

Conferences and Lecture Series

Looking at the Colonizer

Institut für Orientalistik, Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle/Saale, Germany, September 27-28, 2002

Reported by: **Ildikó Bellér-Hann**, Orientwissenschaftliches Zentrum, Halle/Saale, Germany,
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On the 27th and 28th of September 2002 an international conference entitled "Looking at the Colonizer" was held at the Institut für Orientalistik, Martin-Luther-Universität in Halle, Germany. The conference was organized within the framework of the research project "Zerrspiegel" [Distorting Mirror], led by Professor Jürgen Paul, which focuses on the mutual perception of the Russian colonizers and their Muslim subjects in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The conference adopted a wide comparative perspective. Perceptions of the Russians by their Muslim subject populations were compared to the perception of the British in India, especially in Bengal. For further comparisons, case studies from China, Iran and the Ottoman Empire were also presented. Invited speakers came from Russia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, India, Bangladesh, the USA and of course from Germany. The event was sponsored jointly by the Volkswagen Stiftung and the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Conference organizers were Jürgen Paul, Beate Eschment, Hans Harder, and Ildikó Bellér-Hann. The official language of the conference was English and all papers were presented in English.

Among speakers on Central Asia, Baxtiyor Babadjanov (Tashkent) spoke on "Life with Russians as a Problem: The Ulama's Viewpoint." Using new source materials he presented the positions of the Central Asian religious elite, represented by the selected writings of a number of authors, concerning the status of Islam in the region under Russian rule, the course of action to be taken by Muslims in these circumstances, and the permissibility of making use of the innovations introduced by the Russians. Aftondil Erkinov (Tashkent) presented a paper on "The Conquest of Khiva (1873) in the Eyes of a Poet (Shaida'i)." The paper analyzed the poem written by the little known author, Shaida'i, about the deteriorating conditions in

Khwarazm following Russian occupation. The poet, writing in the popular vernacular and adopting a pessimistic style sought to establish a connection between the imposition of Russian rule with all its consequences and the level of religiosity — i.e., adherence to Islamic values among the indigenous populations of Central Asia. Shahin Mustafaev's (Baku) contribution, entitled "The Diaries of Yusif Vezir Chemenzeminli: An Azerbaijani Intellectual in the Process of Acculturation," also discussed local views of the colonizer, taking the writings of an Azeri intellectual as its main source. Mustafaev analyzed processes of acculturation and the acceptance of Russian culture through the writings of a single representative of the Western educated Muslim elite, also known as Vezirov. His example illustrates the emergence of new ideals among local intellectuals in the early 20th century and touches upon issues of social change concerning education, women's emancipation, religious fanaticism and national identity.

Aleksandr Matveev's (St. Petersburg) paper on "Perceptions of Central Asia in Russian Society: The Conquest of Khiva as Presented by Russian Periodicals" analyzed reactions in Russian papers to an important moment of Russian penetration into Central Asia. Sources depicted the Khiva campaign as a heroic action, which was part and parcel of the Russians' project to civilize a "semi-savage" country. This civilizing project aimed at abolishing slavery, putting an end to nomadic raids on the sedentary populations and increasing public safety, which was to create the necessary stability for economic and cultural prosperity. Olga Yastrebova (St. Petersburg) took the writings of a Central Asian as the starting point of her paper, entitled "The Bukharan Amir Abd al-Ahad's Voyage from Bukhara to St. Petersburg." The ruler of Bukhara, Abd al-Ahad, kept a journal of one of his trips to Moscow and St. Petersburg. The journal was soon

translated into Russian and appeared in Kazan. Yastrebova scrutinized the responses of the Russian press to Central Asia which were inspired by the Amir's visit. Although unimportant politically, the visit marked a turning point in Russian perceptions of Bukhara by drawing public attention to the success of Russia's civilizing mission in the region.

Volker Adam (Halle) also analyzed media representations of Central Asian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. The paper, entitled "Ottoman Perception of Muslims in Russia as Reflected in Late Ottoman Press," presented a case study in the politics of representation. In the early twentieth century, depictions of the brutality and ruthlessness of Russian colonization were used by the Ottoman press to present Ottoman minority policies in a favorable light, but at the same time the perpetual propaganda also contributed to a gradual change in Ottoman perceptions of the treatment of minority groups within multiethnic empires. Oliver Reisner's (Berlin) paper, "Discovering Russia: Travel Accounts by Members of the Georgian Upper Classes from the First Half of the 19th Century," analyzed the diary of a Georgian prince, recording his experiences during an extended visit to St. Petersburg in 1831-1832. Torn between the traditional ideals of Georgian feudal society and Russian and European values with which he became acquainted as an officer in the Tsarist army, his views of Russia also reflected underlying issues of self-perception and identity.

Laura Newby (Oxford) talked about "Lines of Vision: Qing Representations of the Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang." Looking at Qing representations of the Turki-sedentary subject populations of Xinjiang in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Newby drew attention to a third case of Asian colonialism, which in many ways is comparable to the Russian case. Not only have the Qing subjugated Muslim peoples who were linguistically and culturally related to

many of the subject populations of Russia, but, like Russia, the Qing believed in their own civilizing mission. The author argued that representations of the local populations by the colonizing elite can only become part of a new and neutral historical narrative if we first try to understand the colonizer's perspective. Rudi Matthee (USA) gave a paper entitled "Between Sympathy and Enmity: 19th Century Iranian Views of England and Russia," which provided a suitable connecting link between discussions of Russian and British colonialism. Though never formally colonized, throughout the nineteenth century Iran was subjected to semi-colonial interference from both Russia and the British. The paper examined continuities and changes in the evolution of Iran's relationship with these great powers, pointing out paradoxes and tensions. The other papers dealing with British colonialism in India, with a special emphasis on Bengal, were as follows:

Anindita Ghosh (Manchester), "Shilil vs. Oshlil: Debates about Obscenity in Vernacular Literature in Colonial Bengal."

Arup Sengupta (Calcutta), "One Colony — Many Worlds: Ways of Looking at the Britons in the Art of Bengal."

Anisuzzaman (Dhaka), "Masters and Subjects: British Colonisers in the View of Selected Bengali Writers in the 19th Century."

Hans Harder (Halle), "The Masters at Home: The British and Britain in Bengali Travel Accounts."

Benjamin Zachariyah (Sheffield), "In Search of Authenticity: The Bengali's Quest for His History and the Imperial Audience."

Amiya Sen (New Delhi), "The Hermeneutical Problem in Colonial Bengal: Situating Reason, Reform and Reinterpretation."

Central Eurasian Studies Society Third Annual Conference

University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis., USA, October 17-20, 2002

Papers Presented at CESS 2002

The following papers were presented at the 2002 Annual Conference. Paper abstracts and further conference information is available on the CESS website at: http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS_Conference.html.

International Relations I

Chair: Robert M. Cutler (Carleton University)

Pınar Akçalı (Middle East Technical University)

Globalization in Central Asia: A Reverse Trend?

J. A. M. Jamil Brownson (University of Iowa)

Geopolitics & Environmental Security, and New Alliances across the Silk Road from Turkey to Japan

Martin C. Spechler (Indiana University/Purdue University-Indianapolis)

Central Asian Security Issues: Regional Responses

Social Issues

Chair: Marianne Kamp (University of Wyoming)

Adilia Daminova (Columbia University)

Domestic Violence in Uzbekistan

Inna Andreeva (Columbia University)

Potential Implementation of American Child Abuse Prevention Policies Model In Kyrgyzstan

Leila Alieva (Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Institute of History/Baku Development Center)

Globalization and Urban Violence: Case Study of Baku

Medieval Eurasian History

Chair: Alexander Seleznev (University of Wisconsin-Madison/Omsk State University)

Uli Schamiloglu (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Western Eurasia in the 12th Century: The Travels of Abu Hamid al-Garnati

Patrick Wing (University of Chicago)

Tolui's Other Son: A Lineage-based Approach to Jochid-Toluid Relations in the Second Half of the 13th Century

Timothy May (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

A Mongol-Ismaili Alliance?: Thoughts on the Mongols and Assassins

Language Policy

Chair: Alma Kunanbay (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Luke O'Callaghan (Trinity College-Dublin)

Language Standardisation in Kazakhstan

Talant Mawkanuli (Indiana University-

Bloomington)

Language and Politics in Xinjiang: The Implementation of China's Language Policy

Ganisher Rahimov (Boston University)

Multinationalism and Language Policy in Uzbekistan

Folklore and Music

Chair: Talant Mawkanuli (Indiana University)

Alma Kunanbay (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Nomadic Aitys on the National Mall

Sayida Elemanova (Qurmangazy State Conservatory)

The Concept of Time in Kazakh Folk-Professional Songs

Isabella Horvath (independent scholar)

Son-of-White Horse Folk Tale: Inner parallels in Hungarian and Inner Asian Folk Tale Construction

Michael Rouland (Georgetown University)

Music and Nation in the 1936 Festival of Kazak Arts

Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (SOAS, University of London)

Maddo: The Tradition of Devotional Singing

Among the Ismailis of Badakhshan, Tajikistan

Geography

Chair: Robert Kaiser (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Alexander C. Diener (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Settlement of the Returning Kazakh Diaspora: History, Climate, Family, and the Nationalization of Social Space?

