers and casualties in the Eastern Front. The memory of Russian soldiers' sacrifice pervades contemporary memory of the war and is memorialized in post-Soviet recollections as a Russian conflict.¹

Muslim soldiers served throughout the Soviet Army, but Soviet public memorials primarily focused on Russian soldiers' contributions. Of the 35 million Soviet soldiers, nearly 4 million² came from Muslim predominate republics. Like all other nationalities in the Soviet Union, they served or died from disease, or they deserted, or they collaborated. Most importantly, they contributed to the victory of Soviet forces.

Muslim soldiers are not a monolithic group; they came from two separate regions and several republics. However, Russian soldiers and the Soviet government viewed Muslim soldiers as 'Moslems' or backward 'Eastern' nationalities. These conditions raise an important question: how did these soldiers perceive their military service? Also, how did Russian mentalities differ between Muslims in general and particular Muslims who served within their unit? This thesis focuses on answering these questions. Muslim soldiers who spoke Russian embedded themselves into their primary groups and perceived themselves as part of the larger army. Soldiers who did not speak Russian could not form those primary bonds with non-Muslims and perceived themselves as a discriminated minority.

Scholars define an ethnic group as people from a shared cultural background. The religious beliefs of peoples are a component of shared ethnic background. For this thesis,

¹ Nina Tumarkin *Living and the Dead* pg. 191-192.

² ² Glantz *Colossus Reborn* Table 13.6 pg. 604

religious institutions and the shared culture in everyday life construct who a Muslim is. I.E. the Waqf as a center of the educational system or shari'ah courts controlling the justice. Considering this, the thesis used Muslim as a term to describe a person coming from these regions and this background without a clear focus on personal religiosity.

The Soviet government and non-Muslim citizens viewed these peoples as Muslims and as the 'other' compared to Slavic peoples, which will be discussed at great length throughout this thesis. That entails nationalities where much of the peoples are Muslims. In the Soviet territories, these nationalities were: Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tajiks, Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Kabardino-Balkars, Azeris, Dagestanis, Ingush, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and Siberian Tatars.

Historiography

The multi-ethnic character of the Soviet Union has been a historiographical topic for several years. Alexandre Benningsen is one of the first scholars to analyze the relationship between Muslims and the Soviet Union.³ Benningsen wrote extensively on this subject, but he focused more on the relationship between the Muslim's religious structures and the Soviet Union.⁴ In these studies, Benningsen argued that Soviet policies greatly diminished the influence of Muslim organizations. This vacuum led to the rise of staunchly Anti-Soviet Sufi revivalists. Across his career, Benningsen focused on how the state failed to integrate Muslims into Soviet society.

³Alexandre Benningsen, *Mystics and Commissars. Sufism in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), Alexandre Benningsen, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), Alexandre Benningsen, *Mystics and Commissars. Sufism in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁴Alexandre Benningsen, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 1st Edition (London: Praeger, 1967).

Later historiographic trend shifted from the Islamic religious structures toward an analysis of Muslim opposition to Soviet power. The opening of Soviet archives, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, allowed historians to focus more fully on Muslim regions due to newly available archival evidence. Two examples of these works are Shoshana Keller's *To Moscow, Not Mecca* and Douglas Northrop's *Veiled Empire*.⁵ Keller's work focuses on active dissent against the Soviet Union through campaigns against Islam in Central Asia. Northrop analyzes Soviet campaigns against the veil in Central Asia. This trend reflected a shift from organized religion to individual Muslims opposing the Soviet system.

Historians focused on Muslim opposition to the Soviet state, but most recent trend focuses on Muslims working within the Soviet system. Two works that highlight this trend are Khalid Abeed's *Islam after Communism* and Ali Igmen's *Speaking Soviet With an Accent*.⁶ Igmen's *Speaking Soviet With An Accent* analyzed Soviet culture clubs in Kyrgyzstan. Within his analysis, Igmen argues that Soviet culture clubs profoundly affected Kyrgyz culture and how Kyrgyz society adapted this system to meet its needs. While Igmen focused on culture organizations, Abeed analyzed a variety of local archives, newspapers, and interviews to show the ways in which Muslims both competed with Soviet policies and worked with the Soviet state.⁷ With the focus on Muslim's cooperating with the Soviet state, Abeed was one of the first historians to write in English about Muslim military service during World War II.

⁵Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2001), Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

⁶Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.)

⁷ Within this work, Khalid described Muslim service in the Red Army and Jadid reformers as groups who worked with the Soviet Union. Pg. 77-83

In addition to Muslims in the Soviet Union and Red Army, other historians studied national minorities' military service during World War II. Early scholarship on national minorities and their role in World War II, focused on Nazi recruitment and organization of national minorities due to the availability of German sources with no access to Soviet documents. Alex Alexiev's *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army* began this trend in the historiography.⁸ Alexiev's work focuses on the difficulties associated with national minorities' integration in the Red Army, with the goal of showing how these problems continued throughout the Red Army and impacted the breakup of the Soviet state. While analyzing World War II, Alexiev argued that the Nazis were more successful at recruiting Non-Russian soldiers, than the Soviet Union.⁹ Alexiev relied on German sources because of the inaccessibility of Soviet documents.

With the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Soviet archives became more accessible, but authorities limited access to military records.¹⁰ Expanding upon Alexiev's work, Daugherty analyzed national minorities' service in the Red Army during World War II, instead of national minorities' collaboration with the German army. Leo Daugherty's "Reluctant Warriors" is one of the first to focus on national minorities in the Red Army.¹¹ Daugherty analyzed recruitment policies of the Red Army and integrated study of these units' military effectiveness.¹²

While Daugherty analyzed Soviet policies, Reese's *Soviet Military Experience* analyzed the national minorities' experience in the Red Army. Reese argued that national minorities

⁸Alexiev and Wimbush, *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988)

⁹Ibid pg. 67

¹⁰Glantz *Colossus Reborn* pg. xvi-xvii

¹¹Leo J. Daugherty, "The Reluctant Warriors: The Non-Russian Nationalities in Service of the Red Army during the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 6, no. 3 (1993): 426–445,

¹²*Soviet Military Experience* pg. 440-43

served a central role in manning the army but faced the challenges of language differences and racism.¹³ Reese and Daugherty reflected a historiographic trend focusing on Red Army policies and strategy. Glantz's expansive *Stumbling Colossus* and *Colossus Reborn* added to this trend. Within this analysis, Glantz detailed the Red Army's recruitment policies and how these policies changed from 1935 through 1945. He argued that these policies led to a more integrated and multi-ethnic Red Army even with the recruitment difficulties and desertion.¹⁴

While previous works focused on Soviet policies, Roger Reese's *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought* focuses on the development of national minorities units and the motivations of multi-ethnic Red Army soldiers.¹⁵ Furthermore, Reese is one of the first to analyze the views of Non-Russian soldiers and integrate them into his work. Within this analysis, Reese adds to the historiography of World War II by focusing on the combat motivations of Soviet soldiers.¹⁶ In this work, Reese argues that a variety of factors motivated national minorities including family history, national background, political beliefs, and history of Soviet repression.¹⁷

This thesis will attempt to add to the historiography of national minorities in the Red Army and Muslims in the Soviet Union by exploring the relationship between the Red Army and Muslims. While focusing on the Muslims in the Red Army, this thesis will explore the ways that military service shaped how the state and Non-Muslims viewed Muslim soldiers.

¹³Ibid pg. 110-112

¹⁴ Glantz *Stumbling Colossus* pg. 619-621

¹⁵ Reese *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought*.pg. 141-148

¹⁶Additionally, Catherine Merridale's *Ivan's War* is an excellent work which analyzes the memory of the war and how it was internalized by Soviet veterans.

¹⁷ Reese *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought*, pg. 307

Sources

This thesis's source base is constituted of translated document collections, published oral history collections, online oral history collections, and published memoirs. Harold Orenstein and David Glantz edited these translated document collections. The collections contain documents from STAVKA and other high-level orders related to command instructions with the Red Army.

This thesis will analyze oral histories from four different collections. Firstly, The Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System is a compilation of interviews conducted between 1951 and 1952.¹⁸ The project interviewed 1500 émigrés from the Soviet Union. Harvard University directed the interviews, under the direction of Harvard professors Merle Fainsod and Paul Friedrich. The United States Air Force and the State Department financed and coordinated this project. Due to the political climate of the US government at the time, the project primarily asked questions about Stalinist repression. Moreover, subjects of these interviews were interested in remaining in Western countries, and this interest may have influenced their responses. While the Harvard project is affected by these forces, it provides a valuable spread of many different nationalities and people who lived in the Soviet Union.

Secondly, the American University of Central Asia and Sam Trantum collaborated to interview men and women from Kyrgyzstan in 2010. Their published collection, *Life at the Edge of the Empire*, contains Russian and Kyrgyz nationalities interviews.¹⁹ The interviews are directed mainly by the subjects instead of a rigid interviewing structure. However, they cover a

¹⁸Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System. Widener Library, Harvard University.<http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/>

¹⁹ Sam Trantum, *Life at the Edge of the Empire: Oral Histories of Soviet Kyrgyzstan*, 2 edition (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).

broad breadth of topics: including World War II, Collectivization, the Stalinist period, military service, the role of the Communist party in everyday life, and Muslim faith under Soviet rule. This collection provides valuable insights for scholars of diverse interests.

Thirdly, Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, eminent scholar, and retired military intelligence officer, David Glantz interviewed 17, predominantly Russian, Red Army officers. These interviews focused on the Vistula-Oder offense of World War II, but within this offensive, Red Army officers discussed the day-to-day life of military service including relations between multi-ethnic soldiers and the training demands associated with the large-scale losses of Soviet armies. This collection and the *Life at the Edge of Empire* focused mainly on academic purposes and aimed to publish the experiences and oral histories of Soviet citizens.

Lastly, Iremember.ru is a Russian government organization which collects testimonies of Red Army veterans from World War II. The site hosts these statements in English and Russian. The website has two aims: first, to present Soviet soldiers' interviews and second, to preserve the narrator's oral histories. The project conducted primarily Russian interviews, but some non-Russians are subjects as well. This site will be used in the same way as the Harvard Project to analyze soldiers' mentality toward military service.

In addition to oral history collections, the thesis examined memoirs of Muslim and Russian soldiers. These memoirs focused on the soldier's military service. Muslim soldiers wrote these memoirs or following the Fall of the Soviet Union. Three memoirs analyzed in the thesis are *Silent Steppe*, *Red Road from Stalingrad*, and *In and Out of Stalin's GRU*.²⁰ These

²⁰ Mukhamet Shayakhmetov and Jan Butler, *The Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Kazakh Nomad under Stalin* (New York, N.Y.: Overlook/Rookery Press, 2007). Abdulin, Mansur. *Red Road from Stalingrad: Recollections of a Soviet Infantryman*. Edited by Artem Drabkin. Revised and Revised ed. edition. Barnsley, South

memoirs suffer from the same influences which all memoirs do: the perception and biases of individual people, the need to vindicate personal decision making, and selectively remembrance of events. However, for this purpose, this thesis does not focus on highly detailed specifics of events. Instead, the thesis primarily concentrates on the perceptions and remembrances of individuals. In that regard, memoirs, while suffering from these shared influences, provide valuable information regarding the personal feelings and views of Muslim and Russian soldiers.

Methodology

The sources listed above have been analyzed for the mentality of Muslim soldiers regarding their military service. Additionally, they have been analyzed to understand the ways that Russians and viewed Muslims' military service. Thus, these sources were analyzed using a qualitative analytical framework utilizing narrative theory and collective memory theory. Individuals construct narratives for a dual purpose. First, they are built for the narrator to understand their past. Second, narrators intentionally create these stories for public presentation.²¹ Therefore, they can be analyzed to understand the mentality of the narrator, but the individual experience is not the sole focus of this thesis. The sources represent not only different experiences but may be analyzed for their collective nature. Collective memory can manifest in groups as small as families to large groups such as soldiers in an army.²² This thesis employed this qualitative model to explore both Muslims' mentality toward military service and Non-Muslims' mentality toward Muslim' soldiers.

Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2005. Ismail Akhmedov, *In and out of Stalin's GRU: A Tatar's Escape from Red Army Intelligence*, First Edition (Frederick, Md: University Publications of America, 1984).

²¹ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010). Pg. 110-112

²² *Ibid* Pg. 95-99

Content of the Chapters

Considering these previous works, this thesis adds to the historiography by focusing on the perceptions of Muslim soldiers. The first two chapters concentrate on the policies of the Soviet Union toward Muslims. The first chapter synthesizes secondary source analysis of Soviet policy toward Muslims before and during World War II. The second chapter summarizes secondary source analysis of Red Army policies toward Muslims before and during World War II. The third and fourth chapter include an original analysis and interpretation of Oral histories and written memoirs of Soviet soldiers both Russian and Muslim.

The third chapter analyzes Muslim soldiers' primary sources for their perceptions of military service and their collective memory of their military service. The collective memory of the Muslim soldiers is the central focus of this thesis. For this thesis, Muslim soldiers historical writing are divided into two epochs: Post-War and Post-Soviet. Language divides Muslim soldiers into two large groups: Russian speakers and Non-Russian speakers. Soldiers who shared a language were capable of and predisposed to form primary groups with Russian soldiers. Therefore, these soldiers frequently alluded to their strong relationships with other soldiers instead of a discussion of the Soviet political system.

The fourth chapter analyzes Russian soldiers' primary sources for their perceptions of Muslim's military service. In this way, Russian soldiers described Muslims collectively and the individual soldiers in their units. With both Muslim and Russian soldiers (and with the scholarship on Primary Group Cohesion), soldiers who form strong relationships with other soldiers focus on these relationships as the principal motivation for enduring military service.

“A MUSLIM SOVIET MAN”: SOVIET POLICY TOWARD MUSLIM CITIZENS

“They also aimed to create a new kind of Soviet citizen, through a "cultural revolution" that intended to produce a New Soviet Man.”²³

This chapter focuses on Soviet government policy toward its Muslim citizens in the interwar period and through World War II. To be clear, the term “Muslims” does not necessarily imply that the persons’ religion, instead of that they came from a nationality that was predominately Muslim. In this regard, individuals might not be practicing, but they originate from a predominately Muslim nationality

Soviet policies toward Muslims, as well as other nationalities, focused on an overall ideological goal, the Soviet government aimed to create “a New Soviet Man.”²⁴ Policymakers targeted Muslim women in education and anti-veiling campaigns. Soviet authorities intended to create a supportive and loyal Soviet society through education, collectivization, nationality creation, and military service.

While Soviet officials crafted uniform policies for all citizens, the Soviet Union divided its non-Russian population into two categories: culturally advanced and culturally backward. According to Terry Martin, the two justifications for these categories were: “One was indigenoussness (*korennost*) which was available to all non-Russians. The second was “cultural backwardness” (*kul’turno-otstalost*), which was available to only those considered

²³ Northrop, Douglas Taylor. *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. 1st ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

²⁴ This phrase can be found in many works but some examples are: *Veiled Empire*, *Everyday Stalinism*, *Being Soviet* and *Inside Central Asia*. Also, refers to a more gender neutral human instead of man or woman.

developmentally backward.”²⁵ These policies implied a hierarchy of ethnicities with the most advanced being European nationalities including Germans, Finns, and Poles closely followed by Russians, Ukrainians, and Armenians, and with Muslim nationalities categorized as the most ‘backward.’²⁶ This conceptual framework pervaded the entire Soviet system.

Imperial Period

Early Soviet government policy regarding Muslims remained similar to Russian Imperial policies. Russian imperial policies revolved around the expansion of Russian strategic power through the acquisition of territory and securing of said land. Colonial governments upheld local traditions while retaining education as the purview of the religious education schools, *Madrasahs* and *Mekhtabs*. Per Peter L. Roudik, Russian imperial officials separated “secular public schools in the Turkistan colony from religious classes, giving local people the alternative to choose their means of education.”²⁷ In fact, the Russian colonial government expanded and subsidized organizations through which they could govern. Therefore, these institutions became reliant on Russian imperial subsidies and aided in the governance of these territories.²⁸ Essentially, Russian imperial officials focused on retaining religious status quo to support efforts to expand the Imperial territory of the Russian Empire.²⁹ To achieve this end, Imperial officials authorized specified religious institutions in an attempt to control Muslim religious practice- with a goal of policing the population.³⁰ Policymakers intended to govern these regions through

²⁵ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001). (23-4)

²⁶ Ibid pg. 127 Table 13

²⁷ Peter L. Roudik, *The History of the Central Asian Republics* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 2007). Pg. 88

²⁸ Robert D Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2009).

²⁹ Roudik pg. 87-88

³⁰ Roudik pg. 87-88

control of religious foundations and this system “allowed the state to govern with less violence and with a greater degree of consensus..”³¹ Therefore, Imperial officials focused on a pragmatic policy to control and rule Muslim regions of Imperial Russia. Soviet officials adopted this policy after destroying all non-official religious institutions. Additionally, Soviet officials pursued an ideological goal throughout.

Re-conquest and New Economic Policy, 1917-1928

The dissolution of the Russian Constituent Assembly sparked the Russian Civil War of 1917. The war between Whites -a conglomerate of anti-Bolshevik forces- and Red –Bolshevik and Bolshevik allied forces- lasted for nearly seven years and resulted in millions of deaths. In the two majority Muslim territories, Soviet re-conquest took multiple years. Caucasian regions declared independence immediately following the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in 1917. Aside from a brief Turkish occupation, the Caucasian region remained independent until Red forces invaded in 1920. Red forces re-conquered Azerbaijan in May 1920, Armenia in December 1920, and Georgia in April 1921. In the regards to Central Asia, Bolshevik forces maintained control of Turkestan throughout the war. Even with stiff resistance, Soviet forces fully reconquered the other Caucasian republics in 1924.

