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RUSSIA AND ASIA IN 1960*

The Moscow Congress of Orientalists and a Visit to Central Asia

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Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, October 12, 1960, Sir Esler Dening in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, the clock has gone half-past one, and the more time we can have the better. Our Chairman, unfortunately, is unable to be present and he has asked me to take his place. I do not feel that Colonel Wheeler really needs a chairman, except that it is a time-honoured custom, as he is so well known as a Vice-President of the Society, as a speaker and as a contributor to the Society's *Journal*.

He has recently been to the Congress of Orientalists in Moscow, and from there on a journey into Central Asia. I am sure you would like to hear what he has to say: Colonel Wheeler.

IN August I had the honour of representing the Society at the XXVth International Congress of Orientalists held in Moscow. After the Congress I took part in a tour of Central Asia, organized by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. This afternoon I propose to give you some account both of the Congress and of the tour, which, as I shall try to make clear, were closely interrelated.

My account of the Congress must necessarily be very brief. As most of you probably know, the International Congress of Orientalists takes place every three years, each time a different country acting as host. In 1957 it was held in Munich and in 1954 in Cambridge. It is attended by orientologists from all over the world, mainly from the West. It lasts six days and consists of opening and closing plenary sessions, the interval being taken up by the presentation of papers to the various sections concerned with such subjects as Egyptology, the Middle East, Indology, Sinology, Central Asia, Turkey, and so on. This year there were twenty sections, including one on Africa, and over 700 papers were presented. At these Congresses an international Committee decides, among other things, the venue for the next Congress.

The decision to hold the XXVth International Congress in the U.S.S.R. was taken at Munich in 1957 and thereafter a number of articles began to appear in the Soviet press which showed clearly that the Soviet Government intended to make the most of the opportunity thus afforded to them of demonstrating what they regard as their new and enlightened concept of oriental studies. Now, like every other branch of learning in the Soviet Union, oriental studies are financed by the State and controlled by the Communist Party. This means in effect that they are primarily designed to promote Soviet policy and are conditioned by Communist

theory and methods. It does not mean, however, that they consist simply of propaganda, as some people suppose, or are devoid of scholarship. Soviet publications on Eastern problems include such material of a very high standard indeed, particularly in such fields as ethnography, and the modern forms of Eastern languages; their treatment of oriental history, on the other hand, is open to a great deal of criticism, as it is always seen through Marxist eyes. Apart from their political angle, oriental studies in the Soviet Union differ from those conducted in the West, in the great importance they attach to modern problems; and the study of these problems is generally given precedence in the Soviet Union over the study of the past.

These features of Soviet oriental studies are familiar to anyone with a knowledge of Russian who has studied Soviet writing on Eastern affairs published since the Revolution and particularly since 1955, when Soviet Eastern policies underwent a drastic revision and oriental studies were enormously expanded. In writing designed for home consumption the Soviet authorities have never made any concealment of the fact that they regard oriental studies as primarily directed towards political ends. Western scholars, on the other hand, are seldom themselves concerned with politics and even more seldom have any knowledge of Russian. They are, therefore, largely ignorant of the nature and scope of Soviet oriental studies and when they give any consideration to the matter many are inclined to resent the suggestion that in the U.S.S.R. oriental studies are pursued with motives different from those obtaining in Western countries. The fact is, however, that whereas Western scholars are able to pursue any type of research which they wish, and are also free to criticize as violently as they please, their governments' Eastern policies—and they very often do please—Soviet orientalists enjoy no such freedom. This does not, I repeat, mean that their work is devoid of scholarship, or that they themselves are necessarily politically-minded people; but it does mean in the words of Gafurov, the Director of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, in an article published just before the Congress, that "Soviet orientalists do not conceal and do not intend to conceal the fact that in all their research work and in their very approach to the various problems of orientalism, they are governed by marxist-leninist methodology and consider this methodology to be the only correct one."

