Discussions of Catherine II as an “enlightened despot” usually emphasize her attempts to reform the social and political bases of the Russian Empire and to gain the active support of the nobility and gentry in governmental activity. Catherine defined enlightened government as well-ordered government, achieving its policy and programs through bureaucratic and political means rather than with the sheer force that many of her predecessors had used.

The term “Russification” is seldom used with reference to the period of Catherine II, even though it was in her reign that the Cossack Sech was abolished, the special privileges granted by Peter I to the Baltic provinces abrogated, and the first successful assimilation of Russia's Muslim subjects into the Russian state accomplished. “Russification” implies the use of force, and, with the exception of the destruction of the Sech, Catherine avoided the use of force in dealing with internal ethnic and religious minorities. Catherine's application of her “enlightened” principles of government to the pressing problem of Russia's Muslims, her use of persuasion and political measures to gain their voluntary acceptance of Russian sovereignty, and their resulting assimilation into the body politic of the Russian state are some of her most impressive, if least known, achievements.¹

From the time of Ivan IV's conquest of Muslim Kazan the Russian state, under the influence of the church, had pressed for the religious conversion to Orthodoxy of all Muslims living within the empire. Every attempt had been made to eradicate Islam from the Russian state, by force and by persuasion. Mosques had been destroyed by state decree and their reconstruction forbidden since the late sixteenth century. The punishment for proselytizing in the name of Muhammad was burning at the stake, according to the Ulozhenie in 1649, although it was apparently seldom carried out. The struggle against the “nonbelievers” had been stepped up with the establishment of the Kazan Office of New Converts in 1740, and under its auspices whole villages of Volga Muslims were baptized at gunpoint.²

² Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii s 1649 g., First Series (St. Petersburg, 1850).
The Muslims often reacted against these policies with violence. Tatar uprisings in 1708, 1735, and 1739 all had religious overtones. There were six Bashkir uprisings from 1645 to 1755, and all to some extent were fomented by religious dissatisfaction; the last, in 1755, was led by the Bashkir religious leader, Mullah Baturshah Ali. It was apparent that forced conversion of Muslims to Orthodox Christianity had been largely unsuccessful, and that Muslim dissatisfaction was growing rather than diminishing.

Under Catherine II the policy of the state toward Islam as a religion falls into three periods. From her ascent to the throne until her "Toleration of All Faiths" edict in 1773, Catherine largely followed the pattern of her predecessors, treating the Russian Muslims rather harshly and eliminating only one or two oppressive practices of the previous years. From 1773 until the appearance in Orenburg of Baron Igelstrom in 1785, a period coinciding with Catherine's experiments in the Crimean Independent State, her policy became one of passive toleration of Islam and coexistence with the Muslim leaders within the Russian Empire. In the third period, from 1785 until 1796, the Russian state attempted through various radical measures to bring the Islamic leadership within the actual governmental structure. It then used this leadership as a means for strengthening Russian influence over and control of the Central Asiatic frontier regions and of the Russian Muslims themselves. Thus Catherine was not only to declare "freedom of religion" but even to support actively a faith other than Orthodoxy.

When Catherine seized power, she inherited a large supply of unanswered Muslim petitions and complaints in which the Muslims stated that the militant Orthodox program of conversion was intolerable. One of her first decrees abolished the Office of New Converts in Kazan, which had been the object of most of these complaints. In her introduction to this decree Catherine stated that she had acted because of the general dissatisfaction expressed in the natives' petitions. However, she made it clear that the Russian government intended to continue the spread of Orthodoxy among the natives but through less forceful means. Although use had been made in preceding years of financial benefits and exemption from various

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XI, No. 8664, 719-20; hereafter cited as PSZ. A recent article by Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay excellently summarizes the history of Russian Orthodox "missionary" activity among the Volga Muslims, "Les Missions orthodoxes en pays musulmans de Moyenne- et Basse-Volga, 1552-1865," Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique, VIII, No. 3 (July-Sept. 1967), 369-403. See also E. A. Malov, O Novokreshchenskoi Kontore (Kazan, 1873), for a sympathetic treatment of the Kazan Office of New Converts.