New Economic Policy or NEP, which lasted from 1923 through 1928, refers to a mixed economic system with the legalization of some private industries but with state retaining control over large industries. Also, this period has witnessed a variety of shifts in nationality policies, which impacted Muslims: delimitation of national borders, *korenizatsiia*, education including literacy programs, religious programs, and culture clubs of Kyrgyzstan. Historians have debated

³¹ Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*. pg. 8

about the strategic logic behind territorial delimitation. Oliver Roy put forward the ‘Breaker of Nations’ thesis arguing that the national delimitation policy aimed to break up Pan-Turkic, a political movement to unify Turkic nationalities under one government, and Pan-Islamist, a political movement to unite all Muslim nationalities under one government, movements.³² Terry Martin, on the other hand, suggested that international politics affected this policy through the “Trans-Frontier Factor” or the Piedmont Principle which means the Soviet interest in exploiting non-Russian diaspora communities to expand Soviet power.³³

Lastly, Francine Hirsh and Adrienne Lynn Edgar argue that border- making was a part of the process of state-sponsored evolutionism, wherein the Soviet Union aimed to accelerate the development of non-Russian nationalities through the stages of Marxist teleology. To achieve this, a nation needed to be created so they could advance by shared territory, language, and culture.³⁴ According to Marshall, “State-sponsored efforts to promote a people’s national-cultural development were compatible with Marxism, and in fact even essential to ‘emancipate the consciousness of more backward peoples’ and set them properly in motion along with rigid Marxist developmental timeline from feudalism towards (ultimately) communism.”³⁵

While it was difficult to ascertain if there was a single reason for this nationality policy, authorities focused on the advancement of nationalities through border delimitation, language reform, *Korenizatsiia*, and cultural projects. This overview focuses on state-sponsored evolutionism but will analyze other nationality policies in a similar vein.

³² Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: Geopolitics and the Birth of Nations, Revised Edition*, Updated edition (New York: NYU Press, 2007).

³³ The Piedmont Principle can be found in Martin’s *Affirmative Action Empire*.

³⁴ Found in Stalin’s *Marxism and The National Question* or Hirsh pg. 6-8

³⁵ Marshall’s *Caucasus Under Soviet Rule* pg. 150-151

Border Delimitation

This policy was pursued mostly in the northern Caucasus and in the Central Asia, where the idea of nationality was a late comer. Following the capture of the North Caucasus, Soviet policymakers created the Mountaineer ASSR in 1921. Ossetian, Karachay, Chechen, Ingush, Kabardian, and Sunzhensky Cossack regions constituted the Mountain ASSR. The districts corresponded to the majority ethnicity of each region: Balkar, Chechen, Kabardian, Karachay, Ingushetia, and Ossetia. This territory contained no single majority nationality.³⁶ Soviet authorities slowly divided the republic. Soviet officials separated the Kabardin district in September 1921. Additionally, they divided Karachay and Balkar in January 1922. Soviet authorities separated Chechnya in November 1922 and then dissolved the Mountaineer ASSR in July 1924. Soviet planners separated the Turkestan ASSR into the Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Therefore, the policy aimed at the construction of republics for a singular titular nationality.

This process of border delimitation saw rapid developments throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Per Peter Roudik, “1924 saw the dissolution of all the preceding administrative entities and a complete rewriting of the map of Central Asia, on the basis of one ethnic group, one territory.”³⁷ Soviet policymakers delimited single ethnic areas with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The overall goal remained the establishment of a territory for a titular ethnicity.

To achieve this end, Soviet officials used the 1926 census as a tool to analyze the ethnic makeup of a territory. Per Hirsch: “The Soviet Union, like the European colonial empires, used

³⁶ Alex Marshall, *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule* (London: Routledge, 2012).

³⁷ Peter L. Roudik, *The History of the Central Asian Republics* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 2007). Pg. 61

the census to achieve the intellectual and actual mastery of diverse lands and peoples.”³⁸ The census informed the delimitation process, and this delimitation advanced the nations through Marxist teleology.

Korenizatsiia

Korenizatsiia translates as “nativization” or “indigenization.” This policy aimed at creating an indigenous workforce, proletariat, intelligentsia, educators and administrators, through education. Within this system, Soviet authorities created a nationality hierarchy of cultural backwardness. Within this system, ‘Western Nationalities’ were deemed as advanced nationalities- these nationalities were: Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Germans, and Jews. While all other nationalities, ‘Eastern Nationalities’ fell below those nationalities as culturally backward and therefore needing development.³⁹

Martin argues that *Korenizatsiia* equated to the affirmative action preference and privileges to non-Russian nationalities. Policymakers focused on two goals: creating a local proletariat for the progression according to Marxist teleology and creating “a bridge between the party and the population.”⁴⁰ Also, Soviet authorities aimed to create a group who had a vested interest in the survival of the Soviet state.⁴¹ However, the ‘hole in the middle,’ a term coined by Terry Martin, means “[t]he absent national technical and clerical white collar workers who would have made possible linguistic korenizatsiia, as well as complete indigenous control over

³⁸ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*, Culture and Society after Socialism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

³⁹ Terry Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire* pg. 23

⁴⁰ Paula Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine And Empire In Stalin's Central Asia*, 1st edition (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). (81-82) And Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*, 2006. (261-262)

⁴¹ Adrienne Lynn Edgar *Tribal Nation* pg., 74-75

the eastern republics.”⁴² The ‘hole in the middle’ plagued the Soviet Union throughout its national minority territories.

Martin contends that *Korenizatsiia* developed in two distinct stages - first, *Mechanical Korenizatsiia* (1923-1926), second, functional *Korenizatsiia* (1926-1928). *Mechanical Korenizatsiia* referred to a policy where local governments dismissed Russians so that non-Russian minorities could directly replace them. Soviet policymakers reevaluated *Mechanical Korenizatsiia* in 1926 for two reasons; first, ethnic Russians resentment and second, concern over the quality of replacements.⁴³⁴⁴ Martin asserts that being replaced built up resentment among Russians, especially due to the ethnic nature of their replacement.⁴⁵ Also, the lack of technically trained national minorities restrained the growth of *Korenizatsiia* by impeding the integration of technical language into national minorities’ mother tongues. Because of the lack of secular schools and trained teachers, clergy remained one of the few literate groups and, therefore, retained prominence in these regions.

Soviet administrators reformed *korenizatsiia* in 1926, per Martin. They carried out three major reforms of the policy. Firstly, Soviet officials replaced ethnicity quotas with a ‘list of specific jobs (a *nomenklatura*) to be fulfilled.’⁴⁶ In this regard, Soviet officials prioritized filling positions with qualified candidates while giving priority to hiring titular nationalities.⁴⁷ Second, the criteria changed from members of the indigenous peoples to fluency in the native language.⁴⁸

⁴² Ibid pg. 179

⁴³ Ibid pg. 179

⁴⁴ For further explanation of the ‘hole in the middle’ please refer to page 6 of this thesis or Terry Martin’s *Affirmative Action Empire* pg. 179

⁴⁵ Ibid pg. 146-147

⁴⁶ Ibid pg. 144

⁴⁷ Ibid pg. 131

⁴⁸ Ibid pg. 144

Thirdly, specialized training programs replaced fully funded apprenticeships (*praktikanstvo*).⁴⁹

This policy would through other reforms, which will be explored later on in this paper.

Education and Religious Reform

Islamic schools proliferated throughout the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union before NEP, in part because the state proved unable to offer alternatives in any substantive and uniform way. As an example, universal secular primary education would not be available in Central Asia until the late 1930s. With the state, unable to provide an alternative, Muslim region “saw a certain recovery of Islamic education in many areas of the former Russian empire, with the number of Islamic schools in some regions even rising beyond pre-revolutionary levels.”⁵⁰ However, Soviet authorities began the long process of cataloging and indexing the financial support network of Islamic schools and mosques. The long-term plan of this policy focused on the confiscation of religious property to fund education efforts in these regions.

The process began with the circular “ On *Waqfs* ”⁵¹ issued on December 19th, 1925 ordering the “identification and registration of all *Waqf* property and setting up a system for managing it.”⁵² In addition to cataloging, “*Waqf* property which was established for the goals of education and social purposes was declared by the TsIK- TsIK stands for the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union - to be the property of the government.”⁵³ Soviet planners

⁴⁹ Ibid pg. 135

⁵⁰ Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika, and Stefan Reichmuth, *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and Its Successor States*, 1 edition (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).

⁵¹ A *Waqf* is a tithed property given by a Muslim or group of Muslims to an Islamic cultural institution, normally a *Madrasah* or *Mektab* or Mosque. *Madrasah* and *Mektab* are primary schools but each services a different age group. Similar to an elementary school and a middle school.

⁵² Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2001). pg. 88

⁵³ Ibid Pg. 88

intended to use this new real estate for funding new Soviet schools. While the takeover was not total, Muslim landowners retained possession of vineyards and gardens, it significantly reduced Islamic institutional land holdings and distressed their financial stability. Thus, Islamic schools persisted during this period but by confiscating their property Soviet authorities undercut their financial stability and used this wealth to fund Soviet educational programs.

Language and Culture

The Soviet language policy was a part of the overall Soviet strategy to advance nationalities through Marxist teleology. Per Roy, Soviet policymakers constructed new languages through accentuating dialect differences between the populations of various linguistic areas. Historians have monikered this process ‘dialectisation.’ As he put it, “The nation was constructed on the basis of difference.”⁵⁴ Soviet officials focused on the dialects to build linguistic differences, similarly to border delimitation, to achieve its larger teleological process.

In addition to dialectisation, Soviet authorities and Azeri officials supported the process of Latinization of the Turkic and Arabic languages.⁵⁵ Muslim communist-oriented intellectuals supported the movement for some reasons. They considered Latinization advisable due to the inherent difficulties of Arabic script traditionally for Turkic languages. Additionally, as Martin explains, “its letters were difficult to distinguish and had different meanings according to their place in a word.”⁵⁶ In addition to these linguistic problems, *Korenizatsiia* required from new administrators and managers the ability to communicate clearly and concisely on several issues for which traditional languages were poorly suited unless reformed.

⁵⁴ Roy’s *New Central Asia* pg. 75

⁵⁵ James Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁵⁶ Martin pg. 186

Latinization progressed unevenly in the Muslim regions. The program began in Baku in 1924; by 1925 administrators from Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabarda, Adygeya, and Karachay had accepted Latin. By 1928, Latin script completely replaced the Arabic script. In effect, the alphabet change separated Muslims from holy books because Soviet officials did not republish holy books using the new script. Additionally, the script change separated Muslims in the Soviet Union from Muslims of the Middle East. This separation became permanent for students who did not learn the old script. Historians have argued over whether this separation was intentional or a byproduct of the Latinization project.⁵⁷

In addition to the language reform, Soviet authorities promulgated a culture club program throughout Central Asia. The system began during the Civil War. Officials viewed the clubs as the “center for the worker’s whole cultural life.” Clubs were supposed to serve as places of “relaxation, sensible entertainment, and education.”⁵⁸ The clubs adjusted their programming to local habits and attitudes. During NEP, the Soviet government refocused the policy on ideology, “clubs attempted to emphasize more collective and political events in their activities.”⁵⁹ The organizations worked to reinforce and propagate Soviet policies of the time throughout the population. In addition to this ideological goal, the clubs functioned as performance halls for a variety of entertainment including movies, plays, and lectures about politics. This program continued throughout the late 1920s. In summary, these clubs highlight the transformative

⁵⁷ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: Geopolitics and the Birth of Nations, Revised Edition* (New York: NYU Press, 2007) pg. 75

⁵⁸ Ali F. Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*, Central Eurasia in Context (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012). Pg. 39

⁵⁹ *Ibid* pg. 40

policies and goals of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government planned to use culture, language, education and national territory as areas for creating this 'New Soviet Man.'

Cultural Revolution-Socialist Offensive, 1928-1932

During the period of Cultural Revolution and "Socialist Offensive," the state focused on industrialization, collectivization, sedentarization of nomadic minorities, the centralization of the state as the economic force. Stalin argued that this utopian path would lead to the 'flowering of nations.'⁶⁰ In contrast to the previous period, during this time the government imposed unrealistic and unattainable goals, instead of pragmatic compromises. It impacted the Muslim territories through collectivization, sedentarization, continued *Korenizatsiia* reform, renewed terror campaigns, and religious restructurings including anti-veiling laws.

Utopian Korenizatsiia

Per Martin, Soviet policymakers envisioned functional *korenizatsiia* as a pragmatic reaction to Russian resentment and other difficulties of the time.⁶¹ After that, the government turned to the unrealistic goals and aims of the previous period. For example: "In March 1929, Yakutia, whose general apparat was then only 13 percent Yakut, abruptly announced a goal of 50 percent Yakut representation in only nine months. In late 1929, the Komi government called for complete linguistic *Korenizatsiia* within a few months."⁶² Additionally, the Central Committee's December 1928 decree required Uzbek and local languages within bureaucratic structures, to expand national minorities inclusion in Soviet government. However, insufficient national minorities cadres existed to fill these jobs, a nagging reminder of the 'hole in the middle.' Local

⁶⁰ Ibid pg. 26

⁶¹ Martin pg. 130-131

⁶² Martin pg. 171

educational facilities simply could not meet demand in such a short period. In theory, the language requirements were designed to force Russians and other Europeans to learn titular nationality languages but this goal, too, was unrealistic. To conclude, Utopian *Korenizatsiia* aimed high but proved unable to meet its aims.

Collectivization and Sedentarization

According to Marshall, the target of a large industrial proletariat required increased food supply: “to both feed the towns and factories and generate a sufficient surplus to sell on to the foreign exchanges.”⁶³ In Central Asia, this process began with the Land and Water reform in the mid- 1920s, which divided large tracts of land and split it among poorer farmers into networks of cooperatives.⁶⁴ In the 1928-1932 the Soviet government pursued the policy of collectivization accompanied by *dekulakization*. “*Kulaks*” were a Russian term for successful and wealthy farmers, seen as enemies of the collectivization or creation of collective farms or *kolkhozes*. In addition to deporting *kulaks*, Soviet officials deprived them of their property. Authorities redistributed *de-kulakized* property, among other peasants or included it in ownership of *kolkhozes*. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, Soviet policymakers constructed *kolkhozes* along already established clan and family lines. According to Galina M. Emelyanova, “The *Kolkhoz* system had a significant social dimension because *kolkhozes* ran schools, clubs, libraries, cinemas, and agro-based industries.”⁶⁵ Crop failures, caused by numerous factors including uneven development of collectivized farms, led to large-scale famine throughout the Soviet

⁶³ Marshall pg. 195

⁶⁴ Galina M. Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam: A Historical Survey*, 1st Edition (Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Pg. 111-112

⁶⁵ *Ibid* pg. 119

Union, primarily impacting Ukraine and Kazakhstan. During the development of collectivization, the policy of sedentarization profoundly changed nomadic Muslim peoples of Kazakhstan. Similar to collectivization, sedentarization caused significant human suffering.

Sedentarization targeted nomadic herdsman, including the Muslim nationalities: Kazaks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, as well as Buryat Mongols who were Buddhists. The policy began in December 1929 when the Central Committee of the Communist Party “resolved that the “sedentarization” of the nomads was a necessary prerequisite ‘for the socialist reconstruction of the economy.’”⁶⁶ The policy aimed at “freeing land for grain cultivation; incorporating the nomads into the collective farm system; making a workforce available for agriculture and industry; ending friction between herdsman and peasants, which had a negative effect on the region’s agricultural production.”⁶⁷ The policy evolved through two phases: 1930-1931 and Autumn 1931 through 1933 harvest. In the first step, the government focused on settling “nomads in agricultural and animal raising villages.” However, this policy was accorded a low priority policy so much so that “no local organization put [it] actually into practice andeven official propaganda ignored [it].”⁶⁸ The primary focus of local bureaucracy centered on enforcing grain and livestock quotas. The second phase aimed to settle nomadic minorities groups into agricultural and industrial jobs.⁶⁹

In 1931, Soviet authorities collectivized nomads’ their herds and moved them into the hands of the *kolkhozes*. This policy led to the near collapse of Kazak livestock. Per Niccolò

⁶⁶ Niccolò Pianciola and Susan Finnel, “Famine in the Steppe. The Collectivization of Agriculture and the Kazak Herdsman, 1928-1934,” *Cahiers Du Monde Russe*, 2004. Pg. 155

⁶⁷ Ibid pg. 155

⁶⁸ Ibid pg. 188-9

⁶⁹ Ibid pg. 189

Piancola and Susan Finnel, “It proved impossible to keep alive the large numbers of animals concentrated in these *kolkhozes*, created on unsuitable land, distant from springs and wells. Many died because of the lack of organization in requisitions.”⁷⁰ Herd losses totaled up to nearly 90% of the herd.⁷¹ In addition to herd losses, Soviet authorities expected nomadic herdsmen to perform agricultural labor, without adequate funding for training. This oversight resulted in mass starvation and out-migration from areas of hunger. Nevertheless, these policies achieved some of the aims, as Piancola and Finnel note since “turning the ‘backward’ peoples in the USSR into rag-clad refugees who were totally dependent on state ‘aid’ was a way of incorporating these societies.”⁷² Soviet administrators intended sedentarization and collectivization as two agricultural processes aimed at the integration and consolidation of Soviet citizens, including Muslim nationalities. Also, Soviet authorities planned on using agricultural outcomes to fuel industrialization in the cities. Industrialization and collectivization focused on developing the “New Soviet Man.”

Religious Policies and Anti-Veiling Laws

Soviet anti-religious policies began in 1924 but initially focused primarily on Orthodox Christianity instead of Islam. Nevertheless, even during this early period Soviet authority utilized judicial reform as a method of undermining Islam. Ingush and Chechens were forced to accept the abolition of *shari’ah* courts in their autonomous provinces in 1923 and 1926 respectively.⁷³ However, two factors slowed the progress of these policies. Firstly, Sufism remained difficult to

⁷⁰ Ibid Pg. 163

⁷¹ Ibid pg. 166

⁷² Ibid pg. 191

⁷³ Ibid pg. 469-70

assault, it “needed no mosques, and assumed a clandestine role, which with the support of the great majority of the population, allowed them to survive the whole period of communist rule.”

⁷⁴⁷⁵ Secondly, clan relations remained well entrenched and required more than judicial reform. Combatting them required years of education and ideological training against the traditional familial structure. To rectify these problems, Soviet authorities introduced two changes in the Muslim regions: The Marriage and Family Code of 1926 and the Criminal Code of 1927.

The 1926 Marriage and Family code set new divorce law and banned several traditional practices such as polygamy, arranged marriage, child brides, and dowry. In addition to this law, Soviet authorities organized a 1927 movement in Central Asia for women’s liberation. This policy aimed to bring women out of the seclusion of their homes into Central Asian society.⁷⁶ However, women’s seclusion and veiling differed from region to region. Per Keller, “As in the rest of the Islamic world, the extent of a woman’s covering was determined largely by local culture and economic status. Among the nomadic Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen groups, survival required women’s labor. “Women could not work while encumbered by the head-to-toe *paranji*, so they simply covered their hair.”⁷⁷ To compare, Uzbek women wore a traditional *paranji* while Chechen, Turkmen, and other Muslims wore traditional scarves but not a full *hijab*. This cultural practice kept a woman from integration in the industrial workforce, a key goal of Collectivization and industrialization. Collectivization, also demanded, “much physical

⁷⁴ Sufism is the mystical sect of Islam. Abun-Nasr, Jamil M.. *Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life*. (Columbia University Press, 2013). Carl W. Ernst Ph. D, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, Reprint edition (Boston, Mass.; London: Shambhala, 2011).