The Moscow Congress certainly served to clear up a good deal of misunderstanding in the minds of Western scholars. From the opening plenary session held in the vast auditorium of Moscow University it was clear that the Russians did intend to give the Congress a political setting. As if to drive the point home, the audience at this opening session, which included many hundreds of people other than the actual delegates to the Congress, was confronted with the following inscription, put up over the rostrum. I do not know how many people noticed it but I copied down the Russian and this is a translation of it: "A Leninist cannot simply be a specialist in his favourite branch of science. He must be at the same time a political and social scientist with a lively interest in the destiny of his country. He must be familiar with the laws of social development and be able to use these laws; he must be an active participant in the political

leadership of his country." In its report on the opening session, *Pravda* made the point that unlike previous Congresses, the XXVth was not going to be merely academic. In Mikoyan's and subsequent speeches there was abundant mention of Western colonialism and imperialism and of Soviet altruism. The contrast between these two attitudes was, indeed, intended to be the keynote of the Congress.

From the point of view of international scholarship the value of the Moscow Congress was probably about the same as that of previous Congresses. It provided an equally good meeting ground for scholars of many nations; and the average standard of scholarship was probably about the same. The fine buildings of Moscow University provided very good facilities for the plenary sessions and for the work of the various sections. The Soviet contribution of papers was by far the largest, and included some very interesting ones. Two criticisms could, in my opinion, be fairly made of it: many of the Soviet papers were unoriginal, being merely a rehash of previously published articles; and some of them—not perhaps very many—were the most flagrant positive or negative propaganda. The worst example of the latter class which I encountered was a paper entitled "The 1919 Afghan War for Independence." The paper was delivered by a man called A. Kh. Babakhodzhayev, an Uzbek member of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, and author of several strongly anti-British publications. The audience of about seventy people consisted mostly of Russians with about six or seven Afghans, some of whom, I noticed, were not Pushtu speakers. Babakhodzhayev delivered his paper in Russian, and it was translated sentence by sentence into Pushtu. This was quite a *tour de force* and very well done by the Russian. Obviously, the procedure had been rehearsed very carefully and so far as I know, it was not followed on any other occasion. The paper, as one expected, was violently anti-British and pro-Afghan in tone, and the theme of Soviet-Afghan friendship was constantly emphasized. Its aim was clearly to make as much bad blood as possible between the Afghan and British peoples. This, of course, is a cardinal point of Soviet policy, but it seems quite inappropriate to air such a policy at an academic Congress. The inclusion of political papers of this kind—I do not think there were very many—was one of the features which distinguished the Moscow Congress from its predecessors. Another was that the scripts of all papers to be read by foreign participants had been submitted to Moscow beforehand. I think that is the general rule, but in this case the scripts had apparently been made available to Soviet scholars. This meant that these scholars had been able to prepare in advance detailed comments on the foreign contributions, and these often took the form of Marxist refutation of what they contained. The effect of this technique was somewhat marred by the fact that in many instances foreign contributors had, in the meanwhile, made alterations in their scripts, and the Soviet comments not infrequently consisted of pointed attacks on statements which were not in fact made at all. This was particularly evident in the Chinese section.

A matter in which the Soviet contribution contrasted favourably, in my opinion, with those of other delegations, was the fairly equal treatment which they gave to the classical and modern periods. Of the 190-odd

papers which they presented, half were on the pre-sixteenth century subjects, and of the remaining 94, 36 ranged from the sixteenth century to the Revolution, the majority being concerned with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 29 were concerned with post-Revolution affairs, and 29 with purely philological subjects. It may well be that the study of current events and politics does not properly fall within the scope of oriental studies, but I hardly think that this restriction should be extended to the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, during which the countries of the East underwent profound cultural and political changes. It is noteworthy, and not perhaps altogether satisfactory, that of the 40-odd papers presented by scholars from the United Kingdom, apart from a few papers on linguistic subjects, only three dealt with post-sixteenth century subjects, and none with present-day problems.

