

Magomet-Bek Hadjetlaché and the Muslim Question

Deceit, Trust, and Orientalism in Imperial Russia after 1905

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A scandal erupted, in the fall of 1911, among members of the Muslim intelligentsia from various parts of the Russian Empire. They suspected that Magomet-Bek Hadjetlaché, chief editor of the magazine *Moussoulmanine* (published in Paris in Russian and directed to a Muslim readership in Russia) and the newspaper *V mire musul'manstva* (published in St. Petersburg) might be an agent provocateur working for the government among the Muslim opposition and publishing his periodicals with a government subsidy.

As the archives show, that was true. Hadjetlaché “worked” both for the Muslim opposition and for the Ministry of the Interior, for some time successfully deceiving both sides about himself and shifting, according to their expectations, his representations of the situation among Russian Muslims and in the Muslim world in general. He thus swung, in double-dealing fashion,

The research for this article was sponsored by an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS, 2006) grant, the Fulbright scholar program (Stanford, 2008), the Kone Foundation, the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (2011), and several grants from the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (MSH, Paris) in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2001, MSH support allowed me to meet Hadjetlaché’s grandsons, Joël and Michaël; his elder daughter, Léïla (1906–2004); and the caring family of her friends, whose daughter, Célia de Barros, inherited the archives. I thank all of them for their help and interest. I was able to get Célia’s consent and initiate, thanks to the efforts of Mme Hélène Kaplan (1928–2017)—whose breadth of interests, energy, and sympathy are unforgettable—the archives’ transmission to the Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC, Nanterre), where they are now deposited (in the BDIC description, my participation was limited to help with the inventorying). I thank Svante Lundberg and Lars Björin for the great help they gave me during my work in the Stockholm archives in the summer of 2011. I thank the anonymous reviewers for their important comments and suggestions. My special thanks go to Willard Sunderland for his great assistance, involvement, and lively discussion in the process of preparing this publication.

between two strategies of presenting information, one for each of his audiences, which appeared in both cases persuasive. The fact that people believed him means that these strategies appealed to the genuine beliefs of each side, their presumptions about what was truthful and trustworthy and not—that is, their “regimes of truth” (a term I borrow from Michel Foucault and Ann Stoler but apply here to the context of mass culture and everyday presuppositions).¹ The Hadjetlaché episode of Russian imperial and Muslim history thus helps expose and compare—in the triangle of relationships between the two sides and Hadjetlaché in-between—the regimes of truth proper for the Muslim activists, on the one hand, and the makers of the state’s Muslim policy, on the other, that shaped their understandings of Muslims’ place and role within the empire in its final decade.

But why is Hadjetlaché useful for this juxtaposition of truth regimes? As we shall see, even his mere political double-dealing, an apparently ordinary business in this “age of Azefs,” might be of use for such a task.² But he was not a simple double-dealer.

The man mostly known under the name of Magomet-Bek Islamovich Hadjetlaché–Skhaguashé (ca. 1870–1929) remains as marginal in the scholarly literature today as he was during his lifetime. In the antireligious early Soviet studies of Russian Islam, he was pictured as a quite immoral “type of those who made the weather in the religious life of Muslims in tsarist Russia.”³ Contesting that view, mainly after 1991, some Kabardian scholars romanticized him as a patriot, a national writer and heroic adventurer.⁴

¹ Michel Foucault (*Power*, ed. James D. Faubion [New York: New Press, 2000], 132) coined the term in relation to his theory of power-knowledge and historicity of truth productions; Ann L. Stoler (“Racial Regimes of Truth,” in her *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016], 237–65) applied it more systematically to *truth claims* and *epistemic assumptions* about race in historical research.

² The expression “age of Azefs” comes from Hadjetlaché’s co-editor Aslan-Girei Datiev’s farewell article: *V mire musul’manstva*, no. 8 (20 April–3 May 1912). The reference is to Evno Azef, a leader of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and police informer, whose exposure as a double agent in 1909 scandalized the Russian public. On double agents in this context, see Jonathan W. Daly, *The Watchful State: Security Police and Opposition in Russia, 1906–1917* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004).

³ L. I. Klimovich, *Islam v tsarskoi Rossii* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe antireligioznoe izdatel’stvo, 1936), 233–67, quotation 242–43.

⁴ See, esp., R. Kh. Khashkhozheva, “Kazi-Bek Akhmetukov: Zhizn’ i tvorchestvo,” in Kazi-Bek Akhmetukov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Nal’chik: El’brus, 1993), 5–78; and Khashkhozheva, “Kazi-Bek Akhmetukov (Magomed-Bek Khadzhetlashe): Ocherk zhizni i deiatel’nosti,” in Akhmetukov [Magomed-Bek Khadzhetlashe], *Izbrannoe* (Nal’chik: Institut gumanitarnykh issledovaniĭ Pravitel’stva KBR i KBNTs RAN, 2008). On Khashkhozheva’s romanticization of Hadjetlaché, see D. Iu. Arapov, *Sistema gosudarstvennogo regulirovaniia islama v Rossiiskoi imperii (posledniaia tret’ XVIII–nachalo XX vv.* (Moscow: Istoricheskii fakul’tet, Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2004), 11–12. On the recent politicization of this

In an important recent study of the late imperial “Muslim question,” Elena Campbell has employed him, once again, as a Muslim opportunist to illustrate the government’s growing obsession with pan-Islamism after the revolution of 1905.⁵ Yet the Hadjetlaché episode suggests richer opportunities for studying these imperial “questions”—in particular, if we take into account that he appeared on the scene as an outsider for all the sides involved. To perform successfully, he thus had to be particularly sensitive to their criteria of truth. Indeed, his appearance was preceded by an unusual career.

Born Jewish as Gersh-Ber Ettinger and baptized in the Russian Orthodox faith as Grigorii around the age of 16 (1886), he claimed to be—after participating, late in 1888, in the infamous expedition of Nikolai Ashinov to Abyssinia via the “Oriental” lands of Constantinople and Port Said—a Muslim Circassian nobleman and a former “Turkish subject” named Georgii Akhmetov.⁶ He became famous, in the mid-1890s, as the politically loyal Circassian writer Iurii Kazi-Bek Akhmetukov, writing in Russian about the Caucasus and the Orient. By 1907, he acted underground as Magomet Aishin, a blackmailer masquerading as a Socialist Revolutionary. Yet simultaneously, and especially since 1908, he became known as the Muslim journalist we have already met under the name of Hadjetlaché-Skhaguashé. He died in a Stockholm prison, condemned for murders committed for gain, yet contending that he had fought the Bolshevik agents in Sweden, though some suspected him of being a Bolshevik agent himself.⁷

person, see Ol’ga Bessmertnaia, “Kem zhe byl M.-B. Khadzhetlashe, ili nuzhda v obmane,” *Ya evam veda... = Kto tak znaet... Pamiati Vladimira Nikolaevicha Romanova*, ed. N. Iu. Chalisova et al. (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2016), 135–90, quotation 137–42.

⁵ Elena I. Campbell, *The Muslim Question and Russian Imperial Governance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 182–84, 210–11; compare with Norihiro Naganawa, “Transimperial Muslims, the Modernizing State, and Local Politics in the Late Imperial Volga-Ural Region,” *Kritika* 18, 2 (2017): 417–36, quotation 422–23.

⁶ On Ashinov, see A. V. Lunochkin, “*Ataman vol’nykh kazakov*” *Nikolai Ashinov i ego deiatel’nost’* (Volgograd: Izdatel’stvo Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2000).

⁷ These identifications are discussed in detail in Olga Bessmertnaia, “Un agent-provocateur musulman, ou un orientaliste de plus: ‘Jouer à l’autre’ dans les miroirs impérial-orientalistes,” in “Les Orients dans la culture russe,” ed. Anna Pondopoulo, special issue of *Slavica Occitania*, no. 35 (2012): 83–126; and Bessmertnaia, “Kem zhe byl.” The identification of Kazi-Bek with Hadjetlaché was suggested by Z. Ia. Khapsirokov (“O khudozhestvennykh istokakh tvorchestva Iuriiia Kazy-Beka Akhmetukova,” *Izvestiia Severo-Kavkazskogo nauchnogo tsentra vysshei sbkoly: Obschestvennye nauki*, no. 3 [1979]: 71–75) and developed by Khashkhozheva, who presented Kazi-Bek as a native Adyg adopted by the Ettingers (Khashkhozheva, “Kazi-Bek Akhmetukov”). Magomet-Bek (or “Beck,” with or without a hyphen) Hadjetlaché (later de Hadjetlaché) was the Latin-alphabet spelling of his name he used in his works published in France and on his calling cards.

This biography of a con man, an adventurer and impostor (an impostor not so much because he reinvented himself as a Muslim Circassian, but rather because he traded on this identity to gain authority, influence, and money)⁸ might be called imperial,⁹ even “inter-imperial,” as the protagonist’s experience was shaped by the diversity of the Russian Empire and influenced by several other imperial states: he spent his early years in the multiconfessional and polyethnic cities of Tiflis and then Odessa; lived, after the return from Ashinov’s expedition, in the North Caucasus and, as a writer, in St. Petersburg and Moscow; and traveled to the Ottoman lands, Persia, and, later on, India. He conducted his “socialist-revolutionary” activities in Ukraine, escaped in Galicia, and finally settled with his family in France, from where he traveled frequently back to various regions of Russia. Each stage of his career coincided with the burning questions of the corresponding period: the 1905 revolution, the rise of the “Muslim question,” and the Bolsheviks’ coming to power, to mention just a few.

Yet, for the purposes of this article, the most remarkable aspect of the protagonist’s experience is his early “discovery of the Orient” (Ashinov’s expedition played here the critical role), and of the Caucasus in particular, which determined the reinvention of his origins. It suggests a case of individual self-Orientalization, of self-conscious choice of “Oriental,” Circassian, and Muslim identity. This romanticized Circassian profile contrasted sharply to his inherited, also “Oriental,” yet “shameful” identity as a baptized Jew, and he would employ, in his letters, a rabidly antisemitic rhetoric, contrasting himself with Jews.¹⁰ Paradoxically, he did not choose the dominant Russian and

⁸ Compare “legitimate” practices of *marketing* identity by modernized “inter-imperial,” authentic Muslims engaged in nation-building (James H. Meyer, *Turks across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2014]). On the authentic Muslims *trading on* their Muslimness with Russian authorities, see, e.g., Alexander Morrison, “‘Applied Orientalism’ in British India and Tsarist Turkestan,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 3 (2009): 619–47 (esp. 634–35); and Michael Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 82–106.