⁷⁵ *Ibid* pg. 469

⁷⁶ Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*, 1st end (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). Pg. 12

⁷⁷ Keller’s *To Moscow, Not Mecca* pg. 64-65

labor, which women covered in yards of cloth could not perform.”⁷⁸ To achieve this aim of the unveiling, Soviet officials held rallies, performed plays and mass unveilings, but they never illegalized the practice. In fact, the policy shifted in the 1930s away from an attack on the veil as an Islamic institution to emphasizing: “that collective farm work and factory work were the only vehicles for true women’s liberation. Denouncing the veil outside of the context of the needs of the proletarian state was no longer acceptable.”⁷⁹ The need for workplace labor drove this assault on an Islamic practice, but primarily to rid the region of ‘backwardness’ and propel women into the proletarian workforce as a means of advancing nations through Marxist teleology.

The Criminal Code of 1927 increased the powers of Soviet courts at the expense of *Shari’ah* courts’ authority.⁸⁰ For example, in Uzbekistan, the number of *Sharia’ah* courts declined from 87 in 1925 to 27 by 1926, and to 7 in 1927.⁸¹ In addition to these legal reforms, the Criminal Code of 1927 illegalized the propagation of religion on an individual level. The new code ordered substantial punishments for standard functions of religious organizations. These sanctions included: “One year’s “corrective labor” for teaching religious beliefs to minors in any school, six months “corrective” labor for “forced collection of contributions to religious organizations,” and three months “corrective” labor for the performance of religious rites in state or social establishments.”⁸² The law code reflected, a shifting trend within Soviet governmental policy. The government no longer focused on assailing Islamic institutions but instead

⁷⁸ Ibid pg. 199

⁷⁹ Ibid pg. 200

⁸⁰ Muslim legal courts that enforced religious laws.

⁸¹ Fazlur Rahman, “Evolution of Soviet Policy toward Muslims in Russia: 1917-1965” in *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 1979 28-46. Pg. 36

⁸² Ibid pg. 37

concentrated on the re-education of national minority members. The code outlined new provisions for the education of minors. The law prescribed, “that the teaching of any religious faith [whatsoever] was not allowed in the state, social, or private educational institutions.”⁸³ Soviet authorities used the act to illegalize religious schools, *Mektab* or *Madrassah*. Also, it drastically reduced the power of clergy by only allowing parents to teach religion to their children. To conclude, these legal reforms reflected a shift toward restrictions on the religious activity of individuals and *Shari’ah* courts. The Family Law code focused on the integration of women into the Central Asian workforce. Soviet religious policies, veiling campaigns, and law reform targeted Muslim religious practices as a source of backwardness. Soviet authorities targeted Islamic institutions that conflicted with Soviet goals of national progress.

1932-1941

There are lots of controversy surrounding this time among Soviet historians. It has been referred to as the “Great Retreat” and has been written about extensively.⁸⁴ The Soviet policies changed in an apparent and perceptible manner during this period.

Silent Korenizatsiia

Terry Martin argued that while the policy remained in effect, it was no longer publicly espoused. He contended that Soviet policymakers shifted this policy as a reaction to Russians’ resentment. Added to a suspicion regarding an upcoming war with capitalist states, Martin argued that this period focused on regaining ethnic Russian support.⁸⁵ Within this term, he

⁸³ Cited after Ibid pg. 38

⁸⁴ Two works engaged in this debate are: Nicholas Timasheff, *Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: Ayer Co Pub, 1972). And I. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*, 1 edition (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁸⁵ Martin pg. 393

argued that this period saw two significant educational reforms at this time. First of these changes focused on the elimination of the *bronia* - a university admission quota for “culturally backward nationalities”- in higher education.⁸⁶ Martin argued that the ending of *bronia* was tantamount to the abolition of *korenizatsiia* public nature, but the overall practice continued privately.

The second change focused on bolstering primary education to closer match the requirements of higher education. During the early 1930s, remedial schools served to bridge the gap between primary education and university. However, starting in the mid-1930s, Soviet policymakers’ focus shifted to the construction of a country-wide elementary educational system in the eastern territories and regions with insufficient elementary education. Soviet policymakers still focused on a self-perpetuating Soviet Man, “the preparation of cadres for the [preparation of] cadres.”⁸⁷ In addition to educational system reform, Russian language education increased during the late 1930s. As Martin explains, education reform: “... aimed at improving access to higher education, since efforts at the linguistic *korenizatsiia* of more than pedagogical VUZy⁸⁸ had also largely ceased with the end of the cultural revolution.”⁸⁹ The growth Russian language educational program included an alphabet transition, for Muslim languages, to Cyrillic.

⁸⁶ Martin pg. 373

⁸⁷ Ibid pg. 374

⁸⁸ Institutions of higher learning.

⁸⁹ Terry Martin *Affirmative Action Empire* pg. 375

Cyrillicization

Mandatory Russian language education began at all levels of the Soviet education system in 1938.⁹⁰ However, the process of changing Non- Russian script to Cyrillic started earlier. In 1933, the Organizational Bureau, Orgburo, of the Central Committee organized a review of Latinization. The report finished in 1934, mandated that Latinization “had been a correct policy but that errors had been made in its implementation.”⁹¹ The switch to Cyrillic began in local soviets that applied to the Soviet of Nationalities for approval. “The first shift occurred on April 7th, 1936 when “the Kabardian-Balkar obkom voted to shift their alphabet to Russian.”⁹² The script change proceeded very slowly and unevenly throughout the Soviet Union. Cyrillicization began in the North Caucasus in February 1937 but did not spread to Central Asia until 1940.

This policy further separated Muslims from holy books and cross-border nationalities. It made holy books published in Arabic unintelligible for students who learned Cyrillic alphabets, similar to the effects of Latinization. The change in alphabet confounded interactions between Soviet Muslim nationalities and other Muslims, such as Turks and Kazakhs. In addition to this, the alphabet change removed Soviet Muslims from contact with Turkic religious thought as well. Whether Soviet policy makers wanted to this result, remains a topic of discussion for historians.

World War II- 1941-1945

The Soviet Union engaged in smaller conflicts beginning with the Soviet invasion of Poland on September 17th, 1939 and the Soviet invasion of Finland on November 30th, 1939.

⁹⁰ “Ayse Pamir Dietrich, “Language Policy and the Status of Russian in the Soviet Union and the Successor States Outside the Russian Federation,” *Australian Slavonic & East European Studies* 19, no. 1/2 (December 2005): 1–2.

⁹¹ *Ibid* pg. 421

⁹² *Ibid* pg. 421

However, Nazi forces surprised Soviet forces on June 22nd, 1941. Shortly after the invasion, Nazi forces occupied fifty percent of the Soviet population and a majority of the industrialized areas. These losses to the industry made Central Asian and Siberian factories more vital to the Soviet war effort. Additionally, the role of Muslim soldiers will be covered more fully in the second chapter. The war years saw pragmatic decisions made to meet the states' demands on the population. For example, Soviet authorities tightened labor laws on Muslim citizens and allowed religious institutions to return to a provisional and regulated system. Additionally, deportations affected several Muslim nationalities in the North Caucasus and Crimea. The Soviet Union's policies towards Muslims, during this period, aimed to: fulfill practical needs, garner support, and punish perceived disloyalty.

Industrialization and Labor Laws in Muslim Territories

Soviet planners accelerated industrialization drive during the Stalinist five-year plan, including the Muslim regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Factories resettlement to Central Asia became central to the Soviet war effort after the Nazi invasion. According to Roudik, "The leadership of each Central Asian republic was assigned to accelerate the development of industries necessary for defense. This changed the industrial structure of the region."⁹³ These industries included coal mining, steel production, cotton processing, and oil production in Azerbaijan. In addition to the introduction of new industries, Soviet policy makers announced new wartime labor laws "which required working 13 hours per day, six days per week; a cancellation of all annual vacations; and prohibitions to leave the place of work

⁹³ Roudik pg. 123

voluntarily under the threat of an eight-year imprisonment.”⁹⁴ Also, displaced peoples from deportations or refugees from the Western Soviet territories began working in the factories in living in the cities of Central Asia. These communities changed the ethnic dynamics of the region. Additionally, these new citizens stressed an already overworked social system and added to internal ethnic divisions.⁹⁵ This industrial policy affected Muslim workers throughout the Soviet Union.

Relaxation of Religious Policy during the World War II

The difficulties of the war and the need for soldiers impelled Soviet officials to garner support among Muslim members of the Soviet East. With that goal in mind, Soviet authorities created sanctioned Islamic organizations. An example of this program’s purpose, Soviet authorities appointed Abdurrahman Rasul to the Muftiate of the Central Muslim Religious Board in Bashkiria. “In 1941, he made fervent appeals to Muslims to pray for the victory of the Red Army and support the Soviet government during World War II. He is said to have pleaded with Stalin to lift some of the pressure on Russian Muslims. At that time, the Soviet leadership was in desperate need of Muslim support. Hence some realignment of relationships was brought about.”⁹⁶ The setbacks of the early years of the war necessitated more soldiers and increased manufacturing. These official religious organizations aimed to engender support for the Soviet state.

The Central Committee divided the Central Directorate, in 1944, into four Spiritual Muslim directorates based in Kazakhstan, Caucasus, Russia/ Siberia, and Azerbaijan. These

⁹⁴ Ibid. pg. 123

⁹⁵ Tashkent work, pg. 142-44

⁹⁶ Religious Policy article pg. 39

separate directorates legitimated religious practice through a state-controlled registration process. All unregistered religious practice remained banned. Therefore, all mosques, *madrassas*, or publications required registration. Additionally, all Imams or religious scholars needed registration.⁹⁷ Therefore, these Soviet directorates influenced a great deal of religious thought and practice throughout the country. Even with these tight constraints, the reformed Soviet system allowed observant Muslims to practice their faith legally. However, Soviet administrators controlled the content of educational programs and maintained state sanctions and a modicum of state control.

Deportations of Muslim peoples

Following the Soviet liberation of the Caucasus and Crimea from the Nazis, Soviet authorities carried out deportations of Muslim peoples residing there. Deportations of Muslim citizens began in November 1943 and continued through November 1944. Deportations of Karachays commenced in November 1943 and finished in February 1944. Kabardino-Balkar and Chechen-Ingush deportation began in April 1944. The final deportation of Muslims focused on Crimean Tatars and commenced in May 1944. Deportations of Northern Caucasian Muslims involved over 700,000 people with over 230,000 Crimean Tatars deported as well. In total, the Soviet government deported nearly a million Muslim civilians from the western Soviet Union to Central Asia. The official Soviet reason for these deportations focused on punishment for collaboration with German forces:

many Karachai(sp) during the German occupation conducted themselves in a traitorous manner, many participated in German detachments to combat Soviet power, betrayed to the Germans honorable Soviet citizens, accompanied and acted as guides for German forces and, after the expulsion of the occupiers, opposed the

⁹⁷ Ibid pg. 39

Soviet authorities, and concealed and abetted enemies of the state and German agents.⁹⁸

Soviet authorities leveled similar charges against other Muslim nationalities such as the Crimean Tatars, Balkars, and Chechen-Ingush. Historians of the Soviet Union have debated, the rationale behind the deportations. Terry Martin argued that a fear of cross-border Pan-Turkism and perception of Turkic nationalities as a potential fifth column in case of a conflict with Turkey were decisive factors.⁹⁹ Alex Marshall argued that in addition to international and military considerations, internal instability of local party apparatus, conviction of the deported nationality's sympathy for insurgents and bandits, and finally, authorities feared that desertion and collaboration were symptoms of widespread antipathy to the Soviet system.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the poor front-line performance of units manned with Muslim minorities, Soviet authorities gauged the party's ability to raise volunteer units as a metric for measuring local support for the Soviet Union. In this regard, the perception regarding the performance of Muslims soldiers directly influenced the perception of Muslims' loyalty to the Soviet Union. In conclusion, the performance and perception of Muslim soldiers and Muslim regions during World War II may have influenced Soviet deportations.

Conclusion

This overview of Soviet policy focused on Soviet policies. Soviet officials aimed to create a Muslim proletariat, intelligentsia, and government officials for the progression of Marxist teleology and the advancement of 'backward' Muslims. Whether Soviet administrators

⁹⁸ Marshall pg. 267

⁹⁹ Martin pg. 421-422

¹⁰⁰ Ibid pg. 269

employed national delimitation, language policy, *Korenizatsiia*, anti-religious policy, collectivization, or Red Army service, they focused on the singular goal of a Muslim Soviet Man. To achieve this aim, officials enacted numerous interconnected policies. Collectivization intended to feed industrialization programs and new workers. *Korenizatsiia* focused on educating and employing Muslims. Anti-religious policies financed these projects through confiscation of Muslim properties or *Waqfs*. Language policy attempted to modernize languages for Russian loan words and highlight the differences between related Turkic languages. Additionally, Soviet administrators tried to integrate Muslims throughout Red Army service. Muslims served in the Red Army from the Civil War through World War II. These policies are the focus of the next chapter.

THE RED STAR AND THE GREEN CRESCENT: MUSLIM SOLDIERS IN THE RED ARMY

"When the Bolsheviks first came to Azerbaydzhan, they formed the "Green" regiments as well. Green is the color of the Moslems and thereby, the Soviets showed that they recognized Moslem (sp) culture. Later the Green and Sharyat regiments were turned into regular units, discarding the names they had been given."¹⁰¹

This chapter focuses on Red Army policies toward Muslim soldiers during the Inter-War period through World War II. The chapter summarizes secondary sources regarding the Red Army and non-Russian national minorities. These historians include David Glantz, Roger Reese, Leo J. Daugherty, Ellen Jones, Erica McMichael, & Brandon Schecter. The chapter follows a chronological view from the Imperial Russian through World War II.

The Red Army's multi-ethnic army served a variety of functions in addition to the national defense. As noted in the previous chapter, the multivariate Soviet nationality policies focused on creating this "New Soviet Man." Roger Reese discussed this before noting: "According to PUPP RKKA¹⁰² doctrine, "Instilling in each Red Army man the discipline of a citizen-soldier and selfless devotion to our party, this is the essential task of all political work in the Red Army. "This was to be done through political indoctrination, anti-religious instruction, and basic literacy and elementary education."¹⁰³ The multiple means of indoctrination focused on creating a loyal and politically reliable non-Russian citizenry for military and other purposes.

Per sociologist Ellen Jones Red Army political administrators aimed at the long-term goals of ethnic integration:

¹⁰¹ *Harvard Project Harvard Project Case # 135 Schedule B pg. 5*

¹⁰² PUPP RKKA is the political administration of the Red Army

¹⁰³ Roger R. Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991*, Warfare and History (London: New York: Routledge, 2000). pg. 71.

(a) Identity assimilation- the erosion and disappearance of ethnic consciousness or identity (what the Soviets call *sliyaniye*). (b) Social assimilation- the extent to which group members socialize freely with out-group members. (c) convergence (*sblizheniye*)- equalization of socioeconomic and political status (what Rothschild refers as “life chances” integration). (d) Sovietization- the process of accepting basic Soviet values (acculturation); (e) political integration- minority acceptance of the legitimacy of the political system.¹⁰⁴

The policies focused on all national minorities, including Muslims. The chapter starts with Muslim soldiers during the Imperial period to show continuity with periods of Soviet Muslim military experience. After this section, the chapter proceeds with a chronological order through Red Army’s policy towards minorities through 1945.

Imperial period

Imperial planners inconsistently armed Muslim soldiers. Except for large-scale deployments, Imperial officers used Muslims, and non-Russians in general, like service or auxiliary troops. According to Leo Daugherty, “These soldiers, permitted to retain their distinct native dress and arms, saw regular service with the Russian field armies during the drive into the Trans-Caucasus region near Turkey [1877-1878 during the Russo-Turkish War].”¹⁰⁵ However, the needs for larger deployments turned Imperial officers to conscript more significant numbers of Muslim soldiers.

Imperial officials used Muslim soldiers in case of extreme need such as the Crimean War and World War I. The Imperial Army that fought in the Crimean War included more than 37,000 non-Slavic troops.¹⁰⁶ The personnel needs of World War I required legal restructuring

¹⁰⁴ Ellen Jones, *Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military* (Boston; London: Allen & Unwin, 1986). Pg. 181

¹⁰⁵ Leo J. Daugherty, “The Reluctant Warriors: The Non-Russian Nationalities in Service of the Red Army during the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 6, no. 3 (1993): 426–7,

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid* pg. 427

due to mounting losses of 1914. Russian Imperial Army conscripted Muslims from the Caucasus, Turkestan, Siberia, and Central Asia.¹⁰⁷ Regardless of these policies, Imperial forces utilized auxiliary non-Russian forces. Royal officials employed Muslim soldiers as an additional force to supplement a majority Russian force. In comparison, Soviet officials used national minorities' military service as both auxiliary forces to strengthen large forces and as an avenue for extending Soviet ideology into national minorities' populations.

Civil War and the Development of the Territorial System

Following the revolution in 1917, the Council of People's Commissars created the Red Worker's and Peasants' Army, or the Red Army. Soviet officials conscripted Central Asians to form Red Army units in Central Asia. These units combated the Bukharin Emir's arm. To involve Muslims in these new units, "The Red Army invented a special symbol of a red star surrounded by a green crescent that would accommodate the sentiments of Muslim conscripts."¹⁰⁸ This unit's iconography constituted the first Soviet attempt at involving the Muslim population in the Soviet military and using Soviet propaganda to do so.

Following the Bolsheviks' victory in the Civil War, they founded the Soviet Union in 1922. Mikhail Frunze ascended to the leadership of the Red Army and instituted a policy of territorial reserves, which resembles the American National Guard system where a larger reserve force supports a smaller permanent active duty service. The main rationale was the small budget of the young Soviet state that could not sustain a large permanent active duty military force.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid pg. 427

¹⁰⁸ Marat, Erica *The Military and the State in Central Asia: From Red Army to Independence*. (Taylor and Francis: London) Pg. 26

¹⁰⁹ Roger R. Reese, *Stalin's Reluctant Soldier: A Social History of the Red Army, 1925-1941*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1996).

pg. 10

Thus, the state created a large reserve force because it remained unable to support a large permanent active duty military force. Additionally, the devastating economic effects of the Civil War required a working Soviet population.¹¹⁰ Summer training for territorial reserves was routinely interrupted for work on economic projects.¹¹¹

Soviet officials administered the territorial reserve system by dividing the Soviet territory into several military districts. Administrators charged these districts with: “1. Registration and Mobilization affairs. 2. Pre-conscript training and preparation of the reserves. 3. Supply of quarters for units. 4. Supplying of units not assigned to corps or divisions. Organization of the services of guard detachments.... 6. Conducting and supervising the activity of the military district commissariats.”¹¹² Because of the territorial nature of the system, Soviet authorities recruited non-Russians and Russians alike.

Recruitment and Use of Troops during the Territorial System

Soviet officials passed the first universal conscription law in 1925, which contained no exemption for the national background. Consequently, 1925 saw a nearly 15% rise -in some areas- in the proportion of Muslims and national minorities in the Red Army.¹¹³ Per Ellen Jones, “Many of these minority soldiers, however, served in regular units; in 1925 nationality formations comprised only 10 percent of the overall armed forces manpower.”¹¹⁴ The number of Muslims who served in these units remains unclear. However, Tashkent officials reported a

¹¹⁰ Ibid pg. 10

¹¹¹ Ibid pg. 29

¹¹² “On the Territorial-Militia System 1925-35,” *Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 3, no. 4 (October 1990): 652–700. pg. 654

¹¹³ Marshall pg. 241

¹¹⁴ Ellen Jones, *Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military* (Boston; London: Allen & Unwin, 1986). pg.184

small jump in volunteerism in the first few months of opening.¹¹⁵ The regional officer training model continued into 1925, for example, 48 training centers opened in Kazakhstan.¹¹⁶ In addition to focusing on national minorities, Red Army recruiters aimed at recruiting urban workers. Since Soviet recruiters enrolled peasants into territorial-reserve units, Muslims, much of whom were rural, served primarily in this type of units.

The previous military experience affected military units raised in territorial units. Nationalities who served with the Imperial Army such as Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Tatars, Bashkirs, Georgians, and Armenians, “would have national units introduced immediately on their territories.”¹¹⁷ Soviet officials employed a different strategy with nationalities without a large-scale Imperial military service history, such as Kirgiz, Kazakh, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tajiks, Buryat-Mongols. Per McMichael, training strategies differed for these nationalities and included increased political education and aimed to incentivize military service among non-Russian nationalities. Imperial Russian Army policy impacted the way that Soviet military planners recruited and trained Muslim soldiers during the earliest years of the Red Army. Additionally, this mindset highlights the integrated view of ideology coinciding with Soviet military service.

Additionally, Soviet military planners created units based on nationalities’ traits and their territories’ environment. Muslim nationalities in Central Asia raised cavalry units, and Caucasian Muslim groups raised mountain infantry units. Individual national characteristics affected unit types built. This system would persist through the 1930s and into World War II.

¹¹⁵ Erica Marat, *The Military and the State in Central Asia: From Red Army to Independence* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010). Pg. 15

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pg. 24

¹¹⁷ McMichael, “National formation of the Red Army” pg. 632

In general, the early to mid- 1920s saw the growth of all non-Russian conscription into the Red Army. Around this time throughout the Soviet Union, Soviet officials started several initiatives involving the Muslim population. These efforts included territorial delimitation, *Korenizatsiia*, the creation of cultural clubs, educational, legal, and religious reforms. The larger inclusion of Muslim soldiers coincides with the NEP initiatives and a Soviet desire to create ideologically driven Soviet citizens. As discussed earlier, Soviet officials viewed military service to inculcate national minority soldiers with Soviet values and propagandas to create a national minority ‘New Soviet Man.’¹¹⁸ In addition to ideological and educational considerations, practical rationale drove this recruitment. By 1925, Frunze’s reforms of the Soviet system created a large territorial reserve force supporting a much smaller active military force. In addition to military service changes, the territorial system included an ideological training system for Muslim nationalities- because they had not served in the Russian Imperial army. Frunze’s reforms included the development of military academies and the use of political workers in Non-Russian territories.¹¹⁹ To conclude this system showed the integral role that national minorities played in the Red Army and the central role of ideology in this national minority system.

Cadre System (1935-1941)¹²⁰

The Frunze system continued throughout the 1920s and early 30s. Reforms began in 1932 with the incremental absorption of territorial units into regular Red Army units. Red Army

¹¹⁸ Jones *Red Army and Society* pg. 181

¹¹⁹ “On the Territorial-Militia System 1925-35,” *Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 3, no. 4 (October 1990): 652–700. pg. 632-33

¹²⁰ Here, the term “cadre” refers to the establishment of permanent non-commissioned active military service members.

officials completed this change in 1936 with the full absorption of territorial units into the Red Army. Roger Reese argues very convincingly that the disassembling of Frunze's reserve system, and the creation of the cadre system, led to the failures of the Red Army in 1941.¹²¹ Reese argues that Soviet officials abandoned the territorial system, through the absorption of the territorial reserve system into the active duty system, without creating a well-trained reserve military force. Overall, this disbanded reserve system impeded the Soviet Union's ability to mobilize.¹²²

According to Reese, further changes to Red Army occurred with the 1936 Constitution and its elimination of nationality limitations: "Allowing nationalities previously banned from service (Uzbeks, Turkmen, Buryats, Tadzhiks, Kirgiz, and some peoples of the North Caucasus) to serve expanded the draft pool."¹²³ However, this spread of nationalities affected the effectiveness of the Red Army. Differences of languages caused several problems including training and the cohesiveness of multi-language units.¹²⁴

In the year leading up to the outbreak of World War II, Soviet command reformed the Red Army. Firstly, Soviet officials removed the final vestige of the territorial system- nationality units. They integrated solely nationality units into standard Red Army units. Additionally, the 1939 Universal Military Service Law increased the term of enlisted service and added expanded organizational goals for training. However, its largest addition focused on the size of the army. The law "required the creation of a many-multi-million-man cadre army based on a unified

¹²¹ Reese's *Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers* pg. 32

¹²² Ibid pg. 32

¹²³ Ibid pg. 14

¹²⁴ Ibid pg. 15

extraterritorial principle of formation independent of ethnic nationality." The cadre system focused on the consolidation of territorial reserves into a larger active duty military force and the expansion of conscription service length and training regimen.

Per McMichael, the switch from a territorial system to a cadre system served a dual purpose. Firstly, "Cadre units were a very important means of extending Soviet power into the non-Russian countryside and of establishing an infrastructure of 'Sovietized' cadres and organizations."¹²⁵ Secondly, "Militarily, they had the added benefits of accustoming national minorities to military service, increasing the mobilization base of the state and preparing native cadres for military service in a fully integrated Red Army."¹²⁶ The next chapter expands upon the impact of Muslims on Russians. However, this period remains relevant because the cadre system saw the integration of soldiers from throughout the Soviet Union. Conscripts from Central Asia, Caucasus, and throughout the Soviet Union would serve in units with Russians for the first time.

Red Army Units' Ethnic Composition

Non-Russian nationalities would no longer be conscripted into national units but would serve in mixed formations with soldiers from around the Soviet Union, but the ethnic composition was uneven and differed from a unit to another. David Glantz provides a few examples illustrating this point. National minorities constructed over eighty percent of units such as 83rd Mountain Rifle Division or the 45th Rifle Division. To compare, non-Russians comprised just about half of the personnel - from forty-five or fifty percent - in the 23rd Rifle, 175th Rifle,

¹²⁵ Scott R. McMichael, "National Formation of the Red Army, 1918-38," *Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 3, no. 4 (October 1990): 613-44. pg. 640

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* Pg. 640

and 103rd Rifle Divisions.¹²⁷ Also, Red Army divisions sometimes contained smaller contingents of national minorities such as five percent or lower, as evidenced by the 109th Rifle and 226th Rifle Divisions.¹²⁸ The diverse demographics of Red Army units continued throughout World War II. The rationale for ethnic composition will be explored more fully in the Recruitment section.

World War II and its effect

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Nazi forces invaded the Soviet Union on June 22nd, 1941. Within six months of the invasion, German forces controlled Fifty percent of Soviet territory and population. Additionally, German army units captured many Soviet industrial areas as well. With the loss of the main population centers in western Soviet territories, Soviet recruiters relied heavily on Non-Russian soldiers including Central Asian soldiers.¹²⁹ Central Asia remained a large well of potential personnel and never faced direct Nazi occupation while German soldiers occupied the Crimean Peninsula and the Caucasus. The difference conditions affected how Soviet officials planned conscription efforts varied throughout Muslim populated republics.

Conscription

Central Asian and Caucasian Soviet recruitment drives initially focused on gathering volunteers. Unfortunately, throughout the war, only 14,000 soldiers volunteered in

¹²⁷ David M Glantz, *Colossus Reborn: The Red Army at War: 1941-1943* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005). Table 13.3 pg. 598-602

¹²⁸ Ibid Table 13.3 pg. 598-602

¹²⁹ Marshall, pg. 242

Turkmenistan, and another 1,000 volunteered from the Tadzhik Republic.¹³⁰ As soon as volunteering fell short, then Soviet recruiters conscripted soldiers to make up the shortfalls.

In addition to slow volunteering, conscription faced stiff opposition throughout the Soviet Union including Muslim regions. According to Reese, “When the Soviet government made a push to conscript men from the Caucasus in late autumn 1941, open rebellion broke out, leading to bombing and strafing by the Red Air Force to suppress it. In the spring of 1942, the attempt to conscript Chechens was clearly a failure. Thousands of young men fled to the mountains.”¹³¹ Recruitment insurrections occurred throughout the Caucasus, not just Muslim regions. However, after local populations experience with harsh German occupation policy, eligible peoples began serving more willing in the Red Army.¹³²

However, open insurrection against conscription drives occurred infrequently. Far more likely, conscripts from these regions deserted or evaded the draft. Per Reese, Soviet authorities suffered setbacks in regards to conscripting residents of the Northern Caucasians. “During war, the state managed to get only 17,500 Chechens and Ingush into uniform, and, at one point, nearly that many (13,000) were listed as deserters and draft evaders.”¹³³ In total, the North Caucasians deserted at a much higher rate than almost any other nationalities. Casualty studies support this fact as well.¹³⁴

Even with these conscription problems, the Soviet Union mobilized 8 million non-Slavic soldiers, and around 4 million of those came from Muslim republics.¹³⁵ In other words, one-

¹³⁰ Reese, *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought* pg. 144-146

¹³¹ Ibid pg. 142

¹³² Ibid pg. 143

¹³³ Ibid pg. 141

¹³⁴ Marshall pg. 246

¹³⁵ Glantz *Colossus Reborn* Table 13.6 pg. 604

eighth of Red Army soldiers serving in World War II came from Muslim republics. Recruitment for Muslim soldiers primarily lasted through 1943. This policy changed because of Stavka order no. 089.¹³⁶ This order shifted recruitment towards territories recently reconquered by the Soviet Union and all eligible peoples between the ages of 17-45. This policy allowed for faster integration of new units into the Red Army, which accommodated the rapid advances of the Red Army in 1943 and 1944.¹³⁷

Stavka's Order no. 089 began a gradual shift away from Muslim Republics and Eastern Republics of the Soviet Union toward newly re-occupied Soviet Western territories. After the implicit end of Muslim recruitment in the Red Army through Stavka's Order no. 089, an October 1943 Stavka directive explicitly ended all recruitment in Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Northern Caucasus. Historians advanced several reasons to account for this change including fear of disloyalty and insufficient military capabilities'. However, Marshall argues that fears of excessive demographic loss might have affected Soviet policy as well: "The proportion of Transcaucasian and Central Asian nationalities in the Soviet Armed Forces by mid-1943 was, in fact, coming to considerably exceed their overall proportion of the pre-war population, judging against the 1939 census..."¹³⁸

Integration of Units Following the 1943 Stavka Directive on Recruitment.

Muslim and other non-Slavic minorities served in integrated units even after the end of Muslim conscription in October 1943. Individual units' level of integration varied, and the year

¹³⁶ Stavka was the main command of the Armed Forces of the USSR. It was composed of several high-ranking military officers.

¹³⁷ David M Glantz, *Companion to Colossus Reborn: Key Documents and Statistics* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2005). pg. 2-3

¹³⁸ Marshall *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule* pg. 264

of founding affected the demographic makeup. A variety of Asian minorities comprised 50% of the 23rd Rifle Division, including Kazakhs who comprised 20% of Company 64. Also, Azerbaijanis consisted 30% of 76th Rifle Division.¹³⁹ These two units' ethnic compositions serve as examples of Muslim soldiers serving in majority Russian units.

However, Muslims constituted the majority of some units. In 38th Rifle Division, Uzbeks constituted 95% of the unit. Uzbeks served as 70% of the 136rd Rifle Division. As a final example, Uzbeks, Tatars, and Kazakhs represented 75% of the 126th Rifle Division.¹⁴⁰ The progression of the war directly influenced the composition of Muslims in the Red Army, depending on the unit.

83rd Mountain Rifle Division and the 252nd Rifle Division 24A provide two examples of this continuous change. In June 1941, Turkmen comprised 95% of the 83rd Mountain Rifle Division. By September 1944, 30% Russians, 30% Ukrainians, and 40% Caucasians and Turkmen contained this unit. In contrast, the 252nd Rifle Division included 60% Yakut and 40% Russian in August 1942. However, by January 1943, Kazakhs and Uzbeks comprised 50% of the division while Russian, and Yakut's composition declined to 50%.¹⁴¹ Massive losses incurred by the Red Army units and their continued replenishment explain fluctuations of their ethnic composition. The ethnicity of the unit depended on upon the personnel available. Soviet policymakers control of the ethnic composition appears as rather limited.

Red Army policy regarding Muslims and other non-Russian minorities seemed to have an ideological component as well. Two directives reflected the goals of Soviet policy regarding

¹³⁹ Glantz *Colossus Reborn* Table 13.2 pg. 591-598

¹⁴⁰ Glantz *Colossus Reborn* Table 13.2 pg. 591-598

¹⁴¹ Glantz *Colossus Reborn* Table 13.2 pg. 591-598

non-Russians, including Muslims. In preparation for the defense of the Caucasus, Stavka directive no. 170578 ordered the 61st Rifle Division to bolster security through reconnaissance and movement. Among others, Stavka commanded: “Before dispatching 61st Rifle Division, remove its rank and file and junior command cadre (sergeants) of Azerbaijani and Armenian nationality and nationalities of Dagestan, filling it with Russian personnel by 22 August.”¹⁴² Stavka issued similar orders in regards to Operation Mars.¹⁴³ This directive ordered: “Eliminate squads and platoons made up of 'Nationals' [ethnic non-Russians] by dividing them up among subunits.”¹⁴⁴ These two orders underscored Stavka’s lack of trust in the fighting ability and loyalty of units with “too strong” concentrations of non-Russian minorities. Higher desertion rates among Northern Caucasian soldiers may have influenced these orders.¹⁴⁵ In general, Soviet policymakers directed that Muslims, and other non-Slavic national minorities be integrated into units with a preponderance of Russian and other Slavic soldiers. Three factors may explain this policy; these analyses come from Ellen Jones, Brandon Schechter, and Alex Marshall¹⁴⁶.

Firstly, an ideological rationale reflected the concept of “cultural backwardness,”¹⁴⁷ a Soviet conceptual hierarchy related to national development wherein Soviet authorities categorized Russians and European nationalities as more advanced than Muslims. As Jones

¹⁴² David M. Glantz, “The Struggle for the Caucasus,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 22, no. 4 (2009): pg. 674

¹⁴³ Operation Mars was a Soviet Offensive around Rzhev near Moscow. Indicated timing

¹⁴⁴ David M. Glantz, *Zhukov’s Greatest Defeat: The Red Army’s Epic Disaster in Operation Mars, 1942* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1999).

¹⁴⁵ Marshall pg. 241

¹⁴⁶ Jones, Ellen. *Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military*. Boston; London: Allen & Unwin, 1986. & Brandon Schechter, “‘The People’s Instructions’: Indigenizing The Great Patriotic War Among ‘Non-Russians’*,” *Ab Imperio* 2012, no. 3 (2012): pg. 114 & Marshall, Alex. 2012. *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule*. London: Routledge.

¹⁴⁷ This topic was discussed in larger detail in the previous chapter

explains, Soviets believed that ‘culturally backward’ nationalities benefitted through contact with more ‘advanced’ nationalities and integration of nationalities remained a goal of national minority’s service in the Red Army.¹⁴⁸

Secondly, it may have reflected a practical need of spreading non-Russians within a majority Russian-speaking unit. According to Brandon Schechter, "Russian was the exclusive language of command in the Red Army as well as lingua franca in the Soviet Union. This made cadres who could not understand Russian a liability, rendering them ignorant of commands, a mystery to their officers, and largely untrainable."¹⁴⁹ Policymakers spread Russians within these units to reduce the impact of confusion, due to language, among soldiers with any mother tongue besides Russian.

Lastly, Soviet officials may have attempted this reorganization to reduce desertions by separating ‘untrustworthy’ minority groups from each other and mixing them with ‘trustworthy’ Russians and other Slavs. Desertion numbers support this viewpoint, showing that North Caucasian Muslim minorities deserted at a higher proportion than other groups. According to Marshall: “Between June 1941 and June 1944, 62,751 men deserted or evaded the draft there, compared with 128,527 in Ukraine, 4,406 in Belorussia and 149,849 in Central Asia- each of the latter districts, of course being considerably more densely populated areas, two of which were also rapidly overrun by the Nazi invaders.”¹⁵⁰ At the very least, Soviet authorities mandated non-Russians, including Muslims, be separated from each other due to beliefs about their

¹⁴⁸ Jones *Red Army and Society* pg. 181

¹⁴⁹ Brandon Schechter, “‘The People’s Instructions’: Indigenizing The Great Patriotic War Among ‘Non-Russians’*,” *Ab Imperio* 2012, no. 3 (2012): pg. 114

¹⁵⁰ Marshall, Alex. 2012. *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule*. London: Routledge. pg. 246

ineffectiveness. Apparently, these reasons could not override the need to refill units with available soldiers to counteract the steep personnel demands of the war.