It is difficult to speak with any degree of precision on the impact of the Congress on its various participants. According to the list of members produced towards the end of the Congress, the total attendance was 1,446. Of these, about 500 were from the U.S.S.R. (115 from the eastern republics), about 660 from the West (including satellite countries in eastern Europe), and 230 only from Asian and African countries. Most of the older Western scholars to whom I spoke or whose opinions I heard quoted expressed views on the conduct of the Congress and on the Intourist arrangements associated with it which varied from disappointment to disillusionment. Many of the younger ones, or at any rate some of them, took a rather different view. Perhaps they did not worry as much about the discomforts, which were rather considerable, and looked more on the rosy side. Some scholars, and here again I speak of the older ones, whom I had in the past twitted with their failure to learn Russian, told me that they were now more than ever determined not to do so. That meant, of course, they did not see much purpose in examining Soviet publications and in this I think they are quite wrong. Western criticism of many of the Soviet papers as unoriginal or elementary may be justified, but Western scholars were perhaps too ready to judge the depth of Soviet orientalism on the basis of the papers presented, rather than on that of the vast mass of printed Soviet literature, which most of them are still unable to read. They are also apt to forget that the great Soviet drive in oriental studies only began five years ago, and that Soviet scholars have incentives and facilities which are lacking in the West and which may result in the West being left behind in many fields of practical scholarship.

There were many reports circulating among Western orientalists that Asian and African delegates had not been favourably impressed by the Congress. I think it would be unwise to be too sure of this. They must have been impressed by the size and modernity of the University, by the special attention and flattery meted out to them, and by the two concerts given in the course of the Congress, both of which I attended. The first of these was a kind of streamlined travesty of oriental songs and dances, not really typical but nevertheless highly flattering. The second consisted mainly of recitations of traditional oral epics by genuine old-timers who had been carefully, but not too ostentatiously, groomed for their parts. I also think that although Western scholars were inclined to speak slight-

ingly of the Soviet contribution in the way of papers, it seems likely that the Asians and Africans were favourably impressed by their range and versatility, by the relative modernity of many of the subjects chosen, and by the competence which Soviet orientalists displayed in the modern forms of Asian and, I think, to some extent, African languages.

From the Soviet political point of view the success of the Congress must be regarded as uncertain. From the voluminous advance publicity given to the Congress it was clear that the Russians hoped that there would be more orientals present than orientalists. The absence of the expected Chinese delegation of 400 destroyed this hope. But in the present state of Sino-Soviet relations the Russians may have felt more comfortable without the Chinese than they would have felt with them. No doubt that opinion was shared by some of the Asian delegations. How the Russians assessed the reaction of the Congress on the Western and on the Asian and African delegations is a matter for speculation.

As you may have heard, the next Congress in 1963 is to be held in India. This decision was not reached without considerable controversy and some bitterness. Invitations were also extended by the United States and by the United Arab Republic, the Soviet member voting for the latter.

I will now go on to a very brief description of the tour which I made after the Congress. As you know, the Russians constantly claim that whereas the whole of the Middle East and South Asia is still struggling to free itself from the bonds of colonialism and imperialism, the Asian peoples of the U.S.S.R. enjoy full freedom and the right of self-government. There have been endless books, articles, speeches on this theme in the Soviet Union, and it was fully stressed in the opening and closing speeches at the Congress and in many of the papers and discussions. These Soviet claims have no foundation whatever and the Russians are quite right in supposing that the West does not accept them. But for many years, informed opinion in the West has known that the material development which the Soviet régime has brought to the Asian part of the empire is very considerable indeed. The Soviet Government, however, still seems to think that the West does not appreciate what has been done on the material side, and it is this side that they are most anxious to show off. From their point of view, therefore, it was quite natural that they should want to follow the Congress by an ocular demonstration of their material achievements in the Asian republics.

The tour in which I took part was necessarily a short one. It took only five days and only included the republic of Uzbekistan and only three towns there, Tashkent, the capital, Bukhara, and Samarkand. A limited number of other towns can be and have been visited, but so far as I know, no foreigner has ever been able to tour freely in the rural areas. Still, I think that these three towns with a total population of over $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions are fairly representative of the republic of Uzbekistan, and very likely of the other republics as well.