⁹ Compare “Narrating the Multiple Self: New Biographies for the Empire,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2009) (a series of articles by various authors); Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, “The Imperial Moshko,” in his *Lenin’s Jewish Question* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 28–63; Willard Sunderland, *The Baron’s Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014); and Ian Campbell, “An Imperial Biography: Ibrai Altynsarin as Ethnographer and Educator, 1841–1889,” in his *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian Rule on the Steppe, 1731–1917* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 63–90.

¹⁰ On Jewish baptism, see Eugene M. Avrutin, *Jews and the Imperial State: Identification Politics in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). On Jewish (sometimes baptized) informers, see Petrovsky-Shtern, “Imperial Moshko.” Hadjetlaché’s case could add

Christian Orthodox status, but nor did he choose an “Oriental” subordination. Employing the Orientalist images to perform his reinvented belonging, he maintained an “Oriental” difference vis-à-vis those in power; manipulating this difference formed his strategy of success. With this “Oriental” identity, there appeared no better way for his creativity to grow than to become a self-made “Orientalist” himself.¹¹

With this background, the concerns of “what is Muslim” and “what is Muslims’ proper place within the empire” could but be cultivated by and grow around Hadjetlaché. Indeed, the episode related to his publications and his subsequent exposure as a double agent—involving other actors besides Hadjetlaché himself in the story of deception, trust, and revelation—revolves largely around these issues. We may thus study it as an *extreme case* which “can often reveal patterns available for more everyday experience” to highlight how questions about Muslims were construed by each side in these relationships.¹²

This article seeks to exploit this episode from two angles, one methodological, the other conceptual. *Methodologically*, I aim to resolve, with regard to this concrete case (though my approach may also apply to other cases of deliberate deception), the abiding problem of microhistorical analysis: namely, the question of representativeness or, rather, of historical generalization, of finding a way to contextualize a given particular historical episode, neither reducing it to an anecdote nor having it serve simply as an illustration of what we already know.¹³ Following the initial microhistory premise, I therefore attempt not so much to explain the situation under study by relating it to an already known context but rather to reconstruct the context through the episode itself, or at least to avoid the direct imposition of the context on the episode, which risks ignoring the specifics of the case itself.

an aspect to the discussion of the Muslim-Jewish hierarchy in Russia: Robert Crews, “Fear and Loathing in the Russian Empire,” in *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?*, ed. James Renton and Ben Gidley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 79–98.

¹¹ For a seemingly similar case in the next generation, see Tom Reiss, *The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life* (New York: Penguin, 2005). Reiss’s Lev Noussimbaum differs from Hadjetlaché particularly by his belonging to the educated classes, not to mention Hadjetlaché’s deliberate political double-dealing.

¹² Quotation from Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 11.

¹³ [Éditorial], “Tentons l’expérience,” *Annales ESC* 44, 6 (1989): 1317–23, quotation 1321; Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 93–114 (esp. 112–13); Jacques Revel, “Micro-analyse et construction du social,” in *Jeux d’échelles: La micro-analyse à l’expérience*, ed. Revel (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 15–36; Jean-Claude Passeron and Revel, “Penser par cas: Raisonner à partir de singularités,” in their *Penser par cas* (Paris: Éditions de l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2005), 9–44; Sigurdur Magnússon and István Sziájtó, *What Is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1–76.

I thus approach Hadjetlaché's deceptions and the trust he gained from his different audiences instrumentally: since trust (at least, *believing* that "that is true") is necessary for deceit to happen, studying them in pair with each other provides a means for the historian to tackle the regimes of truth, which prompted people to believe Hadjetlaché and later to unmask him.¹⁴

Conceptually, I explore and compare, within these regimes of truth, the ideas of Oriental difference and of Muslim belonging and otherness, as they were actualized and made operational or not in Hadjetlaché's communications with the two opposing sides in this story. Those whom I call Muslim activists or *progressionists*¹⁵ represented the Muslim modernized circles and political opposition, generally known as jadids and their allies, who also called themselves the "Muslim intelligentsia."¹⁶ On the other side, there stood imperial agents, mainly the government officials from central departments of the Interior Ministry.

I approach Hadjetlaché as a *trickster*, a figure who crosses political and cultural boundaries by tricking others.¹⁷ This allows us to examine how these boundaries were constructed, both by the trickster and by those whom he tricked. Here the boundaries to explore are precisely those between "Muslims" as represented by Muslim activists and the "state" as represented by government officials. To do this, I pose three questions: Why did people on different sides of this "Muslim-state" divide believe Hadjetlaché? Why, later, did they lose their trust in him? And finally, what were Hadjetlaché's tricksterish methods of deception? *Trusting* Hadjetlaché meant accepting him as "one of us" or, at least, as someone close enough; *losing trust* meant to turn him into an alien; and his methods of deception show which differences between the two opposing camps that Hadjetlaché himself imagined and played on, seeing them

¹⁴ This instrumentalization of "trust" distinguishes my approach from its generalized historical or sociological investigations. See, e.g., Geoffrey Hosking, *Trust: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ I use the word "progressionist" and not "progressive" to avoid the ideological connotations of the latter, and meaning the way of thinking.

¹⁶ For a sharp critique of "jadidology," see Jeff Eden, Paolo Sartori, and Devin DeWeese, eds., "Beyond Modernism: Rethinking Islam in Russia, Central Asia, and Western China (19th–20th Centuries)," special issue of *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59, 1–2 (2016); for a retort, see Mustafa Tuna, "'Pillars of the Nation': The Making of a Russian Muslim Intelligentsia and the Origins of Jadidism," *Kritika* 18, 2 (2017): 257–81. The basic book is Adeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁷ On tricksters' social and cultural functions in the Russian field, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Mark Lipovetsky, *Charms of the Cynical Reason: The Trickster's Transformations in Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011). Compare with Davis, *Trickster Travels*.

as most relevant for the people around him. Thus, by analyzing the reasons for trusting and later rejecting Hadjetlaché, one draws closer to understanding how the Muslim activists, the state officials, and Hadjetlaché in-between expected “Muslimness” to “work” in imperial exchanges.

I pose these questions in the context of two large interrelated discussions, one on Russian Orientalism, the other on the “Muslim question” in late imperial Russia. Regarding Orientalism, my focus is on Orientalism *in action*, “applied Orientalism,”¹⁸ which I see as derived from *mass* (or “popular”) Orientalism—that is, a congeries of ideas and stereotypes about the Islamic “Orient,” circulating in the common attitudes and practices of power, where the elements of different and often conflicting productions of diverse groups of Orientalists (scholars, missionaries, officials, the military, writers, and artists) mixed.¹⁹ In this sphere, the consensus that scholars, as is sometimes assumed, have allegedly achieved in the long-lasting debate on the “Russian soul” of Russian Orientalism²⁰—that is, viewing it as more inclusive, hence “better,” in its attitudes to the “Oriental” peoples and less directly dominated by state interests than Orientalism in the “West”²¹—has been especially strongly contested.²² I agree with those who argue against the view that Russian Orientalism was better. What, indeed, is at issue here, is *how* the “Oriental” distance was put, categorized, and presumed to be managed—no matter how positive, negative, or mixed was the attitude to the Other. Discussing Hadjetlaché’s trust-building strategies, I show how the very articulation of “distance” and “difference” allowed him to establish a kind of “proximity” to state representatives.

¹⁸ Morrison, “Applied Orientalism,” 622, 623.

¹⁹ On distinguishing Orientalist groups, see Vera Tolz, “Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia,” *Historical Journal* 48, 1 (2005): 127–50, esp. 130–31. On mass Orientalism in a related context, see Ol’ga Bessmertnaia, “Tol’ko li marginalii? Tri epizoda s ‘musul’manskim russkim iazykom’ v pozdnei Rossiiskoi imperii (1890e–1910e),” *Islamology* 7, 1 (2017): 139–79, quotation 143–45.

²⁰ Maria Todorova, “Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul?,” *Kritika* 1, 4 (2000): 717–28. On the consensus, see Campbell, *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire*, 3–4.

²¹ Nathaniel Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg, 1851–1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?,” *Slavic Review* 59, 1 (2000): 74–100; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

²² Adeeb Khalid, “Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism,” *Kritika* 1, 4 (2000): 691–99; Alexander Morrison, “Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire,” *Kritika* 13, 2 (2012): 327–64; Willard Sunderland, “The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have Been,” *Slavic Review* 69, 1 (2010): 120–50; Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s Muslims: Islam, Empire and European Modernity, 1788–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 330–31; Campbell, *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire*, 3–4.

Thus we come to the categorizations of “Muslimness” and the “Muslim question” in the discourses under study. As is well known, the “Muslim question” reflecting late imperial dilemmas between the politics of differentiation and integration grew under Petr Stolypin and his successors as a result of the rise of state nationalism and trends toward imperial unification, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the nationalizing movements among the “minorities,” incited by the 1905 revolution. Scholars have richly discussed—and occasionally compared—the relative influence of Orientalism and nationalism in the government’s approach to the “Muslim question.”²³ Yet the link between them regarding concrete practices deserves further explication, as do the underlying notions that informed the state actors’ discussions about Muslims: the current literature discusses the hierarchies and management of differences in imperial politics, but *why* “Muslims” were “different” is often taken for granted.

On the opposite, Muslim side of the story, the Hadjetlaché episode unfolded in the sphere of Muslims’ experience that Mustafa Tuna has called the *Russian Imperial domain*, one of the four intermingling “domains” of Muslims’ exchanges, which particularly referred to subject-state relations.²⁴ In the milieu of Muslim activists, it was largely shaped by the exchange with metropolitan discourses. Here the Muslims themselves deployed both nationalist and Orientalist ideas to create their languages of self-description.²⁵ Ethnic and regional boundaries were here often crossed, and activists used Russian as lingua franca for their communication more frequently than is commonly assumed.²⁶ Together with nationalist ideas, Orientalism figures in this period as a kind of reciprocal enterprise across the state-Muslim divide, a channel of competition of opposing political projects.

²³ Campbell (*Muslim Question*, esp. 164–65) prefers the framework of the state modernizing/nationalizing trends as more revealing than that of Orientalism. Compare with Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), esp. 277–308. See also Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s Muslims*; and Naganawa, “Transimperial Muslims.”

²⁴ Tuna (*Imperial Russia’s Muslims*, esp. 10–14) has suggested this classification for the Volga-Ural Muslims, but it seems extendable to other Muslim regions of Russia. The three other domains are “regional,” “trans-regional,” and “pan-European.”