Nakaz Naroda (The Peoples' Instruction)

In addition to the martial measures such as blocking detachments, Soviet policymakers employed propaganda aimed specifically at non-Russians. Soviet policymakers conceived the problems as twofold: non-Russians were both insufficiently strong fighters and insufficiently committed to the cause of the USSR. In addition to non-Russians, the program aimed to explain why Russians should respect their non-Russian compatriots. According to Schechter, "In short, commanders and commissars were ignoring "non-Russians" at a moment when the Red Army was in grave need of fighting men who not only understood what they were fighting for but would fight to the death."¹⁵¹ Soviet policymakers believed that they needed motivated combat troops and needed to integrate national minorities into this war effort better.

The *Nakaz* program focused on not only improving morale but also at integrating non-Russians more fully into the war effort. The program focused on answering the question: "Why should an Uzbek man risk his life to defend people in Leningrad, or an Armenian to liberate people in Minsk?"¹⁵² March 1942's Red Army order no.12 began the program which, per Schechter: "The order focused on intensifying "educational work" among "non-Russian" combatants and rehabilitating their image."¹⁵³

As stated above, the propaganda campaign focused on two groups: firstly, national minorities, secondly, Russian soldiers. Soviet authorities focused on national minorities with

¹⁵¹ Schechter, "The People's Instructions': Indigenizing the Great Patriotic War among "Non-Russians." Pg. 111

¹⁵² Ibid pg. 119

¹⁵³ Schechter, "The People's Instructions'" Pg. 114

propaganda from their history and in their language. In addition to national minority propaganda drives, propagandists targeted Russians with the goal of rehabilitating national minorities in Russian soldiers' eyes.¹⁵⁴ In addition to this, political officers focused on making Soviet policies understood among the national minorities such as translating Orders 270- a STAVKA order which marked all surrendering soldiers as traitors and therefore targets of Red Army soldiers and order 227- a STAVKA order which introduced and block detachments.¹⁵⁵ In general, the policy aimed to focus propaganda at the national minorities serving in the Red Army during the troubled years of 1941 and 1942.

To achieve these goals, Soviet officials employed various approaches. Firstly, pamphlets and newsletters publicized military achievements of national minorities- and in the languages of the national minorities. National minorities contributed to these pamphlets throughout letter writing, which involved the Soviet home front as well. Additionally, Soviet officials highlighted past military contributions of national minorities- to add historical legitimacy to this current conflict.

In addition to written circulars, Soviet officials focused on an expansion of political officer's system. Soviet officials expanded intra-unit political officers. The political officers concentrated on a dual goal: "a network of agitators within the Red Army and bilingual soldiers who could explain to their comrades both practical and philosophical matters. It established a deputy political officer responsible for their education and the distribution of printed materials- from leaflets to special newspapers."¹⁵⁶ The program focused on integrating national minorities

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, pg. 114

¹⁵⁶ Schechter pg. 115

into the larger Soviet War effort, including soldiers' families mailing encouraging letters or with nationalities' literature and songs. A famous Kazakh Soviet Baurdzhan Momysh-uly defended the program as, "I think it's a crime that Kazakh fighters at the front do not receive the most elementary scanty ration from the arsenal of their native language, native literature, and native music."¹⁵⁷ Soviet authorities emphasized the need to incorporate national minorities as a part of the Red Army. The system's conclusion coincided ended with the conscription of Muslims in 1944.

This policy aimed not solely at pragmatically forcing Muslims and national minorities to fight. It focused on incorporating Muslims and national minorities as a part of the Red Army and by extension to the Soviet system as the whole. Soviet planners utilized culture through the culture club system as well.¹⁵⁸ Soviet officials created a formal and authorized space for cultural practice. Therefore, they manipulated cultures in ways that agreed with Soviet ideology. Red Army officers affected culture in a similar way. They controlled the flow of songs, literature, and letters. Therefore, Red Army officials selected civilian and soldiers' letters for full release in their newsletters. Per Schechter, propaganda officers imbued these letters, "with meaning for those within and outside of the ethnic group addressed in the letter. These letters offered an interpretation of the war that was stylized for one or another ethnicity while remaining universal."¹⁵⁹ This project reflected a larger Soviet goal regarding Muslims and other national

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Ibid pg. 116

¹⁵⁸ This system was discussed in Chapter one. For further reading see Ali F. Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*, Central Eurasia in Context (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid pg. 119

minorities. Soviet policymakers aimed to integrate national minority history and culture to stimulate greater efforts of members of national minorities within the Soviet war effort.

Conclusion

Soviet policy focused on the creation of the ‘New Soviet Man.’ Policymakers included Red Army service as a tool to achieve this goal. Imperial officials utilized Muslims as auxiliaries or conscripted large numbers in time of great need, such as World War I. While Soviet officials mirrored the Russian army’s organization, Soviet planners mobilized Muslims through Soviet history. Officials assembled Muslim units sparsely during the Civil War. However, Marshall Frunze instituted a territorial reserve system, which included Muslims.

In addition to being mobilized, political education of Muslim Red Army soldiers began with the territorial system. After this, Soviet policymakers included Muslims within military service plans throughout Soviet history. Muslims served in integrated units of varying ethnic composition, anywhere from 5% to 90%. Stavka orders, regarding the forceful removal of Muslims and other national minorities, highlighted some political rationale for ethnic composition-including integrating Russians and Muslims or the impact of the conceptual framework of ‘cultural backwardness.’ Political indoctrination began with the territorial system and culminated with the *Nakaz* system. The *Nakaz* program highlighted the interests of Soviet policymakers, the goal to construct Muslims into a ‘New Soviet Man’ through military service. To build this ‘New Soviet Man,’ military service involved political education, integration with large groups of nationalities including less ‘culturally backward’ nationalities, and integration into a part of the Soviet social system. Muslim soldiers’ mentality about military will be the focus of the next chapter.

SEPARATE PEOPLES, SHARED SACRIFICE: MUSLIM SOLDIERS' PERCEPTION OF RED ARMY SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II

"This opinion is justified. As I see it, those who fought at the front managed to preserve a certain special quality for the rest of their life. It is an ability to understand other people's needs, to help others because of a certain brotherly feeling."¹⁶⁰

Introduction

Following from the previous discussion of the Red Army's policies regarding Muslims, this chapter analyzes Muslim soldiers and their mentality toward military service. This chapter analyzed Muslim soldiers' perceptions while utilizing collective memory, primary group cohesion, and institutional bonding theories. Collective memory theory informed the analysis of oral histories of Muslim soldiers. Primary group cohesion remained a leading theory for soldier's motivation and informed the analysis of Muslim soldiers' descriptions of their military service. Finally, the concept of institutional bonding constructed the analysis soldier's views of Soviet institutions, including military service along with other components of the Soviet state.

The goal of the chapter focused on understanding how Muslim veterans saw their military service. In line with the larger theories of Newsome, intrinsic motivations, such as religious beliefs, motivated soldiers less than extrinsic motivations, such as soldiers bond to the primary group and the state and military's institutions.¹⁶¹ However, how Muslim soldiers could integrate into these predominately Russian and Slavic groups remains a central question along with how they felt about these groups.

¹⁶⁰ Mansur, Abdulin *Red Road From Stalingrad*

¹⁶¹ B Newsome, "The Myth of Intrinsic Combat Motivation," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 4 (December 2003): 24-46.

To adequately answer these issues, 35 Muslim soldiers' testimonies constituted the source base. 20 of those sources come from the Harvard Project which interviewed Soviet refugees in the 1950s. The remaining 15 sources come from Post-Soviet memoirs and interviews. The oral histories come two collections: *Life at the Edge of Empire* and the collection of Crimean Tatar deportation stories titled *Surgun Stories*. This chapter analyzed three memoirs. They were- Mukhamet Shayakhmetov's *Silent Steppe*, Ismail Akhmedov's *In and Out of Stalin's GRU*, and Mansur Abdulin's *Red Road from Stalingrad*.

First, the chapter describes and utilizes collective memory theory to understand Muslim soldiers. The following two sections focus on primary group cohesion and institutional bonding theories. This chapter argues that language functioned as a barrier to both primary groups with non-Muslims and to career advancement within the Red Army. Consequently, uni-lingual soldiers, with a non-Russian mother tongue, were unable to properly bond with members of primary groups. Due to the extraordinary needs during the war, national minorities served regardless of Russian language skills. In the face of these significant translation demands, multi-lingual soldiers were promoted more quickly and spread through units to provide translations for non-Russian soldiers.

In addition to being isolated from primary groups, unilingual non-Russian speakers remained isolated from Russians and limited in their advancement within the Red Army. In addition to language differences, Muslim soldiers perceived an inferiority of their cultures within the Soviet system- similar to other Soviet policies hierarchy. The feelings of inferiority balanced against a perception of Russian culture and language privilege over non-Russian nationalities. As such, these feelings of inadequacy and separation from the state impacted their views

regarding military service. Additionally, unilingual Muslim soldier's inability to learn Russian can reflect a rejection of the Russian-centric nature of the Red Army and the larger Soviet state.

Memory

Halbwachs' Collective Memory Theory constituted the theoretical background for this chapter. Halbwachs' theory of Collective Memory argues that people have an individual and collective memory. While discussing these memories: "They are collective traditions or recollections, but they are also ideas or conventions that result from a knowledge of the present."¹⁶² Society and groups shaped the context, which housed the shared memory. Per Halbwachs' theory, these groups varied in size from the scale of a family to groups as large as a social class. These groups created a contextual basis, which informed how group members remember a shared event.

While utilizing these theories, this chapter analyzes the oral histories and memoirs of Muslim soldiers. It studies their mentality regarding Red Army service, through the lens of primary groups and bonding toward the institutions of the Red Army and the larger Soviet state. The soldiers' interviews, which constituted the source base for this chapter, come from two eras: the Post-World War II and Post-Soviet Periods. The Harvard Project collection contains interviews of deserters, POWs, and Eastern European refugees attempting to move to Western countries. According to Halbwachs, present conditions influenced these memories and affected their expression. Halbwachs "... argues that the beliefs, interests, and aspirations of the present shape the various views of the past as they are manifested respectively in every historical epoch."

¹⁶² Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser, 1 edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). pg. 188

¹⁶³ As an example, the interviews focused on the struggles living under the Soviet regime and the difficulties of the early Soviet regime including collectivization, and the Civil War. As such, the current realities and experiences following the war affected the ways that veterans recounted their memories in an oral history or memoir.

Use in this Chapter

This theory's focus on the shared components of memory provides a logical basis for this analysis of 35 Muslim Red Army soldiers as a representative group of the larger Muslim soldiers serving in the Red Army during this time frame. Additionally, Collective memory provides an analytical tool to highlight the differences between Post-War and Post-Soviet memoirs and oral histories. As such, Collective Memory is analyzed throughout the work as its subsection following larger analyses.

Primary Group Cohesion

As defined by Guy L. Siebold, "On a theoretical basis... military unit cohesion [is] an ongoing process of social integration among the members of a primary group, with group leaders, and with the larger secondary organizations to which they belong."¹⁶⁴ Soldiers integrate through both military and non-military tasks. These works included military training, eating, communicating among soldiers, being transported, and participating in the combat. This chapter examined Primary group Cohesion as a component of Muslim soldiers' mentality towards military service in the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Ibid pg. 25

¹⁶⁴ Guy L. Siebold, "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion," *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 2 (January 1, 2007): 286–95, doi:10.1177/0095327X06294173. pg. 288-289

¹⁶⁵In this mentality referred to: "the attitudes, assumptions and implicit ideologies of specific social groups. For a definition of Mentality and its usage for this chapter- see Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity*,

Formation of Primary groups

Memet Abdulla, a Crimean Tatar, served as a driver in the 780th Squadron of the 9th Army, until his deportation. He joined the Red Army in 1941 and served until his deportation with the Crimean Tatars in 1944. He first heard the order on targeted deportation on German collaborators.¹⁶⁶ His unit was ordered to assist the deportation. Upon his unit's arrival in Crimea, his soldiers tried to hide his nationality to help him avoid the deportation.¹⁶⁷ "One day, they called me to the headquarters and said "We received the order [to deport you] today. Let's change your name and give you a Jewish last name. The victory will be declared soon, and you can move to Odessa after the war."¹⁶⁸ Individual soldiers attempted to help their fellow soldier reflecting the role of primary groups.

These perceptions highlight the primary group's role as a structure of support and stability for soldiers facing oppressive state policies as well as the horrors of modern combat. These primary groups served a similar role during the hellish conditions of conflict. Additionally, this type of primary group reflected the secondary role of ethnic and national background to the formation of primary groups. Per Siebold, primary groups formed from individuals based on shared experiences, the need for team efforts to survive, and ability to communicate, build them.¹⁶⁹

Rumour, and Everyday Life under Stalin, 1939-53, 1 edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Pg. xiii

¹⁶⁶ Memet Abdulla, "Memoirs by Memet Abdulla," accessed October 17, 2016, <http://www.iccrimea.org/surgun/abdulla-memoirs.html>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Guy L. Siebold, "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion," *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 2 (January 1, 2007): 286–95, doi:10.1177/0095327X06294173.pg. 287

A Siberian Tatar, Mansur Abdulin, enlisted following the German Invasion of 1941, fought throughout the Eastern Front. His memoir spends substantial time describing the Dnieper Offensive in Ukraine and the battle Mansur titles: 'The Island of Death.' Following this discussion " I even felt remorse that I survived on the 'Island of Death' on the Dnieper, while almost all of my comrades perished. And one other thing. By intuition, I knew even then that whatever the future had in store for me, whoever I may meet, I would never find such close friends as I made on the front under fire."¹⁷⁰ This tightly knit connection of his primary group kept Mansur Abdulin integrated and fighting.¹⁷¹

Another soldier, Mukhamet Shyukmatov- a nomadic Kazakh scout who was deported along with his family in 1933 but volunteered for the Red Army in 1941, detailed how primary groups formed and their ability to support themselves. In his memoir, Mukhamet described his military service as a reconnaissance soldier and how he entered this unit. "Then one of my village friends, Vasily Morozov, who had served in the artillery before the war and happened to be standing next to me, grabbed hold of my arm and stepped forward, dragging me with him. When I tried to resist, he whispered, 'Shut up; I'll explain later. You won't regret it.'¹⁷² He described this effect on his career by stating: "What no other apart from Morozov knew at the time was that life was easier in the artillery than in the infantry, and there were significantly fewer casualties."¹⁷³ This quote showed the effect of primary groups. While the clear majority of primary groups formed around ethnic boundaries, a minority formed in mixed nationality

¹⁷⁰ *Red Road from Stalingrad*. Pg. 159

¹⁷¹ *Ibid* pg. 6-9

¹⁷² Mukhamet Shayakhmetov and Jan Butler, *The Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Kazakh Nomad under Stalin* (New York, N.Y.: Overlook/Rookery Press, 2007). Pg. 266

¹⁷³ *Ibid* pg. 266-267

villages. This unusual arrangement influenced the dynamics of national minorities and Russian soldiers. Additionally, soldiers formed primary groups for survival and to aid each other with the goal of survival. In the case of Morozov, he helped himself by adding men he knew and trusted to his reconnaissance unit.

Mukhamet's injury reflected the mentality of primary groups, as well. A sniper shot Mukhamet, and while he laid in a field, fellow soldiers ran to recover him and bring him back to Soviet lines.¹⁷⁴ He described that this primary group of troops cared for their primary group.

Following his treatment and rehabilitation with a border guard, Mukhamet returned to Kazakhstan on a medical discharge from the Red Army.

As soon as I stepped into my carriage, I noticed a young Kazakh soldier on a crutch and walking stick and a young Russian lad walking unaided and without any noticeable injuries. We introduced ourselves, and discovered we were traveling a long way in the same direction- so we agreed to stick together...¹⁷⁵

This passage reflected the formation of primary groups and mirrored Reese's argument regarding Primary groups in the Red Army. According to Reese, Soviet veterans comprised primary groups of five or fewer soldiers and due to the constant replacement with combat injuries. Thus, these groups reconstituted quickly.¹⁷⁶ The Soviet Union's massive size complicated transportation. Consequently, soldiers formed primary groups to aid each other with the challenging and tedious nature of transportation in the Soviet Union.

¹⁷⁴ *Silent Steppe* pg. 296-297

¹⁷⁵ *Silent Steppe* pg. 320

¹⁷⁶ Reese's *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought* pg. 218

Nationality's relations in Primary Groups

Ismail Akhmedov served in the Red Army during the Winter War and the early days of World War II. He served as a lieutenant in a multi-ethnic division and wrote about their effectiveness. "More than 18,000 men strong, the Forty-Fourth Ukrainian Rifles was made up not only of Ukrainians but also Kazakhs, Azerbaidzhanians, even troops from Turkistan. It was regarded as a crack outfit."¹⁷⁷ This passage showed the effectiveness of multi-national units. Their effectiveness begs the question of how did these units interact and how they thought about each other?

A Circassian¹⁷⁸ driver for the Red Army described Circassian nationality relations. He explained that his people helped each other, while other nationalities helped their own.¹⁷⁹ He mainly argued that his nationality stuck together largely to progress out of their perceived backwardness. An Azeri soldier described his unit's internal national conflict and stated that while multi-national units formed: "A Russian stuck up for a Russian and an Azerbaijani for an Azerbaijani."¹⁸⁰ These soldiers do not appear to argue that these relations excluded Russians but that they preferred to interact with their people. Why did some soldiers maintain a connection with their nationality while others intermix with Russian troops? There appeared to be three reasons for this: Muslim soldiers' beliefs about the relationship of Russians and the Soviet regime, the role of language in the formation of primary groups, and religious discrimination.

¹⁷⁷ Ismail Akhmedov, *In and out of Stalin's GRU: A Tatar's Escape from Red Army Intelligence* (Frederick, Md: University Publications of America, 1984). Pg. 110

¹⁷⁸ A Caucasian nationality group which the majority practices Islam.

¹⁷⁹ *Harvard Project* Case #344 pg. 9

¹⁸⁰ *Harvard Project* Case #346 pg. 3

Not all experiences were negative; this chapter explores soldiers with positive recollections of their multi-ethnic primary groups.

Perceptions of the relationship between Russians and the Soviet Regime

The relationship between Russians and the Soviet system impacted the mentality of Muslim soldiers. If Muslims believed in the Russian nature of the Soviet system, then soldiers discontented with the Soviet regime may have been unwilling to bond with Russian soldiers for that reason.