8 See A. Chuloshnikov, Vostanie 1735 g. v Bashkirii (Orenburg, 1946), and Roger Portal, "Les Bashkirs et le gouvernement russe au XVIII siècle," Revue des études slaves, XXII (1946), 82-105.

4 PSZ, XVI, No. 12,126 (Apr. 6, 1764), 704-7. The Russian term inorodtsy, the term officially used for the non-Slavic eastern minorities, does not easily lend itself to English translation. The French term peuples allogènes is exact, while the English "natives" has now a different connotation. Of necessity, but with hesitation, the author has used "natives" when referring to inorodtsy.
service duties in return for conversion, under Elizabeth these methods had been made secondary to those of the Office of New Converts. Catherine's action only eliminated a program that was both unsuccessful and repugnant to her limited sense of decency. It was in no way a positive policy, merely the end of a negative one.

In her first years as empress, Catherine by and large extended restrictions and continued existing policies. She renewed laws of the early eighteenth century that prohibited Muslim Tatars from owning Christian serfs, decrees that had not always been strictly enforced, and added to them the requirement that Christian serfs taken away from the Tatars be given to new converts as an added benefit.5

Catherine's most creative programs were instituted in the years after the Legislative Commission of 1767-68, although years passed before the information gathered at that convention was put to practical use. The invitation and election of non-Russian delegates to the commission and their presentation of grievances and proposals concerning their own ethnic groups indicates that the nationality question concerned the Russian government. Catherine apparently realized that the non-Russians might have problems different from those of the Russians who lived in their frontier areas. Delegates from each “people” (narod) and each religion were chosen by guberniia, province, town, and district. The total number of native delegates, which included Tatars, Chuvash, Bashkirs, Cheremis, Mordvinians, Votiaks, and Kalmyks, was around fifty-five.6

In her Nakaz to the Legislative Commission in 1767 Catherine declared on the question of minority religions: “In such a State as Ours, which extends its sovereignty over so many different Nations, to forbid, or not to allow them to profess different Modes of religion, would greatly endanger the Peace and Security of its Citizens. . . . the most certain Means of bringing back these wandering sheep to the true Flock of the Faithful, is a prudent Toleration of other Religions, not repugnant to our Orthodox Religion and Polity.”7 Muslim delegates were not convinced of the seriousness of the empress in these statements, but several had read them and had specifically mentioned them in their discussions at the commission.

Most delegates expressed gratitude for Catherine's abandonment of the policy of forcible conversions. But they protested the more subtle means Catherine was now emphasizing, especially the policy of financial incentives. Baptism was rewarded by a three-year exemption from all taxes, as well as exemption from the next three military recruitments. After these exemptions expired, the new converts were absorbed into the large body of state peasants. One Cossack representative to the commission said that since “the present policy is highly successful, the exemption should be in-

5 PSZ, XVII, No. 12,542 (Jan. 5, 1766), 480.
7 W. F. Reddaway, Documents of Catherine the Great (Cambridge, 1931), p. 289.
creased.” This would bring even more “into the fold.” On the other hand, both the natives who had not been converted and the majority of the local nobility criticized this practice. The natives complained that it was breaking up their communities and families and that the rest of the community then had to take over the responsibilities for the new convert’s state obligations. The nobility of Penza province agreed and said that because there were at least thirty thousand new converts in their area, the other inhabitants were burdened severely by their new state obligations.

All delegates at the commission complained about the policy of granting amnesty for convicted criminals if they consented to baptism. The Muslim natives asked that former criminals not be resettled in their former villages, because they would probably repeat their crimes, and that they be given land in other areas.

Moreover, the delegates complained that Muslim propagandists were hindered in their attempts at spreading Islam, and even from holding services. Muslims were now permitted to build wooden mosques, but several delegates reported that many had been destroyed by arsonists of unknown origin. Muslim natives were not permitted to make their pilgrimages to Mecca, although this was not necessarily an anti-Muslim practice. More likely it was a result of unfriendly Russian relations with the Ottoman Empire and Persia in the eighteenth century. Any pilgrimage to the Arab lands would be made through either of these two states.