²⁵ On the reciprocity of the state and the Tatar jadis’ discourses, see, esp., Christian Noack, “State Policy and Its Impact on the Formation of a Muslim Identity in the Volga-Urals,” in *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Hisao Komatsu (New York: Routledge, 2001), 3–26.

²⁶ On the evolution of Muslim attitudes toward Russian in the Volga-Ural region, see Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s Muslims*, esp. 85–102; and Norihiro Naganawa, “Molding the Muslim Community through the Tsarist Administration: Mahalla under the Jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muhammedan Spiritual Assembly after 1905,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 23 (2006): 101–23. On Russian as a lingua franca, see Bessmertnaia, “Tol’ko li marginalii.”

That is why Hadjetlaché's boundary-crossing and the issues of trusting and distrusting him on both sides are of interest here. Helping expose the "Muslim question" as a complex weave of the regimes of truth and reveal their elements, it shows how Orientalism combined, in this case, in a single cluster with the ideas of the presumed primordial and genetically transmitted cultural identity, of nation and race, which established for all sides the *criteria of truth* for determining Muslim belonging and otherness. Therefore an understanding of Islam as "culture" (or civilization), rather than a religion, as a *Volksgeist*, governed this story; for all the sides involved "Muslim difference" was seen as "cultural" (obviously, quite differently from what we today understand by cultural difference). Essentialized to the extent that true belonging to it seemed identical with one's being born into it, "Muslim culture" was conceived by Muslim activists and state officials, to a great extent analogically, as a given whole (though, predictably, they oppositely assessed its value). Consequently, the two camps faced a number of comparable problems in "situating" Muslims within the empire. It was this symmetry of opposite visions that helped Hadjetlaché sell his invented identity to each of the camps while pursuing his chameleon strategy, which I call *playing the Other*.

I first provide an example of how Hadjetlaché exploited the idea of Oriental difference to succeed in the deceit that launched his collaboration with the government, and then I proceed to questions of trusting and distrusting him in the two camps.

A Deceit by Orientalist Means

On 11 May 1909, Sergei Nikolaevich Syromiatnikov received a letter from Paris.²⁷ By that time, he was known as an essayist discussing Russia's path between East and West and editor of the pro-government newspaper *Rossia*; his high government connections extended up to Prime Minister Petr Stolypin. The letter's author, a certain Akhmet Bek Allaev, proposed writing articles for *Rossia*, which would expose members of the Russian revolutionary immigration in Paris. Having got the go-ahead, Allaev wrote again, this time to request Syromiatnikov's help in finding support for relaunching the magazine *Moussoulmanine*, which had folded after its first two issues published in Paris in 1908.²⁸

²⁷ Institut russkoi literaturny Rossiiskoi akademii nauk (IRLI) f. 655, d. 15, l. 1.

²⁸ *Moussoulmanine* is the original title in the Latin alphabet on the magazine's cover since 1910; the same word, initially in Cyrillic letters stylized à la Arabic script and then in the Arabic script proper, was also depicted there against the background of the crescent and the sun rising over the (Caucasian) mountains.

According to Allaev, this influential magazine was able to steer the mountaineers of the Russian Caucasus (its primary audience) away from both socialist and Young Turk separatist propaganda, while also assisting what Allaev described as Russia's "blind" and stumbling administration in the North Caucasus in making its policies more informed and appropriate for local peoples thanks to the authenticity of the news it published. The magazine ran into trouble after its first issues because, as Allaev explained, its publishers—a "circle" (*kruzhok*) of wealthy and "cultured" (*intelligentnye*) Paris-based Circassians had become caught up in the then-recent Young Turk revolution and wanted to shift the magazine's direction to suit the "revolutionary" trend. Yet *Moussoulmanine's* editor, Magomet-Bek Hadjetlaché, whom Allaev described as renowned both for his great talent and his firm principles, had refused to do this. As the publishers could not find anyone of similar stature to replace him, they had abandoned the publication and "assembled," instead, a "whole political party" spreading pro-Turkish separatist propaganda in the Caucasus—that is, the same kind of propaganda that Hadjetlaché's magazine was meant to halt.

Syromiatnikov relayed Allaev's "interesting" letter to the Special Section of the Police Department, but things stopped there.²⁹ After six weeks, Allaev wrote again, this time also sending a package containing what he described as the "most precious thing in his possession," the "most august gift" of Grand Duchess Viktoriia Fedorovna, a diamond pin.³⁰ Allaev asked Syromiatnikov to give it to someone in Russia who would appreciate it as Allaev did, and who might, therefore, be willing to send the editor some money to support the publication of a few more issues of the magazine. Allaev added that he knew that Syromiatnikov "with his heart" would understand him, appreciating the parcel as a sincere and genuine gesture. But Syromiatnikov saw it as a bribe and wrote back in indignation.³¹

Allaev's letter in response was critical. To him, Syromiatnikov's reaction was "the proof of how badly the Russians understand us": as a Muslim and a mountaineer, he followed the dictates of passion, not of etiquette. In reaching out to Syromiatnikov rather than to anyone else, he had been driven by his sense of pride, because, having read Syromiatnikov's essays, he assumed that his views were "consonant with his own." Yet, as it now appeared, he would

²⁹ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 102, op. 316, 1909, d. 234, ll. 1–6.

³⁰ IRLI f. 655, d. 15, ll. 4, 7. Viktoriia Fedorovna was the spouse of Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich; in 1909, the family resided in Paris; the protagonist was, indeed, in contact with them (Bessmertnaia, "Kem zhe byl").

³¹ Syromiatnikov's letters to Allaev are apparently lost; I restore their contents from quotations in Allaev's responses.

always remain for Syromiatnikov an “*incorrigible*” and “*uncultured Asiatic*” (italics added).

Syromiatnikov responded, noting that if Allaev wished to be understood by the Russians, he should first try to understand them himself: this hierarchy of roles was determined, as Syromiatnikov explained, by the “general relations” between the East and Europe, of which Russia formed a part.³² Simultaneously, however, Syromiatnikov put Hadjetlaché (who himself had written to Syromiatnikov even before Allaev did),³³ in touch with A. N. Kharuzin, the director of the Foreign Confessions Department of the Interior Ministry. As a result, Hadjetlaché received a government subsidy for publication of his magazine, made contacts within various ministry departments, performed a number of their tasks, and apparently even managed to influence Stolypin’s view of the “Muslim question.”

Being a prelude to Hadjetlaché’s rise to a position of some influence over the government’s Muslim policy, this correspondence has two remarkable aspects. The first is the role of the presumption shared by both men about the abiding cultural difference between them as representatives of the “Orient” vis-à-vis “Europe,” an “incorrigible Asiatic” vis-à-vis an established agent of the Russian imperial center, which secured Allaev’s success. Indeed, it was Allaev’s appeal to his essential *otherness* as a Muslim and mountaineer that ultimately persuaded Syromiatnikov to fulfill his request to help Hadjetlaché (probably as a result of Syromiatnikov feeling ashamed of his supposed inability to fully “understand” Allaev’s “alien” nature); this appeal proved far more effective than Allaev’s initial reference to his “august” patrons, contained in the pin parcel. Allaev thus turned his “otherness” into a form of *symbolic capital*. Precisely by advertising this otherness, which embraced his claims about their shared convictions and patriotic feeling, Allaev managed to secure Syromiatnikov’s confidence. This exchange thus reveals the very process of constructing and managing “Oriental” otherness in an everyday communication of individuals on opposite sides of the “Russian-Oriental” divide.

The second remarkable aspect is deceit. As we already know, Hadjetlaché was neither a native mountaineer nor a born Muslim, but neither was Allaev.

³² Syromiatnikov’s views on the “Europe-Russia-East” configuration changed a number of times, shifting between those of the Westerners and Easterners. See Boris Mezhuiev, “Zabytyi spor: O nekotorykh vozmozhnykh istochnikakh ‘Skifov’ Bloka,” *Russkii arhipelag* (<http://www.archipelag.ru/authors/mezhuiev/?library=1919>). For brief mentions, see David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001); for Syromiatnikov’s romantic biography, see B. D. Syromiatnikov, *Strannye putesthestviia i komandirovki “Sigmy”: 1897 ... 1916 gg.* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 2004).

³³ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) f. 821, op. 8, d. 1203, l. 1.

Moreover, as it appears, these two figures were one and the same individual.³⁴ Hadjetlaché invented Allaev in this correspondence as a third party to better “introduce” Hadjetlaché and his magazine to Syromiatnikov from an “outsider’s” perspective; since then, this Allaev wrote for various newspapers as Hadjetlaché’s “independent” ally and supporter and maintained a correspondence with Syromiatnikov till 1913.³⁵

Furthermore, Allaev/Hadjetlaché’s reference to a supposedly dangerous “circle” of *Mussoulmanine* Circassian sponsors demanding that Hadjetlaché turn the magazine into a voice for the Young Turk revolution *after* it had occurred (on 24 July), amounts, at best, to an exaggeration, since the first *Mussoulmanine*’s issue appeared four days later (28 July);³⁶ thus, if the magazine’s sponsors had been “corrupted,” they were corrupted right from the start. In reality, though initially presented to readers as a collective endeavor of the Circassian intelligentsia, *Moussoulmanine* was rather Hadjetlaché’s personal project (whereas the “Circassians’ circle” narrative is probably a trace of his earlier search for sponsors, when he could hardly avoid financial conflicts). Creating his image as a would-be man of principle and importance, whom the enemy (i.e., here the Young Turks) was eager to recruit to their side, but who remained impervious to such nefarious temptations, was one of Hadjetlaché’s successful deception strategies. Notably, the narrative of Hadjetlaché’s alleged opposition to his pro-Young Turk sponsors would be reproduced till 1916 in the Special Section reports as a justification for the government subsidy for *Moussoulmanine*, which Hadjetlaché had in 1910–11.

The methods of deception that Hadjetlaché deployed in this correspondence (inventing Allaev as Hadjetlaché’s backer, creating *Moussoulmanine*’s respectable intelligentsia cover, contrasting Hadjetlaché’s patriotism to the Young Turks’ temptations) are those of multiplying the author’s identities and contrasting loyalties against the backdrop of an enemy image represented here by revolutionaries of all sorts. These methods unsurprisingly helped the

³⁴ The evidence is a draft letter addressed to Syromiatnikov and signed by a certain Abdurakhmanov; the signature is crossed out, and in Hadjetlaché’s hand is written “A.-B. Allaev.” On the reverse he adds: “This letter rewrite and send *recommandé*, possibly even from Villemomble [the Hadjetlachés’ residence since 1909—O.B.]... Many kisses” (the instructions were probably addressed to his wife). Syromiatnikov did receive it, in typescript, from Le Raincy, bordering Villemomble, whose *poste restante* was used on letters signed by Allaev as his address. See BDIC f. delta rés 914(10) 6(2); and IRLI f. 655, d. 15, l. 28.

