

Report

FOURTH EAST ASIA CONFERENCE ON SLAVIC AND EURASIAN STUDIES

(REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF ICCEES)

*Image of the region in Eurasian Studies*

4-5 September 2012

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata

In collaboration with

ICCEES, JCREES, CAERCA, KASS, and Ministry of External Affairs, GOI

*[Compiled by Suchandana Chatterjee]*

**Inaugural session**



On behalf of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Dr. Anita Sengupta welcomed all participants of the Fourth East Asian Conference on Slavic and Eurasian Studies. Professor Om Prakash Mishra, Senior member of the Executive Council of MAKAIAS delivered the formal greetings on behalf of the Director of MAKAIAS, Dr. Sreeradha Datta. He especially thanked the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India for supporting this initiative.

Remarking on the theme of the conference *Image of the region in Eurasian Studies*, he stated the relevance of the theme in an age of global interdependence. He explained how the nation states have been impacted by the developments in the international arena and tried to identify an interesting trend in this development. Secondly, he also pointed at the issues as borders, passport and visa, which in a way are creating barriers between nations. Despite the reality of the above fact, today each country is increasingly getting strengthened by sharing and with the exchange of ideas, which he feels is a strong sign of global Interdependence.

He pointed at studies conducted by certain International institutions and agencies whereby the attempt has been to highlight attitudes that have been shaped by issues related to boundaries and borders. However in the realm of ideas, Professor Mishra pointed out, 'globalization' in the true sense has set in and this conference is a perfect example of that. He highlighted the holistic perspective that this Conference promises to offer, which would add to the richness of academic discourse on the region. Before concluding, he congratulated the Institute for hosting this event and welcomed all the national and international participants and expressed that he hopes this academic interdependence with translate into some amount of global interdependence.

In her introductory speech, Dr. Suchandana Chatterjee expressed the Institute's initiative and optimistic approach in organising the India chapter of the International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES) in collaboration with its regional associations, Japanese Council for the Russian and East European Studies (JCREES), the Chinese Association of Slavic Studies (CAERCA) and Korean Association for Slavic Studies (KASS) that it is a rare occasion for educationists in India to interact and share their views with ICCEES scholars. She added that as the host of the Conference in Kolkata, MAKAIAS reflects commitment to ICCEES's agenda of expanding the association base of Eurasian Studies. The Institute has been in discussion with ICCEES Council members about the prospects of an Indian association of Eurasian Studies.

She informed the audience that the idea of Indian forum of Eurasian Studies as one of the Asian partners of ICCEES was proposed by Prof. Matsuzato of Slavic Research Centre, Hokkaido during the Eurasian seminar in Kolkata in Feb 2011. These ideas were backed by Professor Hari Vasudevan of Department of History, Calcutta University and also former Director of Maulana Azad Institute of Asian Studies and other senior scholars in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Mumbai University, Kashmir University and Gautam Buddha University. Though an Indian association on Eurasian Studies on the model of ICCEES is yet to be formalised, conferences on the regions have been organized regularly at important centres in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata etc. By hosting this event, MAKAIAS hopes to carry forward this tradition of engagement with international forums like ICCEES. The response from the participants, according to Dr. Chatterjee, reflects the appeal of Kolkata-the heritage city.

She also did a quick recap of the previous Regional Conferences of ICCEES before introducing this year's theme.

- **First Regional Conference, Hokkaido:** *Resurgence of Russia and future of Eurasia: Views from the east (2009)*
- **Second Regional Conference, Seoul:** *Russia and Eurasia in the Remaking of World Order (2010)*
- **Third Regional Conference, Beijing:** *Russia and Eurasia in the post-Financial Crisis Era (2011)*

While introducing the concept note of this year's seminar, Dr. Chatterjee indicated the intention to capture the renewed interest in 'the region' through the emergent debates which not only revolve round the geographical specificities of the region but also around the socio-economic and political dispensations that determine the developments of the region. She added that emphasis has been given on variety of approaches that examine the relationship between space and place. Questions about how regions in Eurasia have reinvented themselves through an envisioning of spatial entities like Slavic Eurasia, Central Eurasia, Central Asia or Inner Asia have featured quite often. Today each of these

connotations is a critical component of the debates that have emerged within the realm of historical geography, political economy, social anthropology etc- which the present seminar seeks to address.

Professor Kimitaka Matsuzato and Professor Hari Vasudevan were invited to present their individual perspectives on the event.

Prof Matsuzato explained the concept and idea behind organization of the conference. He gave a brief overview of the previous conferences held in three different countries and then readout a message from President of ICCEES, who wished success of the conference and hoped it would generate interest in the region even more.

He mentioned about his experience of participating in the 2010 Eurasia Conference of the Institute in 2011. He was pleasantly surprized about the freshness of views and varied research agendas in the Institute. He appreciated the commendable research on Eurasian studies in the Institute. He explained the importance of a broad-based network of Eurasian studies programmes which was the mission of International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES) and its regional conferences. He added that ICCEES today has, since its inception in the 1970's, been trying to broaden its focus and is looking forward to the perspectives from South Asia and particularly India. He was clearly optimistic that the ICCEES conference has for the first time moved out of the North Atlantic region to India and more particularly, Kolkata. He wished success to all participants.

Professor Hari Vasudevan acknowledged the role of the Institute in carrying forward its Eurasia programme. He appreciated Professor Kimitaka Matsuzato's support regarding this event. His brief historical background of the evolution of Eurasian studies in India was extremely useful. He mentioned that the first PhD dissertation in India on the subject Eurasia was defended as early as 1911 though nationalist scholarship on the region developed much later. Professor Vaidyanathan's long introduction on the state of Slavic studies in India was translated into several Indian languages that helped in taking the message much deeper. Subsequently powerful institutions developed in the area at Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). JNU developed a connection with Soviet state in the subsequent phase and so materials started coming to India which have been accumulated at JNU Library at Russian Studies Department. Everything that has been published 1960s onwards has been stored there. Apart from that the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts has a brilliant collection of primary source material. The majority of the literature on the region is in Russian Language and have been held in printed and microfiche and microfilm collections in IGNCA as well as in the university libraries in Delhi. He mentioned that almost everything that can be found in British Museum can be accessed in these two places.

He mentioned that unlike Chinese and Japanese tradition, India's Eurasianists interact and communicate in various platforms but mostly their exchanges do not extend to fullscale institutional participation in all aspects of research. He added that it would be interesting to learn from the international delegates how they institutionalise their exchange programmes. The comparison of two styles and setups would be extremely useful for future initiatives and collaboration.

He then mentioned about the opportunity that Slavic studies have in Asia. He appreciated Professor Matsuzato's efforts of accumulating primary source material at Slavic Research Centre in Hokkaido University. The international colleagues were encouraged to share such resources which can be offered by MAKAIAS and Asiatic Society in Kolkata. He also gave an idea about the archival material on merchant ctivities in Bombay Asiatic Society. He added though substantial research material exists in this part of the world, these were underutilized and also needed proper preservation.

In conclusion, he mentioned that by and large interest in Eurasian studies has increased in India though more importance has been given to bilateral relations and the area studies perspective seems to have waned. He also highlighted the important task of understanding the problems faced by the Asian educationists so that aspirants in this field will get the encouragement.

## Documentary on MAKAIAS

**Vote of Thanks-**Dr. Anita Sengupta offered the formal Vote of Thanks to all the esteemed speakers of the inaugural session. The Executive Council and the Director of MAKAIAS have been extremely supportive of this initiative and were thanked.

[Anwasha Ghosh]



MAKAIAS, the conference venue

## Panel I: *Spaces in History*

### Presentations:

Sergei Lyubichankovsky, *Experience of the creation of regions' images in the Russian Empire military science*

Svetlana I. Kovalskaya, *Kazakh steppes of the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: the northernmost end of the Muslim world or the south of the Eurasian space?*

Yoko Tateishi, *Rewriting the history of the USSR during the Khrushchev period*



The panel was chaired by Professor Hari Vasudevan and the three presentations in this panel were by Sergei Lyubichankovsky, Svetlana Kovalskaya and Yoko Tateishi. Lyubichankovsky discussed the spatial features of Russian military science as it evolved since the days of Miliutin and Snesev. The influence of Russian military geographers on Russian policy in Eurasia during the Tsarist period is an interesting subject of research that is also indicative of the evolution of regional and provincial politics in Russia. Kovalskaya, like Lyubichankovsky, is concerned with the making and unmaking of the concept of Eurasia as a region. She focuses on the narratives of human geography and deals with the varying images of the steppe as a space featured by human movement. Such images about a nomadic environment are clearly visible in the historical sources especially maps and travelogues, personal sources such as memoirs and official documents pertaining to Tsarist administrative restructuring vis-à-vis the Kazakhs and the Cossacks who inhabited the Eurasian steppe. The image of a transformed space under the colonial dispensation is extremely relevant when it comes to the study of parallel images of the Islamic *millet* (community) in southern Kazakhstan or the intra-community relationships among the *ulema*, *ishans*, the *qadimis* and the *jadids* who were influenced by the new dispensation. Kovalskaya refers to such images in the textbook on the Akmolinsk oblast in the West Siberian Governor Generalate, which according to her, demands serious attention. Yoko Tateishi's research is about image-making regarding the Caucasus during the Khrushchev period. She shows the convergent and divergent analytical trends in the Party's history journal *Voprosii Istorii*. Since 1956, there have been different

perspectives about Imam Shamil's rebellion. There have been both positive and negative descriptions of the Caucasian leader and his movement. Tateishi makes a survey of all post-1956 issues of the journal and shows how the movement of Shamil evoked a lot of appeal among the journal's readers. On the one hand, the Imam of Shamil was described as a privileged class by Party protagonists of the journal. On the other hand, there have been few historians who wrote about the mass character of the movement. Professor Vasudevan commented that the presentations reflect a wide range of debates in colonial historiography about the Eurasian space that mattered to the colonists. Such appraisals about military geography or Muslim geography indicate the level of colonial engagement in Asiatic Russia and Central Asia. Tateishi's paper impressively touches upon the aspect of alternate geographies in the Soviet era that seem to get limited attention in post-Soviet critiques. Questions from the floor were raised by Hiroshi Fukuda and few others. Fukuda critically assesses the spatial model and also asks Tateishi about whether there have similar cases of differing interpretations about regional histories of Russia in Soviet journals.

[Suchandana Chatterjee]

### Panel-II-*Image of Central Asian borderlands*

#### **Presentations:**

Sharad K. Soni, *Debating Nomadism versus Modernism: Some Reflections on Mongolian Identity Issues*

Arai Yukiyasu, *The Language Policy of Kalmykia in 1990s- Search of new identity after collapse of Soviet Union*



Dr. Soni's presentation dealt with Mongolian Identity. A sizeable number of Mongolia's 2.7 million population still give due importance to nomadism and practice the ancient tradition of nomadic herding. Families have kept these herds that include five types of animals- goats, sheep, cattle, camels and horses for generations. They provide meat, dairy products, transportation and wool. As one of the only remaining horse-based cultures left in the world, Mongolians greatly cherish their horses, and

outside the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, the horse is still the main mode of transportation. Even horse racing continues to be a favourite pastime, which is also symbolic to the Naadam festival, Mongolia's national games. While internally nomadism remains a powerful, though sentimentalised, symbol of collective Mongolian identity often linked to the 'glorious past', externally western influences have threatened the very existence of a nomadic lifestyle. Dr Soni's presentation dealt with the origin of debates between nomadism and modernism which have been reflected on the pertinent issues of Mongolian identity in contemporary times. The presentation, therefore, sought to map out the context in which the debates on nomadism versus modernism have been going on. While not ignoring the continuing importance of nomadism as an aspect of identity, it also highlighted the quest of Mongolians for finding their own place in the fast modernizing world community. Finally his presentation also attempted to find out whether the Mongolians should find a proper combination of modernism and traditionalism based on the nomadic culture taking into account the current discourses on realities of the modern world. His presentation highlighted the need of finding a balance between tradition and modernism.

Arai Yakiyasu's presentation dealt with Kalmyk Language Policy in 1990s and captured the quest for identity through language after the collapse of Soviet Union. After perestroika started in mid 1980s they began to seek the way to revitalize their own culture and identity. After Stalin's death the political atmosphere changed and Kalmyks were allowed to rebuild their autonomous republic in 1991. The previous decade damaged the cultural heritage because of the deportation of the nation after the withdrawal of German troops. This presentation attempted to focus mostly on the language aspect of the cultural component. To describe what had been done, and what kind of problems had come about in the process, his presentation focused on two attempts, 1. making terminology to replace enormous amount of Russian loan words in Kalmyk language, 2. orthography reform to make it closer to the pronunciation. He observed that the first attempt saw some success but still is far from being satisfactory while the second one failed in the course of discussion. He argued in his presentation that what came as the results of all these attempts arose from their debates on their identity and the quest to maintain balance in the sense of distance between Mongolianness and Russianness in elements in their language.

Discussant Dr. Gautam Basu observed that the two papers were, in a way complementary to each other yet having their share of distinctness. The common agenda in the two papers have been the question of Modernity which was explicit in Paper-I and implicit in Paper-II. Tension between Modernity and Nomadism as institution often take form of dilemma as depicted in the papers. In the second paper language has been seen as a source of identity formation. He observed that the inherent question has been of alienation and the attempt to get rid of the same. He made an extremely interesting point in the context of India, where "modernism" is seen as something western.. To conclude he raised an important question- to what extent "modernism", "traditionalism" performs therapeutic function? He also posed pertinent questions to encourage the presenters to think deeply - Is Modernism hostile towards traditionalism? Will modernity complete with traditional principles?

A lively discussion session followed after the Discussion finished his observation some of the issues touched are as follows:

- Nature of Middle/late Soviet identity of Kalmykia.
- Role of Newspaper and journals on the revival of the language of Kalmykia.
- Discussions and comments on the use of Soviet and pre-Soviet terminologies.

[Anwesha Ghosh]

### ***Panel III-Post-Soviet as Post-Colonial: Shared or Non-Shared History of Soviet Past in Eurasia***

Chair: Professor Ajay Patnaik

Discussant: Munira Shahidi

#### **Presentations:**

Boram Shin, *The Construction of the Red Colony in Uzbekistan between the 1920s-1930s*

Diana Kudaibergenova, *Imagining post-colonial geography in post-Soviet Central Asia*

Nikolai Murashkin, *Russian Foreign Policy Beyond Central Asia: Construction of post-Soviet Eurasia*

Boram Shin presentation was bordered on Benedict Anderson's argument that a nation is an "imagined community" and emerged as a "cultural artefact of a particular kind". The speaker reiterated with avowed emphasis that Russian colonization was basically the outcome of Central Asian backwardness. In this vein she drew inferences from Karl Marx's justification of colonization as a 'necessary evil'. It was primarily an "unconscious tool of history" that opted to change the socioeconomic structure in Asia without which a world revolution was deemed impossible. The presentation emphatically projected that the success of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 emphasized that the tsarist colonization failed to serve as an adequate tool of history. The inadequacy of the colonization got revealed in its failure to transform Central Asia's feudal system into a capitalist social structure, which is a necessary precondition to socialist revolution.

The paper significantly delved into the making of the Uzbek Nation in the 1920s with considerable detail. Influenced by the European notion of national unity the Jadids were the first to conceive Central Asia in terms of 'nation' or 'milliat'. The Jadids believed that the Russian colonization of Central Asia was a result of Central Asian backwardness. Their motive was to reconcile Islam and European modernity thereby incorporating the region back into the world. According to Faizullah Ho'jaev, the first Chairman of the People's Commissariat of the Uzbek SSR, the roots of Central Asian backwardness and ignorance remained in the systems of oppression which prevented the reunification of the Uzbek people. The 1925 redistribution of Central Asian territories was significantly perceived as the materialization of the inevitable need of the people to eradicate the old borders thereby creating one Uzbek nation. With the confinement of the Uzbek nation to a territory the Jadids and the Bolsheviks embarked upon fostering a historical continuity for the Uzbek people and on redefining the Uzbek language and culture. The intent was to identify and internationalize the culture. By the late 1920s the Bolshevik language of class was adopted by the Jadids though sometimes an overlapping of class-consciousness and national-consciousness was vividly discerned. A number of national attributes the Jadids ascribed to the Central Asian nation vehemently opposed the Bolshevik ideology, however, Turkic and Islamic cultural spirits and practices remained firmly rooted in local identity and they were only renamed, redefined, modified and reinterpreted. The most influential and active participants in the Uzbek language planning were the members of a native literary circle, Chagatay Circle) aspiring to build national literature and standard literary language to build a nation. Though it was abolished the Uzbek intellectuals in search of a literary legacy for national literature of the new Uzbek nation turned to classical Chagatay literature.

While portraying on the representation of the Uzbek Nation in the 1930s the paper delineated that the establishment of the state cultural organs together with the Stalinist Purge ushered in a generational change in the Uzbek literary milieu. At the first All-Union Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, the Uzbek representative, R. Madzhidi reported on the recent developments and the present condition of Uzbek literature. The report, which was a rejection of Gorki's literary historiography, launched attacks on the local Bolshevik leaders for their failures to make the literature accessible to the masses. The first Uzbek Socialist Realist novel was published in 1938. It was established as the cannon of Uzbek Socialist Realist prose. Whereas in 1920s the Uzbek identity was still in the process of making, in 1930s it was manifested in the prototype characters like Mirza-karimbay, whose death symbolized the collapse of the feudal oppression and of Yol'chi, who was esteemed as the martyr of the Uzbek toilers and prophet of the future Uzbek Socialist nation. Proletariat socialist and new national identity predominantly bloomed after the Second World War. It was then under the extraordinary circumstances the new national identity based on the commonly-shared class history and supra-ethnic political ideology was accepted and internalized by the non-elite Uzbek population.



The second paper provided valuable insight on the colonial and post-colonial images of Central Asian republics. The paper, while emphasizing on the need for a new vocabulary, was primarily a critique of the policies of the Centre, which exhibited the dearth of appropriate vocabulary to define the modernized society in 1950s. The paper highlighted different phases of Central Asian history with intense significance. The 1960s and 1970s were the first post colonial span of time where nationalist fervor emerged, though certain collaborative stances between the Centre and the republics were visible. The notions were centered on imperial Russia, Kazakhstan republics and were cultural critique of the Russian policies at the centre. The paper was a decisive depiction of the fact that in 1980s it was literature producing historical myth about ancient culture and politics of the region. The post-colonial critique in countries like India and Latin America greatly inspired them, more specifically narratives of change guided by *glasnost* and *perestroika*. A series of publications in Kazakhstan revealed that after breaking from the Centre the Central Asian republics wanted to remain in union. Sometimes in post colonial critique there was misinterpretation of facts about a particular regime. They remained ascribed to a particular set of symbol, which was more historical or political rather than cultural and was a criticism of economic domination of the Centre. They were assigned to certain political goals which were autonomous in character. Though the friendship between Russia and Kazakhstan was considerably appreciated the nationalist forces were still cropping up.

The paper was a critique of the notion of 'Central Asia', which is itself colonial and fails to explain or elaborate the notion or the image of Central Asia. It has varied connotations. Among the 5 states there are artificial borders, imagined communities and intriguing dilemma in geographical conception. There is ardent need of a new vocabulary to discuss post colonial regime in Central Asia and Soviet rule. The cultural component or the political critique was too strong to define Kazakhstan. Post colonialism was a critique of a particular regime in specific era from 1930s onwards. The paper pertinently recommends that the political interest should find new understanding, new definition of Central Asia, a completely different perception and disposition from that of Soviet era.

The third paper aimed to project the foreign policy orientation of the Central Asian republics, though it is highly problematic given the variety of Central Asian responses. His presentation vividly enumerated the viewpoints of the Russian Geographical Society and made references of his articles published in October 2011 and February 2012. Historical analysis of Russian foreign policy after 1991 reflects the influence of the Eurasian concepts. The presentation made a distinct focus on the emerging triangular equations between India, China and Russia, which is gaining considerable precedence in Russian foreign policy. Pragmatism, changing world order, burgeoning wealth were the parameters of analyzing Russian power matrix in the highly dynamic global order. Russia has a huge heritage of social science regarding Eurasian studies. The different or distinct phases of civilization are prone to interpretations and reinterpretations. The paper highlighted the understanding of Eurasia major and Eurasia minor with substantive geographic and economic content. Russian foreign policy is more Euro-specific than Eurasia-centric. Russia has been very much sensitive to the prevailing political debates and sentiments in the country. In its endeavour to glorify pragmatic values in foreign policy in Kyrgyzstan, Russian foreign policies have been severely criticised. Election proceedings are hardly mentioned in the drafting of a Eurasian Economic Union. Skepticism to Russian governance was distinctly visible.

### **Observations of Discussant**

Eurasian concepts and images were understood from varied academic perspectives which prove the rapid development of the Eurasian studies thereby widening the Eurasian space. Research activities on Eurasian studies, cultural identities and political values are amply available in Kazakhstan. Elaborate understanding and analysis on the conceptualization of cultural identities in 50s and 60s, how it developed, the present statuesque and the span of development i.e whether it developed regionally bearing regional relevance was pursued on a comprehensive scale.

### **Q&A**

Central Asia's post-colonial setup as compared to the Indian situation is a relevant theme of discussion. The whole discourse pointed to the need for elaborate discussion on the Eurasian studies that was pursued and perceived by say, Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan. Eurasianism is more like a collaborative hegemonic idea that is significantly different from Gramscian notion of hegemony. 90% of Central

Asians wanted the Soviet Union to survive. In multi-ethnic state like India, which has inherited administrative structure from the colonial past, the people hardly support the continuation of colonial legacy. In India, the post war dynamics are different and so the social relationships must be reviewed keeping in mind the repertoire of colonial and post-colonial narratives. The crux of the discussion was centred on the crucial question of the uniqueness of the republics that could make policies integrative and assertive. The Central Asian states after independence rarely integrated, they remained in mental isolation from each other.

[Sayantani Sen Mazumdar]



Audience

**Panel-IV- Regional conflicts in Eurasia: Political Violence as a Factor of Domestic Politics: Dagestan, South Ossetia, and Transnistria**

**Presentations:**

Magomed Rasul Ibragimov, *'Politics around the so called Struggle against Wahabbism in Dagestan'*  
Kimitaka Matsuzato, *Domestic Politics of South Ossetia in the Context of Conflict Regulation, 1990-2008*  
Keiji Sato: *"Europeanization at the 'grassroots' level in Moldova: What are effective ways to deal with the Transnistrian conflict?"*

Professor Ibragimov's paper was a discussion of the inadequate dialogue in Dagestan owing to the internal debates among the muftiate in the region. The uncompromising attitude of some Muslim sections accounted for the failure of talks, argued Ibragimov in his presentation in Russian.

In his revised paper "Politics of Vulnerability: South Ossetia in the Context of conflict regulation since 1990s", Kimitaka Matsuzato argued about the social chaos that prevails in South Ossetia. His

presentation began with a video clipping portraying a gunman firing on innocent masses and himself taking the picture of the gruesome happening. The speaker revealed such frequent occurrences in South Ossetia. He argued that the region is the smallest among all other uncategorized states. It is also least industrialised. Russia does not look after this state because of its geographical dis-location. The speaker considered those facts as reasons of vulnerability of the region. He also has mentioned that South Ossetia evaded a dictatorship by former field commanders (the worst form of authoritarianism and crony capitalism), which took place in Nagorny Karabakh in the second half of the 1990s. From 1993 to 1996 there was a constant competition in the political arena for assuming the leading position of the country. This process had made the situation more unstable in South Ossetia. In this phase, the region needed a state builder, who ought to have been calm and pragmatic. After a number of changes in the leadership, L. Chibirov became the head of the state. He was considered to be a successful leader for effectively fighting against organized crime and corruption in South Ossetia. The period between 1999 and 2001 was marked by communist monopoly over the Parliament. The demands of constitutional amendment and need for a strong President were raised during this period. Actually in this point of time Chibirov-Communist rivalry dominated the S.O politics. Immediately after becoming President, E. Kokoity terminated Chibirov's policy of balance between Russia and Georgia and declared his pro-Russian position. The Parliament elected in 2004, constantly threatened by Georgia's military aggression could not function well. On the eve of the parliamentary elections in 2009, the People's Party split, because some party leaders left the party, criticizing the party as losing oppositionist spirit. The authorities earnestly helped the remaining, moderate lump of the People's Party to get seats in parliament. As a result, this party increased its seats from two (2004) to nine (2009). Second, the Unity Party gave the Communist leader, S. Kochiev, the position of parliamentary speaker to appease the Communist Party. Thus emerged a semi-conformist regime, in which Parliament was monopolized by a ruling party (Unity) and two parties which wanted to show themselves as constructive opposition but in fact were becoming Unity's satellite parties. This conformist regime deprived South Ossetia of any outlet of public discontent. But this potentially dangerous situation was misinterpreted by Kokoity and the Russian leadership that the South Ossetian citizens still continued to be satisfied with the victory, recognition, and newly acquired security. This misinterpretation led to a blunder in November 2011, which was easily transmitted to Transnistria.

The primary focus of Keiji Sato's paper was on the ideas and strategies adopted by the international organizations and NGOs for resolution of the Transnistrian conflict. It also tried to introduce the concept of Europeanism and recommended it as a method of conflict resolution in the former Soviet space. Transnistria (Pridnestrovskaya Moldavskaya Respublika) is defined as a case of "unrecognized states" or "de facto independent states" of the former Soviet republics, which possesses an independent government, financial system and security force, and whose territory Moldova, its de jure host country, is unable to control. However, since the outbreak of the armed conflict between the Moldovan National Army and the Transnistrian paramilitary forces on June 1992, there is no clue to resolve the conflict by means of political dialogues and negotiation tables among key members, despite intermediation by OSCE, Russia, Ukraine, the USA and the EU. Under such conditions, the 'grassroots' approach drawing on the basis of "Europeanism" has lately attracted considerable attention for resolution of the conflict.

Moldovan authority, at the first hand, intended to grant "wider autonomy" to the Transnistria, while Transnistrian authority is demanding an independent subject with independent security and financial systems under a confederation framework with Moldova. Despite such efforts, however, the conflict has not been found an exit towards resolution; what is called "deadlock" or "blind alley" in diplomacy.

On the other hand, the colour revolution (Orange revolution in Ukraine and the Rose revolution in Georgia in 2005) and Romania and Bulgaria's annexation to the EU in 2000 have reduced the distance between the EU and Transnistria. This shortening of distance has affected a larger EU political influence on Moldova, with the EU having greater opportunity to intermediate in the Transnistrian conflict. The EU emphasizes more cooperative work with international organizations and NGOs in the long term and focuses more on grassroots approaches to resolution on the basis of confidence building in border regions. For promoting confidence building between the EU and regional inhabitants in Transnistria and for stabilizing regional security, the measure of sharing identity based on Europeanism is one of the most important ideas.

In the case of the Transnistrian conflict, there are two types of confidence building measures; one is by UNDP and another by working groups monitored by OSCE. UNDP's CBM shows more "neutral" and nonpolitical color. It supports to build and repair schools and infrastructure, open business schools following the European standard, and supply medical facilities. According to an interview conducted by the speaker with the project manager of UNDP, the Transnistrian authority does not support UNDP's CBM, but cannot deny it neither. Another CBM monitored by OSCE is based on the cooperative work between the Moldovan government and the Transnistrian side. Furthermore, most of the working groups do not work well owing to lack of cooperation from the Transnistrians. Besides two CBMs, there is a remarkable measure concerning border control for the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict. European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and to Ukraine (EUBAM) indirectly assists in solidifying Moldovan territorial integrity. EUBAM also functions as a working group, which instructs local inhabitants of the relevance of border-control and the observation of international laws.

It is evident that the Moldovan government and Transnistrian authority were still in a state of confrontation along mental border lines between "West" and "East", and also between Europe and Russia. The EU has a great concern in resolving the Transnistrian conflict in order to secure the EU. It would be attractive to Transnistrian inhabitants to obtain Moldovan citizenship as "EU citizens," and finally push forward the national unification among people. The composition of visa regime with UNDP's CBM, OSCE's CBM and EUBAM may only be a promising method for resolving the Transnistrian conflict.

#### Q&A

Why does Transnistria consider the EU as the more viable option than the Central Asian Republics?  
Can Transnistria become less dependent on Moldova? ( asked by Prof. Ajay Patnaik)

Transnistria shares commonalities more with the Russia, Ukraine and Moldova than with the Central Asian Republics. Moldova has taken an important position in this region after the demise of USSR. Most of the Transnistrian companies are looking for large profits by establishing ventures in the EU. On the other hand EU companies are also spreading their influence in this region. The scope of economic cooperation between the EU and Transnistria has increased due to the geographical proximity and low cost of transportation.

## Panel V: Images of Eurasian Integration

Chair: Gulshan Sachdeva

### Presentations:

Paul Richardson- *Reordering and reimagining post-Soviet space: the Eurasian Union*

R. G Gidadhubli- *Eurasian Economic Union: Opportunities and Challenges*

Sreemati Ganguli- *Silk road as an Integrative Concept: the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scenario*



Richardson's paper was a prelude to the emergence of the Eurasian Union, with focus on the possibilities of development and its ideological implications in both domestic and international political realm of Russia and her neighborhood. The observations made were based upon an understanding of the post-Soviet Union Russia. The promotion of this union has been a result of a combination of civilizational debates on how inter-cultural; trans-regional identity has been shaping the soviet space and so on. The Eurasian Union is no doubt a noteworthy attempt of Vladimir Putin to represent the post-soviet space, and it is intriguing for the current Russian leadership to look into how it shapes the Eurasian Union through its co-optional politics. Geo-politically Russia is squeezed in between the major power players like China and European Union which further underscores the Russian drive to promote Eurasian Union on multicultural lines. Significantly the Eurasian Union represents a unique kind of 'Eurasianism' having its own autocratic ideas based on anti-western sentiments and extreme geopolitical and less ideological foundations. But though it is not devoid of its nuances due to conceptual elasticity, the Eurasian Union do pose an immense potential for reforming the post- soviet Russia itself. The irony of the situation is that, shaping of Russia's post-Soviet identity depends upon how it perceives its neighbors as Russia's failure to embrace the CIS countries while forming the Eurasian Union will in itself reveal the weaknesses and challenges, both domestic and international, that it experiences. Thus the paper very interestingly explores the broader discourses attached with the formation of the Eurasian Union, which may be seen as a major viable alternative to the European Union in the post- Soviet space.

His paper looks into the opportunities and the challenges that are associated with the European Economic Union (EEU). The focal points of the paper were: the opportunities that the EEU guarantees for its member countries, the perception of the West towards the EEU, the China factor influencing the

EEU, the perception of South Asia and India in specific and finally the practical challenges that might act as a fetter to the functioning of the EEU. The EEU initiated by Vladimir Putin in 2007 comprising Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan aims to achieve its objective reality by 2015. Therefore the potentiality of this supranational body in the geopolitical, regional and global realm is yet to be seen in this light.

The three founding nations of EEU namely Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan together constituted nearly 75% of the former Soviet Union. Certain important measures taken by them while laying down the roadmap of EEU, curved out mostly along the EU model, can be enumerated as follows: 1) formation of the Customs Union 2) setting up of the Eurasian Economic Space—an adjudicating body for settling economic disputes among the member countries 3) integration measures taken for uniting the neighboring countries based on the geographical congruity of these countries etc. On the basis of these measures taken, the speaker indicated some of the opportunities that can be unleashed out of the system. Russia and Kazakhstan is one of the largest reservoirs of natural gas and oil and hence their exporting capacity can equip them with a greater bargaining power both at the regional and global level. In this Belarus can act as a vital channel by allowing pipeline transit routes through her. Further, relative inequalities in levels of production among these three founding nations are far lesser, hence fostering the ambition of sustainable economic growth in the region. EEU in itself will be an opportunity for Russia to workout modernization and industrialization, given the fact that levels of trade has already increased to around 40% between these countries over the last few years.

Regarding the perception of the West, