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Soviet strategies at the 1960 International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow

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(Amsterdam)

International scientific congresses provide exciting material for analyzing the forming of national research agendas and how they interact. This paper investigates one specific conference of considerable importance, the twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists, held in Moscow in August 1960. Trying to elucidate the interplay between Cold War politics and Orientalist scholarship, I will look at the Soviet internal debates in the run-up to this event, the organizers' strategies in their correspondences with Western colleagues, and the speeches and papers given at the Congress. Finally I will discuss the Soviet as well as the Western evaluations of what was achieved at the Congress and consider how political in character it really was. This chapter is thus meant as a contribution to the history of Soviet Oriental studies (or Orientology, *vostokovedenie*) and an analysis of how Soviet and Western traditions of scholarship interacted. I will also analyze how scholars and politicians saw the future of Oriental studies, especially with regard to the "Orient" itself, which in the 1950s and 1960s was in the process of emancipation and decolonization. I argue that inviting both "bourgeois" scholars from the West and "progressive" scholars from the "Orient" to Moscow and combining scholarship with political propaganda made the 1960 Congress of Orientalists an enormous balancing act for the Soviet organizers. What was the exact relation between scholarship and propaganda, in terms of communication strategies and target audiences?

The article is mainly based on Soviet publications from before and after the Congress (including the voluminous *Proceedings*) and on the surviving documentation of the organizational committee's internal documents and their correspondences with the West, preserved in the "Orientalists' Archive" of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg¹ (the former "Leningrad branch" of the Moscow-based Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences). For some Western views on the Congress I use materials from the American Council of Learned Societies, preserved in the Library of Congress.²

Soviet Oriental studies and the East

Soviet interest in the East began right after the October Revolution, when the Bolsheviks identified the colonies as the weak point of the Western powers. As congresses were important instruments for popularizing political messages, the Soviet leaders tried to reach out to the Muslim world by organizing a “Congress of the Peoples of the East” in Baku 1920, organized by the Comintern, where Bolshevik leaders attempted to inspire the “Oriental” delegates to fight for the victory of communism in their countries.³ While this congress was purely propagandistic, it also provided a stimulus for setting up a research infrastructure on the Orient. In 1922 the Soviet government created the first thoroughly Marxist Oriental teaching institute, the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (*Moskovskii institut vostokovedeniia*, MIV), on the basis of the old Lazarev Institute of Oriental languages from Tsarist times. While MIV was basically a school for the training of Communist Party and administrative personnel for Soviet organs, two other teaching institutes, the University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) and the University for the Toilers of China (KUTK), were established to train communist cadres from abroad that would then be sent back to their home countries, where they were supposed to direct local communist parties under the wings of the Comintern.⁴ These institutes in Moscow published scientific journals meant to offer politically useful knowledge about the “East.” But by the late 1930s, when Stalin turned towards a more pragmatic and then isolationist foreign policy, these institutes and journals were marginalized and abolished, and fell into oblivion.

At the same time the major Russian *scholarly* research institution for Oriental studies was still the Asiatic Museum in Petrograd/Leningrad (established in 1818). Here eminent scholars educated in the pre-revolutionary tradition continued to work on Oriental languages and literatures, history, and archaeology. In 1930 the Asiatic Museum was transformed into the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (*Institut vostokovedeniia Akademii nauk SSSR*, IVAN). What followed was a series of restructurings, outright political infiltration and intimidation, and the state terror of the 1930s.⁵ Still, the Leningrad Arabists, Iranists, Turkologists, Central Asianists, Sinologists, and Buddhologists and scholars of many other fields of Orientology by and large continued to produce historical and textual studies. Such classical Orientology work still had to be conducted in a political framework: as Alfrid K. Bustanov has recently demonstrated, in the 1920s and 1930s and up to the 1980s, the “classical” Leningrad scholars conducted huge manuscript study projects that provided the source basis for the subsequent writing of national histories for the various Soviet republics of Central Asia – that is, for carving up the historical, religious, and cultural heritage of Central Asia into “national” units, thus providing a historical framework for contemporary Soviet nationality policies. In addition, Leningrad scholars were crucial for supporting, and guiding, the establishment of a number of research centers in those republics.⁶

Debates about the nature and political use of Soviet Oriental studies flared up again after the Great Patriotic War. In the context of the “Anti-cosmopolitanism” campaign, IVAN in Leningrad (then under the directorship of Egyptologist and Assyrologist V.V. Struve, 1941–1950) became the target of vitriolic attacks in the press. One of these assaults, published in 1949 in the USSR’s most prominent history journal, claimed that the institute was “moving away from the study of important political questions in the contemporary history of the countries of the East,” and that this “means bowing down before bourgeois Orientology, leading to serious mistakes of an objectivist and cosmopolitanist character.” Bourgeois (i.e. Western) Oriental studies, according to this article, “serves imperialism in the most active way” by justifying the dominance of the Western colonial empires over the disenfranchised East.⁷ Accompanied by such critiques the institute was transferred to Moscow, close to the Kremlin, in 1950; only the huge manuscript collection were left in Leningrad, together with the scholars who continued to work with manuscripts, who formed a “Leningrad branch” of the now Moscow-based politicized IVAN.

In Moscow, too, the institute continued to be criticized for failing to produce a genuine (politicized) “Soviet Orientology.” In those post-war years IVAN lacked an engaged director: Struve’s successor, the Central Asian archaeologist and anthropologist Sergei P. Tolstov, took over IVAN’s directorship in 1950 without giving up his job as director of the academy’s Institute of Ethnography, which must have limited the attention he could give to IVAN. Tolstov’s successor, the Egyptologist Vsevolod I. Avdiev, was only intended as a placeholder (1953–54). While the academic IVAN in Moscow thus had a rather marginal position, the other Oriental institution in the city, the “old Bolshevik” Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (MIV) of 1922, was even closed down in 1954 (with its tasks transferred to Moscow State University), under the pretext that it produced too many graduates who did not find jobs befitting their qualification.⁸

In the same year, 1954, the Institute of Oriental Studies (IVAN) of the Soviet Academy of Sciences finally obtained a leader whose research interests lay in the colonial period: this was the Marxist historian of Southeast Asia Aleksandr A. Guber, who had previously been the Institute’s deputy director. Yet it was precisely during Guber’s tenure that the institute again became the target of public criticism, this time from the highest levels of power. The initiative for this round of bashing came from Bobodzhan G. Gafurov (1908–1977), the first secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan; in a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of February 5, 1956 he argued that “our work in the countries of the East” required a general overhaul of the Institute of Oriental Studies, which would include an organizational reform as well as a complete reorientation of the scientific work of Soviet Orientology towards the study of the contemporary Orient. In his letter Gafurov suggested the establishment of an All-Union Association for the Study of the Countries of Asia and Africa (*Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo po*

izucheniiu stran Azii i Afriki) as the proper instrument for this new approach. In Gafurov's plan, this organization would have various sections (on contemporary history, literature, ethnography, economics, geography and social movements) as well as its own information office, printing house and journal ("Vostok"); importantly, it should also be active in radio propaganda. With branches in all Union republics, the new association would manage and direct all Soviet cultural relations with countries of Asia and Africa. To clear the way, the Soviet organization for cultural diplomacy and propaganda, the All-Union Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (*Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoi svyazi s zagranitsei*, VOKS), should cease to cater to the Orient and only focus on Europe and America.⁹ This was a clear attack on the current director of IVAN, Aleksandr A. Guber, as well as on VOKS, where Guber presided over a "Section of Orientalists."¹⁰

With his February 1956 letter Gafurov already positioned himself as the new organizer of Soviet Oriental Studies, and the CC was ready to take up his critique of IVAN's current work and make it official policy. The central personality for promoting Gafurov's ambitions was the prominent Central Committee Politburo (at that time: Presidium) member Anastas Mikoian, who adopted Gafurov's points and voiced them just a couple of days later from the pulpit of the twentieth Party Congress of 1956 (where Khrushchev held his famous "Secret Speech"). Mikoian bashed Soviet historians and particularly Orientalists for their ideological and scholarly shortcomings, referring to IVAN with the famous phrase: "There is an institute that works on questions of the Orient; but one has to say that while in our days the Orient is waking up, this institute is still in slumber." Mikoian deplored the above-mentioned liquidation of the "old" Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (MIV) and stated that IVAN was not able to produce the "people who know the languages, economies and culture of the Oriental countries"¹¹ that the USSR now needed so urgently for its foreign policy. This turn from closing down one (successful) Moscow Oriental institute in 1954 to demanding the quick development of another (less successful one, from a political point of view) in 1956 indicates that the Soviet government came to realize the rising importance of the "Third World," especially after non-aligned sentiment began to consolidate after the Bandung Conference of 1955.¹² Mikoian's attack on IVAN must have been extremely embarrassing for the directorship of the institute, but for the development of Orientology it also held the promise of more state support in the immediate future, albeit in a highly politicized environment. As a result of the criticism, in May 1956 the Academy of Sciences officially asked the Central Committee to relieve Guber of the directorship of IVAN and replace him with Gafurov.¹³

In contrast to all of his predecessors, Gafurov (who would serve as director of IVAN from 1956 until his death in 1977) was not a Russian but an "Oriental"; and he was above all a politician, not an academic. From 1946 to 1956 Gafurov had been first secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan—that is, Stalin's first man in Tajikistan. He had also made a name for himself

as an author of several popular-scientific books on the history of Tajikistan.¹⁴ What qualified him for the directorship of IVAN were thus his political experience and ambition, his good connections in the Kremlin and in Central Asia, and his being an “Oriental Orientalist.” In Gafurov’s vision, the Soviet republics of Central Asia (and especially Tajikistan) could demonstrate the success of Soviet modernization and nationality policies to the outside world and thus become an important tool for Soviet foreign policy. Gafurov had voiced this idea already at the twentieth Party Congress (when he was still in charge of Tajikistan), in a report that directly followed Mikoian’s speech¹⁵—a sequence that already suggested Gafurov as the natural solution to the problem that Mikoian had formulated.

Equipped with a direct line to the Central Committee (of which he was a member) for getting funds and permissions, Gafurov soon embarked on an expansion of the academy’s Institute of Oriental Studies, in which he emphasized the need to focus as well on China, India, Africa, and Southeast Asia, in addition to the Near East.¹⁶ Gafurov did not cut down the “classical” disciplines (historical and textual studies), but he made significant efforts to expand political and economic research on the contemporary East, and he also set up the journals and series that would popularize the achievements of Soviet Oriental studies. All Soviet and Western accounts agree that Gafurov’s reforms left an enormous imprint on Oriental studies in the USSR. This chapter argues that the twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow was Gafurov’s instrument to consolidate his position as director not only of IVAN but also of Soviet Oriental studies as a whole. But before that we will take a closer look at how the Soviets conquered the international congresses arena.

Returning to the international arena: the Soviets in Cambridge, 1954

The International Congress of Orientalists had been a regular event since 1873, when the first congress was held in Paris. It quickly became the most prominent forum for scientific exchange on issues of Oriental archaeology, history, and religious studies, and partly also ethnography and art history. The third congress, in 1876, was held in Russia, in St. Petersburg, and in the subsequent decades the meetings took place in many cities of Europe, as well as once in Algiers (1905) and in Istanbul (1951). Officially organized under the auspices of the *Union internationale des Orientalistes*, the congresses and their agenda were very much in the hands of the host organizations.

Interestingly, it was not Gafurov who discovered the international congresses of Orientalology as a convenient medium to promote Soviet Oriental studies. Within one year of Stalin’s demise Soviet Orientalists broke out of their isolation and sent a delegation to the twenty-third International Congress of Orientalists that was held in Cambridge in August 1954. This delegation was headed by Guber, and the official Soviet organization that joined the *Union internationale des Orientalistes* was VOKS, in which Guber played a prominent role.¹⁷

Guber sent an impressive group of well-known professional Orientalists. In fact, his delegation covered all major areas of classical research, including Arab/Islamic history (E.A. Beliaev), Iranian studies (I.M. D'iakonov), Armenian studies (S.T. Eremian), Turkmen literature (E.A. Bertel's), Kazakh linguistics (N.T. Sauranbaev), Altaic studies (L.P. Potapov), Turkish linguistics (A.N. Kononov), Indology (V.I. Kal'ianov), Chinese studies (A. Kovalev and S.L. Tikhvinskii), Japanese history (E.M. Zhukov), Oriental manuscript collections and archives in Central Asia (S. Azimdzhanova and M.U. Iuldashev), Oriental Christianity (Nina V. Pigulevskaia), and even African studies (I.I. Potekhin). While most of their papers were meant to demonstrate Soviet academic achievements, almost all of them were traditional source studies; only one contribution had a clearly political orientation (K.M. Kuliev's essay on the "Culture of Soviet Turkmenistan").

While all Soviet participants probably presented in Russian, they also distributed printed versions of many papers in full English translations; these had been published in advance in Moscow, in the form of small booklets.¹⁸ This of course shows how much attention the Soviets paid to the Cambridge congress. The integration of Soviet scholars into the "Congress" community was facilitated by Denis Sinor (1916–2011), a scholar of Central Asia who at that time taught at Cambridge and who served as secretary of the Association of British Orientalists and as secretary-general of the Cambridge congress. Sinor seems to have been on especially good terms with Tikhvinskii, who would soon become director of the new Soviet Institute of Chinese Studies.¹⁹ Guber, together with Nina Pigulevskaia, was also made a member of the International Consultative Commission of the Cambridge congress, which is traditionally in charge of determining the next meeting place. Joining this committee was problematic, since it also included personalities like former Bashkir politician and scholar Zeki Velidi Togan, who had fled Russia in 1923 and was still regarded in the USSR as an anti-Soviet agent.²⁰ This might have been the reason why Guber did not attend the congress in person.²¹

This well-coordinated performance of the Soviet delegation (most members of which worked in Moscow or Leningrad) appears to have been Guber's deliberate strategy to counter the repeated criticism that the institute was ineffective. What is interesting is that Guber did not give in to the call for focusing on political and contemporary issues; quite the contrary, he sent the best representatives of classical Russian Orientalology to the UK, perhaps convinced that the Soviets could best score internationally with topics that fitted perfectly with conservative Western Orientalist research traditions. At the same time one cannot deny that the Soviet delegation also had a political purpose, namely to impress the West—not by open confrontation (which would only have alienated the international audience) but by an exposition of the institute's real strengths.

This puts the subsequent development of Soviet Oriental studies into a different light. When two years later, at the twentieth Party Congress in 1956, Soviet Oriental studies were again bashed, this time by Mikoian, for

remaining in a state of “slumber,” and when a couple of months later the institute began to be overhauled and expanded under Gafurov, the isolation and inertia of Soviet Orientalology had in fact already been attacked by his predecessors. Also, while Gafurov indeed introduced a new focus on contemporary political analysis, he was careful enough not to diminish the classical studies of manuscripts that proved so valuable on the international scene. Gafurov not only exploited the opportunities provided by the new Soviet Eastern policies after 1955 but also reaped the benefits of the preceding director’s work. And as we will see below, Gafurov continued Guber’s approach for impressing Western delegates at international congresses.

Coordinating Soviet Orientalology: the first All-Union Conference of Orientalists, Tashkent, 1957

In two recent articles, Masha Kirasirova and Artemy Kalinovsky have pointed out the role of Soviet politicians from Central Asia as mediators of Khrushchev’s new policy towards the Third World.²² Kirasirova and Kalinovsky focused on Gafurov (as the former first secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan, and then in his function as IVAN director) and the Uzbekistan Party boss Nuriddin A. Mukhitdinov; in the 1950s both were members of the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party, and thus the most prominent Central Asian “natives” to contribute to the shaping of Soviet foreign policies. As indigenous “Orientals” (“sons of Muslims,” in Khrushchev’s phrase), Gafurov and Mukhitdinov were meant to show the Third World that the Soviet Union was not a colonial empire but a modernizing and emancipating state and a model to embrace. Kirasirova focused in her paper on the development of Soviet cultural diplomacy through VOKS and similar associations, and she also drew attention to Mukhitdinov’s initiative of holding a first All-Union Conference of Orientalists in Tashkent in 1957, an event that we will discuss in some detail below. Kalinovsky furthermore argued that Gafurov and Mukhitdinov used the Kremlin’s new rhetoric of support for decolonization in the non-Soviet world to argue for the elimination of the last remnants of colonial “backwardness” in their own countries, and lobbied in Moscow for large investments in their republics’ infrastructure and economy. From this perspective Gafurov’s transfer from the highest Party office in Stalinabad (Dushanbe) to the directorship of IVAN in Moscow in 1956 should be seen not as a demotion and disgrace but as a transfer to another responsible position. Indeed, in Moscow Gafurov was able to work at all-Union level while at the same time remaining an influential person in Tajikistani politics. While Kalinovsky discussed Gafurov’s (and his successors’ in Stalinabad) successful lobbying for huge dam and mining projects in Tajikistan, I suggest that the Soviet organization of the twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow can be seen as another “anti-colonial” Gafurov project which demanded lobbying at the highest level of Soviet politics for the benefit of the interests of the “Orientals.” The

congress was a significant investment, both politically and culturally, and it was designed to bring quick dividends to the USSR—and to Gafurov. In particular, I argue that Gafurov envisaged the 1960 Orientalists' congress as a means to consolidate the role of his Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow as the leading and main coordinating center of Soviet Oriental studies as a whole.

In the early 1950s the leading position of IVAN among Soviet institutions of Oriental studies was not self-evident. When Gafurov became director of IVAN he saw himself challenged by the establishment—on the basis of previously existing research groups and manuscript collections—of new Oriental studies centers in the southern Union republics, which operated largely independently. The first and most important of these was the Institute for the Study of Manuscripts (established 1943/4; upgraded in 1950 to a full-fledged Institute of Oriental Studies) in Tashkent, under the auspices of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences; the politicization of this institute is analyzed in detail by Bakhtiyar Babajanov in the present volume. The Uzbek Institute would be followed by an Institute of Oriental Studies in Baku, Azerbaijan (1958), and another in Tbilisi, Georgia (1960); Gafurov's Tajikistan would get its own institute (again on the basis of an older manuscript institute) only in 1970, followed by Armenia in 1971.²³ While all of these institutes maintained close contacts with IVAN in Moscow and its branch in Leningrad, the proliferation of Oriental institutes in the national republics still meant a growing role for national academies and Party elites in the formulation of research goals and the competition for resources. And while all republican institutes faced the same pressure to focus on international politics (in the Tashkent case from 1949/51, as Babajanov shows in his contribution), the work of the Orientology centers in the southern republics was still largely characterized by classical agendas, especially their work on Oriental manuscripts from the local collections on which they were based. The new Soviet thrust to the Third World notwithstanding, each of the “national” institutes would naturally focus on Oriental sources from their “own” republic, and make important contributions to the production of Soviet-type national cultural heritage.²⁴ This would make it difficult for Gafurov in Moscow to direct Soviet Orientology as a coherent whole.

Gafurov started to counter these trends at the first All-Union Conference of Orientalists, which took place June 4–11, 1957 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This was a major event; for the first time Soviet Orientalists from all Union republics (plus a few invited guests from the “foreign orient”) were brought together in a convention that covered practically all fields of the umbrella discipline. As Masha Kirasirova points out, Mukhitdinov claimed in his memoirs that the initiative for the 1957 conference came from him;²⁵ this would indicate that Mukhitdinov, too, had ambitions to shape the course of Soviet Orientology. As we will see below, the conference itself was clearly dominated by Gafurov, who used it to push through his own agenda.

The 1957 All-Union Conference of Orientalists in Tashkent was organized around a plenary session with political speeches and nine thematic sections of

academic work. Political overtones were of course present in all sections, but only three of them were primarily characterized by political interests: these were devoted to the history of the peoples of the Soviet Union, the historical, economic, and cultural links between the peoples of the East, and the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the non-Soviet East. But what then followed were six sections of a classical Orientalist nature, on: ancient and medieval history, archaeology, and ethnography; literature; languages; manuscript heritage; the edition of Ibn Sina's *Qanun*; plus another section that was meant to unite literature with language and manuscript studies. In other words, historical and philological studies were still prevalent. Against the background of the late-Stalinist witch-hunt targeting "bourgeois" Oriental studies, the 1957 Conference must have been perceived as a full rehabilitation of the classical research agenda. Again, the Conference was prepared in a very professional way: a hard-bound volume comprising the theses of the scientific part of the program (thus without the political speeches!) was seemingly already distributed at the Conference;²⁶ and an impressive full version of all 121 speeches and contributions (altogether 1,063 pages) was edited a year later.²⁷

In his speech to the plenary of the Tashkent convention Gafurov pointed out the achievements and shortcomings of the past decades. He acknowledged the work of the "progressive and democratic" part of classical Russian Orientalology, but argued that on the whole pre-revolutionary Orientalology had remained "bourgeois," unable to reveal the laws of social development in the East. When Lenin "united the national question with the colonial one," he managed to demonstrate that "the peoples of the Orient wake up to become practical actors, so that each people participates in the fate of humanity as a whole." Also, Lenin showed that Oriental countries were able to move from pre-capitalistic relations directly to socialism, thus bypassing capitalism (which was one of the major official departures from Stalin's Marxist determinism in the Khrushchev period). Armed with Lenin's teachings, Gafurov claimed, Soviet Orientalists eventually managed to bridge the gulf between Russian academic Orientalology and the contemporary life of the peoples of Asia. Still, many Marxist Orientalists lacked the necessary linguistic and cultural skills, and therefore applied Marxism in a very dogmatic way; as an example Gafurov pointed to the debates on the Asiatic mode of production (in the 1920s and early 1930s), which he characterized as not fruitful.²⁸ Mistakes had also been made when Marxist scholars schematically postulated the existence of national proletariats in countries that obviously had little or no industry; and importantly, Soviet Orientalists did not sufficiently recognize the positive contribution of national bourgeoisies in the anti-imperialistic struggle, that is, of figures like Gandhi. Finally, Gafurov insisted that it was wrong to condemn all expressions of Islam as simply "pan-Islamist," and to ignore Islam's role in the mobilization of the masses.²⁹

These acknowledgements of past mistakes, Gafurov said, had already led to a number of reorganizations. With respect to the growing role of China as a socialist power in the East (and as an ally of the Soviets), the Academy of

Sciences established a separate China institute in 1957 (perhaps on the initiative of Gafurov, who had already in the summer of 1956 argued that China and Mongolia studies should be taken out of "his" IVAN to form a new institute³⁰). Furthermore, Gafurov claimed that his academic Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow should now concentrate on the contemporary countries of the foreign Orient, while the Leningrad branch would focus on manuscripts. In addition, Gafurov announced, the Moscow IVAN should take over the task of coordinating Oriental studies throughout the USSR, that is, the work of Orientalology centers in the Union republics. Leningrad and Stalina-bad [Dushanbe] would then specialize in Iranian studies; Leningrad, Tashkent, and Baku in Turkology; Tashkent and Leningrad in the publication of manuscripts. Furthermore, Afghan studies would be conducted in Moscow and Tashkent, and Arabic studies in Moscow as well as in Leningrad and Tbilisi. Research on contemporary history, economy, and the decay of colonialism and imperialism would be concentrated in Moscow.³¹

This centralist approach to Soviet Oriental studies conflicted with the interests of national republics, where Orientalology traditionally focused on the history of the respective territories and regions. In his speech at the congress the Uzbekistan Party boss Mukhitdinov made no secret of his resentment of Gafurov's proposal that the Union republics should concentrate, on Moscow's recommendation, only on their respective Oriental neighbors; he conceded that IVAN in Moscow should have a coordinating function, but he insisted that "his" institute in Tashkent had the cadres and expertise to cover Oriental studies broadly, especially in relation to sources from the region; and that it would be unwise to change this direction by introducing a new division of labor.³² There was thus a clear conflict of interests between Gafurov, now as the representative of the Center, and Mukhitdinov, who defended the traditional approach of "his" Uzbek research center.

In his "Concluding Remarks" at the end of the convention, Gafurov lauded some of the academic contributions to the conference but bemoaned the fact that there were still very few works on contemporary affairs. Without openly referring to Mukhitdinov's opposition, Gafurov repeated that all Soviet Oriental studies institutions should focus on the *foreign* Orient, which implicitly meant assigning the study of the "Soviet Orient" largely to the *historical* institutes in the individual republics.³³ Gafurov's suggestions, including his general demands to coordinate work and to develop a strong focus on the modern East, were all taken up in the "Decisions" of the conference.³⁴ This must be seen as an attempt to link Soviet Orientalology even more closely to Khrushchev's foreign policy and to counter the increasing decentralization of the Oriental studies network in the USSR. Gafurov later reiterated his centralization plans for Soviet Oriental studies on various occasions.³⁵

In many respects, Gafurov's reform program was a return to the kind of Marxist Orientalology that had been envisaged in the "Red Years" of the early 1920s, when party officials and scholars sympathetic to the revolution debated how to fuse the traditional "bourgeois" scholarship of Tsarist times with the

“new” Marxist research. As the “Thaw” was largely dressed in the rhetoric of a return, after the mistakes of the Stalin era, to true Leninism, a return to programs of the 1920s at the 1957 Tashkent Conference made perfect sense. The Soviet “turn to the East” in the mid-1950s was also couched in slogans of historical urgency that were reminiscent of the early Bolshevik expectations of an immediate world revolution, in which the Oriental colonies would play an important role in bringing down Western (above all, British) imperial hegemony; the difference was that in the 1920s this upcoming global victory was understood as being profoundly communist, whereas after Bandung the Soviet leaders were ready to see other “non-capitalist” developments in the de-colonizing Third World as allies against Western (now primarily US) imperialism. Gafurov even made a positive reference to the 1920 Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East (“convened on Lenin’s initiative”). Also re-occurring was the metaphor of an “awakening” or “new” East (“*razbudivshiesia k novoi zhizni narody Vostoka*,” as Mukhitdinov formulated this position in his speech at the Conference),³⁶ reminiscent of the imagery used in Mikhail Pavlovich’s Marxist Oriental journal, *Novyi Vostok* (“The New Orient,” 1922–1930). Gafurov also argued for the establishment of a separate Oriental studies *teaching* institute in Moscow that would support the Oriental Institute of the academy.³⁷ Such an Oriental university would have been a kind of re-establishment of Mikhail Pavlovich’s Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (MIV), which had just been closed down (in 1954).

The extent to which Gafurov’s program resembled that of the 1920s is furthermore apparent from his call for the establishment of an all-Union association of Orientalists (*Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo vostokovedov*),³⁸ an idea he had already voiced in his above-mentioned letter to the CC of February 1956. An organization with this name had once functioned, again under the chairmanship of Mikhail Pavlovich, but had fallen into oblivion by the late 1920s. And finally, it had also been Pavlovich who called for strict central coordination of all Soviet Orientalist research work and who instigated the first systematic program of political and economic studies of the East, including some of a popularizing and propagandistic nature.³⁹

Bringing World Orientology to Moscow: the goals of the 1960 congress

The Tashkent Conference of Soviet Orientalists included only a handful of foreign participants from socialist states; still, with its 122 papers it appears as a kind of stocktaking and, thus, as a test run in preparation for the big event of 1960, the twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists. In fact, the timing suggests that it must have been the Tashkent Conference (of June 4–11, 1957) that prompted Gafurov to ask the Central Committee, in a letter later that month, to give him the green light to use the twenty-fourth International Congress of Orientalists in Munich (which was to take place in early September 1957) to invite the *Union internationale des Orientalistes* to hold the next congress in the USSR.⁴⁰ But strikingly, in his communication with the

CC Gafurov did not even mention the Tashkent conference; and in his later articles and speeches, and even in his internal reports, he persistently failed to mention the 1957 Conference of Soviet Orientalists as a milestone on the path to the 1960 congress. I see this as another indication of the growing rivalry between Gafurov and Mukhitdinov. For Gafurov, the Moscow congress was meant to overshadow Mukhitdinov's Tashkent conference, not build on it.

Yet in spite of all the rhetoric about engagement with the Third World, Gafurov's delegation to the Munich Congress of Orientalists was again made up of renowned classical Orientalists and historians. Judging from the published proceedings,⁴¹ the Soviets came with seven papers on the ancient Orient,⁴² eight on the medieval period,⁴³ and only three on the modern East,⁴⁴ in addition to two papers on Soviet Indology.⁴⁵ As with Guber's delegation to Cambridge there was not one paper on the current struggle for de-colonization. It seems the Soviets did not want to overemphasize their anti-colonialist agenda when invited to a major scientific conference in the West; and probably they simply did not have much quality research on anti-colonial affairs to offer. Anyway, in sending their best representatives of textual studies they managed to demonstrate that Soviet Orientology was able to cover the whole breadth of the Oriental world, which must have made quite an impression. The papers were again presented in the Russian language; for the publication of the proceedings they were all translated into German.

As in Cambridge, two Soviet scholars (Gafurov and Guber) were included on Munich's consultative committee.⁴⁶ When Gafurov submitted his invitation to have the next congress, in 1960, in the Soviet Union, this seemingly went unchallenged, also because there was no formal invitation from any other country to represent a realistic alternative. Gafurov's invitation did not mention any specific Soviet city as the place for the congress, but it was taken for granted that it would "probably [be] in Leningrad," as the transcript of that session mentions.⁴⁷

In contrast to all previous congresses, the 1960 convention in the USSR would not be organized by just one scientific association or institution; rather, the justification, preparation and organization of the congress, as well as the formulation of its goals, involved the whole state apparatus. In the typical Soviet manner of organizing large political events and campaigns, Gafurov and his team were in regular contact with the Communist Party's Central Committee for political and general issues, with the ministries of finances, foreign affairs, communication/mail, culture and education, with Intourist for visas, hotels, travels, excursions, printing facilities, and translators, and even with the Soviet fleet.⁴⁸ The organizers also established contact with academic research institutions all over the Soviet Union to mobilize Soviet Orientalists and generate enough Soviet papers of good quality. By contrast, the *Union internationale des Orientalistes*, officially the mother organization of the congress, was largely sidelined, as we will see below.

The presidium of the Academy of Sciences formally approved the congress on October 4, 1957. From then on things were largely decided at IVAN:

Gafurov set up an organizational committee (*orgkomitet*) – approved by the Academy of Sciences on January 31, 1958 – which comprised no fewer than 47 persons. While most of these were from IVAN, there was also one representative from the academies of each Central Asian and Caucasian Union republic, plus one from the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Dagestan (G.D. Daniialov, director of the Institute of History, Language and Literature in Makhachakala). The directors of the new Institute of Chinese Studies and the Ethnography Institute, both in Moscow, were included, in addition to representatives of Moscow and Leningrad state universities and of the publishing house *Vostochnaia literatura*. This broad network was obviously meant to ensure the outreach of the *orgkomitet*, while at the same time making it clear that all decisions were made by Moscow-based scholars. The position of congress secretary was assigned to Igor' M. D'iakonov (1915–1999),⁴⁹ a tremendously versatile and productive expert in ancient Orient and Iranian studies from IVAN's Leningrad branch who was fluent in many Western languages.⁵⁰

Within a week the academy approved a second *orgkomitet*, for the establishment of an All-Union Association of Orientalists (with most of its 18 members also being in the congress *orgkomitet*);⁵¹ Gafurov's strategy was obviously to use the International Congress for the establishment of a scholarly association, equally under his chairmanship, that would cement his grip on Oriental studies in the whole of the USSR. In a follow-up meeting of the *orgkomitet* on February 20, 1958, Gafurov emphasized that under the conditions of the downfall of the colonial system and the uprising of the Orient ("*kogda podnimaetsia Vostok*"), the congress would have significance far beyond the field of Oriental studies. Gafurov maintained that at the two previous congresses in Cambridge and Munich the countries of the East were represented only sporadically or not at all [which was simply not true, since at Munich there were at least 83 papers – out of a total of around 450—by scholars residing in countries of what was traditionally called the "Orient"⁵²]. This would be different at the 1960 congress in Leningrad, said Gafurov, where there would be a strong representation of scholars especially from China, India and other Oriental countries. "The Congress will proceed under the banner of strengthening relations between West and East, under the banner of the friendship between the Soviet people and the peoples of the Orient."⁵³

Also discussed in February 1958 was what sections the congress should have, the statutes of the congress leaving a great deal of discretion to the host in this area. Congress secretary D'iakonov clearly understood this as a way of avoiding certain topics, especially religion; he suggested having sections on "Byzantine, Syrian and Ethiopian Studies" (instead of "Byzantinology and the Christian East"), "History of the Near East" (in place of "Islamology: History and Religion"), and "Literatures and Art of the Countries of the Near East and Central Asia" (in place of "Islamology: Literature and Language"). By contrast, the senior Caucasianist Iosif A. Orbeli (who served as vice-president to the congress) saw Islamic studies as anyway just "a fig leaf

for Arabic studies,” and argued that one should not be afraid of religious terminology when designing the sections. Another issue was how to group country studies: Struve argued that China should not be put into a group with other East Asian countries, and East Asianist Nikolai Konrad added that Korea should be divided from Japan (obviously in view of the recent history of Japanese imperialism). Similarly, Ottomanist A.F. Miller argued that the Republic of Turkey should have its own section, distinct from the Near East.⁵⁴ The orgkomitet repeatedly referred to the experience gathered at Soviet congresses of the past; in particular the third Congress of Iranian Archaeology (held in Leningrad in 1934) was referred to as an example of how to organize exhibitions during the congress. The fourth International Congress of Slavic Studies that Moscow had recently hosted was also cited as a possible model.

It was at this point that the Iranist Boris N. Zakhoder (1889–1960) cautioned against its being taken for granted that the 1960 Oriental Congress would be as easy a success as the 1958 Congress of Slavic Studies, and made some frank statements about the standing of Soviet Oriental studies in the world:

While the Soviet Union is leading in Slavic studies, this is different with regard to Oriental Studies: our Orientology is everywhere artificially isolated. People either do not read [our works], keep silent about them, or they distort them, they just study them to gather intelligence. At international congresses they kindly accept us, but they also isolate us. At the same time it is not only communists that give us their favor, but also for instance representatives of certain religious groups. Yet in a country like France our position on North African issues [i.e. the Soviet profession of support for the Algerian independence war against the French] will barely find any support, even among the liberals. Our task is to tear down this isolation, and I support I.M. [D'iakonov] [with his proposal] to immediately set up friendly relations by creating [small] working groups [together with foreign scholars]. Which sections should we set up? S.P. [Tolstov] suggests [to design the sections] around problematical topics (*problematiki*). But [if] we suggest our own problematical topics, such as the crisis of the colonial system, then the most progressive people will join us, but many others will move out of our congress and might set up parallel congresses. This we have to avoid, but to retreat, to replace our topics (*tematika*) by [for instance] archaeological issues—that is not our task either.

Zakhoder then linked this issue to a broad critique of the conventional identity of Orientology—not just of its Western branch but globally:

Before the organization of the Institute of Oriental Studies [in Moscow] there was a discussion, and many of those who are present here today took part in that discussion. In the future we will see the establishment of

one general history (*vseobshchaia istoriia*), [and of] one general history of literature, and Orientology as such will no longer exist; we have to anticipate [this] development of sciences. We should [therefore] divide the orgkomitet into groups – a group for medieval history, for ancient and modern histories, and the same for literary studies and linguistics, ethnography and ethnology – and then also an exhibition [of artefacts] will be useful. This will allow us to discuss the problematic topics in an academic fashion.⁵⁵

Asked by Sergei Tolstov, the former director of IVAN, whether this would mean the liquidation of Orientology, Zakhoder replied:

To liquidate Oriental studies would not be bad, but at the moment this would be premature. There is [already] no Orientology in our [Central Asian and Caucasian] republics: what is being developed there is just the history of the individual republics. This is the future of the discipline; one has to see its [long-term] development.⁵⁶

This was a strong statement – the end of the colonial system will inevitably also bring down Orientology as an outdated discipline, not just because of its former support for colonialism but because it no longer makes sense to treat the Orient in isolation from global processes. Zakhoder's position anticipated much of what was discussed at later congresses and the debates ignited by Edward Said's well-known *Orientalism* in 1978. Interesting also is Zakhoder's reference to previous debates among Soviet scholars (probably in 1950) on the controversial nature of Orientology. These reflections can be added to Vera Tolz' argument that several outstanding Russian (and ethnic German) Orientalists were already questioning the traditional definition of the discipline in the early twentieth century.⁵⁷ The controversy was clearly still alive in the post-war USSR. However, according to the minutes of the meeting Gafurov did not take up Zakhoder's ideas but returned to the agenda of the day.

Another issue discussed by the orgkomitet was where to place the national literatures of the individual Soviet republics with Muslim populations. This had been a dangerous political issue in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when in the course of the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign Soviet scholars were forced, at the risk of being stigmatized and repressed, to isolate their work on the medieval Persian and Arabic-language literatures of the individual Soviet republics from the wider Persianate and Arabic literary worlds.⁵⁸ In 1958 this does not seem to have been a dangerous topic any more, as can be seen from D'iakonov's suggestion, made at one of the following meetings of the orgkomitet, that "Tajik literature *as a whole*, that is, excluding the most recent period, cannot be divided from Iranian literature." While the historical sections should be designed according to countries, what matters for the philological sections was, in D'iakonov's words, *rodstvo*—that is, the common genetic roots.⁵⁹

Eventually the orgkomitet agreed on 18 sections. Five of these covered the ancient Orient (Egyptology, Assyrology, Urartu studies and Hittitology, Semitic studies, and Byzantine studies), four were designed as historical (histories of the Arab countries, of Iran and Afghanistan, of Central Asia, and of Turkey), while seven sections were obviously conceived as a mixture of philology and area studies (Altaic studies, Caucasian studies, Indology, Southeast Asian studies, Chinese studies, Far East and African studies).⁶⁰ By mid-1959 more sections were added, on Arabic and Iranian philologies as well as on Korea, Japan, and Mongolia.⁶¹ In other words, the congress program was mostly consistent with that of the preceding conventions, with the exception that it de-emphasized religious aspects. Gafurov would clearly have liked to see a section on the (socialist) economy of Central Asia, the field that he deemed so important as a model for the rest of the Orient; but he conceded that this was impossible “because we want to avoid [our] direction of the congress leading to accusations [by Westerners] that it is propagandistic.”⁶²

Subsequent meetings of the orgkomitet dealt with the selection of papers. Interestingly, it seems the Soviets were above all concerned with the quality and political suitability of their own papers rather than with possible challenges presented by the paper proposals of their “ideational opponents” (*ideinye protivniki*) from the West. By February 12, 1960, 312 Soviet scholars had submitted their papers (probably summaries), of which only 181 were approved. The orgkomitet protocols indicate that many Soviet proposals were rejected because of their poor quality (as in the case of the paper on al-Farabi by M. M. Khairullaev, who would later become director of the Uzbek Institute of Oriental Studies).⁶³ Others were not accepted because they were deemed controversial; these were then characterized as “not in accordance with the tasks of the Congress.” Among these rejections we find the proposal of the prominent Azerbaijani Arabist and historian Ziya Buniatov, who wanted to speak on Arab settlements in the territory of Azerbaijan in the seventh and eighth century.⁶⁴ At first sight this issue might seem to be remote from politics, but Buniatov was at that time becoming a notorious troublemaker in IVAN’s Leningrad branch for using Oriental sources to support Azerbaijani claims on Armenian territory (and Buniatov became director of the Oriental Institute in Baku in 1981⁶⁵). Interestingly, several papers on the economy of the People’s Republic of China were rejected at the orgkomitet’s meeting in February 1960⁶⁶—which might indicate that the orgkomitet already feared that the growing rift with China could prevent the Chinese from attending the congress and that any discussion of Chinese politics and economy should thus be avoided.

Communicating the congress to the West

Coordination with the West did not go smoothly. At Munich it was agreed that before each congress there would be a “Meeting of the Three,” comprising the chairman and another board member of the previous convention as well as the chairman of the new congress. Yet Gafurov paid no attention to

this regulation. As a result, in November 1959 the secretary-general of the *Union internationale des Orientalistes*, Professor Helmuth Scheel (Mainz, Germany) admonished Gafurov that the Soviets had not yet invited the Munich chairman Professor Herbert Franke (1914–2011) and another member of the previous congress to discuss the planning. Scheel also complained that congress invitations had been poorly distributed and had not reached many of the leading Western scholars; even the *Union* had not yet obtained the latest circular letter from Moscow. Scheel also inquired why the Soviets had decided to hold the congress not in Leningrad but in Moscow, which made the trip significantly more expensive for Western participants.⁶⁷ D'iakonov, in his reply to Scheel, claimed that this decision was made on the request of Asian participants, for whom the trip to Leningrad would have been too costly.⁶⁸ This was probably a pretext; it is more likely that the practical problems of hosting a huge congress in Leningrad were the reason why it was decided, probably in September 1959, to move the venue to Moscow; and, of course, the Moscow institute was better suited to give the congress political direction than its dusty, manuscript-oriented Leningrad branch. The whole issue reveals how little the orgkomitet cared about the international umbrella organization of the congress, and how little experience it had in dealing with different organizational cultures.

Yet congress secretary D'iakonov did attempt to avoid open conflict and to bring the *Union internationale* back on board. In a document that he probably drafted in early 1960, D'iakonov laid out that the *Union* was crucial for avoiding political challenges at the congress, and that it could even be helpful for eliminating provocative papers from the West. D'iakonov argued that politically unwelcome papers could be excluded with reference to the *Union* statutes, which allowed the host organization to limit the number of papers in each section. This regulation was introduced at the Munich congress, abrogating the previous custom that the orgkomitet had to accept absolutely all paper proposals. D'iakonov suggested that the best way to do this was via the "Meeting of the Three," especially since the Western delegates, Sinologist Herbert Franke as the secretary general of the Munich Congress and Turkologist Louis Bazin (1920–2011) as the representative (treasurer) of the *Union*, "have a relatively loyal position towards us." D'iakonov clearly wanted to convince his boss (or the respective state organs) that the *Union internationale des Orientalistes* should not simply be bypassed. To be sure, if the Soviets were to dismiss certain (Western) papers of a political nature by arguing that the relevant sections were already full, then it was to be expected that they would do the same with their own papers. However, this was not a problem, said D'iakonov, since it was anyway impossible to include all Soviet proposals. Also, Bazin and Franke might not even resent the decision to refuse (Western) political papers, "because as a rule, the European Orientalists have a very negative attitude towards political topics."⁶⁹

The meeting between D'iakonov (as Gafurov's representative) and Herbert Franke and Louis Bazin finally took place on June 29, 1960 in Moscow, only

a few weeks before the event—that is, when not much could have been changed anyway. And indeed, D'iakonov tried to make his deal for the sake of the scientific character of the congress. D'iakonov informed his guests that so far 6,000 invitations had been sent out, and that there were 660 replies (*zaiavki*) from abroad and 500 from the USSR (the numbers obviously including guests who would not present). The foreign guests included 109 from America (99 from the USA), 115 from Asia, 414 from Europe, two from Australia, and 21 from Africa. To demonstrate that the Soviets were constraining themselves, D'iakonov initially bluffed that there had been 700–800 paper proposals from the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ This was not true: at the time of the meeting, in late June 1960, the overall number of Soviet proposals was probably less than 350,⁷¹ of which not more than 185 had been approved by them.⁷² Still, by maintaining an exaggerated number the congress secretary could argue that in order to keep a balance, the Soviets were voluntarily limiting their own delegation to around 250.⁷³ In addition, this would presumably give the organizers legitimacy to also censor Western contributions here and there. Franke and Bazin seemingly accepted this argument and did not even ask why the Soviets gave up their initial plan, published in their journals a year earlier, that the USSR delegation would provide no more than 70 or 80 papers.⁷⁴

When asked directly by Bazin whether the Soviets had rejected any papers from the West, D'iakonov replied negatively.⁷⁵ Here he seems to have been speaking the truth; the correspondence between D'iakonov and Western organizations and scholars that I perused did not give clear evidence of any Western paper being rejected, for any reason.⁷⁶

While excluding unwelcome scholars was thus a fake problem, ensuring the participation of enough prominent scholars from the West and enough representatives from the Orient was a real headache. It was also a financial issue. The combined fees for travel and accommodation that Intourist demanded from Western guests were widely perceived as very high,⁷⁷ and many participants complained about them, asking for subsidies or discounts.⁷⁸ Scheel, as secretary general of the *Union internationale*, wondered (in a letter of March 7, 1960) whether prices were the same for all foreign guests, implying that the Soviets were demanding lower prices from non-Western participants.⁷⁹ D'iakonov, in a reply of March 30, responded that the orgkomitet had no influence over transport costs, but that they tried to provide inexpensive accommodation in hotels and student dormitories. With some haughtiness D'iakonov evaded the question about preferential treatment for “some” participants: “I think your question whether the prices are the same for participants from all countries is inappropriate.”⁸⁰

There was good reason not to answer this question. The documentation of the congress preserved in the Archive of the former Leningrad branch of IVAN contains several financial documents which indicate that in addition to the actual costs of organizing the event, in February 1960 Gafurov had already requested no less than 1,229,400 roubles for the transport of 420 “guests from the Orient,” which must have included not only scholars but also ordinary “progressive” guests who would attend without giving a paper.

As a result, the overall congress budget skyrocketed to almost three million roubles.⁸¹ It is not inconceivable that the Soviet decision to suddenly pay for 420 “Oriental” guests was motivated by the knowledge that the Chinese delegation (reportedly expected to amount to 400 members)⁸² might not show up. At about the same time, in late March 1960, Gafurov demanded another extra budget line—100,000 roubles for the travel costs of Communist guests from Africa and Asia and also some twenty well-known European scholars, including Sir Hamilton Gibb, Louis Massignon, Jean Deny, Franz Babinger, and Alessio Bombacci, to name but a few.⁸³ These famous “bourgeois” scholars were obviously needed to give the congress a high academic profile.

The congress unfolds: Propaganda or scholarship?

Meanwhile the Soviet Orientology journals regularly published notes on the congress preparations,⁸⁴ in addition to articles on previous congresses.⁸⁵ A 1957 editorial in the academic journal *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* (probably by Gafurov or the journal’s editor-in-chief I.S. Braginskii) explained the importance of the congress for supporting the “young Orient” in its fight for its national traditions and independence, and demanded that the Soviet contributions to the congress present the most representative results of long-standing research projects and thus demonstrate the agenda of Soviet Oriental studies as a whole. According to the editorial, after the reforms of the 1930s (the establishment of IVAN in Leningrad) and IVAN’s transfer to Moscow in 1950, Soviet Oriental studies was currently in the phase of “actualisation” (*aktualizatsiia*), meaning that Soviet Orientalists were turning to contemporary issues. He also argued that work on the ancient and medieval periods had relation to the present time, since it would help establish “what elements [from the national traditions of the Oriental peoples] is today just a remnant of the distant past and hindering progress, and what is progressive, and what is really national (*podlinno narodnyi*), and thus deserves support and further development.” This “would make it possible to find the correct answers to many questions of our time.”⁸⁶ The elimination of the backwardness (*otstalost’*) and poverty of Oriental peoples would enable the new nations of the East to lead a policy of peace according to the principle of “peaceful coexistence” (*mirnoe sosushchestvovanie*),⁸⁷ one of the catchwords of the Khrushchev period; eventually the congress would support the blossoming of “global Orientology” (*mirovoe vostokovedenie*). To prepare for the big event the editorial announced a number of minor conventions of Soviet Sinologists, Iranists, Turkologists, and scholars from other disciplines that could take place between 1958 and 1960; a convention of Arabists, for instance, was held in Leningrad in May 1959.⁸⁸ Gafurov also envisaged a second All-Soviet Conference of Oriental Studies,⁸⁹ which, to the best of my knowledge, never took place. Western observers thus had good reason to assume that the 1960 congress would not only display the latest achievements in Soviet historical and textological studies but also be a political event.⁹⁰

About a month before the congress the Soviets faced a major political setback when the delegation from the People's Republic of China cancelled their participation.⁹¹ This must not have come as a surprise: in 1959 the disastrous consequences of the Great Leap Forward were already visible, and ideological and political tensions between China and the USSR grew steadily, with Mao strongly opposing Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence and challenging the USSR's claim to leadership of the socialist camp.⁹² While there is good reason to assume that the congress *orgkomitet* prepared itself for the possibility of a Chinese no-show at its meeting of February 1960, the Chinese boycott was still embarrassing. Much of the congress's legitimacy had been attached to the expected presence of the Chinese scholars; in the run-up to the congress, most Soviet speeches and publications had emphasized that the presence of the Chinese would be the most visible mark of the event's difference from the 24 previous, "bourgeois" congresses of Orientalists. A separate Institute of Chinese Studies (*Institut Kitaevdeniia*) had already been established in 1957, boasting no fewer than 300 researchers in 1959, with a focus on modern political history and the specifics of the Chinese way of socialist construction, in addition to the production of dictionaries and popular overviews.⁹³ The twenty-first Congress of the CPSU, in January/February 1959, had emphasized the importance of the USSR's alliance with China. Now the Soviets had to play down the role of China and emphasize the importance of other "Eastern" countries instead.

The congress eventually took place in Moscow over August 9–16, 1960—almost exactly when the Soviets withdrew their last civilian and military personnel from China.

In the towers of Lomonosov University, the tension between political and academic interests were already obvious in the opening plenary session. As custom had it, the first address was given by the president of the preceding congress, the German Buddhologist Ernst Waldschmidt (1897–1985). Probably as a concession to the Soviets, Waldschmidt announced that "today, at the end of the colonial epoch, the study of the Orient is more important than ever"; but then he developed a defense of classical Oriental studies, arguing that "in general, the representatives of our discipline pursued their studies out of the joy of increasing knowledge, in the service of truth." Orientalists were devoted to the Orient in a sympathetic and non-selfish manner, and it was this tradition that Waldschmidt hoped to see continued in Moscow.⁹⁴

This conciliatory note was followed by a fierce political speech by Anastas Mikoian.⁹⁵ Mikoian made no concessions to the Western audience: he emphasized the fight against imperialism, celebrated the victorious national-liberation movements in Asia and Africa, postulated that the October Revolution would have great influence on the Oriental nations, and extolled the model character of the Soviet Union in the liquidation of the economic and cultural backwardness of the peoples of the Orient, especially through the Soviet solution of the national question. Accordingly, he said, Oriental studies now had to take a very different direction:

Naturally, the revolutionary turn in the lives of the peoples of Asia and Africa also changes the character and content of Orientalology. We can state clearly that the new principal characteristics [of Orientalology] is today that the peoples of the Orient, like never before, are now creating their own science that investigates their history, culture and economy, so that the peoples of the East cease to be the object of science that they had been so far, and become its creators.

Putting scholarship at the service of political liberation, Mikoian stated that “Orientalology can only obtain broad recognition and success when it supports the interests of the peoples of the Orient.” Soviet Orientalology, said Mikoian, studies not only the ancient and medieval history and literatures of the Orient but concentrates on contemporary problems and national liberation. In this context, Mikoian also drew attention to the Moscow Friendship of Peoples University that was set up that very summer of 1960, with the training of national cadres from Oriental and other developing countries as its main goal.⁹⁶

Gafurov, in his opening speech,⁹⁷ repeated some of Mikoian’s political statements, but it seems he was above all trying to ease the discomfort of Western guests after Mikoian’s speech and the strong applauses it elicited. Gafurov highlighted the achievements of pre-revolutionary (i.e. “bourgeois”) Russian Orientalists, and then explained the new turn towards the study of the contemporary Orient; but in order to demonstrate this he did not refer to any particular Marxist work on political issues but to the pioneering studies of contemporary Arabic literature by the late Ignatii Krachkovskii (1883–1951), a scholar who was completely trained in the pre-revolutionary tradition, and who enjoyed tremendous prestige in the West. According to Gafurov:

Soviet science also tries to approach the past in a new manner. In the past of the peoples of Asia and Africa we do not see a thousand years of stagnation (*zastoi*), or just a sequence of random historical circumstances, but, to the contrary, [we see] how societies went through different phases of an economic process that follows general laws (*zakonomernyi protsess razvitiia obshchestva*), a process that is one and the same [in all the world] in its unlimited diversity.

Marxist materialism was thus presented as a bridge between East and West. And after quoting Khrushchev to the effect that the formerly repressed colonies would catch up with the developed world, Gafurov did not turn to Soviet political Orientalology but instead gave several examples of Soviet successes in Central Asian archaeology and in the study of old Iranian languages, such as Sogdian, and then lauded the achievements of French scholars in the study of stone inscriptions from the Sahara and of Indian historians in the re-evaluation of the 1857 Mutiny. Drawing to a close, Gafurov put the ideological differences into the perspective of peaceful coexistence: “We might have disputes and disagreements, but the creative discussion will be very beneficial for

scientists, because what unites us all is the love for science, the deep interest in our subject matter, the thirst for new discoveries.” To this effect he quoted, in the Persian language, a poem of the Tajik poet Rudaki (d. ca. 941), which in his (rhymed) Russian translation included the lines, “Whatever language and period we take [i.e. as the object of our studies], [we will see that] Man has always been driven towards knowledge.”⁹⁸ Gafurov’s introductory speech was a masterpiece in downplaying the impression, given by Mikoian, that the congress was meant to be mainly a forum for propaganda, emphasizing instead, like Waldschmidt in his preceding note, the beneficial character of classical Oriental studies, and even reaching out to the lovers of classical Persian literature and scoring with the “Orientals” in the audience—a fine example of how poetry could have political functions in Soviet discourse.

How many Soviet and Western papers of a contemporary political nature were then actually presented at the congress, and when did they lead to open confrontation? Our major source for evaluating the degree of the politicization of the congress are the five published conference volumes of 1963.⁹⁹ These *Proceedings* contain 549 papers – some in abstract form, some at full paper length of up to 23 pages – and they also include the titles of 56 more lectures that were delivered but were reportedly not submitted for publication after the congress. Accordingly, the overall number of papers read at the congress was a staggering 605 (compared to 450 at the preceding Munich event), in Russian, English, German, and French, but also some in Oriental languages.¹⁰⁰ A rough count shows that 217 of these papers were read by Soviet scholars (149 of whom came from Moscow or Leningrad); many of these were translated into Western languages and distributed in the sections. Almost precisely the same number of papers, namely 216, were read by scholars from the West (including Western Europe, US, Canada, and Israel); around 86 came from socialist Europe (including Yugoslavia), and merely 95 from the “Orient” (23 from Japan, 17 from India and Sri Lanka, 11 from the Arab world, eight from Turkey, eight from Vietnam, and a few from Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and some African states). The Moscow congress thus had only few more papers from “Orientals” (95) than its Munich predecessor (83), and fewer when taken as a percentage of the total. Also interesting is that while the GDR presented no fewer than 38 papers, the Federal Republic of Germany – the host of the previous congress!—provided only ten contributions, which probably resulted from the orgkomitet’s poor distribution of announcements and invitations, in addition to widespread resentment against the USSR among West German scholars.

Judging from the published volumes (in which there is sometimes mention of discussion following individual papers), overt political contributions were extremely limited, from both the Soviet and the Western sides. Volume one, comprising five sections of Ancient, Semitic, and Byzantine studies, contains barely any trace of open political dispute. Similarly, a review of the papers in volume two (on the histories and philologies of the Middle East) indicates that the Soviets refrained from touching on contemporary political issues. For

instance, there was no paper on the ongoing Algerian war of liberation, even though a major Soviet expert on these issues, R.G. Landa, had participated in one of the Soviet conventions that were meant to prepare the Congress.¹⁰¹ The only political contribution that might have offended the Westerners was a paper by GDR scholar Lothar Rathmann on the German Empire's policies towards the Ottoman Empire in World War I.¹⁰² Another contribution on political issues, a largely neutral evaluation of Bourguiba's Neo-Dustur Party in Tunisia, came from a scholar based in the US.¹⁰³

The first Soviet papers on contemporary politics appear in volume three (covering the sections on Central Asia, Altaic studies/Turkology/Mongolian studies, and Caucasian studies), which contains a number of contributions that highlight Soviet achievements in Central Asia such as the blossoming Kolkhoz life in Uzbekistan, the splendid creation of the Soviet Turkmen nation, and the success of the Soviet economy in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. However, one would classify these as propagandistic but not aggressively anti-Western; and notably, one of the sessions was chaired by Annemarie von Gabain, a famous German Turkologist known for her aversion to the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁴

The Caucasus section had potential for conflict not because of opposition to the West but because of the competition between scholars from the various republics of the Soviet Caucasus; thus, the Azeri Ismail A. Guseinov's paper on the Azerbaijani nation as a latecomer in history was directly followed by an Armenian scholar who celebrated the ancient origins of the Armenians and their long-standing relations with Europe.¹⁰⁵ Among the most noteworthy papers of the Soviet delegation were the contributions by two Daghestani scholars: Rasul Magomedov's paper on customary law (*adat*) sources from medieval Daghestan, and Magomed-Said Saidov's paper on the Daghestani manuscript literature in the Arabic language up to the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁶ Both of these contributions stand out for their use of unpublished Arabic-language primary sources from the North Caucasus, and judging by the sketchy documentation of the sessions, they both ignited lively discussion—in particular, Saidov received praise from well-known Western and Arabic scholars. As I argued elsewhere, Saidov's short paper in Moscow on Arabic works of Islamic law, theology, Sufism and history from Daghestan (which he held in Arabic and in which he avoided any positive reference to Soviet power in Daghestan) became a milestone in the study of Daghestan's Arabic written heritage; it paved the way for scholars in the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Daghestan to return to the systematic study of pre-revolutionary Daghestani texts—creating the basis for an academic Orientalist tradition of Arabic source studies that has continued in Makhachkala up to the present day. Without the ideological blessing of Saidov's paper by the Congress and the respect it gained among the international community of scholars, the establishment of academic Arabic studies in Daghestan might have been much more difficult. Obviously, the Congress could mean very different things to different participants, each with their own particular agenda at home.

Volume four, on Indology and Southeast Asian studies, was equally dominated by philological and historical studies, but it also comprised some more political papers. These included the only paper that made systematic reference to the classics of Marxism, namely L.S. Gamaiunov and R.A. Ul'ianovskii's analysis of Karl Marx' notes on the sociologist Maksim M. Kovalevskii's (1851–1916) work on the agrarian community, which the authors discussed in relation to India. (Ul'ianovskii was also a member of the orgkomitet, and would later become one of the foremost Soviet authorities on agrarian economies in the Third World.) But the transcript of the discussion after the paper indicates that neither the Western nor the Indian participants agreed with their hypothesis that large and medium-sized landholdings emerged in India only after World War II; this indicates that the paper was regarded as too schematic.¹⁰⁷ Again, it was members of the GDR delegation that came up with papers of a clear ideological inclination, on the Indian national movement before World War I and on the India policy of Fascist Germany; in addition, an Indian scholar took a Marxist approach to Indian literature. The Southeast Asia section also contained a few studies of colonialism and independence, some of them authored by Western scholars. Yet only one of the Soviet contributions directly discussed Soviet-Asian relations.¹⁰⁸

With regard to China and Chinese studies the Soviet scholars were in a difficult situation: the organizers did not even come up with an official explanation for the absence of the Chinese delegation, seemingly because it was all too obvious a political affair of considerable magnitude. It seems that several Soviet Sinologists were still prepared to praise Mao's "Great Leap Forward" and China's role as a successful communist partner in the East (as they had frequently done as late as 1959, pointing out the role of Soviet aid in China),¹⁰⁹ and to defend Chinese policies against Western criticism; but now they were restrained by the new political situation and embarrassed by the absence of the Chinese.

This is reflected in volume 5 of the Congress publications, which contains the work of the sections on China, Korea, Mongolia, Japan, and Africa. The China section (which included Tibet) comprised 51 papers, divided into sub-sections of history and philology. While Soviet scholars made a huge contribution to the philological sub-section (providing 12 out of a total of 29 papers), the historical sub-section contained only four papers by Soviet scholars (out of 22), which indicates that the Soviets deliberately limited their presence in this problematic area. Furthermore, none of these four Soviet papers¹¹⁰ dealt with Communist China, meaning the field of contemporary economic, social, and political issues was completely left to the guests from, on the one hand, the West and on the other, from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Japan (whose delegation was dominated by Marxists). As usual, the East German speakers provided the most political papers, including one that praised the agrarian transformations in Mao's China.¹¹¹

The greatest controversy was aroused by two US papers, by Columbia professor of anthropology Morton H. Fried (author of *The Fabric of Chinese*

Society, 1953) and demographer and sociologist of Japan Irene B. Taeuber (1906–1974, author of *The Population of Japan*, 1958), both of whom discussed issues of population growth in China.¹¹² The reception of Taeuber’s paper “On the Growth of China’s Population” is a fine instance of how the Soviets intentionally misread Western arguments to make an indirect point for the Chinese. Taeuber argued that a major problem for assessing Chinese demographics was the lack of reliable statistics. The censuses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were unreliable because officials tended to provide the figures that their superiors wanted to see; there were also technical and cultural problems attached to gathering data. Taeuber also argued that the latest population registration campaigns in the People’s Republic were marred by serious deficiencies, and she called for the publication of data and for transparency in how they were gathered. Taeuber estimated that currently there were two demographic processes at work, namely modernization, urbanization, and communist forms of social organization (which would lead to an erosion of family values and to fewer children and longer life expectancy) on the one hand, and on the other, population growth in the countryside, which would conflict with the fact that the increasing mechanization of farming requires less manpower. She argued that China’s population would soon increase by 26 million a year, but she explicitly called this a normal development in the contemporary world. Taeuber did not mention any negative effects of the “Great Leap Forward” that had started in 1958—which, as we know today, cost tens of millions of lives.

According to the transcript of the ensuing discussion, Taeuber was first criticized by the Moscow sociologist Iurii A. Levada (1930–2006, today well known for his association with the Levada Center for the study of public opinion that he directed in his last years). Levada reproached Taeuber for not taking into account the huge economic opportunities of China, which would enable the country to feed a rapidly growing population. Another opponent was a certain Afanasii G. Krymov (the Russian name of the Chinese Communist living in Moscow, Guo Zhaotang, 1905–1989),¹¹³ who, in an obviously prefabricated lengthy rebuttal of an English paper he did not understand,¹¹⁴ argued that Taeuber had no reason to doubt the correctness of the latest official statistics and that China would develop sufficient food resources. According to the transcript, Taeuber replied that the shortness of her paper did not allow her to go into detail on economic issues that were not central, and she emphasized that she did not regard the population growth of China as a “danger,” as Krymov had obviously insinuated.¹¹⁵ Similar discussions, with Soviet scholars “correcting” the figures and interpretations of US scholars, are also recorded for the Mongolia section.¹¹⁶

Two conflicting Soviet perspectives on the Congress

As we know from reports of the American Council of Learned Societies after the event, most US scholars who came on ACLS stipends described their

Soviet colleagues as extremely helpful and eager to exchange books and opinions. Still, there was some tension and a number of complaints. The Soviets had taken some allegedly political books out of the US book exhibit at the Congress, and even after a written protest did not return all of them;¹¹⁷ and the British book exposition disappeared mysteriously even before the Congress began.¹¹⁸ Also, many—but certainly not all—US scholars felt embarrassed by Mikoian's provocative political speech and by Gafurov's political references.¹¹⁹ Even more disturbing for them was the Soviets' obvious manipulation of the Congress Consultative Commission's selection of the next place for the event, in 1963; in order to counter the US invitation to New York (which the US State Department and the US embassy in Moscow had been lobbying for since July among the European scholarly societies, as well as with the Indians¹²⁰), the Soviets supported a bid from the United Arab Republic, which was unacceptable to the West since Egypt would refuse to invite Jewish guests. The Soviets' argument against the US invitation was reportedly that Chinese Communists would not be able to enter the USA. In the end the Soviets urged India to renew their invitation (which India had already withdrawn, perhaps on the instigation of the USA), and New Delhi was chosen as a compromise solution for 1963.¹²¹ The ACLS understood this maneuver as a national humiliation.¹²²

Nevertheless, most published Western reviews by participants of the Moscow Congress were positive; as the FRG scholar Joachim Glaubitz (back then a young specialist on Soviet and Far Eastern relations) noted, "the type of Orientology that was demanded by Mikoian did not take place in Moscow," with the exception of some East German and Japanese contributions.¹²³ Walter Z. Laqueur, in an extended discussion of the Congress and of Soviet Oriental studies under Gafurov, came to the conclusion that "the Russians were more concerned to put up a show of respectability than to conduct propaganda which might have well missed the mark"; in Laqueur's perception, "the visitors from the West made every effort to keep out political debate, and even the Russians were on the whole concerned to do the same."¹²⁴

The absence of the Chinese certainly contributed to this downplaying of antagonisms in the final plenary session. Gafurov, in his concluding remarks, made the necessary political statements but also continued to defend the overall discipline: in his mind, it was wrong to claim that Orientology as a whole had only served colonial interests and that it was reactionary in character. As he stated, dozens of European and American Orientalist scholars were in fact thorough humanists and true friends of the East, and he pointed out to the famous novel *Max Havelaar* by the Dutch colonial officer Eduard D. Dekker (alias Multatuli) that had been published exactly one hundred years earlier. With the end of the colonial period, the "foreign strata" (*chuzherodnye nasloeniia*) that were responsible for the colonialist ideology in scholarship were losing their positions. The future of Orientology was in the hands of the Orientals themselves, and Western scholars (obviously including the Soviet Orientalists) now had the task of supporting scholars from the East

and collaborating with them on an equal footing. In other words, the liberation of the Orient entailed a liberation of Orientalology from colonialist attitudes, which would enable Oriental studies to not only move on but even reach new heights, together with the Orientals. "The cooperation between scholars of the West and of the East will enrich the peoples with great spiritual treasures,"¹²⁵ said Gafurov, again supporting his arguments with quotes from Persian poetry. The official resolutions of the individual Congress sections dealt exclusively with the preservation of archaeological sites and manuscripts and with the necessity of joint efforts to edit Oriental literary monuments; there was no mention of any political agenda.¹²⁶

Finally, the official published Soviet reports about the Congress also adhered to this tone—the Congress was presented as an exceptional convention of two thousand scholars from fifty nations of the world, with over six hundred contributions.¹²⁷ The Congress program also included films and music from the USSR's "Oriental" republics, in addition to what the former British colonial officer Geoffrey Wheeler jokingly referred to in his report as the "recitation of traditional oral epics by genuine old-timers" from the Caucasus and Central Asia.¹²⁸ There were various exhibitions that included an impressive number of Soviet Orientalology books published before the Congress. Two select groups of Congress guests were guided through the South Caucasus and Central Asia, respectively, to visit archaeological and cultural sites as well as hospitals, factories, and the Tashkent Oriental Institute; others were given tours of Moscow and Leningrad. Significant attention was paid to international UNESCO projects, focusing on the historical interrelations between the nations of wider Central Asia—another international forum that Gafurov cultivated through his institute¹²⁹ (a UNESCO representative participated in both the opening and closing plenary sessions).

Strikingly different from these official appraisals are the unpublished internal reports on the congress sections; here the Soviets returned to their political focus and presented the event as a successful promotion of their ideology. The 20 section reports focused on conflicts with Western scholars, and exaggerated the victorious alliance of the scholars from the USSR and its satellites with the "Oriental" guests, against Western imperialism.¹³⁰ On the basis of the individual section reports Gafurov produced a final report¹³¹ (this is unsigned, but a quote from the Persian poet Sa'di reveals its author), which was probably meant for consumption by the CC, to politically justify the huge expense of the congress. Here Gafurov likewise emphasized the political victory of Soviet scholars over their Western opponents, which allowed him to remain completely silent regarding the problem Soviet scholars faced from the break-up of relations with the People's Republic of China. According to Gafurov, in the run-up to the congress the British press had published articles claiming that the Soviets would use the event for propagandistic purposes;¹³² these slanders were fully rebutted by the Soviet delegation, which fielded dozens of first-rank specialists in the "traditional branches of Orientalology."¹³³ In other words, the Soviets beat the Western delegates on their own turf.

Furthermore, the broad participation of Central Asian and Caucasian delegates to the congress fully disproved Western claims that there was no real science in these republics; and the participants' excursions to Tbilisi and Baku, as well as to Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara, were a splendid demonstration of the economic and cultural blossoming in the Soviet south, and indeed convinced the guests of the successes of the USSR's nationality policies:

By organizing the 25th Congress in the light of several topical contemporary problems, the whole work of the Congress could be linked to the downfall of the colonial system, and to the emergence of several dozens of independent states in Asia and Africa; and [this enabled us] to state with full justification that from now on, after the Moscow Congress, the center of the Orientalist science is being transferred from the West to the East.¹³⁴

This was a pious lie, given the fact that in the China section all Soviet papers avoided contemporary issues and left the dirty work to the East Germans and Japanese. Also, to talk about a "transition" of *Orientalology* from Europe and the US to the Orientals themselves makes sense only if we add the 217 Soviet papers to the 95 that were delivered by scholars from the Orient (many of whom were actively recruited by the Soviets). No wonder then that "in a number of principle questions almost all scholars of the Orient formed a united front with the scholars of the socialist countries."¹³⁵ In the *Indology* section, almost the whole Indian delegation "gave extremely active support" to the Soviet scholars who stood up to the slanderous remarks of US scholar Stephen Hay who, in his paper on the Indian philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), "tried to discredit the great Indian poet's relation to the USSR."¹³⁶ Needless to say, there was nothing "discrediting" in Hay's paper; it simply did not mention the USSR.

Gafurov noted that Western Orientalists did their best to avoid papers on the national-liberation movements in the Orient, which they saw as outside the purview of Oriental studies. By contrast, Gafurov found the Indian delegates delighted to see that Soviet scholars exactly went into such matters. The Japanese also formed a united front with the Soviets on this question, and Iranian scholars were satisfied that the Moscow Congress for the first time accepted Persian as a working language in their sections, next to the major European languages. Finally, Gafurov also referred to the US papers on China's population growth, claiming that Soviet Sinologists and scholars from the people's democracies forced Morton H. Fried to eventually concede that "he does not know the real processes that are currently unfolding in the People's [Republic of] China."¹³⁷ The Cambridge scholar V. Purcell was also forced "to renounce his most hateful statements" in the course of the discussion of his paper on the Boxers' Rebellion. As such open conflict situations were so rare in the sections, Gafurov came up with instances based on mere

hearsay; thus, he claimed that one reactionary scholar from the FRG, Jörg Krämer (Erlangen), had prepared in advance a detailed rebuttal of the presentation of his East German colleague, Lothar Rathmann, on German imperialism in World War I; but “the block of Arab scholars and scholars of the socialist countries created such an unwelcoming atmosphere for such statements” that Krämer left the room even before Rathmann’s talk.¹³⁸ This was an open justification of outright pressure on a Western scholar, hardly in line with Gafurov’s public statement that disputes were welcome at the congress. (Krämer would probably have been surprised to hear this version, since after the congress he thanked the orgkomitet for the “pleasant and human atmosphere” at the event).¹³⁹

On the whole, however, Gafurov argued that Western scholars “did not dare to criticize” Marxist papers on contemporary affairs; and persons who were known for their anti-Soviet opinions, such as the Turkish economic historian Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “conceded that they had to rethink their positions.” (As Barkan had a paper on “Some Sources for the History of Turkish Construction Commodities,”¹⁴⁰ one wonders what kind of views he might have had to rethink). Finally, Gafurov claimed that some Western scholars who had previously been opponents of the inclusion of contemporary affairs into Oriental studies “now welcomed the new course,” with reference to the Dutch scholars C.C. Berg and Willem F. Wertheim in the Southeast Asia section.¹⁴¹ What is left out here is that Wertheim (1907–1998), professor of sociology and the modern history of Indonesia at the University of Amsterdam, had always been busy with contemporary affairs,¹⁴² like many other Dutch Orientalists before him. The Soviets’ claim that it was they who introduced contemporary studies into Orientalology was simply wrong.

In the sections on Arabia, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, and even in the historical and philological sections, Gafurov saw Westerners beaten en masse on methodological and factual questions;¹⁴³ and he concluded that “at its core Western Orientalology remains colonialist in nature.”¹⁴⁴ When the Western guests did touch upon contemporary issues of language and literatures this was, Gafurov revealed, “dictated by political goals”¹⁴⁵—as if the Soviets acted otherwise.

Conclusion: a Soviet critique of Orientalism?

Interestingly, into this unpublished final report Gafurov wove a short sketch of the history and achievements of Soviet Orientalology, especially as it had developed under his guidance since 1956. Gafurov argued that in the USSR, the old concept of traditional Orientalology (*traditsionnoe vostokovedenie*) “had already died in the 1930s,” not only due to structural reform but also—and especially—because of the inclusion of national cadres from the Soviet East. Accordingly, the terms “Orientalist” and “Oriental studies” had become vague and unfitting when they were meant to include scholars from the East who study their own history and culture. Gafurov implied that this was why

the Soviets had now, in 1960, come up with a name change for their Institute of Oriental Studies (IVAN) in Moscow: it was henceforth to be called the "Institute of the Peoples of Asia" (*Institut narodov Azii*), and a new foundation, the Institute of African Studies (*Institut afrikanistiki*) was established at its side.¹⁴⁶ This reference is interesting since it is one of the few remarks we have found so far on the question of why the Soviets gave up the term "Oriental studies" in the institute's name: did they indeed reject the term "Oriental studies" because they connected it, even in their own country, with colonialism in a Saidian sense? As we have seen, in the preparations for the congress, some Soviet scholars also argued in this direction.

However, Gafurov's final congress report, if we take it seriously, seems to indicate that the major reason for the name change was the growing specialization of the field, especially the new focus on Africa, which prompted a transition to a better defined area studies approach (Gafurov did not mention the Institute of Chinese Studies in his report, presumably because at the time of writing it was already in the process of dissolution, another consequence of the conflict with China¹⁴⁷). The growing specialization could then conveniently be added to the Soviet criticism, voiced by Mikoian in 1956 at the twentieth Party Congress, of "traditional Orientology" as an outdated concept. This assumption is supported by the fact that after 1960 Gafurov continued to defend the old name of the discipline of Oriental studies in public speeches; and for reasons that have not yet been elucidated, in 1970, still under his directorship, the institute regained its previous name, *Institut vostoovedeniia* (IVAN). Three years later, when the twenty-ninth International Congress of Orientalists in Paris eventually decided to give up its outdated name (and to continue under the name of *Congrès International des Sciences Humaines en Asie et Afrique du Nord*),¹⁴⁸ Gafurov reportedly belonged to those who argued against the change, defending the traditional name of the discipline.¹⁴⁹ From the perspective of Gafurov's suggestion, referred to above, that the 1960s would see an increasing "decolonization" of Orientology, a liberation of the discipline from colonial interests as the period of colonialism in Asia and Africa drew to a close, this makes perfect sense. What was important to Gafurov was the bridges between East and West; a complete elimination of the difference between the West and the "Orient" was not desirable because this would also end the Orient's entitlement to support from Moscow.

Returning to the question of the interaction between politics and scholarship at the Orientalists' Congress in 1960, we have to conclude that what prevailed were ambiguities all around. Soviet Orientalists were, more than scholars in the West, servants of the state, and were treated as executioners of state tasks; they worked by definition within an ideological framework. As we saw above, even linguists and medievalists were repeatedly asked to provide useful information for state policies. From this perspective the Soviet performance at the Congress was a complete success precisely because USSR scholars managed to make a sound academic impression – since international respect for academic Soviet scholarship was what the state wanted to achieve

with this event. This would lead us to the conclusion that, if classical scholarship was largely aimed at impressing the Western audience, then the propaganda elements were, much like at the 1920 Congress in Baku, targeting the Eastern guests. This must not imply per se that the Soviets saw the “Orientals” as inferior, as ready to accept cheap propaganda; in their internal reports for their superiors and their domestic publications for the wider Soviet audience too, the general tone was propagandistic. There were different registers for different audiences, and Soviet readers and scholars would know how to interpret them.¹⁵⁰

Of course, a congress means very different things to different people, and in this paper we have just followed the archival track. For the individual Soviet scholar, an important reward for his work was recognition by peers, which in turn provided him with the self-respect to continue with his work; and as we saw with the case of the Daghestani Arabist M.-S. Saidov, this could radiate back into his home institution. From this perspective, the 1960 Congress must have been a tremendous success, since never before (or after) have so many scholars from the Soviet center and its peripheries met so many international colleagues, to learn from and talk to—especially in the corridors. That Soviet scholars in Gafurov’s service could use the Congress for establishing and maintaining friendly relations with colleagues from the other side can be demonstrated with the example of the orgkomitet secretary Igor’ M. D’iakov, who received an invitation to teach as a guest scholar at Michigan University in 1961/2.¹⁵¹

And finally, the Congress was also a unique opportunity for Soviet scholars to meet each other: the program of the International Congress of 1960 included more Soviet presentations than the Tashkent All-Union Orientalists’ Conference three years earlier. To see and meet with the coryphées of one’s discipline must have stimulated in the younger generation of Soviet scholars a feeling of esprit de corps and an elitist collective identity that many of them continued to cultivate until the late 1980s, when the system gradually fell apart. After the Stalinist repressions that took such a toll on the Oriental discipline, after the Great Fatherland War that many scholars and students went through, and after the bashing of Oriental studies from the late 1940s to 1956, the Congress must have finally given senior and junior scholars alike a feeling of security and purpose, whatever value they attached to their ideological tasks.

The central broker in the event, Gafurov, played this complex and ambiguous game extremely well. In a situation where the Soviets were part of the West as they claimed to side with the East, the Tajik politician-cum-scholar succeeded in walking a tightrope between the Kremlin, the West, and the “New Orient,” and between ideology and scholarship; the Chinese would probably have made things only more complicated. With this event Gafurov managed to both consolidate his Moscow institute and set the tone for relations with the emerging Orientology in the Soviet republics—all in the name of building bridges between Western and Eastern civilizations.

Notes

- 1 *Arkhiv vostokovedov Instituta vostochnykh rukopisei Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk*, fond 123, opis'1 (in the following: AV IVR RAN 123/1), Collection "Moscow Congress of Orientalists."
- 2 Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Archive of the ACLS, Series H, Box 11 ("Moscow Congress of Orientalists"); in the following abbreviated as: ACLS H/11. I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Artemy M. Kalinovsky for making the ACLS documents available to me, and to Dr. Masha Kirasirova for valuable comments.
- 3 *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920—First Congress of the Peoples of the East*, edited by John Riddell (London, Montreal and Sydney: Pathfinder Press, 1993).
- 4 For surveys of early Soviet Oriental studies, see N.A. Kuznetsova and L.M. Kulagina, *Iz istorii sovetskogo vostokovedeniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970); and Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Structure of Soviet Orientology: Fifty Years of Change and Accomplishment," *Russia and Asia: Essays on the Influence of Russia on the Asian Peoples*, ed. by Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 52–134.
- 5 For the many Orientalists who suffered from persecution in the Soviet Union, see *Liudy i sud'by: Bibliograficheskii slovar' vostokovedov-zhertv politicheskogo terrora v sovetskii period (1917–1991)*, ed. by Ia.V. Vasil'kov and M.Iu. Sorokina (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 2003).
- 6 Alfrid K. Bustanov, *Settling the Past: Soviet Oriental Projects in Leningrad and Alma-Ata*. Unpublished PhD thesis (Amsterdam University, 2013). See also Alfrid Bustanov's chapter in the present volume.
- 7 See, for instance, "Neotlozhnye zadachi sovetskikh istorikov-vostokovedov," *Voprosy istorii* 4 (1949), pp. 3–8, here: p. 5.
- 8 P.M. Shastitko and N.K. Charyeva, "Kak zakryvali Moskovskii Institut Vostokovedeniia," *Vostok (Oriens)* no. 6, 2002, pp. 88–98.
- 9 "Pis'mo B.G. Gafurova ob uluchshenii nauchnogo izucheniia sovremennogo Vostoka" (letter to the CC secretary D.T. Shepilov, who is often regarded as "Khrushchev's theoretician"), February 5, 1956, *Akademiia nauk v resheniiakh Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b)-KPSS 1922–1991*. [Specific volume title:] *Akademiia nauk v resheniiakh TsK KPSS: Biuro Prezidiuma, Prezidium, Sekretariat TsK KPSS. 1952–1958*, ed. by V.Iu. Afiani and V.D. Esakov (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010), pp. 553–554.
- 10 "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'O vstuplenii sovetskikh vostokovedov v Mezhdunarodnyi soiuz vostokovedov'" (August 26, 1954), *Akademiia nauk v resheniiakh TsK KPSS*, p. 141.
- 11 "Rech' tov. Mikoiana," *XX S"ezd kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz, 14–25 fevralia 1956 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Politicheskaiia literatura, 1956), pp. 301–328, here: p. 324.
- 12 For a discussion of Soviet foreign policies after Bandung see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- 13 "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'O rabote Instituta vostokovedeniia Akademii nauk SSR'" (July 20, 1956), in: *Akademiia nauk v resheniiakh TsK KPSS*, 548–550; and "Zapiska Prezidiuma AN SSSR ob utverzhenii B.G. Gafurova direktorom Instituta vostokovedeniia An SSR" (of May 4, 1956), *ibid.*, p. 551.
- 14 On Gafurov see Lisa Yountchi, "The Politics of Scholarship, and the Scholarship of Politics: Imperial, Soviet and Post-Soviet Scholars Studying Tajikistan," *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, edited by Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 217–240, as well as the ongoing dissertational work of Hanna E. Jansen (University of Amsterdam).

- 15 *XX S"ezd kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz*, 328–334.
- 16 [Editorial], “XX S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz i zadacha izucheniia sovremennogo vostoka,” *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* 2 (1956), pp. 3–12. This article, which boils down to a crushing critique of the institute’s work ethos in recent years, went to press in April, before Gafurov became director of the institute. But the possibility cannot be excluded that it was authored by Gafurov himself, preparing his move from Tajikistan to IVAN in Moscow.
- 17 “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS ‘O vstuplenii sovetskikh vostokovedov v Mezhdunarodnyi soiuз vostokovedov’” (August 26, 1954), in *Akademiia nauk v resheniiaxh TsK KPSS*, pp. 140–141.
- 18 *Doklady sovetskoi delegatsii na XXIII mezhdunarodnom kongresse vostokovedov* (Moscow: Izd. Akademii Nauk, 1954). The Soviets also made a gift of 66 works of Russian Orientalists to the Congress Library society; see “23rd International Congress of Orientalists,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, nos 3/4 (October 1954), p. 202.
- 19 Letter, Denis Sinor to B.G. Gafurov, Nov. 9, 1960, in Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 4, fol. 149.
- 20 *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third International Congress of Orientalists, Cambridge 21st–28th August 1954*, ed. by Denis Sinor (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1954), p. 33.
- 21 The Soviet publication of their Cambridge papers included several articles that were not read at the 1954 congress, including A.A. Guber’s work on the Philippine republic of 1898, S.P. Tolstov’s report on the archaeological and ethnographic Khorezm expedition, and two papers on Egyptology by V.I. Avdiev and V.V. Struve. Why the “big shots” Guber, Tolstov and Struve (who all served as IVAN directors at one point) did not attend in person remains a matter of speculation.
- 22 Masha Kirasirova, “‘Sons of Muslims’ in Moscow: Soviet Central Asian Mediators to the Foreign East, 1955–1962,” *Ab Imperio* 4 (2011), 106–132; Artemy M. Kalinovsky, “Not Some British Colony in Africa: The Politics of Decolonization and Modernization in Soviet Central Asia, 1955–1964,” *Ab Imperio* 2/ 2013, pp. 1–31.
- 23 *Vostokovednye tsenry v SSSR, vypusk I: Azerbaidzhan, Armeniia, Gruzii, Ukraina*, ed. by A.P. Baziant (Moscow: Glavnaia redaktsiia vostochnoi literatury, 1988), p. 19 (Baku) and pp. 50–51 (Armenia).
- 24 Bustanov, *Settling the Past*, Ch. 1 (“The Leningrad Connections: Oriental Projects of Source Editions”).
- 25 Nuriddin Mukhitdinov, *Gody, provedennye v Kremle. Vospominaniia veterana voiny, truda i Kommunisticheskoi partii, rabotavshago so Stalinym, Malenkovym, Khrushchevym, Brezhnevym, Andropovym. Kniga pervaiia; O deiatel'nosti TsK KPSS i ego Politbiuro v 50-e gody* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo narodnogo naslediiia imeni Abdully Kadiri, 1994), pp. 308–311.
- 26 *Pervaiia Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia Vostokovedov. Tezisy dokladov i soobshchenii* (Tashkent: Akademiia nauk Uzbekskoi SSSR, 1957) (no name of editors).
- 27 Sh.R. Rashidov (chief editor), *Materialy pervoi Vsesoiuznoi nauchnoi konferentsii vostokovedov v g. Tashkente, 4–11 iunია 1957 g.* (Tashkent: Akademiia nauk Uzbekskoi SSSR, 1958).
- 28 [On these debates see M. Kemper, “The Soviet Discourse on the Origin and Class Character of Islam, 1923–1933,” *Die Welt des Islams* 49/1 (2009), pp. 1–48].
- 29 V.G. Gafurov, “Sostoianie i zadachi sovetskogo vostokovedeniia v svete reshenii XX S"ezda KPSS,” *Materialy*, pp. 22–36, here: pp. 22–27.
- 30 “Zapiska direktora Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR B.G. Gafurova o perestroiki raboty instituta” (August 4, 1956), in *Akademiia nauk v resheniiaxh TsK KPSS*, pp. 552–553 (a document that outlines Gafurov’s reorganization plans for IVAN, including African but not Chinese studies).

- 31 Gafurov, "Sostoianie i zadachi," pp. 29–36.
- 32 "Rech' Pervogo Sekretaria TsK KP Uz N.A. Mukhitdinova," *Materialy*, 183. In her article Masha Kirasirova drew attention to the division of specialization that Gafurov proposed ("Sons of Muslims," pp. 118–120), but Mukhitdinov's resentment did not catch her eye.
- 33 V.G. Gafurov, "Zakliuchitel'noe slovo," *Materialy*, pp. 107–114.
- 34 "K resheniam konferentsii," *ibid.*, 1059–60. See also the summaries in "Pervaia Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia vostokovedov," *Sovremennyi vostok*, no. 2 (August 1957), pp. 44–47.
- 35 [Gafurov], "Aktual'nye zadachi sovetskogo vostokovedeniia," *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSR* 8/1957, pp. 13–24.
- 36 "Rech' Pervogo Sekretaria TsK KP Uz. N.A. Mukhitdinova," *Materialy*, p. 180.
- 37 Gafurov, "Sostoianie i zadachi," p. 35.
- 38 Gafurov, "Sostoianie i zadachi," p. 36.
- 39 On Pavlovich's imagery and projects, see M. Kemper, "Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia," *Die Welt des Islams* 50/3–4 (2010), pp. 435–476.
- 40 "Zapiska direktora Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR B.G. Gafurova s predlozheniem o provedenii ocherednogo XXV Mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov v SSSR" (June 29, 1957, addressed to the CC), in *Akademiia nauk v resheniiaxh TsK KPSS*, pp. 810–811.
- 41 *Akten des Vierundzwanzigsten Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses München, 28. August bis 4. September 1957*, ed. by Herbert Franke (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1959).
- 42 V.I. Avdiev (on ancient Egypt); L.J. Duman (on ancient China); A.M. Belenitskii (on Sogdian art); I.M. D'iakonov (on the Hurrian and Urartu languages, and another paper on the documents discovered at the Parthian fortress of Nisa in Turkmenistan); G.A. Melikishvili (on Urartu); B.B. Piotrovskii (on Urartu).
- 43 A.M. Mirzoev (on Persian literature); N.V. Pigulevskaia (on Syrian legal documents); A.A. Alizade (on the Azerbaijani agrarian system of the thirteenth and fourteenth century); V.I. Beliaev (on manuscripts from the Abbasid period); E.A. Beliaev (on sectarian movements in Islam); I. Braginskii (on the Tajik Sufi poet Kamal Khujandi, d. ca. 1400); A.S. Tveritina (on a medieval Turkish manuscript); B.G. Gafurov (on the Samanids).
- 44 D.A. Ol'deroge (on the Nigerian jihad leader Uthman bin Fodio, d. 1817); P.P. Topkha (on the economy of the Meiji in Japan); A.A. Guber (on class formation in Indonesia before 1945).
- 45 E.P. Chelyshev (on Indian philology); V.V. Balabushevich (a presentation of Soviet Indology).
- 46 *Akten des Vierundzwanzigsten Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses München*, p. 41.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 1, fol. 16 ("Proekt" of the CPSU Central Committee decree, obviously drafted by Gafurov), mentioning these ministries and organizations.
- 49 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 1, fols 1–3.
- 50 D'iakonov was also involved in a long-standing conflict with the former IVAN director Sergei P. Tolstov, a central figure in the Marxist debates on the Asiatic mode of production of the 1920s who is often credited for having formulated the *piatichlenka*, that is, the five-stage model of human development that became a dogma under Stalin. In the late 1950s D'iakonov harshly attacked Tolstov for his hypotheses on the role of slave labor in the economies of the ancient Orient; and Gafurov supported D'iakonov in this criticism of the former IVAN director, and

- helped him defend his *doktorskaia* dissertation in 1959 in spite of opposition from Tolstov.
- 51 *Ibid.*, fol. 4–5.
- 52 According to the Munich congress proceedings, these included above all scholars from the Arab world (27) and Turkey (23), plus nine from India, six from Iran, and four from Japan. Some of these, however, were Europeans residing in these countries. It is also remarkable that Munich had three participants from both Taiwan and Hongkong, so that there were more participants from China in Munich than at the Moscow congress, where the Chinese failed to show up.
- 53 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fols 1–2.
- 54 “Protokol zasedaniia Org. Komiteta po podgotovke XXV mezhd. Kongressa orientalistov v Leningrade v 1960 godu, 20. II. 1958,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fols 3–7.
- 55 Here Zakhoder referred to an article in which he, together with Konrad, had explained this approach; he added that this article (which I have so far not been able to identify) had found the support of Vladimir F. Minorsky, the eminent Russian expert on the Muslim history of the Caucasus who resided in Great Britain. In fact, Minorsky was invited and came to the Moscow congress; this required some clarification of his political opinions and some “cleaning up” of his KGB file. See letter, Minorsky to D’iakonov, November 11, 1959, AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 4, fol. 37; followed by a report of the Istanbul office of the Soviet Friendship Union supporting Minorsky’s “great friendship for the USSR” and more correspondence. Eventually the academy paid for Minorsky’s ticket (letter, D’iakonov to Minorsky, fol. 53).
- 56 “Protokol zasedaniia Org. Komiteta po podgotovke XXV mezhd. Kongressa orientalistov v Leningrade v 1960 godu, 20. II. 1958,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fols 17–18.
- 57 Vera Tolz, “European, National, and (Anti-) Imperial: The Formation of Academic Oriental Studies in Late Tsarist and Early Soviet Russia,” *Kritika* 9:1 (2008), pp. 53–81, as well as her *Russia’s Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 58 Aleksandr O. Tamazishvili, “Iz istorii izucheniiia v SSSR tvorchestva Nizami Giandzhevi: vokrug iubileia—E.E. Bertel’s, I.V. Stalin i drugie,” *Neizvestnye srانيتы otechestvennogo vostokovedeniia*, vol. 2, ed. by V.V. Naumkin, N.G. Romanova, and I.M. Smilianskaia (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura RAN, 1997), pp. 173–198.
- 59 “Protokol zasedaniia orgkomiteta, 20 VI 1958,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 25.
- 60 “Protokol zasedaniia orgkomiteta, 30 III 1959,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fols 46–49.
- 61 “K XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” *Problemy vostokovedeniia* 4 (1959), 3–7, here: 4; and *Trudy dvadtsat’-piatogo Mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov* vol. 1 (Moscow: Izd. Vostochnaia literatura, 1962), pp. 30–31.
- 62 “Protokol zasedaniia orgkomiteta, 30 III 1959,” fol. 35.
- 63 “Protokol no. 3: Zasedanie orgkomiteta, 12 II. 1960,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 101.
- 64 “Protokol no. 3: Zasedanie orgkomiteta, 12 II. 1960,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 123.
- 65 The “mythologized” biography of Buniatov, the development of his scholarly work and his disputes with Armenian scholars are the subject of the ongoing doctoral dissertation work of Sara Crombach (University of Amsterdam).
- 66 “Protokol no. 3: Zasedanie orgkomiteta, 12 II. 1960,” AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 126. Among the excluded papers were I.N. Sladkovskii, “Ekonomicheskie svyazi KNR so stranami sotsialisticheskogo lageria,” as well as G.V. Astaf’ev,

- “Nekotorye problemy promyshlennogo razvitiia Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki.”
- 67 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 2 (Programma i korrespondentsiia), fol. 12–14.
- 68 Ibid., fol. 20.
- 69 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 229 (“Spravka o zadachakh ‘Komissii trekh’”).
- 70 Ibid., fol. 220 (protocol of meeting D’iakonov with Franke and Bazin, Moscow, June 29, 1960).
- 71 In February 1960 there were 312 Soviet applications for papers.
- 72 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 1, fol. 101 (“Prezidium AN, postanovlenie 24 VI 1960”), and fol. 123.
- 73 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 220.
- 74 (Anonymous editorial), “K XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” *Problemy vostokovedeniia* no. 4, 1959, pp. 3–7, here: p.4.
- 75 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 3, fol. 223 (protocol of meeting D’iakonov with Franke and Bazin, Moscow, June 29, 1960).
- 76 To be sure, among the lists of paper proposals from the USA there is a note about twelve papers on political topics, mostly on China, Japan and East Asia, that had been announced by the University of Michigan but that had then been withdrawn by the authors themselves. Whether there were political manipulations at work is not clear from the available documentation. AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 2, fol. 89.
- 77 From Germany the conference overall costs (flights plus hotel) ranged from 2.051 DM (luxury class) to 1.374 DM (tourist class) and 1.181 DM (student dormitory); DER travel agency formulas, AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 15, fol. 167.
- 78 See, for example, the German correspondence, with its many complaints and cancellations; AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 15, fol. 24 and *passim*.
- 79 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 2, fols 23–24. Scheel addressed the letter to the president of the *Union internationale* but had a copy sent to D’iakonov as well.
- 80 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 15 (“Perepiska FRG, Tseilon, Chekhoslovakiia”), fol. 153.
- 81 The Leningrad documentation includes copies of four general calculations (*smetas*) of the overall costs, made at different times, which don’t all include the same items (AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 60, esp. fols 1–50). While these documents might simply have been drafts for internal purposes and therefore need to be read with caution, they nevertheless give an indication of the budget development. But as some of the calculations are undated (and the ordering of the documents in the file is not chronological), we can only make assumptions about their sequence. In my view, the oldest of the four is a *smeta* dated 1959 (fol. 11) that amounts to 1,978,000 roubles. It includes (among many other items such as interpreters, technical facilities, and various exhibitions) the costs for two hotel nights for 1,200 congress guests, in addition to ten nights for 50 invited guests; there is as yet no indication of the costs for bringing these guests to Russia. The second calculation, chronologically, is probably a *smeta* from April 7, 1959 amounting to 2,200,000 roubles (fol. 20). This calculation introduces as a new item the full coverage of some participants’ excursions to Central Asia and the Caucasus (428,130 roubles), in addition to travel and accommodation for “one hundred great scholars from the Orient.” The coverage of hotel costs for all participants was given up. The third calculation, in my interpretation, is one that must date from late 1959 or early 1960 because it already indicates Moscow as the congress venue; this calculation amounts to only 933,000 roubles. The decrease in costs was made possible by only covering the hotel costs of the Soviet guests and by excluding the excursions (which the international guests now had to cover themselves). However, I suggest that this document must be read together with a separate calculation (undated) of additional costs, namely the travel and accommodation of 100 foreign guests, amounting to an extra sum of not less

than 1,065,200 roubles (fol. 19). Taken together, the budget now ran to almost two million roubles. What I believe is the last calculation—not dated either but mentioning Moscow as the congress site—is one that amounts to 1,268,140 roubles; this one also does not cover the excursions of the guests to Central Asia and the Caucasus, nor their travel and hotels. Again, this document probably has to be read in connection with two other calculations, dated February 1960, that specify the costs for “invited guests from Delhi, Paris, Helsinki and Nakhodka” (obviously referring to Indian, European and Japanese participants), amounting to 291,928 roubles (fol. 29), and 1,229,400 roubles for the transport of the above-mentioned 420 “guests from the Orient” (fol. 31–33). If this reading of the scattered documentation is correct, then the overall sum had risen to 2,789,468 roubles by February 1960. That the Soviets did indeed cover the costs for several hundred guests from the East is supported by another document that mentions 1,664,440 roubles for the transport of 381 persons from Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia and Japan (delo 2, fols 97–99), to be covered by the Academy of Sciences.

- 82 That the Soviets had expected 400 Chinese delegates is mentioned by Colonel Geoffrey E. Wheeler’s well-informed report on the congress, “Russia and Asia in 1960: The Moscow Congress of Orientalists and a Visit to Central Asia,” *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 48/1 (1961), pp. 17–28, here: p. 21. According to Wheeler, the actual overall number of guests from Africa and Asia at the congress was given in Moscow as 230. The expectation of 400 Chinese scholars might have motivated the Soviets to increase their own delegation from the initial 80–90.
- 83 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 2, fols. 29–90 (“V TsK KPSS—sekretno,” 28.3.1960), here: pp. 29–36. In this document Gafurov also suggested producing a special Soviet postage stamp dedicated to the congress, and institutionalizing a Krachkovskii prize for achievements in Arabic studies, as a counterpart to the Lidzbarski-Medal of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* that was regularly awarded at the Orientalists’ congresses for outstanding scholarship in Semitic studies. These suggestions were not taken up by the CC.
- 84 See for instance, “O podgotovke k XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* 6 (1957), pp. 3–7; “Navstrechu XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu orientalistov v Leningrade,” *Sovremennyi vostok* 6 (1958), pp. 1–2; “V orgkomitete XXV mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov,” *Sovremennyi vostok* 8 (1958); “K XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” *Problemy vostokovedeniia* no. 4, 1959, pp. 3–7, and notes on p. 226; “V organizatsionnom komitete po podgotovke XXV mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov,” *Problemy vostokovedeniia* no. 6, 1959, p. 220. See also Bobodzhan G. Gafurov, “Assambleia vostokovedov mira,” and several other contributions in the direct run-up to the congress, in *Sovremennyi vostok* 7 (1960), pp. 2–3 and ff.
- 85 A.P. Baziants, “Tretii mezhdunarodnyi i pervyi v Rossii (k istorii mezhdunarodnykh kongressov vostokovedov) [a review of the 3rd International Congress of Orientalists, held in St. Petersburg in 1875], in *Problemy vostokovedeniia* 3 (1960), pp. 202–203; and E.A. Beliaev’s review of the proceedings of the Cambridge and Munich congresses of 1954 and 1957, in *Problemy vostokovedeniia* 3 (1960), pp. 240–245.
- 86 “O podgotovke k XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” p. 5.
- 87 “O podgotovke k XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” p. 6.
- 88 For some of its papers see the special issue of *Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta narodov Azii*, XLVII: Arabskie strany, 1961.
- 89 “O podgotovke k XXV mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vostokovedov,” p. 6.
- 90 See for instance, O. Edmund Clubb, “Note on the Soviet Preparations for the XXV International Congress of Orientalists,” *Far Eastern Survey* 29/2 (February

- 1960), pp. 31–32 (on the basis of Soviet press reports). Clubb also informed the American Council of Learned Societies about the Soviet preparations, presenting the congress as a veritable challenge to Western scholarship, especially as the Soviets had “advantages” over the West in Sinology; see Clubb’s two Memoranda to Shirley Hudson of ACLS, February 23, 1959 and October 21, 1959; here and for the following US documents: ACLS Archive, Series H, Box 11 (no coherent pagination of the documents).
- 91 Another event, the 13th Conference of Young Sinologists that was meant to take place in Moscow in the week preceding the 25th International Congress of Orientalists, had already been cancelled before it became clear the Chinese would not attend the latter. See Roderick MacFarquhar, “The 25th International Congress of Orientalists (August 9–16, 1960, Moscow),” *China Quarterly* 4 (Oct./Dec. 1960), pp. 114–118, here: p. 115.
- 92 Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: 2009), Chs 4 and 5.
- 93 R.V. Viatkin, “Institut kitaevedeniia AN SSSR v 1958 godu,” *Problemy vosto-kovedeniia* 1 (1959), 223–224; and the anonymous editorial “XXI S”ezd KPSS i zadachi vostokovedeniia,” *ibidem*, pp. 18–25.
- 94 Waldschmidt’s speech in *Trudy dvadtsat’-piatogo Mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1962), p. 39.
- 95 Mikoian’s speech in *Trudy*, vol. 1, pp. 40–43.
- 96 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- 97 Gafurov’s speech in *Trudy*, vol. 1, pp. 45–51.
- 98 *Trudy*, vol. 1, p. 50. The Soviets had just celebrated a Rudaki anniversary.
- 99 *Trudy dvadtsat’-piatogo Mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Izd. Vostochnaia literatura, 1962), vols 2–5 (1963).
- 100 The *Proceedings* do not have a table of contents (perhaps to conceal the poor participation of “Orientals”). It should be noted that the papers included in the *Proceedings* correspond to the list of papers given in a congress report that was published right after the event, so that we can safely assume that the editors did not purposefully add or omit any titles. See the lists of contributors and papers in “XXV mezhdunarodnyi kongress vostokovedov,” *Sovremennyi vostok* 5 (1960), pp. 206–220.
- 101 R.G. Landa, “Natsional’naia revoliutsiia v Alzhire,” *Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta narodov Azii*, XLVII: Arabskie strany, 1961, pp. 49–54.
- 102 L. Rathmann (Leipzig), “Zur deutschen Politik gegenüber dem Osmanischen Reich im Ersten Weltkrieg,” *Trudy* vol. 2, pp. 73–81.
- 103 M. Halperin (Princeton), “Political Parties as Instruments of Modernization in Recent North African History,” *Trudy*, vol. 2, pp. 85–96.
- 104 *Trudy*, vol. 3, p. 290. See Jens-Peter Laut, “Annemarie von Gabain 1901–1993,” *Finnisch-ugrische Forschungen* 52 (1994), pp. 367–74.
- 105 *Trudy*, vol. 3, pp. 448–467.
- 106 M. Saidov, “Dagestanskaia literatura XVIII–XIX vv. na arabskom iazyke,” *Trudy*, vol. 2, pp. 118–123. Michael Kemper, “Ijtihad into Philosophy: Islam as Cultural Heritage in Post-Stalinist Daghestan,” *Central Asian Survey* 33:3 (2014), pp. 390–404.
- 107 L.S. Gumaiunov and R.A. Ul’ianovskii, “Trud russkogo sotsiologa M.M. Kovalevskogo ‘Obshchinnoe zemlevladienie, prichiny, khod i posledstviia ego razlozheniia’ i kritika ego Marksom,” *Trudy*, vol. 4, pp. 38–45.
- 108 S.N. Rostovskii and B.M. Volkov, “K voprosu o razvitii sovetsko-indoneziiskikh otnoshenii,” *Trudy*, vol. 4, pp. 382–389.
- 109 For example A.A. Martynov, “Bol’shoi skachok v sotsialisticheskom stroitel’stve v Kitae i ego istochniki,” *Problemy vostokovedeniia* 2 (1959), pp. 34–48.

- 110 L.W. Simonovskaia (Moscow), “Deux tendances dans la société féodale de la Chine de la basse période” (*Trudy*, vol. 5, pp. 18–24); V.P. Iliushechkin (Moscow), “Agrarnaia politika taipinov,” *ibid.*, pp. 46–50; G.V. Efimov (Leningrad), “Istoricheskoe znachenie 70-kh–90-kh gg. XIX veka v novoi istorii Kitaia (k voprosu o periodizatsii novoi istorii Kitaia),” *ibid.*, pp. 50–55; S.L. Tikhvinskii (Moscow), “Mandzhurskoe gosподstvo v Kitae v kontse XIX v. i partiia reform,” *ibid.*, pp. 83–89.
- 111 Helmut Fessen (Berlin), “Das Gemeinfeldsystem der Li auf Hainan und seine Umgestaltung in Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften,” *Trudy*, vol. 5, pp. 35–36; Herbert Bräutigam (Berlin), “Zu den Volksaufständen polyethnischer Gruppen in Guizhou zwischen 1854 und 1872,” *ibid.*, 43–46; Siegfried Behrsing (Berlin), “Telegramme der Chinesischen Gesandtschaft in Berlin aus der Zeit des Eindringens des deutschen Imperialismus in China (1898–1899),” *ibid.*, pp. 62–63.
- 112 Morton H. Fried (New York), “Problema revoliutsii sem’i v Kitae,” *Trudy*, vol. 5, 31 (“text not delivered”); Irene B. Taeuber (Hyattsville), “The Growth of China’s Population,” *Trudy*, vol. 5, pp. 31–35.
- 113 At that time a PhD student at IVAN; he later authored *Obshchestvennaia mysl’ i ideologicheskaiia bor’ba v Kitae (1900–1917 gg.)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972).
- 114 As already suggested by MacFarquhar, “The 25th International Congress of Orientalists,” p. 117.
- 115 *Trudy*, vol. 5, p. 35.
- 116 William B. Ballis (Ann Arbor), “Historical Perspectives on the Formation and Development of the Mongolian People’s Republic,” *Trudy* vol. 5, pp. 306–314 (Soviet opponents on pp. 313–314).
- 117 “A Report on the Organizational and Political Aspects of the XXVth International Congress of Orientalists,” eight pages, not dated, not signed (but written as an overview in the name of over thirty US scholars who attended the congress with ACLS travel grants), here: fols 6–7; document preserved in ACLS H/11.
- 118 Report by Majid Khadduri to ACLS about his congress attendance, October 3, 1960, in ACLS H/11.
- 119 “A Report on the Organizational and Political Aspects.” The report mentions that “slightly over half of the [US] participants who submitted reports [on their participation] protested against these Russian actions [i.e. their political speeches], while the remainder was not particularly disturbed, either because they personally experienced little or no unpleasantness in the section meetings or because they felt such tactics were to be expected” (p. 1). This US group of scholars travelling on ACLS grants (the money provided by the Rockefeller Foundation, and also perhaps by the Ford Foundation) had been selected by the directors of the American Oriental Society and the American Society of Asian Studies. The ACLS was officially the US member of the *Union internationale des Orientalistes*.
- 120 Letter, Culver Gleysteen, US Embassy Moscow, to John Armitage, Office of Soviet Affairs, Dept. of State, of July 13, 1960; and reply, Gleysteen to Armitage, July 28, 1960; National Archive and Records Administration, R.G. 59.
- 121 “A Report on the Organizational and Political Aspects,” pp. 4–6.
- 122 Letter by Frederick Burkhardt, president of the ACLS (probably to the ACLS members of Oriental disciplines), two pages, not dated (but after the congress), discussing the Soviet manipulations and asking the members whether the US government should issue another invitation at the Delhi congress (“Can we afford a second rejection?”). In fact, already in early 1961 the ACLS started to coordinate US efforts to have a strong delegation at the Delhi congress, where they indeed succeeded in attracting the 27th International Congress of

- Orientalists to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Ironically, this congress of 1967 was at the last minute boycotted by the Soviets, in protest against the US war in Vietnam.
- 123 Joachim Glaubitz, "Der Internationale Orientalistenkongress in Moskau," *Osteuropa* 10:10 (October 1960), pp. 657–662, here: p. 660.
- 124 Walter Z. Laqueur, "Orientalists in Moscow: Eastern Reproaches," *Soviet Survey* 43 (October 1960), pp. 3–7, here: pp. 6–7.
- 125 B.G. Gafurov, [Concluding Remarks], *Trudy*, vol. 1, pp. 61–67, here: pp. 64–65.
- 126 Resolutions in *Trudy* 1, pp. 53–61.
- 127 The most detailed account being the anonymous "XXV mezhdunarodnyi kongress vostokovedov," *Sovremennyi vostok* 5 (1960), pp. 206–220, which gives overviews of the general speeches and also of the 20 sections.
- 128 Wheeler, "Russia and Asia in 1960," p. 20.
- 129 Ongoing work by Hanna E. Jansen (Amsterdam).
- 130 See for instance the report on the China section (August 18, 1960), signed by the director of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Sergei L. Tikhvinskii; AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 27, fols 1–29.
- 131 [Gafurov], "Mezhdunarodnyi Forum Orientalistov (K itogam XXV mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov)," AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 52, fols 26–73.
- 132 Gafurov here mentions *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Star* (fol. 29), without giving details. For a cautious discussion of how much propaganda was to expect at the congress, see the very professional article "International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow," *The Interpreter*, May 1960 (a copy of which is included in the ACLS file).
- 133 [Gafurov], "Mezhdunarodnyi Forum Orientalistov," fol. 29.
- 134 *Ibid.*, fol. 32.
- 135 *Ibid.*, fol. 33.
- 136 *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34. The paper in question is Stephen N. Hay (Chicago), "The Development of Tagore's Views on the Meeting of 'East' and 'West,'" *Trudy* vol. 4, pp. 201–211 (with a note on the opponents who argued Hay ignored Tagore's involvement in the national-liberation struggle).
- 137 [Gafurov], "Mezhdunarodnyi Forum Orientalistov," fol. 35; in a similar vein on Taeuber, fol. 37.
- 138 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- 139 AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 15, fol. 102ab. In that letter Krämer also investigated why the West German participants had not obtained a written invitation to the final reception in the Kremlin, as guests from other countries had. To be sure, Krämer acknowledged that the Soviets gave an oral invitation to all participants (which he decided however not to accept).
- 140 Ö.L. Barkan (Istanbul), „Türk yapı ve yapı malzemesi tarihi için kaynaklar," *Trudy*, vol. 2, p. 466.
- 141 [Gafurov], "Mezhdunarodnyi Forum Orientalistov," 37.
- 142 In Moscow Wertheim gave a paper on reformist movements in the religions of South and Southeast Asia, focusing on the 19th and 20th centuries; *Trudy*, vol. 4, pp. 350–355.
- 143 [Gafurov], "Mezhdunarodnyi Forum Orientalistov," fols 44–53.
- 144 *Ibid.*, fol. 55.
- 145 *Ibid.*, fol. 70.
- 146 *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.
- 147 Only in 1966 did the Academy of Sciences establish a Far East institute, which covered China together with Japan, Korea, and other countries.
- 148 In 1985 changed once more to *International Congress of Asian and North African Studies*.
- 149 Bernhard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," *The New York Review of Books*, June 24, 1982, pp. 4–5.

- 150 For an insightful discussion of the paradoxes of Soviet propaganda language and of its internalization and appropriation see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- 151 Letter, George C. Cameron (Dept. Near Eastern Studies, Ann Arbor) to D'iakonov, August 31, 1960, AV IVR RAN 123/1, delo 11 (correspondences USA), fol. 247 f. Cameron knew D'iakonov already from the Munich congress.