³⁵ For more details, see Ol’ga Bessmertnaia, “Musul’manskii Azef, ili igra v Drugogo: Metamorfozy Magomet-Beka Khadzhetlashe. Pochti roman,” *Kazus: Individual’noe i unikal’noe v istorii, 2007–2009* (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2012), 209–98.

³⁶ Here Hadjetlaché played on the difference in the calendars: the publication date of *Moussoulmanine*’s first issue in Old Style was 15 July.

author gain trust, as they often do during periods of anxiety. The specialness of this case is that all these devices were framed by the key idea of Oriental difference, whose imagined and invented as well as *effective* character appears squared, because Allaev, the central articulator of this difference, was himself as much a fiction as his creator's Oriental belonging, that of Hadjetlaché.

Let us now investigate how this key idea worked in Hadjetlaché's interactions as a Muslim journalist with Muslim activists and government officials.

Trust and Revelation

Hadjetlaché did gain trust on both sides. Starting in 1910 when *Moussoulmanine* was relaunched, Muslim authors of various ethnicities and political orientations, representing a range of professions and sometimes having a higher secular education (occasionally preceded by an Islamic one), along with some Russians (including Syromiatnikov) contributed there.³⁷ Many of them were or would become well known on Russia's Muslim scene: the Volga-Ural Muslims Hadi Atlasov (Atlasi), a jadid scholar and publicist, and Sharif Sunchali(ev), a teacher; North-Caucasians, including the Ossetian army officer and literary translator Kambulat Esiev, the Circassian lawyer and future leader of the Mountain Republic (1917–20) P. Kabardei (Pshemaho Kotsev), socialists and writers, the Ossetian Akhmet Tsalikov and the Lak Said Gabiev.³⁸ The magazine's subscribers included at least 100 individuals and institutions in various regions: Muslim newspapers' boards and charitable societies; traders, officers, and teachers in the Caucasus, the Volga-Urals, and Turkestan; and some Russian officials, including Stolypin and the Caucasus viceroy, I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov. The editors received correspondence in Russian and Turkic (the latter was translated for Hadjetlaché by his assistants),³⁹ discussing subscription issues and matters of content.⁴⁰

Moreover, Hadjetlaché secured explicit expressions of confidence from members of the Muslim intelligentsia. When establishing *V mire musul'manstva* in early 1911 (the government subsidy this time was partial), and looking for Muslims' support in St. Petersburg and the Volga-Urals, where he visited, Hadjetlaché was personally recommended by Galiaskar Syrtlanov, a member of the State Duma Muslim faction from Orenburg, as a "*vigorous*

³⁷ In 1909, Hadjetlaché led a "Muslim Section," assembling a number of authors, in the newspaper *Bratskaia pomoshch'*; comparably, *V mire musul'manstva* was preceded by a section in *Novaia Rus'* (1910); these newspapers differed drastically, the former conservative, the latter liberal.

³⁸ The transliteration of names is given according to the spelling (mainly Russified) in *Moussoulmanine* and *V mire musul'manstva*.

³⁹ Hadjetlaché did not speak Turkic languages and had a poor grasp of French.

⁴⁰ BDIC f. delta rés 914(10) 6(2).

man ... sincerely wishing to work for the common good of our coreligionists" and "absolutely trustworthy in all respects." The letter went to Fatikh Karimov (Karimi), the famous editor of the Orenburg jadid newspaper *Vakit* and a central figure in Muslim activist circles, who also assisted with fund-raising.⁴¹

As for government officials, they tended to characterize Hadjetlaché as "acting in the spirit of government interests," and the Special Section of the Police Department even defended his bona fides against suspicions on the part of the Okhrana that he was an undercover pan-Islamist agent.

Generally speaking, there were three basic factors that motivated both sides to trust Hadjetlaché: (1) pragmatic needs; (2) ideology/discourse; and (3) Hadjetlaché's image. I start with the first two and return to the last factor later.

Muslim Activists

Why did Muslim audiences embrace Hadjetlaché? One of the main messages of his publications for Muslims was urging them to pursue the path to *Culture*—"beneficent culture, which alone provides both happiness and joy of being."⁴² The path was that of progress, and Culture as its goal was understood as a universal ideal (though, predictably, most obviously associated with Europe).⁴³ Progress demanded *enlightenment* (learning) and the civilizing mission of the *Muslim intelligentsia* vis-à-vis the supposedly "backward" ("Oriental," in this sense) Muslim masses. The pledge of enlightenment was seen in all-Russia's Muslim "cultural" union: according to the announcement on *Moussoulmanine's* cover, the magazine "aspire[d] to unify all the coreligionists on the grounds of progress, love, and labor and bring them amid the civilized peoples." These "cultural objectives" also manifested the Muslims' aspirations for the common good of all the peoples of the Russian Empire (the rhetoric also used, e.g., by State Duma oppositional Muslim deputies).⁴⁴ This evolutionist progressionist scheme thus depicted Russian Muslims as a *people* under the leadership of the *Muslim intelligentsia*, which was also to be united through *Moussoulmanine's* efforts, and whose rivals were the ignorant fanatical *mullahs*. The intelligentsia, though, also had its inner enemy, the pseudo-intelligentsia, the educated egoists abdicating their duty to serve the people. Simultaneously, Russian Muslims represented the "most progressive" flank of the "Muslim world"—

⁴¹ Natsional'nyi arkhiv Respubliki Tatarstan (NART) f. 1370, op. 1, d. 22, l. 20.

⁴² *Moussoulmanine*, no. 1 (1911): 4.

⁴³ I use the capital "C" to distinguish this universal meaning from the notion of culture, which allows its use in plural, like a national culture.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Sadridin Maksudov's speech, 13 March 1912, in *Musul'manskie deputaty Gosudarstvennoi dumy Rossii 1906–1917 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, ed. L. A. Iamaeva (Ufa: Institut istorii, iazyka i literatury, 1998), 178–94.

an Orientalist notion evoked already in the titles of Hadjetlaché's periodicals and underscored by the rubrics used in *Moussoulmanine*.⁴⁵ They displayed a vision of this Muslim world's space structured by nearness to the publishers' supposed homeland: "From the Homeland" (on the North Caucasus), "Muslim Life" (on Muslims in Russia), "From the Life of the Muslims of Other Countries." Yet in its whole, this design emphasized and simplified, in a Russian rendition, the commonplaces of the Tatar jadid press.⁴⁶ Hadjetlaché probably caught them "in the air" during his engagements with Muslim milieus and from Russian retellings, while the authentic Muslim progressionist authors of *Moussoulmanine* kept the line.

Since they saw this ideology as suitable, Muslim activists needed Hadjetlaché pragmatically as the chief editor of *V mire musul'manstva*, given the value of a Russian-language (i.e., lingua franca) Muslim publication based in Russia's capital.⁴⁷ Indeed, the need for such a publication had been discussed by Muslim progressionists (e.g., Ismail Gasprinskii, Ali Mardan-Bek Topchibashev, and Fatikh Karimov, as well as less-known figures), even before Hadjetlaché's appearance.⁴⁸ The task was, once again, "to unite" Russia's Muslims on the path of progress, while also relaying "true" information on them to the Russian public and government. Syrtlanov's words of recommendation, evoking the "common good of our coreligionists" are another illustration of the aspiration for "unity," whose element Hadjetlaché seemed to be. In addition, they preferred an editor "independent" of the Duma faction and standing *outside* the inner cleavages among the activists.⁴⁹ Thus Hadjetlaché appeared there just in time.

⁴⁵ Compare with Naganawa, "Transimperial Muslims," 422; and Geraci, *Window on the East*, 283.

⁴⁶ On the link of the notion of "Muslim intelligentsia" to Russian populism among the "progressive" Volga-Ural Muslims, see Tuna, "Pillars of the Nation"; and Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims*, chap. 8. On the progressionist design of the Tatar jadid press, see Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims*, chap. 7; and Meyer, *Turks across Empires*, 130–44. For more details on *Moussoulmanine*'s discourse and its own parallels with Russian populism, see Ol'ga Bessmertnaia, "Russkaia kul'tura v svete musul'manstva: Tekst i postupok," in *Khristiane i musul'mane: Problemy dialoga. Khrestomatiia*, ed. A. V. Zhuravskii (Moscow: Bibleiskobogoslovskii institut sv. apostola Andreia, 2000), 256–312.

⁴⁷ The newspaper, as well as the preceding section with the same title, in *Novaia Rus'*, had a co-editor in St. Petersburg—an Ossetian, Aslan-Girei Datiev (quoted above), a lawyer connected with G. Syrtlanov and Hadjetlaché's old acquaintance.

⁴⁸ Bessmertnaia, "Tol'ko li marginalii," 155–58. After Hadjetlaché's publications stopped, the endeavor was realized in *Musul'manskaia gazeta*, published in St. Petersburg (1912–14) by Said Gabiev and Ismail Shagiakhmetov, an ex-student of St. Petersburg University from Orenburg.

⁴⁹ Diliara Usmanova, *Musul'manskaia fraktsiia i problemy "svobody sovesti" v Gosudarstvennoi Dume Rossii, 1906–1917* (Kazan: Master Lain, 1999), 61; for the same information from the

Yet the universalist, evolutionist expectation that sustained this vision of Muslim unity was superseded by the romantic “nationalist” one under the Muslims’ shock at losing trust in their “vigorous man.” They acted now as if representing the Muslim “ethno-national” culture, where genuine “Muslimness” was granted only by indigenous Muslim origins, “*Islamic blood*.”

The activists became suspicious of Hadjetlaché for a variety of reasons. One was Hadjetlaché’s exceedingly ambitious conduct. His outspoken positions sometimes drew a strong response, such as his denigration of post-1908 Turkey, which many Russian Muslims viewed as the model of modernization, or his criticism of the Duma Muslim faction or of the Baku magnate and sponsor of a number of Azerbaijani Muslim periodicals, Zeinalabdin Tagiev. Indeed, it was in Tagiev’s newspaper that Akhmad Kamal, condemning *Moussoulmanine’s* attitude to Turkey, doubted if the editors had “a *drop of Islamic blood* in their veins.”⁵⁰ Some critical views comparable to those of Hadjetlaché could appear in the “authentic” Muslim progressionist press too, but hardly all together.