In the short time at my disposal I cannot give you more than my general impressions. These may perhaps be of some interest because although the tour was so short I was able to see things against a background

of many years' continuous study of Soviet publications on the area, and was also able to make comparisons with the various so-called colonial and semi-colonial countries in which I have lived outside the Soviet Union. It may interest you to know that nothing I saw during this tour caused me to revise the conclusions which I had previously derived from my academic studies. This confirms my view that it is possible to construct an accurate picture of the situation in Soviet Central Asia by a discriminating and cumulative study of Soviet publications.

The flight from Moscow to Tashkent by jet TU-104 now takes little over $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and the contrast between Tashkent and Moscow is most striking. Moscow is at any time a drab and dreary city, somewhat lacking now in character and individuality. One's first impression on arrival in Tashkent is that one is in a much more real and human and individualistic atmosphere, and this impression stayed with me throughout the tour. All three cities present a generally prosperous appearance and the people are well-clothed and look reasonably healthy and well-fed. I should say that the standard of hygiene and cleanliness is considerably above similar towns in most of the Middle East and South Asia.

Tashkent is a relatively modern city and its population is more than half Russian; but even there, and much more so in Bukhara and Samarkand, there is a distinctly Muslim atmosphere, more so than in say Tehran or Istanbul. The Russians, so far as I know, have never discouraged the wearing of national dress, and most of the women do in fact wear it or something resembling it. I did not personally see any veiled women, though one or two members of the party said they did. The great majority of the men wear European clothes, but almost all of them wear the characteristic skull cap or *tyubeteyka* as the Russians call it. There has been a great deal of building on modern lines, and some of it is quite handsome, if not beautiful. Public transport is obviously very well organized. The police are certainly not obtrusive and extremely polite when spoken to, at any rate to foreigners. I understood from Uzbeks that about half the police force in Tashkent is Uzbek and half Russian, but I did not myself see any Russian policemen in the streets. This, I think, may have been deliberately arranged in order to create a good impression on people who were supposed to be experts on colonial régimes.

The shops were, I thought, much brighter than in Moscow and better arranged, although the quality of the goods except for fruit was generally very poor indeed. The many bookshops, in which I was much interested, seemed to be much patronized by Uzbeks, a testimony to the great advance in education. There were relatively few books in Uzbek and although there are many Uzbek translations of Russian classics and modern literature and Russian translations of Western literature, I was told that there was no such thing as Uzbek translations of Western literature. The ancient monuments, of which there are virtually none in Tashkent but a very great many in Samarkand and Bukhara, are in a pretty poor state of repair; but a good deal of restoration has been going on since I believe about 1954.

If you recall, Lord Curzon commented very unfavourably on the way the Tsarist régime treated ancient monuments. In the early days of the

Soviet régime there was a tendency to let these monuments fall still further into disrepair, but this has since been corrected. There was also a tendency to desecrate ancient monuments with modern statues of Soviet leaders, Soviet youth, etc. Although this practice has now been discontinued, there are some of these statues still in evidence.

A matter in which I was particularly interested was the relations existing between the Russians and the local population. As you know, there is a very large white, non-Asian settler population in Central Asia, the present proportion being about one white to two Central Asians. This is higher than the proportion of whites in any other Muslim country in the world, not excluding North Africa. The Russians like to represent the relationship between themselves and Central Asians as one of close friendship, mutual admiration and mutual interest in each other's cultures. I must say I saw no evidence whatever of this. The attitude of the Uzbeks towards the Russians is not hostile, but it is withdrawn and indifferent. I base this statement on conversations which I had with Uzbeks. There seems to be practically no social intermingling of the two peoples. In two evenings which I spent in the magnificent Park of Rest and Culture in Samarkand, I never saw Russians and Uzbeks sitting or walking together. Although Russian is a compulsory subject in Uzbek schools and a very large proportion of Uzbeks speak good Russian, the Russians seem rarely to learn Uzbek. Some of those whom I asked about this had lived in Uzbekistan all their lives and still only knew a few words of the language. All the notices are in Russian and Uzbek, even in Bukhara, where the language most spoken is Tadjik, a form of Persian closely resembling that spoken in Afghanistan.