Relations between newly converted and Muslim natives were not always friendly. Each side spoke of the other’s insults to its faith—the Muslims chiding the converts for leaving their community and old way of life in return for bribes, the new converts calling the Muslims heathens and using “obscene words” in connection with their prophet.

In sum, the reports to the Legislative Commission showed that the Russian government’s policy toward the minorities had been unsuccessful in the field of religion. It was here that its program especially needed overhauling. The practice of conversion had been changed from a forceful one to a more subtle and less violent one; the results, however, were no more satisfactory from the natives’ standpoint, and by 1767 most of those participating in the commission recognized that involuntary (or bought) conversion was not really spiritual conversion and should be abandoned.

In 1773 the Holy Synod issued, in the name of Catherine, the “Toleration of All Faiths” edict. In the decree itself the Synod indicated that the question of toleration arose specifically from Muslim reaction against the existing restrictions on mosque construction. Although it states that “as

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8 “Istoricheskie svedeniia o Ekaterininskoi Komissii dlia sochineniia proekta Novago Ulozheniia,” Sbornik Imperatorskago Russkago Istoricheskago Obshchestva (St. Petersburg, 1867–1916), XXXII, 62, 427–28; hereafter cited as SIRIO.
9 SIRIO, XXXII, 116, 391, 541–42; CXV, 101, 110, 400.
10 SIRIO, CXV, 319, 335; CXXXIV, 176, 182, 189.
11 SIRIO, XXXII, 117, 544; CXV, 319–21.
God tolerates all faiths on earth, Her Imperial Majesty will also permit all faiths and desires only that Her subjects exist in harmony,” toleration of Islam is the decree’s main point. All members of the Synod, all bishops, and all priests were instructed to permit the construction of mosques and were “not to interfere in Muslim questions or in the building of their houses of worship.” 13 This edict signaled the beginning of a new period in state-Muslim relations, one in which Islam was tolerated and there was a form of coexistence between Islam and the Russian government.

Muslim and Orthodox propagandists in the native areas were treated the same under the edict. Both were restricted as much as possible. Inasmuch as the edict forbade interference by Orthodox priests with Muslim internal life in any way, Muslims were again told that they might not try to convert any Christians to Islam. It is difficult to believe that any Muslims would have wanted or attempted to convert Orthodox Russians, and probably what was meant was that new converts should not be permitted to return to Islam.14 These Muslim mullahs were reminded of the prohibition, dating from the Ulozhenie of 1649, providing for death by fire as the punishment for any busurman (Muslim) who “turns, by force or deceit, any Russian to his own faith.” 15

There was a great deal of conservative opposition to even a toleration of Islam within the Russian Empire. Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov wrote that the war against Islam should be stepped up, not ended. In his opinion there could be no peaceful coexistence between two such radically different faiths. He wrote that “the Muslims, on account of their faith, are the born enemies of Christians, and as once they ruled over Russia, it should be Russia’s policy to treat them as her enemies.” Shcherbatov went on to implicate the Russian Muslims as accomplices of the Ottomans and stated that “when there is a war between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, our Muslims will always show their friendship toward that state.” Thus Shcherbatov would continue to deny Russia’s Muslims the right to make pilgrimages to Mecca, for it was on such trips that they would become “infected” with the Ottoman disease. He admitted that it was a difficult task to convert true Muslims to Orthodoxy, but suggested that the present methods continue. He mentioned the tax and service exemptions, and suggested moreover that special social privileges be given to baptized minorities who were a part of their upper classes. Those who would then return to their former faith and refuse such “benefits” on the part of the Russian state should be taken into the army for life.16 Luckily for Russia’s Muslims, his policy was not adopted.