As an example, a Tajik soldier specifically blamed ethnic Russians for the government's mistreatment of his family.¹⁸¹ He used the phrase Russian and Soviet interchangeably throughout the interview, indicating a belief in their interconnectedness. The Chechen-Ingush interviewee stated that he specifically blamed Russians for the Soviet regime's crimes.¹⁸² The Chechen-Ingush interviewee connected the government and Russians through Russification of Soviet schools and cultural enterprises. Additionally, a Siberian Tatar soldier described a process where Russian films replaced Tatar and other Muslim nationalities' films. These soldiers are only a small reflection of the Harvard Project's Muslim soldiers. Many interviews included this cultural replacement concept.¹⁸³ The first chapter explained this concept.

Other soldiers characterized the state as multi-ethnic, with no single nationality preferred over another by the state. Four soldiers- 2 Azeris, a Tatar, and a Cherkiss- described all people as suffering under the Soviet regime, including Russians.¹⁸⁴ These Muslim soldiers blamed

¹⁸¹ *Harvard Project* Case #318 pg. 13

¹⁸² *Harvard Project* Case #434 pg. 24-5

¹⁸³ *Harvard Project* Case #252 pg. 21, 135 pg. 9

¹⁸⁴ *Harvard Project* Case #319, Case #24, Case #344, Case #346

Russians for discriminatory Soviet policies. Three soldiers attributed hardship to a hierarchy of nationality, where all people suffered but to different degrees.¹⁸⁵ While one soldier stated that there was a division; they saw the state as the sole entity responsible for its discriminatory policies.¹⁸⁶

Reasons for this difference of opinion could be due to education, labor, and separation from other nationalities. Many accounts described a division between Russian and non-Russian nationalities. This lack of contact led to less interaction and less understanding of what life was like for Russian citizens. This separation could have led to a faulty understanding of Russians' living conditions and a false impression that they had a much better life. A Circassian interview subject worked on a collective farm and did not have much education.¹⁸⁷ Perhaps his collective farm work alongside Russians dispelled the belief that Russians benefitted because of their nationality. This Circassian stated collective farming was slave labor.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps soldiers' hatred of collective farming created a sense of camaraderie among nationalities that worked these farms.

To conclude, Muslim soldiers without language skills or previous contact with Russians tended to conflate Russians with the Soviet regime. The belief in continuity between the Imperial and Soviet governments or the conflation of Soviet and Russian cultural values appeared to drive the conflation of Russian and Soviet. However, multi-lingual Muslim soldiers or soldiers with the previous contact with Russians tended to separate Russian nationality from the Soviet regime. In this regard, Muslim soldiers with a history of interacting with Russians may have previously

¹⁸⁵ *Harvard Project* Case #319 pg. 19, 23; Case #24 pg. 42 and Case #344 pg. 9

¹⁸⁶ *Harvard Project* Case #346 pg. 3

¹⁸⁷ *Harvard Project* Case #344

¹⁸⁸ *Harvard Project* Case 344 pg. 5

formed a pre-war primary group with Russians. This previous relationship appeared to have increased the chances of war-time primary group bonding.

This belief regarding the connection between Russians and the Soviet Union impacted Muslim soldiers' ability to bond with Russian soldiers. Soldiers who connected Russians to the larger oppressive Soviet system tended not to bond with Russians due to their belief that nationalities in the Soviet Union were not equal and that Russians were the beneficiaries of the Soviet system. However, Muslim soldiers who share the knowledge of Russian language and shared experience with Russians tended to bond with Russian soldiers. Whether soldiers constructed this image before military service, is unclear.

Collective Memory on Nationality Relationship

Harvard Project respondents focused more on the pre-war years than years during the war, which reflect their focus on the Soviet Regime. In the Harvard project interviews, the Soviet Union stands as a current opponent for Soviet refugees. Harvard project respondents actively hid from the Soviet Union and that specter drapes over their entire remembrance of the war and military service. These refugees escaping from the Soviet Union, their lives and difficulties after the war form a continuous past with troubles they faced before the war through collectivization, deportation, the Great Terror, or Sedentarization for nomads.

Whereas, post-Soviet writers focus more strictly on their individual fellow soldiers. The most glaring explanation for this is that the Soviet Union is no longer an active component of post-Soviet life. It is a defunct state and while it had an enormous and, often, terrible effect on the lives of its citizens- it no longer exists. In this way, their thoughts focus more firmly on the men they

served with than the pre-war conditions of the state that they served. As well, as the immediate effects which military service had on their lives. Per Catherine Merridale, benefits afforded to soldiers influenced post- Soviet interviews; these benefits included pensions, job training, or career advancement. However, memoirists have spent nearly 40-50 years honoring the sacrifice of their fallen comrades or spending time with survivors. Within the enclaves of their homogenous ethnic communities, their peoples' sacrifices are remembered and honored.

Communication Barrier

The largest barrier to the developments of primary groups appeared to be the ability to communicate through a shared language. Per Reese, "The multiethnic composition of the army also had an effect on the formation of primary groups. The shared language was a prerequisite for camaraderie, followed closely by cultural and social compatibility."¹⁸⁹ A Tatar described the linguistic challenges of the multi-ethnic Red Army: "Most of our men do not speak Russian; for technical military work you had to know the Russian language and the Russians laughed at our Turkestani troops when they had difficulty with the tongue. Consequently, antipathy developed and Turkestanis got together in their free time and spoke disparagingly of the Russians."¹⁹⁰

This language differences caused a myriad of problems. They created tension between groups and stopped the interactions between nationalities. Bi-lingual soldiers crossed this barrier and formed primary group bonds. Mukhamet Shayakhmetov provided an example of this earlier. He ably communicated with Russians in his units and bonded with these soldiers throughout his career in numerous scenarios including training, transportation, and combat.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Reese's *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought* pg. .217

¹⁹⁰ *Harvard Project Case #221 Uzbek* pg. 12-13

¹⁹¹ Shayakhmetov *Silent Steppe* pg. 266-267, 296, 320

In addition to these soldiers, several others described how Red Army service expanded their Russian speaking skills. Madalbek Keneshov served as a clerk in his unit and received advanced Russian language training. This training affected the ways that he interacted with his fellow Russian soldiers: “After that, I began to feel confident enough to engage in verbal skirmishes with Russian soldiers.”¹⁹² Another Kyrgyz soldier, Sooronbay Jusuyev, echoed this sentiment: “Before the army, I couldn't speak any Russian, but then I learned it, and now I speak perfect Russian.”¹⁹³ Lastly, Komiljan Djurabekov mirrored a similar idea with The Russian language in the Army: “I also know Russian, because in the army, people spoke Russian and I learned Russian.”¹⁹⁴

These Muslim soldiers highlighted the role of the Army in the language training of Muslim soldiers. Madalbek argued that his language training specifically influenced his ability to communicate with Russians and impacted his relationship with Russian soldiers.¹⁹⁵ These soldier’s stories reflected the role of the shared language of relationships with Russian soldiers. Lack of a shared language disrupted soldiers’ interpersonal relationships. As such, language served to integrate with the group and to highlight the interest to interact with Russians. Russian-Language speaking Muslim soldiers communicated with Russians and in this way can form primary groups with Russians and members of other nationalities who spoke Russian. These primary groups contained several nationalities and language enabled them to communicate.

¹⁹²Tranum *Life at the Edge of Empire* pg. 22

¹⁹³ Ibid pg. 187

¹⁹⁴ Ibid pg. 137

¹⁹⁵ Ibid pg. 22

Collective Memory

Due to the end of life nature of Post-Soviet memoirists, they are more able to see the far-reaching effects of the language learning on their lives. Post-Soviet respondents could have linked their successes to their language learning and therefore, more readily willing to discuss the positive byproducts. In comparison, immediate Post-War memoirists do not know what effect this skill have had on their lives. Therefore, they may be more likely to view it as another sign of discrimination against non-Russian nationalities and another example of Russian superiority within national relations

Religious Discrimination's Impact on Primary group

The differences in religion caused conflicts between Red Army soldiers. They created tension between soldiers and demarcated soldiers in primary groups from each other. A Tajik soldier described this difficulty: "But it was very hard to be religious in the army. If I tried to sit down and say my prayers, someone came over and cursed me out."¹⁹⁶ These religious differences may have caused rifts among primary groups, but the whole atheistic nature of the Soviet regime makes it unclear whether this was a particularly anti-Muslim policy or a component of the larger anti-religious movements. Regardless of the motivation behind these incidents, Muslim soldier's felt isolated and ostracized by these events- as such, it is outside of the scope of this study whether Christian soldiers felt the same isolation in the Army.

An Uzbek soldier described this tension over religious practices in a prisoner of war camps. In these camps, the Uzbek soldier described how Russian soldiers told German officers that circumcised Muslims were Jews. These denunciations to ended in the execution of

¹⁹⁶ *Harvard Project* Case #318 pg. 13

Muslims.¹⁹⁷ Madalbek Keneshov described this during an encounter with a fellow soldier over the consumption of pork. A non-commissioned officer insulted him around his religion's prohibition on eating pork. During this encounter, the non-commissioned officer called him a fascist.¹⁹⁸ The differences in religion and nationality changed the cultural context of the primary groups and affected the ways in which they interacted. Language allowed for easier contact and the creation of primary groups, but nationality and religious differences restrained the growth of primary groups. However numerous the barriers, soldiers needed primary group's close-knit companionship and support to survive the day-to-day difficulties of military service.

Institutional Bonding

Soldiers served in a multi-layered society. They served in a military institution, which was formed by and subordinated to, the party and national government. According to institutional bonding theorist Guy L. Siebold, "The institution provides a general sense of purpose and meaningfulness that is linked to the larger (usually national) society and culture. This institutional level sets the general conditions under which the immediate secondary groups, primary groups, and service members live and function."¹⁹⁹ As such, this section analyzes the Muslim soldiers' perceptions of and attitudes toward the Red Army and the Soviet national government.

¹⁹⁷ *Harvard Project Case #221* pg. 2

¹⁹⁸ *Tranum Life at the Edge of Empire* pg. 22

¹⁹⁹ Guy L. Siebold, "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion," *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 2 (January 1, 2007): 286–95, doi:10.1177/0095327X06294173. pg. 290

Perceptions of Territorial Unit

Soviet authorities formed territorial units throughout the Soviet Union after the Civil War. From 1931 until 1935, the STAVKA gradually shifted the territorial system to a national cadre system. Therefore, certain republics moved territorial forces into the cadre system in the years between 1931-1935. While this institution ended before the war, it influenced the perceptions of many Muslim soldiers post-war. Several Muslim soldiers served in these forces before the war, and some Harvard Project soldiers served in these units as well. A Chechen respondent contended that the units refused to serve for the Russian interests which he conflated with the Soviet regime. Therefore, these soldiers served their national interests instead of those of the regime.²⁰⁰

However, other Muslim soldiers conflated these units with their nationality. Therefore, the abolition of these units showed that the regime viewed Muslim nationalities as inferior or untrustworthy soldiers. An Azeri soldier detailed this belief: "...the cause of the abolition of the national units was the fear that the Soviet government had to the national units in such areas as the Caucasus and Turkestan."²⁰¹ A Tajik soldier echoed this sentiment by saying: "Following the liquidation of the division no Turkestanis were called up into the Army until 1933-1934²⁰² because the regime had no confidence or trust in the Uzbeks."²⁰³ He continued and stated that Red Army reform scattered officers among Russian units.

²⁰⁰Harvard Project Case #434 pg. 8

²⁰¹Harvard Project Case #135 Schedule B pg. 11

²⁰² The institution began phasing out in 1931 but ended nationally in 1935.

²⁰³Harvard Project Case #252 pg. 20

An Uzbek soldier displayed a similar mentality. He contended that Soviet authorities did not trust independent Uzbek nationality formations used against Basmachi rebels and for that reason majority-Russian formations always accompanied Uzbek units into combat.²⁰⁴ Also, the Uzbek territorial unit retained local control through the use of Uzbek language and traditional clothing. However, Soviet military reforms moved this unit into a Russian-speaking Red Army unit in 1935²⁰⁵.²⁰⁶ While discussing the wartime recruitment of Central Asian Muslim national minorities, he stated that military officials trained soldiers locally but provided little weaponry.²⁰⁷

The Uzbek soldier believed that the regime did not trust the Muslim minorities:

When they were sent to the front these divisions were broken up, and battalions were absorbed into Russian divisions and then were issued arms and given additional training. The reason for this is that the regime cannot trust the national minorities. This is why after World War II Stalin drank a toast to the Great Russian people for having contributed the most to winning the war.²⁰⁸

These soldiers articulated a conviction that the Soviet military authorities did not trust national units or their soldiers and instead relied on Russian and Ukrainian-majority units. Some Muslim soldiers did not feel bound to Red Army institution. Instead, these Muslim soldiers identified with their nationality formations. Therefore, when Soviet reforms ended this program, Muslim soldiers perceived this as a reflection of Soviet attitudes toward their nationality's martial abilities. This perception of inferior treatment affected Muslim soldiers' views of the

²⁰⁴ *Harvard Project Case #221* pg. 9-10

²⁰⁵ To reiterate, the institution closed at different intervals throughout the nation starting in 1931. This territorial system ended in 1935.

²⁰⁶ *Harvard Project Case #221* pg. 10

²⁰⁷ *Harvard Project Case #221* pg. 11-12

²⁰⁸ *Harvard Project Case #221* pg. 11

Red Army. Muslim soldiers felt that the Red Army did not trust them due to their nationality and functioned as a Russian-centric organization.

Collective Memory

The pre-World War II territorial units appeared exclusively in the Harvard Project interviews. There are two possible reasons for this: 1st a generational effect based on the age of the respondent. The youngest member of the regional units would have been 75 years old in 1991. Secondly, it could reflect the more overtly nationalist feelings of the Harvard Project respondents. These soldiers discussed this topic and period because they were proud of this military service defending their villages and their republics instead of protecting the entirety of the Soviet Union. Additionally, they are proud of the central role of their nationality played within this unit.

Language's Military Value and Career Opportunities

Bilingualism formed a connection between Russian soldiers and Non-Russian soldiers. In addition to the Russian language's role in the formation of primary groups, The Russian language became the single dominant language of the Soviet military following the Soviet military reforms of 1936. Consequently, Muslim soldiers who spoke Russian served a valuable function in the military. An example of this, Ismail Akhmedov served as an Intelligence officer in Turkey between the Winter War and World War II. He advanced to this position due to his technical skill but also his unique mix of language skills. He spoke Turkish, Russian and German languages. These language skills aided his career advancement. His Turkish and Russian language skills promoted him through teaching institutes early in his career.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Akhmedov *In and Out of Stalin's GRU* pg. 67-70

For many soldiers, the Red Army became a place to advance within society, with language and with skills learned as a result of military service. A Kazan Tatar developed within the structure of the nationality units before the war. He became a Lieutenant in the Tatar division of the territorial system, served on an instructional level in a sniper and artillery unit during the Winter War. He served on the command level during the war- in part due to his skill with the Tatar and Turkish languages and an ability to translate Army code into Tatar.²¹⁰

Komiljan Djurabekov echoed similar sentiments. After his military service, he served as the director of a dormitory as a direct result of his military service and advanced to the district committee and vice president of his department.²¹¹ This advancement was due to his service and language skills: "I know many Turkic languages because they are all similar. I also know Russian, because in the army, people spoke Russian and I learned Russian. The party school was also in Russian."²¹²

Seven soldiers believed that language was the largest reason for their advancement. While discussing the language needs of the military, Mukhamet Shayakhmetov stated: "... the regimental command appointed half a dozen young Russian-speakers, including myself, as section commanding officers."²¹³ Mukhamet believed that they served as "just glorified interpreters."²¹⁴ These multi-lingual soldiers acted as a bridge to other units. An Iranian soldier serving in an Azeri artillery unit relayed a similar story. While serving as an artillery specialist, the soldier contended that Russians and Ukrainians formed the backbone of the specialized and

²¹⁰Harvard Project #77 Kazan Tatar pg. 1

²¹¹ Trnum *Life in the Edge of Empire* pg. 136

²¹² Ibid pg. 137

²¹³ Shayakhmetov *Silent Steppe* pg. 273

²¹⁴ Ibid pg. 273

trained units. When Soviet forces expanded, Red Army officials dispersed these Russian and Ukrainian specialists to other units. This reassignment process propelled the advancement of the Iranian soldier, to a great part due to these language skills.²¹⁵

Kurman-Ghali Karakeev, an Uzbek naval officer, served in the Black Sea Navy during World War II and, according to him, this service advanced him within the party and then the Uzbekistan's Academy of Sciences.²¹⁶ Other soldiers advanced in the army and received specialized training, which may have aided future employment. A Cherkiss soldier served in the Red Army from 1942 until his desertion in 1949.²¹⁷ He described how his family was unable to afford school because his family's large size required him to work. When he entered the Army in 1942, he studied and served in a chemical-bacteriological unit.²¹⁸ An Uzbek soldier described similar training. Military officers trained him as a chemical engineer. This experience as a chemical engineer supplemented his engineering experience and could have aided his future career opportunities.²¹⁹

Muslim soldiers gained experiences from their mandatory military service. It appears that language served as a means of advancing in the Red Army. After joining the Red Army, language served as a means of gaining further experience and training in several military functions. The value of these military training affected advancement within the Red Army or advancement after service in the Red Army, as evidenced by Kurman-Ghali. Per Merridale, the Red Army served many functions including as a vital training ground for the soldiers in the

²¹⁵ #375 pg. 4

²¹⁶ Trnum *Life at the Edge of Empire* pg. 83

²¹⁷ #344 Cherkiss pg. 3-6

²¹⁸ #344 Cherkiss pg. 3-4

²¹⁹ *Harvard Project* #221 pg. 1-2

army.²²⁰ The acquisition of Russian language skills allowed for the swift advancement of Muslim soldiers, inside and outside the service.

Conclusion

Muslim veterans were not a monolithic group. Some perceived Economic opportunity discrimination in several ways including linguistic differences, how trusted their nationality was, or inferior educational possibilities. The soldiers described discrimination in multiple ways; some describe it as both cultural discrimination and career opportunity. Additionally, Muslim soldiers' mentality reflected the primacy of Russians and Russification and how this did not include Muslim nationalities.

Muslim soldiers, who were unable to form primary groups with Russians, described a system policy of Russification through cultural policies, language, and the Red Army. Soldiers' perceived Russification as displacing other nationalities, by privileging Russians over Muslim nationalities. Muslim soldiers' mentality reflected that this Russification implied inferiority to Russian soldiers and a separation from the Soviet war effort. However, a primary group bound, through language, Muslim soldiers to the war effort by reducing the barrier between Muslims and Russian soldiers.

²²⁰ Merridale *Ivan's War* pg. 229

HIERARCHY OF SACRIFICE: RUSSIAN SOLDIERS' PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIM SOLDIERS

““What do you mean, 'until further notice'? Demanded the mothers of the Russian conscripts. 'The Soviet authorities need everyone. Why should only Russians defend the country and die for it? It's not fair! Kazakhs should go to the front too! Why should our children have to go to war and risk their lives while Kazakhs stay home and take things easy? Send the Kazakhs to war as well!'”²²¹ (261-262)

Silent Steppe by Mukhamet Shayakhmetov

During World War II, Russians comprised the clear majority of Red Army soldiers. In the meat grinder that was combat in World War II, Russian soldiers died in the largest numbers. Their astronomical losses are a significant component of Soviet public memorialization of World War II, primarily through Victory Day marches. Soviet memorialization incorporated the multi-national Soviet forces but still glorified the Russian soldier as a pre-eminent figure in the Soviet victory over the Nazi forces.²²² Similarly, some soldiers' testimonies portrayed unity of the nationalities as a strength of the Red Army.

While describing a multi-ethnic unified Red Army, soldiers' memoirs and oral histories reflected a mentality of a nationality-based hierarchy. Within this hierarchy, Russian soldiers portrayed a mindset wherein Russian and the Slavic nationalities played the dominant role in the Red Army victory- through leadership and superiority. While Russian testimony described the whole of Muslim nationalities' soldiers as incompetent, Russian soldiers portrayed individual Muslim soldiers as mostly competent and meaningful members of the primary group. These nationalities' descriptions mirrored previous chapter's discussions of Soviet policies and official discourse's depictions of Muslim nationalities backwardness. Additionally, these perceptions

²²¹ Shayakhmetov *Silent Steppe* pg. 261-262

²²² Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945*, 2006. pg. 380-381

appear influenced by the problems of language differences. This chapter argued that other reasons for this perception of backwardness include: Muslims service in Vlasov's army, the so-called Tatar Yoke, problems with the training of Muslim soldiers, instances of cowardice and self-injury to shirk duty. However, Primary group cohesion influenced Russian soldiers' descriptions of individual Muslim soldiers. Russian soldiers highlighted individual Muslim soldiers as competent and worthwhile members of Red Army units, due to primary group cohesion and in contrast to wider perceptions of Muslim nationalities.

For this chapter, 60 Russian soldiers' testimonies constituted the source base. These sources come from three memoirs, two edited collections, the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System, and Iremember.ru. 34 Interviews from Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System, 20 interviews from Iremember.ru, three memoirs, two interviews from *Red Army Officer's Speak*, and one interview from the *Life at the Edge of Empire* oral history interview collection. The memoirs, edited collections, and Iremember.ru interviews were conducted in the post-Soviet period. As discussed in previous chapters, the Harvard Project interviews were carried out in the 1950s and interviewed refugees from the Soviet system.

Wartime Brotherhood

The combined efforts of multi-ethnic Soviet forces remained a dominant component of Soviet memory- like the Soviet concept of a 'Homo Sovieticus.' A people united under the banner of the Soviet leadership and transformed by life within this system. Following the Civil War, Soviet war planners created nationality militias. Following the abolition of these nationality militias, multiple nationalities served together, through a national mobilization system. Russian commander Naumenko described this dynamic as such:

I showed concern for them, of course, to be sure they were clothed and fed. So, the composition varied and in nationality as well. There were all kinds- Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tatars, Armenians, Georgians, Azerbaydzhanis[sic], a varied group. There were up to 25 nationalities in the regiment, but no questions arose during that time. That was an international regiment. They fought, they all accomplished the mission with which we had been tasked, to rout the enemy as rapidly as possible. No problems arose. It was friendly, one big family, a regimental family.²²³

Naumenko's memoir is not a unique description of this scenario. Twelve, from the sample of 60, Russian soldiers described a similar unity between the nationalities in the Red Army. Similarly, Dimitrii Krutuskikh stated: "We were just friends with my subordinates. There were people of many nations; we lived close and merrily."²²⁴ According to these soldiers, the Red Army Banner served to unite the disparate nationalities of the Soviet Union.

Like Naumenko's and Krutuskikh's description, other Russians focused on a soldier's martial ability instead of national origin. "Despite our ethnic diversity, I don't recall our ever having any tension on that score. The determining factor was not a soldier's nationality but what kind of soldier he was on the battlefield."²²⁵ Soldierly ability trumped national origin as a prism through which soldiers viewed each other. A Russian infantry soldier described being led by Tatar officers: "I never heard of any separate national units. In general, one did not feel the difference in the Army. We had a number of Tartar officers."²²⁶ In line with the concept of 'Friendship of the Peoples,' Russian soldiers from Post-Soviet era described the multi-ethnic unity of the Red Army as a component of the Soviet victory. This view privileged the triumph of the Soviet Union over nationality differences.

²²³ Grantz *Red Army Officer's Speak* pg. 116-117

²²⁴ Dimitrii Krutuskikh iremember.ru/eng

²²⁵ Loza *Fighting for the Soviet Motherland*, pg. 145

²²⁶ *Harvard Project Case 541* pg. 39

Collective Memory

Overwhelmingly, post- Soviet recollections incorporated descriptions of unity among nationalities. Iremember.ru, a Russian Federation website contained seven of the twelve Russians who portrayed this unity of nationalities. Soviet Victory day celebrations may have influenced Russian soldiers' testimonies, as well. As discussed by Nina Tumarkin, public recollections of Victory Day focused on the multi-republic Red Army forces. She argued that this vein of multi-national unity pervaded official Soviet memory of the war. This official memorialization started during the war with the "United, Powerful Soviet Union" and with official Soviet memorials highlighting the multi-national losses.²²⁷ This formal memorialization of multi-national Red Army affected soldiers' memory of their wartime experience. However, during the final years of the Soviet Union, public display re-focused on Russians' central role. Additionally, Primary group cohesion affected this relationship. However, this chapter contains a discussion of primary group cohesion later.

While the focus remained on the multi-nationality efforts to defeat Nazi forces, this does not mean that Russian soldiers ignored perceived differences in nationalities. In particular, the inability to speak Russian became a differentiating feature, George Minnin described this problem while discussing Central Asian peasants: "...they didn't know the Russian language and often gathered separately speaking in their mother tongue. We treated them indulgently as if they were our younger brothers, and never despised them."²²⁸ 'Younger Brothers' is a term which belied tension between Russian and non-Russian soldiers. The term reflected the inferiority

²²⁷ Nina Tumarkin, *Living and the Dead* pg. 64 & 186

²²⁸ George Minnin Iremember.ru/eng

which Russian soldiers perceived Russian soldiers. Russian soldiers' usage of this term reflected a mentality wherein Muslim soldiers are not the equals of their Russian compatriots. Instead, Russian soldiers' position meant that they train Muslim soldiers as well.

Language constituted a significant distinction between nationalities and segregated individuals from each other, as discussed in previous chapters. While some Russian soldiers hailed the unity of nationalities its effect on the success of the Soviet War effort, other soldiers detailed a hierarchy of martial prowess wherein Muslim soldiers at the bottom as second-class soldiers.

'Slavic Backbone':

In addition to the multi-ethnic unity of the Red Army, Russian soldiers described a national hierarchy wherein Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians remained atop with Caucasians and Central Asians beneath them. In particular, Russian soldiers portrayed Muslim nationalities as the most incompetent part of the Soviet war effort- or the 'Younger Brothers' of the war effort. A commander of a BTR unit, Ivan Vladimirovich Maslov, described this hierarchy as: "The battalions with "Slavic backbone" held fast, but the others.... there were many unreliable units formed of Central Asian ethnic minority men, Caucasians, and Crimean Tatars... those units were the first to flee."²²⁹ Of the 60 interviews studied for this project, nine soldiers reflected a mentality consistent with this national hierarchical system.

Russian and Slavic solidarity represented a pinnacle and predominant feature of Soviet victory. Per a Russian mechanic, he argued that Russians and Ukrainians are similar in

²²⁹ "Maslov Ivan Vladimirovich," <http://iremember.ru/en/memoirs/tankers/maslov-ivan-vladimirovich/>.

temperament and mentality. Russians and Ukrainians are similar in temperament and mentality.²³⁰ Similar to Terry Martin's analysis wherein Russians and Slavic lead the vanguard of Soviet national development.²³¹ In a similar way, Russian soldiers defined these similarities as constituting a unified Slavic people. The hierarchy established Russians and Slavic peoples as much of the force which is true- but identified Muslims as marginal to the war effort.

Language

Russian soldiers' usage of language reflected this hierarchical mentality, as well. Previous chapters discussed the Russian language's central role in the Red Army. Therefore, an inability to speak Russian became one of the ways in which Russians perceived Muslims' reduced role in the war effort. A Russian wrote: "In the Army sometimes both the Russians and the Ukrainians made fun of the other nationalities because of the language they spoke, because of their imperfect Russian."²³²

In addition to the use of the Russian language, Russian soldiers utilized two slang terms to denigrate Muslims. The term Natsmen is a contraction of "natsional'noie men'shinstvo" (national minority) and denigrated several nationalities including but not exclusive to Muslims.²³³ In addition to 'Natsmen,' Russian soldiers used Yoldash, a friend in Kumyk, as well. According to a Russian Harvard Project interview subject: "The Russians called the Uzbeks "Eldash"[sic] and disliked them for their cowardice."²³⁴ These derogatory terms reflected a mentality wherein Muslim soldiers maintain a position separated from their Russian compatriots.

²³⁰ *Harvard Project Case 415 Schedule A*

²³¹ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

²³² *Harvard Project Case 517 Schedule A*

²³³ *Ivan's War* pg. 288

²³⁴ *Harvard Project Case 641 Schedule B pg.1*

These derogatory terms combined with the hierarchy show that the multi-national nature of Red Army service was internalized by Russian soldiers as a hierarchy wherein Russian and Slavic soldiers served as the pinnacle and vanguard of this military force, while Muslim nationalities were a backward and not complexly reliable component of it. In addition to their separateness, Muslim soldiers took a smaller role in the Soviet victory, per Russian soldiers. A few reasons appear to influence this mentality, and this chapter will explore them later.

Collective Memory

The majority of soldiers who described this nationality-hierarchy wrote in immediate post-war recollections. The immediate post-war memories are most likely closer to the perceptions of Russian soldiers. In post-Soviet recollections, decades of official Soviet discourse may have affected how Russian soldiers viewed Muslim soldiers. This hierarchical system focused on the accomplishments of Russian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian as a vanguard of the Red Army, while Russian soldiers portrayed Muslim soldiers as secondary to the Soviet victory. The emphasis on the 'Slavic Backbone's central role in the defeat of Nazi Germany aimed to reinforce Russian soldier's primacy within this triumph. This memorialization reflected a mentality wherein Russian soldiers must immortalize Russian sacrifice. To accomplish this reinforcement, Russian soldiers degraded the multi-ethnic components of the Red Army.

Rationale behind the 'Slavic Backbone.'

Difficulties with Training

As discussed in previous chapters, the language barrier impeded military functions in several ways. Russian soldiers described these problems, as well. Ivan Sergeyeovich Katyshkin, a captain, and assistant department chief described this as:

“Moreover, you yourself understand, we received replacements from previously occupied territory, predominately the Ukraine and Central Asia(sic). They didn't even know the Russian language very well. This was Kazakhstan, Turkestan, Turkmenistan, from those areas, so we even had a problem with the training of the rank and file troops. That was very complicated work. New staffs arrived, new corps joined the army; people didn't know one another.”²³⁵

The language was not the only problem which affected between Muslim and Slavic soldiers in the Red Army units.

Four other Russian soldiers described a similar problem with replacement troops and their unpreparedness before arriving at their units. Nikolai Alexandrovich Christiakov stated: “It resembled the sector of the front where our break-through was assumed. In contrast to the 1942 experience, there was a wise attitude toward training the troops for combat. Do you remember that in 1942 the recruits from the Central-Asian region didn't even know how to use a rifle?”²³⁶ This quote refers to their arrival at the unit before they received the additional training discussed by Nikolai Alexandrovich Christiakov.

Later, in his recollection, he wrote: “At the left of the haystack I saw a group of Uzbeks or Tajiks shouting loudly in their language (they had such a rule: if something unusual happened – they gathered and began shouting).”²³⁷ Their lack of Russian language skills separated them from their fellow soldiers. Furthermore, their purportedly insufficient training made Muslim soldiers as less vital to the Soviet war effort.

The poor training these soldiers received, affected Russian soldiers' views of them. These training problems fit into a larger narrative of their incompetence and fed the opinion

²³⁵ *Red Army Officers Speak!* Pg. 106

²³⁶ Nikolai Alexandrovich Christiakov iremember.ru

²³⁷ Ibid

regarding their secondary importance behind Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian soldiers. These training difficulties highlighted several problems of previous chapters including difficulties of a multi-lingual army, inadequate educational systems in Central Asia, and inadequate military training of recruits from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Russian soldiers articulated these systematic problems of Soviet military as the issue of Muslim soldiers. As such, Muslims' training difficulties became one of the many ways, in which Russian soldiers described Muslims' secondary role in the Soviet Union's victory.

Self- Injury

The concept of self-injury remains a contested topic among military historians. Several methodological problems complicate the study of self-injury. However, there is a Russian word used by the respondents. *Samostrel* is a Russian term for soldiers who injured themselves.²³⁸ The existence of this term emphasizes the proliferation of this problem within the Red Army.

When discussing Muslim soldiers, seven soldiers described self-injury as a widespread practice among Muslim soldiers. The degree of injuries varied from shooting oneself to suicide: "They did not want to fight... Among the natsmeny, especially the Tadzhiks, the Uzbeks, there were many suicides rather than fight. The command had to have exhibition firing squads of such cases as a lesson to the others."²³⁹

Self-injury with the intent to avoid military service affected militaries throughout history. Merridale discusses this topic and argues soldiers injured themselves during the early failures of

²³⁸ Artem Drabkin and Todd Marvin, *Red Army infantrymen remember the Great Patriotic War: a collection of interviews with 16 Soviet WW-2 veterans* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009). pg. 332

²³⁹ *Harvard Project Case 641 Schedule B* pg. 1

the war.²⁴⁰ Additionally, Merridale argues that her work focuses on “true combat stories.” Soldiers, like other groups of memoirists, discuss non-traumatic topics. Therefore, traumatic topics like self-injury, desertion, or sexual assault of civilians, remain silent problems during many memorial recollections.²⁴¹

The taboo nature of self-injury may explain Russian soldiers described something as dishonorable as self-injury, as a problem plaguing Muslim soldiers. A Russian nurse explained their frequency in field hospitals: “There were Uzbeks and Tadjikis [sic] - there were many self-inflicted gunshot wounds. There were many fakers.”²⁴² A Russian soldier described the same system of self-inflicted injuries: “One such “warrior” would swallow a piece of soap, or another, cause a self-inflicted wound in hand. And then his fellow villagers would carry him on a martial cloak to the rear – with moaning, screeching and screaming.”²⁴³ In general, discussing self-inflicted wounds as a peculiar feature of Muslims soldiers is another way for Russian soldiers to insinuate the inferiority of Muslim troops. Not only are they culturally backward, or so the story goes, untrainable due to language differences, and incompetent; they are also willing to injure themselves to avoid combat, per Russian soldiers. This discourse implied that Muslim soldiers contributed little to the Soviet victory over Germany.

Collective Memory

From a collective memory perspective, post-Soviet soldiers overwhelmingly discussed self-injury; while the Harvard project focused more on the Soviet political system than World

²⁴⁰Merridale, *Ivan's War* pg. 80

²⁴¹ Ibid pg. 9-10

²⁴² Nina Erdman Iremember.ru/eng

²⁴³ Maslov Ivan Vladimirovich. Iremember.ru/eng

War II. There are two possible reasons for post-Soviet soldiers discussing self-injury. Firstly, the subject became taboo during official commemorations of World War II. However, this taboo topic remained in the forefront of Russian Red Army soldiers' memory. Secondly, the role of individual soldier became a part of official memorial toward the end of the Soviet Union. Therefore, questions related to the relationships within primary groups became a larger focus of these memoirs.

Tatar Yoke

Six Russian soldiers invoked the term "Tatar Yoke" while discussing nationality relations in the Soviet Union. 'Tatar Yoke' referred to the Tatar and Mongol domination of Russia in the 14th through the 15th centuries. In Russian collective memory and political thought, this era of Mongol control is reflected upon as a central formative part of Russian identity and a central component of Russian historical heritage²⁴⁴. According to this myth, several Russian soldiers attributed much of Russian supposed backwardness to the "yoke." Some soldiers stated this as a fact. "The Russian people in comparison with other people are backward because they endured the Tartar yoke for 240 years and broke away from Europe. During that time Russia was devastated, while the West continued to develop.," said a Russian soldier²⁴⁵ In a similar vein, a Russian truck driver soldier stated: "The Russians have been a backward people because of the Tatar yoke. The Russians have blinders just as animals do and they do not know and cannot see from where the whip is being applied to their backs."²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia* (Houndmills ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Pg. 3-6

²⁴⁵ *Harvard Project* Case 18 Schedule A pg. 66

²⁴⁶ *Harvard Project* Case 407 pg. 34

These descriptions of the “Tatar Yoke” reflected a mentality wherein Tatars were backward peoples whose domination retarded Russian peoples’ development. Per Marlies Bilz-Leonhardt: “The Soviets decreed a historiography that construed Russian history as a triumph over backward models of society and depicted the Russians as the modernizing avant-garde and the ‘Big Brother’ of the non-Russian peoples of the USSR.”²⁴⁷ The term Tatar Yoke is used throughout Russian history when describing a dark period of history, according to Bilz-Leonhardt. However, within this construct of the dark period of Russian History, Tatars remained the villain and embodiment of backwardness. Therefore, Soviet historiography supported the idea wherein Russian nationalities, including Russian soldiers, represented the vanguard of the Soviet nationalities. This era of Tatar control underpinned this notion.

Russian history makes frequent references to this supposed period of national humiliation. It served an additional purpose, as well. The memory of Tatar domination functioned in Soviet movies to highlight historical victories of the Russian peoples and join these victories to the victory over Germany.²⁴⁸

In addition to these cultural practices, the “Tatar Yoke” served to further separate Tatars, and other Muslims, soldiers from their Russian and Slavic compatriots. Within this usage, Russian and Slavic peoples of the Russian empire combined into a larger group that successfully defeated this Tatars yoke, and could, therefore, defeat other oppressive groups such as and Nazi forces. According to a Russian soldier: “The Tatar Yoke was stopped by the Russians... The

²⁴⁷ Marlies Bilz-Leonhardt, “Deconstructing the Myth of the Tatar Yoke,” *Central Asian Survey* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 33–43, doi:10.1080/02634930802213916. Pg. 35

²⁴⁸ Maureen Perrie *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin’s Russia* (Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). pg. 42-44

Russians are hospitable to foreigners, they are not selfish, they have a broad nature. Thanks to this the West was allowed to develop and the mutual influence between West and East - cultural influence - developed."²⁴⁹

However, within the Tatar Yoke and cultural practices, Muslim soldiers' behavior impact not just Muslims, but Russian soldiers as well. Within the concept of the Tatar Yoke, Muslim soldiers actively retarded the developmental progression of Muslims. Also, superstitious Muslim cultural practices weakened the martial prowess of the Red Army. As such, Russian troops further impugned the effect that Muslim soldiers had on the Soviet victory.

Divergent voices

In line with the backwardness hierarchy, some Russian soldiers claimed that no Muslims served efficiently, others argued that they were not present at all. According to..: "In the Soviet Army there are only Russian, Ukrainians and Bielo-Russians[sic] and of the minor nationalities only a few, like the Mordva²⁵⁰. There are no Caucasians, Turkmen or any of the other peoples whom we call Natsmeni."²⁵¹ Again, usage of the term "Natsmen" differentiates the competent Slavic soldiers from their incompetent and backward Muslim counterparts. Five other soldiers excluded Muslim soldiers as a part of the Red Army. This total exclusion of Muslims represented the farthest extreme of the trope of 'Slavic backbone,' per which Slavic soldiers comprised the totality of the Red Army.

²⁴⁹ *Harvard Project* Case 8 pg. 32

²⁵⁰ An indigenous ethnic group from the Republic of Mordovia in Western Russia.

²⁵¹ *Harvard Project* Case 62 pg. 16

Collective Memory

Russian soldiers that articulated the belief of the Muslim's exclusion from military service are found primarily among the Harvard project. These soldiers left the Soviet Union without involvement in the decades-long repetitions of Victory Day or the Soviet Union's Memorial. Therefore, official memorializations of the war as a multi-ethnic struggle against Fascist Germany did not reach these Russian soldiers.

Active Cooperation with German Forces

Muslim cooperation with German forces featured prominently through some accounts and pre- and post- Soviet recollections of the war. Nikolai Litvin, a Russian memoirist, wrote about encountering a group of captured soldiers from Vlasov's army. During an interrogation, Litvin's commanding officer recognized them as Uzbeks and stated: "He had previously encountered Uzbeks of this sort during the Kursk battle when several of the Uzbeks among our reconnaissance troops had gone over to the enemy while on a scouting mission."²⁵² Another soldier, Sergei Andreyevich Ostroschenkov, wrote about a group of Uzbeks captured during a raid on a village: "They looked very strange, having apparent Asian facial features. They didn't understand Russian or pretended that they didn't. We checked their papers. They appeared to be Uzbeks from the national unit."²⁵³

In addition to Uzbeks, Russian soldiers singled out Crimean Tatars as a collaborationist group. A Muscovite soldier who served in the Black Sea Navy until his transfer to the Red Army, during 1942, described them as such: "In the battles for Sevastopol, the Crimean

²⁵² Nikolai Litvin, *800 Days on the Eastern Front: A Russian Soldier Remembers World War II*, trans. Stuart Britton, annotated edition (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007). pg. 127

²⁵³ Sergei Andreyevich Ostroschenkov Iremember.ru

Tatars organized a Tatar division and went over to the Germans. The local Tatar population went into the mountains, and there showed the Germans how to get into Sevastopol."²⁵⁴ An aviation mechanic described their collaboration in a similar way: "The Tartars of Crimea were anti-Russian. When the Germans arrived, a Tartar delegation went to the German general and offered their help in the liquidation of the Russians in the Crimea. They hate Communism and think Communism is a Russian invention."²⁵⁵ As such, Crimean Tatars are rarely described as contingents of the Red Army and instead as parts of German forces.

Finally, a commander of first, a Red Army unit and a then collaborating Vlasov' Army stated that Muslim nationalities fought better in German forces: "There were three Russians and forty[sic] Caucasians, Chechens, Ingush, Kabardians[sic], Armenians, Georgians. All nationalities were commended by me. I loved them more than any other; they were honest and devoted."²⁵⁶ In this statement, it reflected a mentality in which the Red Army excluded Muslim soldiers and instead, these soldiers felt more comfortable fighting for German forces.

Russian soldiers described Muslims in the German forces and are more likely named by nationalities than Russians. This collaboration affected the memory of Russian soldiers who might have only had contact with collaborators instead of with Muslims serving in the Red Army. Regardless, this is another reinforce the primary position of Russians toward the Soviet victory, while Muslim soldiers collaborated with the Germans.

²⁵⁴ *Harvard Project* Case 641 pg. 2

²⁵⁵ *Harvard Project* Case 415 pg. 39

²⁵⁶ *Harvard Project* Case 147 pg. 107

Primary Groups and the Muslim Soldier.

Primary group theory argues that soldier's bond with soldiers form the strongest bonds with their immediate group. The foundational theory of Primary group bonding argues that these groups, when properly functioning, maintain the unity of purpose and morale. In the previous chapter, the primary group functioned as an integrative system for Russian language speaking Muslim soldiers into the multi-ethnic Red Army. This system operated in the same way for Russian soldiers. In such groups, many Russian soldiers became involved with Muslim soldiers, possibly for the first time.

A Russian veteran from the defense of Smolensk remembered two Tatar soldiers who received commendations for a raid on a German encampment. Upon entering the camp and stealing two guards' uniforms, "[they]...simply walked into the guard-house and arrested one of the officers and then took him back to the Russian lines. In the winter, they were dressed in white, but underneath, if it was an important mission, they wore a German uniform."²⁵⁷ The exploits of these Tatar soldiers are mentioned mostly as an example of the primary group bond, not as a proof of Muslim soldiers' efficiency.

However, soldiers from the post-Soviet period described individual Muslim soldiers in contrast to the perceptions of their backward nationality. In the memoir *Tank Rider*, Evgenii Bessonov described two Muslim soldiers. They are both shown to be efficient and useful members of their unit. While discussing one, Karabei Tajadev; Bessonov wrote: "I was always relying on the fire support of his Maxim machine-gun. He distinguished himself among other

²⁵⁷ *Harvard Project Case 27* pg. 52

soldiers of his age with his outstanding bravery.”²⁵⁸ Five other Russian soldiers repeated these sentiments regarding exemplary individual Muslim soldier.

Arseni Rod’kin described in great depth his service with a Kazakh driver named Ivatulin. Rodkin wrote about Ivatulin as a brave soldier, “He was extremely foolhardy, nothing could ever scare him. He was considered a trophy man; he would always bring either a captured truck or a tank.” He described Ivatulin as a friend: “I had my old mechanic Ivatulin back with me, the rest of the crew all newcomers.” Finally, he relays a tale about Ivatulin saving his life during an attack by German aircraft.²⁵⁹

Ivan Konovalov described Muslim soldiers’ proper conduct as well. Konovalov wrote about Karim, Tatar soldiers, who fought as a gunner on Ivan’s tank. Ivan’s portrayal described Karim as a dedicated and conscientious fellow soldier.²⁶⁰ This portrayal of Muslims in a primary group focused on their competence and integral role in the unit.

Russian soldier’s description of Muslim members of their primary group mirrored those of Muslim commanders. Sergei Andreyevich Ostroschenkov wrote about Captain Jumin: “He was a nice guy, a real artist, and a good combat officer. He was also killed, so regrettably senselessly.” Also, Anatoli Statin described his Tatar commander in a similar way through the heroic actions of the commander while being encircled by a German unit: “Our company commander was a senior lieutenant, an ethnic Tatar. He ordered: “To open fire!” When we began shooting, three tanks came from the left flank, and we heard again a shout of the tank crew:

²⁵⁸ Evgeni Bessonov, *Tank Rider: Into the Reich with the Red Army, First edition* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.; London: Greenhill Books, 2006). Pg. 238

²⁵⁹ Arseni Rod’kin Iremember.ru/eng

²⁶⁰ Ivan Konovalov Iremember.ru/eng

“Give up, you are encircled!”” Thus, in the memoirs of soldiers from late Soviet and post-Soviet period, individual Muslim soldiers and commanders are described as useful for the overall Soviet war effort.

Collective Memory

There are two reasons for the primarily Post-Soviet sources discussion of Muslims in Red Army primary groups. Firstly, the Harvard Project asked less direct questions about military service than about broader questions focusing on the larger Soviet Social System, as mentioned before. With this emphasis on the nationality relations, it is more likely that Harvard project respondents focused more on the nationality traits of Muslims.

Secondly, post-Soviet war memorializations focused on of individual soldiers. According to Tumarkin, Gorbachev’s “Immortal Exploit of the Soviet people” speech in 1985 marked a new emphasis on individual soldier’s sacrifice: “no one is forgotten, and nothing is forgotten. This is not a call for vengeance. It is spoken as a remembrance from the heart, which is what makes a human being human...”²⁶¹ Tumarkin argued that this shifting focus on the individual Soviet Soldiers’ sacrifice showed through several Russian activities such as the search for the bodies of Soviet soldiers on Russian soil.²⁶² In fact, this shift remained through the end of the Soviet Union and the start of the Russian Republic. It reflected a change in mentality, which focused on the remembrance of individual soldiers.

In line with this change in memorialization, Russian soldiers’ recollections focused on their closest soldiers, as a significant component of military service. The primary group

²⁶¹ Tumarkin pg. 197

²⁶² Ibid pg. 17-24

members of the Red Army were small and formed quickly, per Reese.²⁶³ Russian soldiers' testimonies from this period included these memorializations of their primary groups including Muslim soldiers. Also, it appears that the Muslim soldiers represent a contrast to the perception of their nationalities as backward or incompetent. Russian soldiers highlighted them to show their personal impact in contrast to their nationalities' failings. In other words, because Jumin and Ivatulin are respected members of their units but that does not mean that all Tatars or Uzbeks are talented soldiers. Instead, their martial skill reflected a larger sentiment wherein Jumin and Ivatulin are exceptions to the broader perception of Muslim soldiers as incompetent and backward.

Conclusion

The Soviet Union fielded an army of nearly 35 million people. Of that 35 million, 21 million soldiers came from the Russian republic, and more Russians came from other Soviet republics.²⁶⁴ Russian soldiers comprised the largest number and lost the greatest number. As such, Russian soldiers remembered themselves as the most significant component of the Army. Whether that memory focused on the unity of multi-nationalities fighting against the Nazi forces or the 'Slavic Backbone' serving as the vanguard of the Red Army; Russians remembered their contributions as the largest component of the Red Army.

In contrast, Russian soldiers in the immediate post-war years described Muslims as backward. Russian soldiers derided Muslims as hard to train due to language differences, which is a military logistical concern. They often invoked the myth of the "Tatar yoke" which blamed

²⁶³ Roger R Reese, *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought: The Red Army's Military Effectiveness in World War II* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2011). pg. 218

²⁶⁴ Glantz *Colossus Reborn* pg.604, Table 13.6

supposed Russian backwardness on the role of Muslim peoples in Russian history. Finally, Russian soldiers tended to minimize or ignore Muslim soldiers' contributions on the front, emphasizing their alleged self-injuring and collaboration with German invaders. These descriptions tended to ascribe a larger role to the Russians in the Red Army victory and coincided with the collective celebration of Russians' contribution to the war toward the end of the Soviet Union and through the development of the Russian Federation.²⁶⁵

Within this joint celebration of Russian military success, Russian soldier's memoirs and oral histories still included their primary groups. Within these multi-ethnic cohorts, Russian soldiers remembered individual Muslim soldiers' service. Russian soldiers remembered their Muslim comrades-in-arms who served in their units. These Muslims, possibly separated by linguistic differences, acted as an example of a Muslim who fought for the combined victory of the Soviet Union. However, their model retained prominence due to the larger perceptions of Muslim soldiers as backward and incompetent and inconsequently to the Soviet victory over Germany. With this context, Muslims comrades served as an example of how a Muslim served as a useful component of the Soviet triumph. These memories of the individual coincided with an effort to memorialize the individual sacrifices of Red Army soldiers.²⁶⁶

To conclude, Russian soldiers reflected a mentality wherein Muslim soldiers were part of the larger military force and unified in their goal of victory over German forces. However, Russians degraded Muslim nationalities contributions as second-class soldiers. They retained larger perceptions of backwardness, superstition, and incompetence, within their memoirs. Only

²⁶⁵ *Ivan's War* pg. 379-381 and *Living and the Dead* pg.191-192 and 197

²⁶⁶ Tumarkin *Living and the Dead* pg. 17-24

individual soldiers from primary groups maintained their position as an essential part of the Soviet victory, and as an example of their uniqueness from the larger perceptions of their nationalities. Within the collective memory of World War II, Russian soldiers retained their position as the most prominent on the hierarchy of sacrifice.

CONCLUSION

“I was a participant in the war and from 1941 until 1954 I helped the wounded,” wrote a woman with a Ukrainian name in a letter published in *Izhetsiia*. “They were all dear to me. I was with the 223rd Azerbaijani division defending the Caucasus. And it never came into my head to think about which of my friends were Azerbaijani, and which ones were Armenian or Georgian.... Let the memory of the war, the friendship of peoples tempered in its fires, be an example for our conscience today.” –*Living and the Dead* pg. 209

The ‘Friendship of the People’s’ remained a common refrain in official Soviet memory of the nationalities fighting in WWII. This analysis has shown the divisive Muslim perceptions of military service along with how Russian soldiers viewed other nationalities. While this is mostly propaganda, Muslim soldiers intermixed with Russian soldiers. Language remained a barrier. Primary groups formed outside of the bounds of nationality but appear to hinge largely on the ability of troops to communicate. When Muslim soldiers could speak in Russian to Russian soldiers, it seems that they formed those primary groups. Russian soldiers’ perceptions coincide with this idea when Muslims as a group are viewed as inferior fighters while individual Muslim soldiers are remembered both fondly and as integral members of their primary groups. Most interviewed Muslim soldiers blame their lack of Russian language skills on logistical reasons like access to education. However, resistance to the Russianness of the Soviet system may be another explanation.

The first chapter summarized secondary sources’ analysis of, and some Russian Imperial policies before the Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet Union’s Muslim policies from 1917 throughout World War II. This chapter showed the evolution of Soviet teleological nationality policies which aimed to create nationalities to build communism in the entire Soviet Union. Also, Soviet authorities sought to create a ‘New Soviet Man’ made up of all nationalities.

However, the buildup to war caused a shift in policy to Russianization and a national hierarchy with non-Slavic peoples at the bottom. In addition to formal nationality hierarchy and how it evolved to focus on Russianization at the exclusion of Muslims and other non-Russian soldiers.

The second chapter summarized secondary sources' analysis of Soviet military policies toward Muslim soldiers from the Bolshevik Revolution through World War II. Immediately following the revolution, the Red Army's regional army program provided too few underprepared soldiers for the Soviet Union's offensive wars of the late 1930s. Therefore, in the mobilization for war, the Soviet Union moved toward a national conscription model. This policy focused on the professionalization of the Red Army and construction of a national army. This national army involved higher conscription rates for Muslim provinces with varying degrees of success. Additionally, Red Army policies adopted a Russian-centric model in coordination with national policies. During the war, the Red Army designed and initiated propaganda campaigns targeting Muslim and other non-Russian soldiers. These mass mobilization campaigns served the practical goal of increasing the size of the Red Army and aimed to serve the ideological aim of creating a 'New Soviet Man.'

The third chapter analyzed primary sources of Muslim soldier's oral histories and memoirs for how they perceived their military service. Russian language skills divided Muslim Red Army soldiers. Russian-speaking Muslim soldiers overwhelmingly had more positive interactions with other Russian soldiers as well as better post-war economic opportunities. Post-war recollections focused on the injustices placed on Muslims in the Soviet Union before the war and the separateness felt by non-Russian soldiers while Post-Soviet memorializations focused on Muslim soldier's primary groups and how the war affected their careers. In general, Muslim

soldiers did not perceive the war in a single hegemonic way, instead of their language skills and economic situation after the war affected their perception and memorialization of the war.

The final chapter analyzed Russian soldiers' memoirs and oral histories for how they perceived and reflected on Muslim soldiers' military service. Russian soldiers describe a nationality hierarchy which mirrors the official Soviet policies- Russian soldiers see themselves as the group who has sacrificed the most (by total percentage of war dead this is an unavoidable fact) and therefore the largest group responsible for the Soviet victory. Along with this discussion, Russian soldiers denigrate Muslim nationalities as marginal to the success of the Red Army- through active cowardice including self-injury and suicide or their backwardness. However, Russian soldiers described individual Muslim soldiers as competent and excellent additions to their units. In conclusion, Russian memorializations shared common traits with Soviet ideological views toward Muslim nationalities while still valuing the service of the individual Muslim soldiers in their primary groups.

Further Research

There is much more to understand regarding this period, Soviet relations toward non-Russian minorities, and the relations between Russians and non-Russian, including soldiers. The relations between Russian and non-Russian soldiers are a fertile field of study. Historians have studied Jewish soldiers' services to both understand the Holocaust and Soviet policies toward Muslims. However, Muslim soldiers served throughout Soviet history and had remained understudied.

While some scholars have studied the Soviet Union in Central Asia and the Caucasus, however, historians have not comprehensively studied the Red Army in these regions. There are

four different research topics which are related to this thesis. First, an analysis of public memorialization of World War II in Muslim-majority ASSRs and their post-Soviet countries. Second, Crimean Tatars and Muslims of the North Caucasus during World War II and their collaboration with German forces or their effect on the Soviet War effort. This relationship needs to be more comprehensively studied to understand those nationalities' deportations better. Thirdly, a cross-national research opportunity exists to compare Soviet policies toward Muslims with Chinese Communist policies toward Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Fourthly, an article studying the term 'Younger Brother' and the role in which it plays in the national minorities system.

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