One often hears it said that all administrative posts of any importance in Central Asia are held by Russians. I am sure that this is no more true than it would have been to say that such posts were all held by the British in the British period in India. All the same, I think that on this occasion considerable efforts were made to give us the impression that Russians played no part in public affairs. During our visit to the Academy of Sciences in Tashkent, for instance, I did not meet any Russians although a large proportion of the staff is undoubtedly Russian. But the Uzbek Directress of the Oriental Institute in the Academy was unquestionably in charge of it and seemed to be a fine scholar into the bargain.

I have always held the opinion and have expressed it on several occasions in this hall that the Soviet achievement in the field of education in Central Asia is remarkable. Everything I saw during my visit bore this out. People in quite lowly walks of life seemed to be astonishingly well-informed on a variety of subjects, which do not, however, include the outside world. One small incident struck me. I was riding in a taxi with a very talkative Uzbek driver. He spoke good Russian and we talked in Russian. He suddenly said, "How do you do" in English. "Where did you learn that?" I said. He replied, "My sister is a student of English at the University. She occasionally teaches me phrases, but"—and I mention this, too, because he used the proper grammatical term in Russian—"I was not sure where the tonic accent fell." You might find that sort of thing in the U.S. but I do not think you would find it in England.

So far as the outside world goes, the standard of knowledge is very low. While we were looking at Ulug Beg's observatory in Samarkand, I noticed a young woman with an old man, evidently her father, looking at us with great curiosity. Presently I went up and addressed her. She immediately asked who we were and where we had come from. When I told her she said, "I suppose you are all capitalists." I was a little taken aback. I said, "No, hardly that, we all work for our living." "Then you are workers?" she said. She turned out to be not an Uzbek but a Turkmen, who had come from Chardzhou, where she worked in a *kolkhoz* (collective farm), so we were probably the first westerners she had ever seen. She was highly intelligent and spoke good Russian. She questioned me closely about the position of workers in England, their salaries, educational facilities and so on, but I doubt very much if she believed what I told her.

A very full programme was arranged by the Intourist officials accompanying us. It included not only the ancient monuments but textile factories and other modern institutions. Some of the party objected, foolishly and rather rudely, I thought, to seeing anything but the picturesque and old. As a result of their objections I missed seeing the textile factory in Tashkent which I believe to be a remarkable enterprise. No objection was made if we went off on our own. For instance, I and one or two others went to the Old City of Tashkent at night, and visited an old-time *chai-khane*, or tea house, which might have been there for 500 years. So far as I could see, no attempt was made to follow us, either on this or any other occasion. On the other hand, some of the local people, including some Crimean Tatars, of whom there are a large number in Uzbekistan, who attempted to get touch with members of the party were told to sheer off by Intourist officials and security men, and did so at once.

During such a short visit it was, of course, impossible to form any firm opinion on such subjects as nationalist feeling, the Uzbek attitude towards Communism and the like. Soviet Communists make great play with the word "nationality." They claim to have extracted nationalities, as it were, out of a *mélange* of peoples created by centuries of exploitation by feudal and imperial masters. The present so-called nationalities of Central Asia—Uzbeks, Kirgiz, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Tajiks, and Karakalpaks—did not apply these names to themselves before the Revolution in any collective sense. Nor were they ever independent in any sense which would have any meaning nowadays, with the possible exception of the Uzbek Empire of the sixteenth century.

The impression which a visitor to Central Asia gets of a well-disciplined and reasonably well-fed, well-clothed and well-educated population is to my mind an accurate one. The people are materially much better off than they have ever been in their lives or than their ancestors were. They are also probably better off in a material sense than the great majority of peoples living outside the Soviet Union—in the Middle East and South Asia. There are, of course, some exceptions. But the same impression of material well-being might be gained in a concentration camp where there is a well-balanced diet, reasonable heating and lighting, and well organized, and even profitable, work for all. And whatever the state of their material well-being, the Muslim peoples of the U.S.S.R. have no con-

trol over their destinies in the sense that the independent peoples of Asia and Africa have. Do they themselves know this? Are they striving for freedom? Is there a spirit of nationalism abroad in the sense that this word is understood outside the U.S.S.R.? I simply do not know the answers to these questions. There are certainly no overt nationalist movements, no nationalist leaders, no nationalist press or literature. And yet the Communist Party authorities not infrequently issue stern reproofs about the continuance of nationalism, or as they nowadays prefer to call it, localism or particularism. The French writer and politician Buchez once defined nationalism and nationality as "something in virtue of which a nation continues to exist even when it has lost its autonomy." But the Muslim peoples of Central Asia and elsewhere in the U.S.S.R. have never had any autonomy beyond that enjoyed by nomad tribes and their transformation into nations has been artificially and arbitrarily contrived by the Soviet paramount power. There are, of course, other nation states in the Middle East and elsewhere which have been similarly created and which had not known independence before. But the paramount power has always withdrawn its armed forces from those countries and in many instances there are few or no white settlers there. The continued presence in the Muslim lands of the Soviet Union of the predominantly white Soviet army and of a vast mass of white officials, technicians and settlers is not, of course, conducive to contentment, but it may—I say *may*—make nationalism altogether out of the question. If, however, it is, as some people maintain, only lying dormant, it is possible to visualize certain circumstances which might bring it to life. One is some great upheaval such as another world war; another development, which we may hope is nearer and more likely, would be the continued grant of independence to colonial territories outside the U.S.S.R. to a point not very far distant when the Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union, and perhaps even their rulers, would realize that only they of all the Muslim peoples of the world have been denied self-determination and freedom.

The CHAIRMAN: We have fifteen minutes left for questions. I ask members of the audience to keep their questions short so as to allow as many questions as possible.

Brigadier LONGRIGG: The speaker several times referred to the Muslim peoples, as indeed they are, and he roused my curiosity as to the extent to which there is still an operative and self-conscious Islam in these new Soviet territories, whether privately in the hearts of the people or publicly in the ordinary institutions of Islam—mosque staffs, petty officials and so forth. Is Soviet policy at present smiling or frowning on Islam?

Colonel WHEELER: This is a complicated question which it would take a long time to answer fully. The Soviet Union and the Communist Party continues to frown on Islam, first, in the way they frown on all religious beliefs, and, secondly, on the Moslem way of life as incompatible with productivity and modern civilization.

The attitude of the people towards Islam is very difficult to get at, certainly in a short tour like the one I did. I did speak to people about it, I mean of course Uzbeks. They were inclined to scoff at congregational prayers and other religious observances, but they were obviously proud of

belonging to a Muslim civilization and regarded it as something exclusive and better than any other civilization. There are very few mosques now but I believe they have a fair Friday attendance.

We went to a Muslim seminary at Bukhara, actually, I think, the only active one in the Soviet Union, but as it was closed for the vacation we were unable to see how it was functioning. We went into a so-called *madrasah* at Tashkent which struck me as being of a very different kind. The mufti of Tashkent himself was an impressive figure speaking good Arabic, but we were greeted there by a number of very old men who reminded me of walkers-on in a film. They may have been theological students, forty or fifty years ago, but they certainly were not now. One who claimed to be teaching Arabic only knew a few words of it. One must, I think, draw a distinction between the Muslim way of life and genuine belief in Islamic dogma. Of the latter there is, I should say, no more than in Turkey or Persia. But there is still a great respect for and adherence to the former.

GROUP-CAPTAIN SMALLWOOD: May I offer a small comment? It seems that the attitude of the Russians towards the Muslims in the Central Asian countries our lecturer has visited is similar to the attitude of the Mongols, which is largely Russian influenced, to those Lamas who still exist.

May I ask also whether the old industry of carpets still exists in Bukhara?

COLONEL WHEELER: The answer is, no, it does not. They make a few carpets, but these usually bear portraits of Soviet leaders. I do not think there is any of the old traditional carpet industry. The making of what are called Bukhara carpets is now virtually confined to Persia.

DOCTOR LINDGREN: Colonel Wheeler referred to the Soviet work in ethnography. I should be grateful if he would say what types of ethnography they specialize in.

COLONEL WHEELER: Ethnography is a very wide term. There have been good ethnographical surveys of Persia and Afghanistan over the years. They have also done what I am told is a good one on China.

Regarding sociological surveys, there have been several by a particular man called Abramzon—to all intents and purposes a Russian, although it is not a Russian name—on family life on the collective farms and in various districts in the Central Asian republics. These, to my mind, are very interesting and do not appear to be tinged by political considerations. This work is good by any standard. On the other hand, there is much other work of a more superficial kind which is primarily concerned with politics and ideology.

MAJOR BURTON: What is the attitude of the Russian orientalists towards the so-called Turkic languages spoken in Central Asia.

COLONEL WHEELER: This is a field in which they have done much more work than any other country and "much more" is a mild way of putting it. The general object is to systematize and elaborate these broadly similar languages, making them as different from each other and as much like Russian as possible. To achieve the latter end they have introduced the Cyrillic alphabet and a large Russian and international loan vocabulary.

A vast amount of literature has been produced on the subject. That on lexicography and grammar is quite outstanding and far too little attention has been paid to it in the West.

Mr. BYRT: Since India has attained independence one of the difficulties which have arisen there is the development of specious local enthusiasms and provincialisms, and in different parts of India these have become a considerable trouble. The fact of their existence was confirmed in the Address to the People issued by the President of India on August 15, the annual Independence Day, warning them against these separatist tendencies, which have largely sprung from the demand for linguistic divisions. It is said that Communist agitators have with alacrity taken advantage of these agitations, to utilize them for their own purposes. The Kerala disorder a short time ago was an illustration of that. Can the lecturer, as a result of his experiences, make any comment on the problem?

Colonel WHEELER: This question of the emphasis on local differences of customs and opinions, and so on, has troubled the Soviet Union in the same way as it may now trouble the central Government in India. The Russians have only themselves to blame. It was they who invented the nationalities and persuaded or ordered the various Turkic peoples to emphasize the differences. Now they are confronted with something of a dilemma, because whereas their original object was the simple one of divide and rule—to make these people as different from each other as possible in order to prevent their “ganging up”—they are now confronted, or think they are, with new nationalisms which they themselves have created. I suppose India is afraid of something of the same sort, though the difference there between peoples can be far more pronounced than in Central Asia. The Russians have in the past written a great deal about linguistic policies in India, but they do so far less now, possibly because they find it a delicate subject. The linguistic state is having some vogue in India. There it has little or nothing to do with Communism.

Sir GERARD CLAUSEN: Would Colonel Wheeler agree with the impression I got that the new orientalism is centred on Moscow and controlled by Professor Gafurov, who owes his position of authority there more to his political status than to his reputation as an orientalist. It seemed to me that this emphasis on modern studies was all coming from Moscow. I spent a good bit of time in the Leningrad Institute with pen-friends that I was meeting for the first time. My impression is that Leningrad is still as much the home of pure scholarship as ever it was. The subjects studied there are the classical oriental languages and literature. They do not seem to be concerned with the modern history of southern and South East Asia or Africa on which attention is concentrated in Moscow.

The other impression I got was that the Russians are trying hard to turn selected members of the Soviet minorities into good scholars. They are certainly arousing the interest of these scholars in their own past. For example, I received an offprint from one of them—I had better not mention her nationality—which was headed “About my national literary heritage.” But my impression is that they are having difficulty in making these selected members of minorities into really good scholars. It seemed to me that it was much easier for such a scholar to become a professor than it

would be for a Russian with comparable qualifications. I do not know whether you agree.

Colonel WHEELER: Yes, I would agree. So far as I can tell, the atmosphere in the Leningrad University is from a scholarly point of view far ahead of Moscow. That was one reason why the Congress was not held in Leningrad as originally decided. Moscow is the fountain head of political direction and, as you say, Gafurov's is a political appointment rather than an academic one.

So far as minority scholars are concerned, again I agree. I think they are themselves not anxious to be drawn into the vortex of Moscow. This point about their national heritage is becoming troublesome to Soviet authorities, particularly in Azerbaijan. My impression of the minority scholars in Moscow was that they were very subdued. In Tashkent I got a different impression. They seemed much more free and I think they are doing some good work in fields they select for themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid our time is up. I am sure you will join with me in thanking Colonel Wheeler for his extremely interesting talk, in the usual manner. (*Applause*).



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