From the issuance of the edict of 1773 until 1785 Catherine’s attention, so far as Islam was concerned, was focused on the Crimea. From 1772 until 1783 the Russian empress was involved in an experiment in nation building

13 PSZ, XIX, No. 13,996 (June 17, 1773), 775-76.
14 PSZ, XX, No. 14,313 (May 1, 1775), 135-34.
15 Ulozhenie, Chapter 22, point 24, as quoted in PSZ, XX, No. 14,313 (May 1, 1775), 135.
along her southern frontier. With the Russian defeat of the Ottoman Turks and the treaties of Karasu Bazaar and Küçük Kaynarca, which severed political relations between the Ottomans and the Crimean Tatars, the Russians tried to establish an independent and autocratic state on the lands of the former Crimean Khanate. Catherine's tool in this enterprise was a unique personality, a member of the Crimean royal family, Şahin Girey, who had studied in Europe, and who became a favorite of Catherine's during one of his stays in St. Petersburg in the early 1770s. It was during this eleven-year experiment that Catherine learned a great deal about Islam and its hold over its followers. She discovered that despite overwhelming force and military might, despite substantial financial aid to Şahin's depleted treasury, and despite the absence of all Ottoman help, her attempts to secularize Crimean society and to work against the Muslim leadership brought only civil war and constant bloodshed. In the Crimea Islam was alive as a faith and held the allegiance of the Crimeans in practically all aspects of their lives.

Catherine was finally forced to abandon her project here, and in 1783 she formally annexed the Crimea to the Russian Empire. In that year a trusted member of Catherine's imperial service, Baron Igelstrom, arrived in Bahçesaray to arrange for the incorporation of the Crimean peninsula into Russia. It was no surprise that the Islamic leadership was now courted and brought into the administrative leadership of what was soon to become Tavricheskaia Oblast. The müftü, the chief Islamic cleric in the Crimea, assumed complete authority over all religious affairs there, and this included management of the vast vakif lands that belonged to the various mosques and religious foundations—around a third of all lands in the peninsula. His administration, given the name of the Müftiat of the Crimea, was made an integral part of the civil administration of the new territory, and the müftü and his advisers were put on the Russian payroll. Religious freedom and guarantees of noninterference in their affairs were solemnly promised. High hopes were placed in this new arrangement, and the idea occurred to Catherine that a similar plan might also work in the Muslim areas of the Russian state proper.

The edict guaranteeing religious tolerance to Islam in 1773 had not had the desired effect. Most of the Muslims had taken the side of Pugachev in his rebellion in the years immediately following that edict, and, except for a few members of the Tatar nobility, no Muslims had shown any indication of accepting even a passive tolerance that was still coupled with the policy of bribery to gain conversions. Since it was Catherine's main intention to create a well-ordered state, and since she recognized that Russia's Muslim subjects, for better or worse, were going to be a part of

18SIRIO, XXVII, 245–46; N. Murzakevich, "Pis'ma svetleishago kniazia Grigoriia Aleksandrovicha Potemkina-Tavricheskago raznym litsam (1774–1789)," Zapiski imperatorskago odesskago obshchestva istorii i drevnosti, VIII (1872), 191–95; A. Skalkovsky, "Zaniatie Kryma v 1783 g.," Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia (1841), II, 23–44.
this well-ordered state, she decided, on the basis of her experiences in the
Pugachev rebellion and the Crimean experiment and its ultimate failure,
to change radically the relationship between the Russian state and Islam.
The Islamic leadership and the Muslim masses would no longer be con-
sidered outside the Russian mainstream; they would no longer be treated
as special cases, but, with the help of those officials, especially Baron
Igelstrom, who had completed the reorganization of Tavricheskaia Oblast
in the Crimea, the Russian state would attempt to assimilate its Muslim
subjects through bureaucratic methods. Moreover, Catherine believed that
a satisfied and indeed enthusiastic Muslim community in the Russian Em-
pire would be useful in further imperialistic undertakings in Central
Asia.

After 1784, with the expert guidance and advice of Baron Igelstrom, the
government undertook a positive program toward the Muslims in Russia.
Islam and its leaders now played an important role in increasing Russian
control of the native areas and even in subduing the neighboring Muslim
Kazakhs. This eventually involved the establishment of the Spiritual Mus-
lim Assembly, whose officials would be appointed and salaried by the
Russian government.

In 1785 Igelstrom became governor of Orenburg Guberniia and im-
mmediately began advising the central government about Islam and its
potential for the state. On the basis of his experience in the Crimea he
well knew the value of religious centers for turning nomads from their
roving ways toward an acceptance of a settled society. The Bashkirs of
Orenburg were for the most part still nomadic, and the neighboring
Kazakhs were completely nomadic. Igelstrom attributed much of the
unrest in his region in the eighteenth century to nomadism and saw the
participation of the Bashkirs and other nomadic peoples in the Pugachev
rebellion as evidence of a growing nomadic reaction against quickly spread-
ing Russian settlements in the area. He had witnessed the disruptive in-
fluence of the Nogays in the short-lived Independent Crimean State, and
concluded that nomads in any settled society would be a disruptive ele-
ment.

When Russian imperial centers were founded in the Volga and Ural
regions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, native
populations had been excluded from them. Orenburg was one of these
cities. Just outside Orenburg a settlement of Tatar merchants had grown
up. These merchants carried on the bulk of trade in this region, even
though they were subjected to religious and administrative discrimination
by the Russian settlers. They realized that their livelihood depended
entirely on the good will of the Russians and became loyal subjects of the
tsars. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this group,
called the Orenburg Seitov Settlement of Trading Tatars, continued to

18 AN SSSR, Materialy po istorii Bashkirskoi ASSR, V (Moscow, 1966), 569-73.
19 Portal, "Les Bashkirs . . . .",
20 See my unpublished dissertation "The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1774-1783"
prosper, and continued their loyalty to the Russian government. During the Pugachev rebellion they joined the Russian armies in their final victory. They had shown themselves more interested in retaining their privileged position—privileged at least in relation to the other natives—in the Russian state than in taking part in the uprisings.

Under Catherine the Russian government began to realize the potential that these Tatars had for its imperial policy, and on Igelstrom’s advice in 1785 their religious leader, or akhun, Muhammad Djan-Hussein, began to receive a salary from the state, “because he wishes to be in our service, and we want to keep him in it.” 22 Within the next few years this Tatar Muslim leader became the central figure in the new Spiritual Muslim Assembly.

Igelstrom then persuaded the central administration that Islam in general, and mosques in particular, should be subsidized by the state, and in the fall of 1785 Catherine ordered that the government supervise and pay for the construction of new mosques as well as settlements around them. As a justification for the benefit of conservatives such as Shcherbatov, Catherine stated: “We feel that it will be beneficial that Muslim prayers be held in public places. This will be good for nomadic peoples who live nearby, within the empire and across the border.” 23 The governor was instructed to build caravansaries near the mosques for the convenience of traveling Muslims and to construct Muslim schools in the same areas. There was to be a mosque for every 1,500 persons. Igelstrom was authorized to request the necessary number of Muslim mullahs and teachers from either Kazan Guberniia or the Seitov settlement. The Russian state thus was making moves toward establishing control over the Islamic community by recruiting its religious leaders for government service. It is interesting to note that at that time Igelstrom suggested the use of Russian Muslim mullahs among the Kazakhs as a means of drawing them into the empire.24

In the next year, 1786, Muslim schools were instituted in conjunction with the mosques and were placed under the jurisdiction of the Russian government’s Commission for Public Schools,25 thus further extending Russian control over Islam. Books that mullahs were to use in these schools from now on were to be printed and translated at government expense, with the Russian original printed alongside the Tatar translation. Tatar was now considered the language of Russia’s Muslims, at least in official capacities—probably an attempt at lessening the influence of Bashkir mullahs who had participated in, and in some cases led, revolts against the central government.

It was in 1788 and 1789 that Igelstrom made his greatest contribution to Russia’s administration of its Muslims with the establishment of the

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23 Ibid., p. 351; and PSZ, XXII, No. 16,245 (Sept. 4, 1785), 450.
24 PSZ, XXII, No. 16,292.
Spiritual Muslim Assembly. The akhun of the Orenburg Seitov Settlement, Muhammad Djan-Hussein, was chosen to head this organization and was given the office of müftü, which corresponded to that post in the Crimea. As müftü Hussein became the spiritual leader of all the Muslims living within the Russian Empire, with the exception of the Crimea, which retained its own müftü. This religious institution was under the jurisdiction of the Ufa Vice Regency and Orenburg Guberniia, headed by Igelstrom. Although the assembly's main function was the regulation of Islam, it is evident that Catherine and Igelstrom considered this a political task, since Hussein was to take his orders from the provincial governor. According to its charter, the assembly was to determine the basis upon which Muslim clergy would be chosen, to decide the educational and spiritual prerequisites for becoming an “accredited” mullah, and to regulate the actual religious services and houses of worship that these mullahs would use.

Besides describing the actual method of administering tests of competence to prospective mullahs, this charter included two important provisions. The first required that “each person desiring to become a mullah must live in the settlement or district where he will practice.” This was an obvious attempt to curb the influence of mullahs in the unrest and rebellions in the frontier regions. The central government, and even the local administrators, believed that much of the Muslim fanaticism that had aided in the revolt of 1755 among the Bashkirs and in their extensive participation in the Pugachev rebellion was the direct result of mullahs coming from foreign lands, in particular from the Ottoman Empire and Bukhara, which Russia wrongly considered to be a satellite of the Porte. One of Igelstrom's assistants wrote of the "close contacts" between Russian Muslims and mullahs from Bukhara and of the so-called plots of the Turks through their Bukharan mullahs to “arouse the Russian Muslims to revolt.”

The second provision stipulated the languages the Spiritual Muslim Assembly would use in its day-to-day work. All of the written work done in the assembly was to be in Russian, “just as in all other Russian government offices,” although a Tatar translation would also be made. All materials sent to mullahs and other Muslim officials would be in Tatar, with a Russian translation. This meant that only Russian officials or Muslims who knew Russian would be appointed to its posts. Igelstrom pointed out to the Muslim hierarchy that his government would not recognize any Muslim officials who did not hold the necessary credentials given by the assembly, and that he would strive to eliminate “anyone who

26 PSZ, XXII, No. 16,710 (Sept. 22, 1788), 1107; No. 16,711, p. 1107; XXIII, No. 16,759 (Apr. 20, 1789), 20-21.
27 AN SSSR, Materialy, pp. 563-64. This is the “charter” establishing the duties and competence of the new assembly.
28 Ibid., p. 564, point 6.
29 Dmitrii Mertrago, “Zapiski,” Russkii arkhiv (1867), Supplement, p. 43.
30 AN SSSR, Materialy, p. 564, point 7.
on his own calls himself akhun, imam, or mullah.” Apparently almost all past restrictions on the number of mosques built were discarded, but from now on all Muslim officials who were connected with these mosques, whatever their rank, must be listed by name and qualifications on the assembly’s registers.31

Igelstrom was particularly strict in the matter of unregistered ulema (teachers), who more often than not appeared to have been of foreign origin. From 1789 on, all Muslim schools were to be directly affiliated with a mosque, and every month each school was required to submit to the assembly a complete list of its pupils, teachers, and courses of study. Thus the assembly, as an arm of the Russian government, controlled the subject matter taught in all Muslim schools in the empire. In the first decade of the Spiritual Muslim Assembly 1,921 Muslims passed its examinations and requirements, including 7 akhuns, 527 mullahs, 2 teachers, and 51 tutors.32

The new Spiritual Muslim Assembly was also given authority to determine and regularize certain aspects of the dogma of Islam, particularly the parts concerning marriage and divorce. Igelstrom was quite specific in his report on the prerequisites of valid Muslim marriage and divorce, and he pointed out that although any mullah might marry two Muslims in his own mosque, now it was only before the assembly itself that a divorce could be instituted. Legal disputes that the Russian government defined as civil in nature were taken out of the hands of Muslim leaders and placed under the jurisdiction of regular civil courts. Igelstrom defined crimes of a religious nature, with which Muslim officials might deal, as “neglect of prayers, drunkenness, and other reprehensible acts against the Muslim faith.” Punishments for such crimes, however, must be in line with those meted out by Russian courts, and not those determined by the Koran, involving corporal punishment.33