Aigul Zabirowa (Indiana University/Eurasian National University)

The Latest Urbanization Processes in Kazakhstan: A Case Study of Astana

William C. Rowe, Jr. (Macalester College)

Agriculture and Society in the Hisor Valley of Tajikistan: The Effects of "Change"

Botagoz Shaimardanova (Indiana University/Pavlodar State University)

Ecological Monitoring of the Technogenic -

Contaminated Region in Northeastern Kazakhstan:
The Actual Information and Actual Processes

Society & Politics I

Chair: Kamer Kasım (Abant İzzet Baysal University)

Lowell W. Barrington (Marquette University)

Those Dirty, Stupid Kazakhs: Attitudinal and
Demographic Determinants of Ethnic Stereotypes
among Russians in Kazakhstan

Khatchik DerGhoukassian (University of Miami)
& **Richard Giragosian**

Huntington Revisited: Ethnic Conflict, Economic
Transition And Corruption in the Caucasus

Central Asian Politics

Chair: James Millward (Georgetown University)

Farrukh Naberayev (International Management
Training Centre, Samarkand)

Ethnocracy vs. Democracy: Central Asian
Peculiarities

Dolkun Kamberi (Radio Free Asia)

Uyghurs and Uyghur Identity

International Relations II

*Chair: Pınar Akçalı (Middle East Technical
University)*

Yelda Demirag (Baskent University)

From Past to the Present: Turkey - Central Asia
Relations

Chien-peng Chung (Institute of Defence and
Strategic Studies, Singapore)

China's Great Game in Central Asia: On the
Defensive?

Jonathan Zartman (University of Denver)
The Contributions of Social Constructivism to
Conflict Resolution

Asbed Kotchikian (Boston University)
"Where Worlds Collide" The Geopolitics of the
Caucasus in a "New World Order"

Economy & Law

Chair: Gregory Gleason (University of New Mexico)

Eric W. Sievers (Harvard University)

Water and Conflict in Central Asia

Philip M. Nichols (National University of
Mongolia/University of Pennsylvania)

Privatization of Land in Mongolia

Anthony Pizur (Quickwater Research)

The Short Run Viability of Central Asian-American
Trade

Kuatbay Bektemirov (Indiana

University/Karakalpak Branch of the Uzbekistan
Academy of Sciences)

Challenges for Sustainable Development in Central

Asia: Socio-economic and Institutional Aspects of
Water Mismanagement

Askat Dukenbaev (American University in
Kyrgyzstan)

Politico-Administrative Relations in Kyrgyzstan

Islam

*Chair: Alexander Knysh (University of Michigan-
Ann Arbor)*

Vernon James Schubel (Kenyon College)

From Ahmad Yasavi to Hajji Bektash, From Central
Asia to Anatolia: Images of Spiritual Authority in
the Vilayetnameh

Ravil Bukharaev (BBC)

Sufism in Russia: Nostalgia for Revelation

Mehmet K. Karabela (Institute of Islamic Studies,
McGill University)

Disputes Between Musa Jar Allah Bigiyef (1875-
1949) and One of the Last Ottoman Sheyhülislams
Mustafa Sabri Efendi (1869-1954)

Alexander Seleznev (University of Wisconsin-
Madison/Omsk State University) & **Irina Selezneva**
(Russian Institute of Culturology, Omsk)

Zange-Ata and Hazir-Ilyas in Siberia: On the
Problem of the Central Asian Sources of Siberian
Islam

Culture I

*Chair: Anatoly Khazanov (University of Wisconsin-
Madison)*

Tony Banks (Massey University)

Kazak Nomads and Settlement in Xinjiang

Russell Zanca (Northeastern Illinois University)

The Importance of Anthropology to Collectivization
Studies: The Uzbek Experience

Cynthia Werner (Texas A&M University)

Women, Marriage, and the Nation-State: The Rise of
Non-Consensual Bride Kidnapping in Post-Soviet
Kazakhstan

Benjamin D. Koen (Ohio State University)

The Embodiment of Local Symbol and Metaphor in
the Music, Prayer, and Poetry of Badakhshan,
Tajikistan

Education

Chair: Martha C. Merrill (Indiana University)

Alan J. DeYoung (University of Kentucky)

Creating an "Action Plan" for Educational Reform
in the Kyrgyz Republic: 2001

Zemfira Zeynalova (Indiana University)

Distance Education in the Technology Supported
Education Reforms in Azerbaijan

Sarfarozi Niyozov (Institute of Ismaili Studies,
London)

Education in Tajikistan after the Collapse of the Soviet Union: The Policy Makers' Rhetoric and the People's Realities

Elmira Ibraimova (University of Minnesota)
The Educational System and the Necessity to Develop Leadership

Shifting Boundaries of Imperial Authority: War and Diplomacy in the North Caucasus 1700-1859

Chair: John Colarusso (McMaster University)

Brian J. Boeck (Harvard University)
When Raiding became Robbery: The Creation of Boundaries on the Russian-Ottoman Steppe Frontier (1700-1710)

Sean Pollock (Harvard University)
Ambiguity in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca: The Case of Kabarda

Dana Sherry (University of California-Davis)
Mosque and State in the Caucasus, 1828-1843

Culture II

Chair: Russell Zanca (Northeastern Illinois University)

Michael G. Davis (Truman State University)
On the Effects of the Introduction of the Domestic Horse in the Western Hemisphere and Its Implications for the Comparative Study of Equestrian Nomadism: Formulating the General Problem

Radha Dalal (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities)
Excavating Footsteps: 19th and 20th Century Travelogues on Khiva

Marianne Kamp (University of Wyoming)
Welfare, Mahalla, and Women in Uzbekistan

Laura Adams (Babson College)
Imagining the Audience: Global and National Influences on Culture Production in Uzbekistan

Tristra Newyear (Indiana University)
A History of the World: Mongolian Theater in the 1920s

Rahilya Gheybulleyeva
Religion in Literature: Fact and Fiction

Society & Politics II

Chair: Martin C. Spechler (Indiana University/Purdue University-Indianapolis)

Regina Faranda (US Department of State) & **David Nolle** (US Department of State)
Ethnic Social Distance in Kyrgyzstan: Evidence From a Nationwide Opinion Survey

Maureen Nemecek (Oklahoma State University-Stillwater)
Media Use and Credibility of International News in

Kazakhstan: Perceptions of the Attacks in the U.S., the Attacks in Afghanistan and the Raising of the Kursk

David J. Mikosz (IREX)
Appropriation of Technology: The Internet in Central Asia

Erin Epstein & Charity Fain (National Democratic Institute)

Democracy in Central Asia

Mukhabbat Nuritdinova
Phenomenon of Self-Immolation in Central Asia

Modern Central Asian History

Chair: Brian J. Boeck (Harvard University)

Nurten Kilic -Schubel (Kenyon College)
The Historiography of the Shibanid-Uzbek Period in Central Asia

Scott Levi (Eastern Illinois University)
Challenging Central Asian Historiography: The Khanate of Khoqand

Ron Sela (Indiana University)
Whose Story is it Anyway? A Khivan Historian on the Russian Conquest of Khiva and the Massacre of the Yomut Turkmens

Jeff Sahadeo (University of Tennessee)
Class, Culture, and Colonialism in Revolutionary Turkestan

Anvarbek Mokeev (International Manas University)
New Historic Sources on Kyrgyz Resistance to Russian Colonists in the Nineteenth Century

Identity

Chair: Robert Olson (University of Kentucky)

Brian Glyn Williams (University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth)

A Nation Exiled: The Historic Role of Ethnic Cleansing in Shaping Crimean Tatar National Identity

Ahmet Agir (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Reconstruction of Uzbek Identity in Uzbek Novels

Ayse Gün Soysal (Ataturk Institute, Boğaziçi University)

"What do You Understand by Nationality?" - A Questionnaire in a Tatar Periodical

Talinn Grigor (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
The Missing Authors: The Construction of Pahlavi Monuments and the Negotiation of Iranian Identity, 1934-1987

International Relations III

Chair: Eric W. Sievers (Harvard University)

Robert M. Cutler (Carleton University)

Transnational Potentials for Conflict Reduction and Prevention in the South Caucasus

Oksan Bayulgen (University of Texas-Austin)

Azerbaijan: "Frontier of Capitalism"

YounKyoo Kim (St. Mary's College)

The Resource Curse in Post-Communist Regimes: Russia and Kazakhstan in Comparative Perspective

Ottoman and Turkish Foreign Relations

Chair: John Schoeberlein (Harvard University)

Ihsan Çomak (Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow)

Russian Foreign Policy Towards The Ottoman Empire at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Centuries

Michael Reynolds (Harvard University/Princeton University)

The Inchoate Nation Abroad: Tsarist Russia, Nation-Building, and the Kurds of Ottoman Anatolia, 1908-1914

Kamer Kasim (Abant İzzet Baysal University)

Turkey's Foreign Policy Towards Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia

Robert Olson (University of Kentucky)

Turkey-Iran Relations, 2000-2001: The Caspian, Azerbaijan and Kurdish Issues

Society & Politics III

Chair: Maureen Nemecek (Oklahoma State University-Stillwater)

Martha C. Merrill (Indiana University)

Contextualizing Central Asian Studies: Escape from the Post-Soviet Paradigm

Gregory Gleason (University of New Mexico)

Authoritarianism and Human Rights in Central Asia

Alisher A. Khamidov (University of Notre Dame)

Islamic Fundamentalism in Central Asia: Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami as a New Challenge for Central

Asian Security

Anar M. Valiyev (Indiana University)

Islamic Radicalism in Azerbaijan

Linguistics

Chair: Lars Johanson (Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz)

Eva Agnes Csato Johanson (Uppsala University)

The Late Swedish Turcologist Gunnar Jarring and his Kashkay Language Materials

Kerim Demirci (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Kazakh Descriptive Verbs and Grammaticalization

Ferhat Karabulut (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Kazakh Relative Clause Construction

Sagit Shafikov (University of New Mexico)

Semantic Universals in Lexicon Based on Tatar and English

Forum – CESS: Looking to the Future

Moderator: John Schoeberlein (Harvard University)

Featured Speakers

James Millward (Georgetown University)

Xinjiang/East Turkestan from a Long Perspective: Reflections on the Region's History and Current Crisis

Alexander Knysh (University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)

A Clear and Present Danger: "Wahhabism" as a Rhetorical Foil

Presidential Address

John Schoeberlein (Harvard University)

Muslim Hearts and Minds: The Contested Terrain of Central Asian Islam

Summaries of Featured Speaker Addresses

Xinjiang / East Turkestan from a Long Perspective: Patterns of the Region's Past and Present

James A. Millward, Associate Professor, Department of History, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., USA, millwarj@georgetown.edu

The September 11 attacks, the US war in Afghanistan, and their aftermath have brought renewed government, academic, media and even public attention to Xinjiang, as to the rest of Central Asia. A few Uyghurs wait in detention in Guantanamo; the US has designated a Uyghur group as a terrorist organization in league with al Qaeda. At this juncture it is worth examining the little-known history of the Xinjiang region. I identify two broad patterns in that history.

The first concerns the region's geography and its historical strategic relationship with China. From the Bronze Age to the eighteenth century, the fertile oases of Turfan and the Tarim Basins in southern Xinjiang tended to fall under the control of nomadic peoples based in Zungharia, the steppes north of the Tian Shan range. Zungharia itself communicates easily with Mongolia, and indeed under Xiongnu, Turk and other steppe empires was often controlled by the same powers. The farms and trade routes of southern Xinjiang served as an important source of food and tax revenue to these nomad regimes, especially at times when hostilities cut off trade and tribute from China. Thus in Han, Tang and Qing periods, the impetus for Chinese military expansion westward was strategic: to disrupt their northern nomad rivals by cutting off access to southern Xinjiang. The Qing Empire definitively broke this pattern, not only by conquering and integrating Xinjiang within the empire under Manchu (not Chinese) administration, but also by annexing Mongolia and preventing any possible emergence of further nomadic powers north of China.

The second pattern began in the late 19th century, as the weakening of the Qing dynasty forced it to revise its approach to rule in Xinjiang and other frontiers, replacing imperial rule as overlord over Inner Asian elites and indigenous institutions (local tax codes and *Shari'a*, for example) with Chinese-style administration and governing personnel, expanded Chinese colonization, and even attempts to Sinitify Turkic

elites through Confucian education. Though these initial attempts failed, a pattern emerged of oscillation between assimilative policies and those offering greater cultural and political autonomy for the region's non-Chinese. This continued through decades of Chinese warlord, Kuomintang, and finally PRC rule in Xinjiang. Meanwhile, Russo-Soviet power acted as a powerful check on Chinese assimilationism, sometimes forcing Chinese regimes to cede a greater role to non-Han peoples in Xinjiang's governance, sometimes taking advantage of dissatisfaction with Chinese rule to carve off territory for itself or sponsor a client state in northern Xinjiang. In the 1960s and 1970s, following the Sino-Soviet split, this caused the Chinese state to equate all Turkic cultural or political expression with Soviet imperialism. Uyghur nationalism, growing throughout the 20th century, has been thus forced to navigate between the Soviet Scylla and the Chinese Charybdis.

In the 1980s Deng Xiaoping's government backed away from the assimilationist push of the high Maoist years, restoring more relaxed policies with regard to Xinjiang's non-Han peoples. Since the 1990s however, although Beijing has promoted more liberal economic policies in Xinjiang (as nationwide), exaggerated fears of separatism have led it to constantly restrict the cultural and political autonomy of the Uyghurs and certain other non-Han groups. Today, the PRC is eliminating even such emblems of its modified Stalinist nationality policy as education and publication in Turkic languages, and by means of its "Open the West" campaign attempts to speed Han Chinese settlement and development of the region. In this way it echoes both the mandatory Chinese-language education and the colonization efforts of the late Qing. While China can for now get away with assimilationist policies in Xinjiang because of its material power and the lack of a Soviet counter-pole, the cost in popular disaffection is steep.

A Clear and Present Danger: "Wahhabism" as a Rhetorical Foil

Alexander Knysh, Professor and Chair, Department of Near Eastern Studies, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., USA, alknysh@umich.edu

This paper traces the evolution of the notion of "Wahhabism" and "Wahhabi Islam" in the Russian collective mentality and the ways in which it is deployed by Russian and Western writers, commentators, politicians, and academics to explain the wide range of phenomena and political developments associated with the real or perceived resurgence of Islam-based movements in the former Soviet Union. The author highlights different discursive contexts in which "Wahhabism" is deployed. These contexts range from public speeches and declarations of political leaders (e.g., Karimov of Uzbekistan and Shaymiev of Tatarstan) to popular journalism and academic studies of Islam in Russia and the former Soviet Union. In these discourses "Wahhabism" is often juxtaposed with "Sufism," which is seen by many commentators as a more "benign" version of the Islamic religion, which is also more adaptable to the "democratic" values embraced by post-Soviet societies of Russia and its "near abroad." The author brings out the rhetorical uses of "Wahhabism" and "Sufism" (as its counterpart) by the Russian media, military, and academics against the background of the changing public perceptions of Islam and Muslims in post-Soviet Russia. He demonstrates that the public image of the Islamic religion and its followers has been undergoing a steady progressive denigration due, on the one hand, to the military conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia and to Russia's "rediscovery" of itself as a "Christian" nation, on the other.

In the context of public debates over Islam, "Wahhabism" has become a convenient (if also very

vague) symbol of the inherently "intolerant," "fanatical" and "militant" aspect of the Islamic religion that has to be eradicated by all means necessary, including political repression. For authoritarian rulers of newly independent Islamic states as well as their counterparts in Islamic republics of the Russian Federation the perceived militancy of "Wahhabism" has become a handy justification for wide-scale persecutions of opposition movements, including those that have no links whatsoever to the "Wahhabi" ideology. Paradoxically, public condemnations of "Wahhabism" in the Russian media, statements of the Russian military command in Chechnya and Dagestan, and in speeches of various state functionaries have attracted to it many disgruntled Muslims in post-Soviet societies, who have found themselves displaced and impoverished in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet economy and public institutions. These elements, which include a disproportionate number of youth, perceive the incessant litanies of invectives against "Wahhabism" by their oppressive and corrupt rulers and their inner circle as evidence of the invincibility of the "Wahhabi" movement in the face of brutal oppression. Consequently, the more adventurous (or perhaps more desperate) consumers of this anti-"Wahhabi" rhetoric decide to explore its practical implications by joining purported "Wahhabi" groups either for collective worship or, progressively, to fight against the common enemy, be it the state or an invading army.