Separate from concerns about Hadjetlaché’s views, there arose suspicions of his “alien” origins. Rumors spread about his dubious past; for example, the Kazakh nobleman and former Ufa deputy to the State Duma Salim-Girei Dzhantiurin wrote about that to Karimov from Turkey, where he tried to collect information.⁵¹ Such suspicions led to a detailed investigation. The revelations were shocking: Hadjetlaché’s indecent behavior as a journalist and his political double-dealing (I will return later to the facts discovered). These discoveries formed *the* proof of what before had only been suspected: his being a Jew. Consequently, Hadjetlaché got a moniker among Muslims: the *Muslim Azef*.⁵² Hadjetlaché was clearly associated with Evno Azef both because of his political double-dealing *and* his Jewishness. His former colleague Said

Russian government side, see Vladimir Gol’mstrem, ed., *Musul’manskaia pechat’ v Rossii v 1910 godu* (Oxford: Obshchestvo issledovaniia srednei Azii, 1987 [1911]), 60.

⁵⁰ *Jeni Fejuzat*, 1 February 1911, in GARF DP, OO, 1911, d. 74, pt. 6, ll. 9–9 ob. Ahmad Kamal, a Turkish immigrant from the Abdul Hamid II regime, was an editor of some of Tagiev’s newspapers (Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey, *La presse et le mouvement national chez les musulmans de Russie avant 1920* [Paris: Mouton, 1964], 112).

⁵¹ NART f. 1370, op. 1, d. 22, ll. 28–28 ob. Another person who wrote to Karimov, sharing his worries, was Osman Akchokrakly—a Crimean publicist, teacher, and historian and Gasprinkii’s associate (*ibid.*, ll. 32–33). On Dzhantiurin and the Syrtlanovs as representing “a new kind of public” in Bashkiria, see Charles Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire: Loyalty and Tsarist Authority in Bashkiria, 1552–1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), esp. 199.

⁵² *V mire musul’manstva*, 20 April 1912, 8. Notably, Hadjetlaché himself scorned Evno Azef when writing under Allaev’s name to Syromiatnikov; he then called Russian revolutionaries based in Paris “Azef’s comrades.”

Gabiev captured this view by paraphrasing a verse from Ivan Krylov's fable "The Liar": "Some nobleman or maybe even a prince, some Muslim, or maybe even a Jew in Muslim skin."⁵³

In other words, Muslim activists actually constructed Hadjetlaché's origins, knowing nothing for sure but proceeding from ideological presumptions. Briefly speaking, the suspicion of Hadjetlaché's alien origins caused investigation of his political double-dealing, and his political double-dealing became *the* proof of his non-Muslim origins. According to this logic, the origins determined one's behavior, psychology, and morality: no "real" Muslim could possibly behave like Hadjetlaché did.

There were, certainly, nuances to the situation. For example, Pago Tambiev—a Circassian ethnographer, teacher, and engineer concerned more with developing the Circassian self-awareness than the Muslim one—disagreed with Hadjetlaché's opponents (though before their final discoveries). He argued that Hadjetlaché as an Adyg public figure was "beyond comparison," and must be Adyg in origin, because "no Karaim or any other outsider would ever *so deeply understand the national psychology* alien to him" (italics added).⁵⁴ He meant, probably, Hadjetlaché's role as the creator of *Moussoulmanine* as a publication discussing North Caucasian problems from below and open to authors of varied positions and confessions; as a modernized Circassian, he most likely also appreciated Hadjetlaché's opposition to the Circassians' emigration to Turkey.⁵⁵ Yet in this argument Tambiev, too, "constructed" Hadjetlaché's origins on the basis of ideological presumptions.

Alternatively, Islam as a religion was at issue among Hadjetlaché's opponents—though, to an extent, still "sacrificed" to the idea of "Muslim culture." Karimov's *Vakit* insisted, before Hadjetlaché was finally exposed, that *Moussoulmanine* was "necessary" for promoting Russian Muslims' unity and "useful" as a Russian-language Muslim magazine that could "bring back to us" those Muslims who could not read Tatar. Simultaneously, however, *Vakit* detached *Moussoulmanine* from its own Tatar-language readership, implying

⁵³ "Kakoi-to prints, a mozhet byt', i kniaz', kakoi-to musul'manin, a mozhet byt', i musul'manstvuiushchii evrei," *Musul'manskaia gazeta*, 25 May 1913.

⁵⁴ R. Kh. Khashkhozheva, ed., *Pago Tambiev: K 110-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia* (Nal'chik: El'brus, 1984), 237.

⁵⁵ The emigration from the North Caucasus in the late 19th century was (and still is) a matter of memory wars in Russia. On emigration, see Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845–1917* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); and James Meyer, "Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship: Russian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, 1860–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, 1 (2007): 15–32.

that it lacked the Islamic authenticity of the Tatar press because its editors “seemed not to know much of the deeds and the religion of Muslims.”⁵⁶

Obviously, personal relations influenced the situation, too. But the broadest Muslim reaction still revolved around the question of Muslim “native” belonging: “Tell us, finally, the truth about the Muslim Azef,” called one of Hadjetlaché’s former readers from the North Caucasus to *Musul’manskaia gazeta*, once again inquiring about his origins.⁵⁷

Thus the shock of Hadjetlaché’s revelation actualized those very elements in the Muslim progressionists’ ways of constructing Muslim identity, which made the imperial authorities and conservative public opinion believe, rather simplistically, in “Muslim nationalism” as the base of Muslim “renaissance” and political opposition. But how did these “nationalist” truths relate to the discourse in *Moussoulmanine* that initially drew Muslim audiences to trust Hadjetlaché? As the described reactions to his unmasking together with many essays published in *Moussoulmanine* show, the magazine’s progressionist design of the “Muslim people,” with all its universalism, might nevertheless imply for Muslim readers the “ethno-national” stance; Hadjetlaché’s oral contacts with activists probably implied the same. These visions obviously differed from how authorities perceived them, as they lacked separatism: contrarily, “enlightenment” and “progress,” in *Moussoulmanine* and, for example, in Duma Muslim deputies’ speeches were understood as a pledge of equality of “Muslims” with other peoples within the empire. Moreover, not to make this “Muslim nationalism” absolute, it is worth noting that Muslim discourses circulating beyond the “Imperial domain,” including those of the same Muslim actors, rest beyond this story.⁵⁸ Yet the very fact of this “ethno-national” surge is revealing.

This “nationalist” imagination built, essentially, on self-Orientalization. The imagined unity *was* Muslim, vividly described by Said Gabiev as “the Muslim world *leached* by misters like Hadjetlaché.”⁵⁹ Beyond Hadjetlaché’s revelation, it was often viewed with an anticolonial stance, as a *non-European*, “Oriental” conglomerate of peoples resisting the European aggression, similarly in Hadjetlaché’s publications and, for example, in *Musul’manskaia*

⁵⁶ *Vakit* (1911): 839, in NART f. 199, op. 1, d. 722, ll. 237–38.

⁵⁷ *Musul’manskaia gazeta*, 23 July 1913.

⁵⁸ As Tuna has shown (*Imperial Russia’s Muslims*, chap. 8), the progressionists’ activities in the “imperial domain” often gave grounds for erroneous judgments on Russia’s Muslims generally; the progressionists’ “nationalist” stance itself was perceived inadequately. For more interpretations, see, e.g., Noack, “State Policy and Its Impact”; and Meyer, *Turks across Empires*. On the “cultural bilingualism” of the same actors, particularly Fatikh Karimov, see Bessmertnaya, “Tol’ko li marginalii.”

⁵⁹ *Musul’manskaia gazeta*, 25 May 1913.

gazeta by his opponents.⁶⁰ Hadjetlaché's exposure revealed how Muslim conceptualizations of "Muslimness" inverted the European/Russian negative Orientalist interpretations and implied its high morality, contrasted not only to European greed but also to Jewish corruption.⁶¹ *Moussoulmanine* appealed to the same "Muslim" features. Hadjetlaché's Muslim publications developed the same "truths" about "Muslim culture," which revealed themselves in the reactions to his exposure.

The Ministry of the Interior

Why did Hadjetlaché's patrons in the Interior Ministry accept him? And why did they agree to support *Moussoulmanine* and *V mire musul'manstva*, whereas his apparently similar earlier project seemed even dangerous to them? In 1898, the General Department of the Press declined to support a project authored by Kazi-Bek, the magazine *Kavkaz i narody Vostoka*, noting that "despite the good intentions of the editors, such a magazine, will likely only reinforce in these tribes ... their national self-awareness, giving [them] material for the separatist aspirations recently observable."⁶² By 1909–10, the ministry officials were much more wary of "separatist aspirations" among the Muslim peoples of the empire: as is well known, the conservative circles' paranoiac obsession with the perceived pan-Islamic menace (anticipating the all-Muslim political union outside the country and separatism within) reached its peak. Precisely in 1910, Hadjetlaché's patron in the Department of Foreign Confessions and Stolypin's consultant on the Muslim question, A. N. Kharuzin, presided over the Special Commission for Countermeasures against Tatar-Muslim Influence in the Volga Region, dealing abundantly with pan-Islamism.⁶³ Thus the Okhrana, which knew nothing about Hadjetlaché's

⁶⁰ Compare, e.g., Allae's correspondences on Morocco in *Moussoulmanine* and S. Gabiev's editorials in *Musul'manskaia gazeta*, nos. 1, 2, 3, 8–10, 11–13 (1911).

⁶¹ On the mirrored character of "Occidentalism" and self-Orientalization, see James G. Carrier, "Introduction," in his edited *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 1–32.

⁶² RGIA f. 776, op. 8, d. 1146, l. 7. The goal of the magazine, according to Kazi-Bek's proposal, was to "strive to prove that the well-being and cultural development of the Asian peoples, both Christians and Muslims, was possible *but* under the protection of powerful Russia" (*ibid.*, ll. 1–1 ob.).

⁶³ Campbell, *Muslim Question*, 170–93; Geraci, *Window on the East*, 277–308; Robert Geraci, "Russian Orientalism at an Impasse: Tsarist Education Policy and the 1910 Conference on Islam," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, ed. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 138–61; Bessmertnaia, "Panislamisme"; Bessmertnaia, "Tol'ko li marginalii." Compare with Paul W. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 254: "In general, the year 1910 became the critical one in turning the regime decisively away from conciliation with the foreign confessions."

collaboration with the ministry's higher departments quite conformed to the context, when it suspected him of being a pan-Islamist. Why then were the sponsors now not as cautious as in 1898?

One of the answers is, probably, in their changed outlooks. It was not only the need to create a special Russian-language publication informing the government of the current situation among Muslims, directly recognized at the 1910 Special Commission. Nor only, on a personal level, was Hadjetlaché's biographical data better arranged for administrative eyes, rather than those of Kazi-Bek, not to speak of probable personal differences among the ministry's officials.⁶⁴ Against the background of recent wars and revolutions enhancing fears (the 1898 Andijan uprising, the 1899–1901 Boxer Rebellion, the shock of the Russo-Japanese War, the 1905 revolution, and revolutions in Turkey and Persia), the idea of the *already present* all-Muslim “unity” in Russia, dominating differences among the Muslim peoples, tended to direct the central state's Muslim policies.⁶⁵ According to this view, in order to be controlled, Muslims should be treated as a *unity* (if by exploiting regional and ethnic diversity against that very “Muslimhood”). Hadjetlaché's Muslim publications “helping the government in its struggle against pan-Islamism”⁶⁶ and addressed right to that Muslim “unity” (instead of Kazi-Bek's *Kavkaz i narody Vostoka*, addressing ethnically defined peoples) thus appeared, on the Russian side too, just in time. Notably, in 1916, Hadjetlaché would explicitly propose to the Government measures for further *uniting* Russia's Muslims to better counter the German propaganda among them.⁶⁷ “Unity” appears both menacing and better posed for managing it.

Hadjetlaché's solution to the “Muslim question,” which he proposed to the government in 1909–13, here again was urging Muslim “enlightenment.”

⁶⁴ Kazi-Bek, on the basis of information he gave himself, was reproached for lack of education and living outside Russia, in Constantinople (RGIA f. 776, op. 8, d. 1146, l. 7). Hadjetlaché was known to the officials as a Russian subject (even if “formerly” a Turkish one), descendant of a Circassian noble of Kubanskaia oblast, and a graduate of the Ekaterinodar gymnasium (RGIA f. 821, op. 133, d. 449, l. 28).

⁶⁵ Compare Zhurnal osobogo soveshchaniia po vyrabotke mer dlia protivodeistviia tatarskomusul'manskomu vliianiiu v Privolzhskom krae, “Iz istorii natsional'noi politiki tsarizma,” *Krasnyi arkhiv*, no. 4 (1929): 107–27, and no. 5 (1929): 61–83, quotation no. 5, 76–77, 82–83; Geraci, *Window on the East*; Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims*, chap. 9; and Olga Bessmertnaia, “‘Alye rozy vostoka’: ‘Panislamizm,’ orientalizm i shpionomaniia v poslednie mirnye gody Rossiiskoi imperii. Razvedyvatel'naia imperiia?,” *Shagi/Steps* 4, 1 (2018): 9–44. The trend seems to precede the shift observed by Eric Lohr during the World War I period, from assimilative politics of minorities toward “t[aking] identities as given” (*Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003], 7).

⁶⁶ GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 194, ll. 89–93.

⁶⁷ GARF DP, OO, 1916, d. 74, ll. 20–22.

He thus spontaneously appealed to those imperial administration views on the integration of Muslims, which scholars consider to have been mostly abandoned in the policies of this period.⁶⁸ The projects of civilizing Muslims as the way to their *rapprochement* with things Russian, developed under the influence of the 1860's reforms, seemed now even dangerous, the more so as the state's civilizing mission among Muslim masses was now contested by the Muslim intelligentsia itself. The government's current concerns were mainly about security and Muslim loyalty, and "modern education" tended to be perceived as "arming" Muslims, and their new elites particularly, with "modern" ideas of nationalism and separatism. Yet the educational steps that were still attempted on a broad scale,⁶⁹ and the attention to Hadjetlaché's "enlightening" proposals, in our particular case, suggest that the government was more embarrassed than unwilling to educate Muslims.

Scholars explain the embarrassment about how to coalesce education with keeping Muslim loyalties toward the state and away from "Muslim nationalism" by the officials' Orientalist vision.⁷⁰ Indeed, it borrowed much from the design, in imperial agents' eyes, of "Muslim unity" as a projection of the generalized "Muslim *culture*" tightly associated with the perceived pan-Islamic threat. "Muslim culture," in this vision, seemed infused with an immanent hostile fanatical spirit, while its "being fraught" with pan-Islamic political union equated Muslims to a nation in itself. Therefore, its "leaders" identified with pan-Islamists seemed to be doomed to reinterpret, in that very spirit, the "European" education they might get, thus enhancing the "Muslim nation's" hostile potential. Hadjetlaché himself helped affirm these presumptions: he probably authored, along with supporting the usual version of Turkey's patronage over pan-Islamism, an untrivial interpretation of pan-Islamism as born in Africa (which vaguely implied the Sudanese Mahdist state), whence it spread all over the Muslim world—yet "initiated" by a "*French Catholic, born Algerian, with a complete sophisticated upbringing and education of a Western European, perfectly speaking foreign languages and very talented.*" Pan-Islamism was thus imagined as a mixture of African militant savagery, Islamic danger, and the ingenuity of French civilization. This information was integrated,

⁶⁸ See, e.g., Geraci, "Russian Orientalism"; Campbell, *Muslim Question*, esp. 161–69; Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims*, esp. 295–301.

⁶⁹ Wayne Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860–1917* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

⁷⁰ Geraci, *Window on the East*, esp. 281–95; Geraci, "Russian Orientalism"; Bessmertnaïa, "Panislamisme"; Bessmertnaïa, "Alye rozy vostoka." For the islamophobic character of the "specter of pan-Islam," see Werth, *Tsar's Foreign Faiths*, 252–53.

first in 1910, in the Police Department's analytics on pan-Islamism, including its director's report (in 1916, though, the "French Catholic" disappeared).⁷¹

However, regarding Russian Muslims' "enlightenment," Hadjetlaché's proposals to the Interior Ministry combined the two approaches, one "civilizing," the other "securitizing," and suggested a way out of the impasse. It was not education but, inversely, Muslim "darkness" that attracted Muslims to pan-Islamists who then "taking advantage of the ignorance of the masses . . . , brought discord into the life of the peaceful population, [making them] rush about in different directions, not knowing whom to listen to and believe."⁷² Consequently, the proposed solution was to struggle for the masses' loyalty against pan-Islamists by educating them—that is, explaining to them who were their true friends and foes. This struggle should be waged by Hadjetlaché himself as *the* alternative to those dangerous leaders, and "exclusively by means of the press," countering, in particular, the "nationalist" Muslim press. All Hadjetlaché's reports to the government aimed, actually, at further promotion of *Moussoulmanine* at the beginning and, after his publications closed, restoring them on a broader scale than before: he insistently proposed creating a "widely arranged" publishing house, issuing, along with a newspaper, small books in "Muslim languages"—that is, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Tatar, and Russian.⁷³

Hadjetlaché thus referred, on the one hand, to the image of the genetic Muslims' loyalty accompanying their passivity and backwardness, which was common before the concerns with "Muslim renaissance" arose in the public discourse. On the other hand, to underscore his necessity for the administration to act as the alternative enlightening figure, he persistently, and quite inventively, accentuated the danger of pan-Islamism (and if, at the beginning, Hadjetlaché pictured pan-Islamists as coming to Russia from abroad, after his unmasking, he included in their ranks the "inner enemy": the well-known names of his Muslim opponents). But Hadjetlaché's design of Muslim entity, suggested to the government, appeared structurally similar to that represented in *Moussoulmanine* and the Muslim intelligentsia's discourse: the masses ("people" or "population") directed by their mentors/leaders; the harmful pan-Islamists replaced here the traitorous "pseudo-intelligentsia." Whether Muslims followed the right path depended on their leaders, and

⁷¹ GARF f. 102, DP, OO, d. 74, 1910, ch. 1, l. 162; 1912, l. 48; 1916, ll. 81–83. Director Beletskii's 1912 report is published in A. Arsharuni and Kh. Gabidullin, *Ocherki panislamizma i panturkizma v Rossii* (Moscow: Bezbozhnik, 1931), 101–13.

⁷² GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 365, l. 18 (Hadjetlaché's report on his mission in Turkestan, spring 1913).

⁷³ RGIA f. 821, op. 8, d. 1203, ll. 10–17 (1909); GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 365, ll. 7–8, 11–12, 13–25, 64–69 ob., 61–63; d. 194, ll. 50–55.

thus it remained to the government to choose the proper leader—that is, Hadjetlaché—to shape the proper spirit of Muslim unity.⁷⁴

Compared to *Moussoulmanine*, there was, apparently, an essential shift in Hadjetlaché's proposals to the government regarding Muslim "enlightenment." Here it was not about progress and universal Culture but about proper loyalty in the adverse and misleading geopolitical environment. "Geopolitics" was, indeed, an important aspect of his reports. The image of a pan-Islamic enemy whose disguised "emissaries" and "spies" flooded Russia was sustained by the examples of other European countries that had either already done (like England and France), in their own struggle against pan-Islamism, what Hadjetlaché was proposing to the "sluggish" Russian administration or, like Germany, supported pan-Islamists. He described pan-Islamist leaders, in turn, as counterposing—in search for the best ways to spread their influence—European countries to each other.⁷⁵ Yet *together* with *Moussoulmanine's* message, teaching Muslims proper loyalty might imply teaching "progress." The menacing political "Muslim union" was thus to be reshaped in Russia into the progressist, universalist "Cultural" one. Against the background of the enemy presence around and inside Russia, Hadjetlaché suggested to the government a kind of "*disarmed*" Muslim modernization.

That worked for some time. Not only were his publications, at first, sponsored and the information provided in his reports used and circulated by the Police Department and Stolypin himself.⁷⁶ His proposals were discussed or prepared to be discussed at a high level. His report on his mission of 1909 "in search of fellows" for *Moussoulmanine* in the Volga-Urals and the North Caucasus caused Stolypin's correspondence with the Caucasus viceroyal administration.⁷⁷ The proposal to establish a publishing house, presented in his 1913 letters to the director of the Police Department S. P. Beletskii and Interior Minister N. A. Maklakov (when Hadjetlaché was sent with intelligence missions to Turkestan and Bukhara, and to the Volga-Urals),⁷⁸ was prepared for discussion at the Soviet of Ministers in January 1914 (though stopped in April).⁷⁹ His reports were ready to be sent to Minister of War

⁷⁴ See, e.g., GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 365, ll. 18–19.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 194, ll. 16–22.

⁷⁶ Stolypin's often-quoted *Predstavlenie v Sovet ministrov* (15 January 1911) probably bears imprints, as regards pan-Islamism and Turkey's interference, of Hadjetlaché's 1909 report (published in Al'ta Makhmutova, "Proekt, ne uspevshii stat' zakonom," *Gasyrlar avazy—Ekho vekov*, no. 1–2 [2001]).

⁷⁷ RGIA f. 821. op. 8. d. 1203, ll. 16–17; GARF f. 102, DP, OO, 1910, d. 74, ch. 1, ll. 21–23, 32, 47–50, 52, 68, 211.

⁷⁸ GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 194, ll. 50–55; d. 365, ll. 7–8, 13–25, 61–69 ob.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, d. 194, ll. 15, 78.

V. A. Sukhomlinov (sent), and Minister of Foreign Affairs S. D. Sazonov (stopped).⁸⁰

What explicitly interested the government in Hadjetlaché's proposals, was, certainly, securing Russian Muslims' loyalty by countering the perceived pan-Islamic and, with World War I approaching, German propaganda among them: this message the officials actually underscored both in 1910 and in 1913.⁸¹ Another obvious interest was information: besides his publications, he personally seemed appropriate to provide it. Yet for his initial sponsors—Kharuzin and Stolypin, who read *Moussoulmanine*—the project of *civilizing* Muslims hand in hand with teaching them loyalty might look like a promising alternative both to the stances of “separatist” Muslim progressionists and “conservative mullahs,” whom the government finally chose to rely on.⁸² Here Hadjetlaché's Muslim publications conformed to the line toward the state-supervised modernization of the empire's peoples, evident in the state's search for educational policies.⁸³

The presumed *obscurity* of that “culture,” the “Muslim world,” was another aspect that Hadjetlaché exploited. Communicating with the officials, he persistently underscored its impenetrability for alien understanding, opposing himself (a born Muslim!) as a genuine good judge both to the “ill-informed” local administrators and the “so-called connoisseurs of the Orient” (*znatoki Vostoka*), the Orientalists—“outsiders.” He did not distinguish between academic knowledge and the popular culture he belonged to, and easily crossed boundaries here, too. Thus he fiercely attacked scholars who reviewed his drastically ignorant popular book on Islamic law, the reaction aggravated by his competition for the government subsidy.⁸⁴ Indeed, in 1912, these academic Orientalists started another “special publication on Muslimhood,” sponsored by the Interior Ministry, *Mir islama*. It was later assessed (in 1914, when it had already stopped) by the then director of the Department of Foreign Confessions, E. V. Menkin, as a “publication of *the same type*” as *Moussoulmanine* whose support was thus “no longer necessary.”⁸⁵ (Menkin

⁸⁰ Ibid., d. 365, ll. 70, 78–79; d. 194, l. 69.

⁸¹ For Kharuzine's remarks, see RGIA f. 821, op. 8. d. 1203, ll. 76a–b; for Maklakov's instructions, see GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 194, l. 64.

⁸² On the conservative turn, see Werth, *Tsar's Foreign Faiths*, 252–56; on the conservative mullahs' campaign, see Meyer, *Turks across Empires*, 145–50.

⁸³ Campbell, *Muslim Question*, 164; Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 188–235.

⁸⁴ See the review of his *Shruel'-Islam* by Aleksander Shmidt in *Mir islama* 1, 1 (1912): 118–23. Hadjetlaché's offensive letter to Vasili Bartol'd, editor of *Mir islama* in 1912 is in Arkhiv Rossiiskoi akademii nauk, St. Petersburg (ARAN SPb) f. 68, op. 1, d. 430, l. 162; N. Katanov's letter to Bartol'd on Allaev's attack against *Mir islama* is ll. 113–14.

⁸⁵ RGIA f. 821, op. 133, d. 449, ll. 138–39 (December 1914); italics added.

probably disliked Hadjetlaché and sent him back to the Police Department when he proposed his service to Menkin.) “The publication of the same type” implied the tasks already designated by the 1910 Special Commission, mainly information. Although Menkin and the Interior Ministry heads now preferred academic Orientalists to Hadjetlaché as the publication’s editors (yet having ultimately chosen the most pragmatic ones),⁸⁶ that was, as we have seen, not always the case. Looking for expert knowledge of the Muslim world, the government here again appeared uncertain how to define it and whom to consider its useful bearer.⁸⁷

Many of Menkin’s colleagues expected the best results both in informing on and in “teaching” Muslims from a Muslim, but a trustworthy one.⁸⁸ The genuine “cultural” origins here, too, analogically to the Muslim activists’ presumption, seemed to precondition genuine “cultural” knowledge. In officials’ eyes, Hadjetlaché’s proper origins were complemented by his being “civilized,” which his living in Europe enhanced; by his “expertise,” which his writing talents and “outstanding position” in the Muslim world proved; and by his conscious “patriotism” and geopolitical concerns, where mutual enemies (including the inner Muslim opposition) served, perhaps, as the main argument to his advantage. His being an outsider to the Muslims’ political camps (an advantage in the Muslim milieu, too) here conformed to his serving state interests. So he personified a *disarmingly modernized* Muslim citizen himself, supporting the sinking belief in the civilizing mission.⁸⁹ His being an outsider to the government, with his “Muslim” cultural distance manipulated so as to show both their common interests and his self-sufficiency (quite in the way of Allaev’s letters to Syromiatnikov) brought him trust again.

⁸⁶ Ramil’ Khairutdinov. “Mir islama’: Iz istorii sozdaniia zhurnala,” *Mir islama* (Kazan), no. 1 (1999): 3–20; Édite Ybert, “La première revue russe d’islamologie: *Mir Islama* (1912–1913),” in “La religion de l’Autre à travers différents prismes,” special issue of *Slavica Occitania*, no. 29 (2009): 391–420.

⁸⁷ On failures to apply the academic Orientalist knowledge in the government policies, see, in different frameworks, Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg”; Tolz, “Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity”; and Morrison, “Applied Orientalism,” among many other works.

⁸⁸ See the discussion in RGIA f. 821, op. 133, d. 449, ll. 462–85 (1916). The distinction between non-Russians being either “trustworthy” or not, used in the Russian colonial discourse, is mentioned in Campbell, *Muslim Question*, 159; compare with brief notes on “trustworthy natives” in Anne L. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 232–34.

⁸⁹ On the ideals of citizenship as the means of integration in the late Russian Empire, see Austin L. Jersild, “From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire,” in *Russia’s Orient*, 101–14; and Eric Lohr, “The Ideal Citizen and Real Subject in Late Imperial Russia,” *Kritika* 7, 2 (2006): 173–94; compare with Morrison, “Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship.”

Duplicity

The leeway for discursive manipulation exposes itself in the Muslim activists' revelations causing Hadjetlaché's final unmasking. These were not just his articles stressing the pan-Islamic menace in the conservative Russian press. He went further and reproduced, in his Muslim publications, his article previously published in the right-wing *Ofiterskaia zhizn'*. To do that, he changed the original title: "Pan-Islamism, a Menacing Movement in the Muslim World," for one appealing to Muslims, "Reformers of Islam: An Attempt at Historical Investigation," and eliminated the odious assessments.⁹⁰ Yet his main trick was the change of *code* in describing the article's object, "Muslim unity": its *political* character (that of political uniting) in the version addressed to the conservative public became *Cultural* (progressionist) for a Muslim readership. In *Ofiterskaia zhizn'*, the "Muslim world"—brought up by Islam as the "haughtiest religion in the world," hostile to any development, and led nowadays by pan-Islamists—was striving to restore its past power by exterminating the hated "giaurs" (i.e., European civilization). In the Muslim version, Islam just temporarily lost its genuine path, plunging into backwardness due to its misleading "pseudo-teachers," but led nowadays by its reformers, it was returning to the path, joining mankind on its way to universal progress.⁹¹

Alternating between these two meanings in representing "Muslim unity" and "culture" formed, actually, Hadjetlaché's principal way of persuading his different audiences of his ideas. Muslim *backwardness*, the shared motif in both discourses, was thus represented either as an obstacle to overcome on the Muslims' way to progress *or* as an innate cultural feature engendering Muslim hostility. That implied opposite visions of Muslim history and future. Obviously, addressing Muslims, he always chose the former; addressing the government, as we have seen, he suggested a way of transforming the latter perspective (i.e., that of hostility) into the former by employing his own "authority." The two versions represented in a concentrated, even absurd form the two poles in the actual visions of the "Muslim question" in that period, expressed in the "civilizational" and "racial" approaches toward Muslimness—that is, viewing Muslims as either apt for civilizing *or* as genetically incorrigible

⁹⁰ *Ofiterskaia zhizn'*, no. 118 (1908): 261–63; no. 122 (1908): 317–18; no. 123 (1908): 333–35; *Moussoulmanine*, no. 14–17 (1911): 685–96; *V mire musul'manstva*, nos. 1–3 (1911).

⁹¹ Paradoxically, an imprint of the generalized ideas of religious Islamic reformism (its critique of tradition—*taqlid*) "translated" into secular progressionism is noticeable in the "Muslim" version; Hadjetlaché might have again caught it in the "air." For a comparison of the article's versions, see Ol'ga Bessmertnaia, "Kul'turnyi bilingvizm? Igra smyslov v odnoi skandal'noi stat'e (Iz istorii otnoshenii musul'manskikh oppozitsionerov i russkikh 'gosudarstvennikov' v pozdneimperskoi Rossii)," in *Rossii i musul'manskii mir: Inakovost' kak problema*, ed. A. V. Smirnov (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2010), 197–383.

and “non-assimilable.”⁹² This actuality helped Hadjetlaché’s proposals be heard and discussed. Undoubtedly, Russian Muslim progressionists mostly renounced the very existence of pan-Islamism: this myth not only served the government to justify repressions against the Muslims’ “national” rights for “progress” but, in manifesting the “racial” approach, deprived them of a future.⁹³

The activists’ revelations were published in the Muslim newspapers and the broadly read Constitutional Democrats’ *Rech’* (St. Petersburg) and used—for example, by Sadri Maksudov—in political debates with the government to illustrate the invented character of pan-Islamism and amorality of the government agents and methods.⁹⁴ As for government officials, the published story might have influenced some of them in their personal attitudes to Hadjetlaché (as, supposedly, Menkin or the Police Department director in 1914–15, V. A. Brune de Sent-Ippolite). Yet the formal explanation (available for 1916) was still his struggle with pan-Islamists.⁹⁵

Ironically, Hadjetlaché’s curious “translating” of his article for different audiences, providing a “magnifying glass” for his own activities, sharply reflects a much broader context, too. The essential difference of meanings notwithstanding, the core idea of Muslim “unity” and “culture” and the discussion threads that it involved formed a parallelism of opposite discourses, the conservative/governmental and the Muslim progressionist ones. Hadjetlaché thus “revealed” a knot of *imperial mirrors*. Within these mirrors, almost one and the same text could be at least expected to be read by different readerships from opposite perspectives, according to their preconceptions. Employing the strategy of *divide et impera*, Hadjetlaché counterposed two “camps” that opposed each other without his efforts. But it was the mirrors of their discourses, the languages of describing Muslimness, representing the “regime of truth” in each “camp”—those of modernity, empire, nationalism, and Orientalism—which Hadjetlaché consciously played on, *relativizing* each

⁹² On Muslims’ “non-assimilationability,” see Daniel Brower, “Islam and Ethnicity: Russian Colonial Policy in Turkestan,” in *Russia’s Orient*, 115–37; and Morrison, “Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship.” Pan-Islamism (often confused with pan-Turkism) could be even described as uniting a *race* (Bessmertnaia, “Alye rozy vostoka,” 19–21). Compare with Khalid’s argument (“Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism,” 696): although Orientalism was rather a civilizational than a racial approach, it often had similar effects, being invested heavily in the “Romantic categories of the organic nation” and “Romantic notions of authenticity.”

⁹³ Geraci wondered about this renunciation (*Window on the East*, 284).

⁹⁴ *Rech’*, 24 December 1911–6 January 1912, 353; Sadri Maksudov’s above-quoted speech (13 March 1912).

⁹⁵ GARF DP, OO, 1913, d. 194, ll. 89–93.

of these languages. This reciprocity made Hadjetlaché's swinging between the camps and playing the Other easy, and his alternating word trustworthy.

Image

One of the roles (perhaps, the truest one) Hadjetlaché performed to construct his image was being a Writer, the bearer of a high social mission in Russia. It distinguished him, at least in his own eyes, from an ordinary police agent and probably formed another aspect in the combination of his *difference and recognizability* for state officials. "*She spreads far and wide, our great Rus'. Over the mountains, valleys and rivers my train is speeding forth*"—in this style he composed his reports to the police.⁹⁶ For a Muslim intelligentsia where nearly everyone *wrote*, his being a progressionist journalist with many personal connections marked his "outstanding belonging" to this milieu.

Yet the pivot of Hadjetlaché's image was his "national character." To construct it, he resorted, essentially, to the commonplaces of that late 19th-century wave of mass literature on the Caucasus, which he himself participated in as Kazi-Bek.⁹⁷ His life story, published in 1894, was deep-rooted in that wave: in it, his real name was Akhmet-Bei Bulat (Kazi-Bek being his pen name), and he was a descendent of the well-known North Caucasian hero, Akhmet-Bei Bulat sung by Mikhail Lermontov, and the younger son of Akhmet Akhmet-Bei, the Abadzekh prince who had emigrated to Turkey in 1863 (i.e., during an intensive Adyg emigration from Russia).⁹⁸ He kept this romantic descent, though under different names, through the rest of his life. Book reviewers then already appreciated his works, which clearly exoticized the Caucasus and the Orient, as some *truth* especially justified, here again, by his perceived "authentic" origins. His works gave, as they wrote, a "lively and truthful description of Caucasian and Oriental life" and represented those "passionate characters" who were "the southerners, the Chechens or Tatars," with "the *exactitude of an eyewitness locally born.*"⁹⁹

Appealing to this "common sense" of the Orient or another, *imaginal* aspect of the *regimes of truth*, based essentially on literary images, allowed Kazi-Bek/Hadjetlaché to convincingly reproduce the "passionate" Circassian character both in his life story and in his live image. Likewise, when rebutting

⁹⁶ Ibid., d. 365, l. 13.

⁹⁷ Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 252–61; Layton, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery," in *Russia's Orient*, 80–100.

⁹⁸ *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, no. 34 (1894): 134. Akhmet-Bei Bulat is a hero of Lermontov's early poem "Khadzhi Abrek," whose prototype was a real historical actor, Bei-Bulat Taimazov.

⁹⁹ *Vokrug sveta*, no. 26 (1897): 415; *Kavkazskii vestnik* 26, 2 (1902): 99; compare with *Ruskaia mysl'* (October 1896): 453–54. Italics added.

his opponents' accusations, he appealed to the image of Muslim resoluteness—a positive inverse of the commonplace of “Muslim fanaticism”—and resorted to the same “ethno-cultural drive” that made Muslim activists reject his “Muslimness”: “Could they have really likened me to Azeff? What an outrageous error! *A Muslim will rather die than turn traitor.*”¹⁰⁰ For all the sides involved in Hadjetlaché's political double-dealing—Russian officials and journalists, the Volga-Urals and North Caucasian Muslim intelligentsia—this “Circassian Muslim character,” at least initially, looked trustworthy. Thus Russian literature, and the popular literary Orientalist images particularly, interfered through the entire story, meddling in the actors' perceptions of truth.¹⁰¹

The officials' view was articulated, already in 1907, from outside the government, by the editor in chief of *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, A. A. Bashmakov. Interceding for his “former correspondent” with the Caucasus viceroy, I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov (who, however, did not accept Hadjetlaché's services), he characterized Hadjetlaché's “*natural* energy and *fery* temperament” as an ingredient of a “rare and useful for us coincidence of elements,” including “training and education, so to speak, on two fronts” and a “*curious* combination of hot devotion to Russia and, simultaneously, tribal (his own) patriotism, together with the wish to discourage his Muslims from the illusions of pan-Islamism.”¹⁰² Later, the Interior Ministry officials probably shared this manifestly Orientalist impression of their “civilized” agent. They ignored the fact that the information in Hadjetlaché's reports was essentially based on his literary fantasy, similarly to his own image.

Conclusion

We have seen how (1) an established imperial agent, Syromiatnikov, “surrendered” to Hadjetlaché's accent on his “oriental” otherness and Circassian/Muslim belonging, which became effective in Hadjetlaché's building trust with his interlocutor; (2) Muslim activists politicized Hadjetlaché's origins, “Muslim” or Jewish, and thus his Muslim belonging or Jewish otherness, similarly in trusting and rejecting him, ascribing his good qualities to or contrasting his awful nature with the romantic and self-Orientalized “Muslim culture,” while aspiring to build their “unity” based on this culture; (3) government officials saw in Hadjetlaché a trustworthy and “disarmingly

¹⁰⁰ Allaev's letter to Syromiatnikov, March 1913, IRLI f. 655, d. 15, ll. 37–38. Italics added.

¹⁰¹ On the role of (mass) literature in collecting intelligence, see, e.g., Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁰² Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka f. 58, op. 74, d. 26-1, l. 1.

modernized" Muslim whom they needed both to provide expertise on and to educate Muslims, precisely because of their vision of "Muslim culture," which put them between the promises and threats of the civilizing mission, so that they required someone belonging to this culture by origin but "civilized," and yet deprived of its innate hostility; (4) the Muslim activists' and the state agents' visions of "Muslim culture" appeared structurally symmetrical and mirrored—Hadjetlaché "revealed" this parallelism when he used it to address each of his opposed readerships (i.e., Muslim progressionists and imperial conservatives), by shifting between "civilizational" and "racial" approaches to "Muslim unity," seen either as "cultural" (progressionist) or "political" (pan-Islamist), and to Muslim perspectives for the future—his "game" thus relativized each of the visions; and (5) each of the groups involved saw Hadjetlaché's "game" as the truth (at least initially) despite the fact (or probably thanks to it) that he founded both his own image of a Muslim Circassian and the information he provided about the "Muslim world" on literary images and fiction about the Caucasus and the Orient. All these situations, which Hadjetlaché connected and "adjusted" for us so as they reflect each other, are permeated with the idea of "Muslim culture" and one's "genetic" belonging to it.

There is hardly any special "inclusiveness" present in the reactions of Russian officials toward Hadjetlaché's conduits and proposals, as regards him personally or Muslims generally. Hadjetlaché's ability to turn his perceived Oriental otherness into advantage in his relations with the government was the product of the government's own limitations, "supported" by his personal talents as a trickster. He maintained the combination of difference and commonality in his position amid the officials' milieu, which brought him success, by stressing his otherness and not diminishing it, and not because the officials felt in any sense "close" to the "Orientals" themselves.

A number of Orientalist discourses intersected in the episode discussed here. Hadjetlaché used them to define himself, to describe Muslims for different audiences (in both his story books and his police reports) and to "teach" them. He interacted with the Orientalism of government officials as regards Muslims as state subjects, with the Orientalism of writers and journalists as regards the Caucasus as an object of literary imagination, with the "inversed Orientalism" of the Muslim intelligentsia as regards Muslim masses to be made enlightened, or with the Orientalism of Circassian ethnographers like Pago Tambiev as regards Circassians as a future nation. These various "Orientalisms" conjoined romantic "national" visions of otherness and belonging to their genetic, "racial" interpretations, applied even to "Muslim culture"; the Orientalist images adjoined those of "national characters."

“Indigenous” “cultural” belonging thus became, in nearly everybody’s eyes, a prerequisite for one’s ideological and aesthetical trustworthiness in representing this “culture,” which per se was defined politically and ethically. Such an idea of “Muslim culture” created a common framework for different languages describing Muslimness, which formed for Hadjetlaché the space of trading on his invented identity.

It is essentially a story of the nationalization of imperial space, with its growing spymania and enemy images on the eve of World War I and the accompanying frustrations of central state officials.¹⁰³ They appeared here both hesitant in their Muslim policy and aggressive in their rhetoric. Hadjetlaché played on their hopes and fears, showing us how profoundly the imaginary, the fictional, and the fictitious infused their perceptions of “truth” and categorizations of the “enemy.” The Muslim oppositional activists who unmasked Hadjetlaché appeared much more confident about their presumptions.

At the same time, Hadjetlaché’s “game” demonstrates aspects of symmetry and the shared basis of these space-dividing state and Muslim progressionists’ discourses in the “imperial domain,” turning into imperial mirrors. It thus depicts both the conflicting character and the connectivity of this part of the imperial space. Playing with and relativizing these mirrored *regimes of truth* in each case, Hadjetlaché shows their unsteady balance on the eve of World War I.

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¹⁰³ Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*; Bessmertnaia, “Alye rozy vostoka.”