Count Dmitrii Tolstoy, in his brief introduction to Igelstrom’s papers, which he edited, severely criticized some of the concepts used in the formation of the Spiritual Muslim Assembly. He considered that the use of so many Kazan Tatar mullahs as a means of “bringing Russian civilization to the frontier natives” was doomed to failure from the beginning. These “fanatical” Tatars would bring only “Tatarness” (Tatarstvo) and would remove these natives further from Russian civilization. “The Tatars comprised a special reserved world and even now [in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century] they shun Europeanism.” 34

But one should not attribute to Catherine and Igelstrom the intention of only using these mullahs to bring Russian civilization to the Muslim natives. Nor does the term “fanatical” correctly describe the Tatars of the Spiritual Muslim Assembly. Hussein, the müftü of this institution, had

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31 Ibid., pp. 564–66.
32 Ibid., p. 566, point 9.
33 Ibid., p. 565, point 3; p. 684.
given several years of loyal service to the state before taking on his new post, and Catherine had good reason to trust him.

In other steps to establish a close relationship with the Muslim leadership the Russian government awarded the Muslims further privileges. The mütüfû, in Ufa, along with other high Islamic officials, was allowed to own and operate immovable estates—a privilege not given, in theory, to their Orthodox counterparts. Hussein was later provided with many Bashkir lands and could operate them so long as no Orthodox peasants lived on them. He was also given the status of a Russian nobleman and was exempted from taxes. Under Igelstrom's successor as governor of Orenburg Guberniia, A. A. Peutling, the Russian administration gave certain privileges to even the Bashkir mullahs, exempting them from taxes, service, and duties, "so that they might better serve their Muslim flock." Rather than immediately Russifying the Muslims, Catherine wished only to bring them more completely under Russian administration, to regulate their leadership, and to insure the stability and passivity of this leadership. The Kazan Tatars were the logical choice for the implementation of this policy, and Tatarstvo was much to be preferred to Bashkirstvo or Bukharetstvo. Tolstoy would have wished for the complete conversion of the Muslims to Orthodoxy, and thus was the nineteenth-century heir to the ideas of eighteenth-century conservatives like Shcherbatov. The administration of Catherine II rejected the idea that this policy was the only way to stabilize the frontier, because it had been a complete failure in the years immediately preceding her reign. Catherine and her advisers formulated a program that proved to be the correct one in the short run. The Muslims accepted the new assembly with apparent gratitude and in several petitions thanked the empress for her benevolence and generosity "for the building of mosques, for the creation of our Spiritual Assembly, for the creation of a mütüfû for our people who fulfills our faith according to its rules and regulations."

Catherine's policy toward her Muslim subjects was fairly consistent and included methods that were altered in response both to changing situations and to an increased awareness and understanding of the problems and possibilities of the frontier. Her experience in the Crimea with Şahîn Girey and his failures was a valuable education for her. Her policies resulted from her desire to fit these peoples and areas into the "normal" Russian administrative categories and thus to effect as complete a Russian consolidation of the natives and their lands as was possible. Although in her early years as empress Catherine may have followed the methods of her predecessors in such areas as Orthodox proselytism and economic and social restrictions, her ideas were flexible enough to react positively to the information that she gained from the Legislative Commission and to the advice she received from such able administrators as Igelstrom and Peutling. Her efficient use of the resources available is reflected in her em-

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35 PSZ, XXIII, No. 16,897, 164; No. 17,099, p. 399.  AN SSSR, Materialy, p. 573.  Ibid., p. 587.
ployment of loyal Muslim natives, whom the previous Russian rulers had persecuted along with the other Muslims, to pacify other natives and to bring them more into the Russian fold.

The assimilation that Catherine accomplished contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. The schools established under the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Muslim Assembly succeeded only too well in spreading Western knowledge among Russia's minorities—knowledge also of Western ideologies, not the least of which was national consciousness. The combination of this growing national consciousness in the nineteenth century with the policies of Alexander III and Nicholas II—both of whom replaced Catherine's shrewd programs with pogroms and persecution of the minorities—served to create an anti-Russian nationalism, which came into the open during the revolutionary period and which still exists to some extent today in Muslim areas of the Soviet Union.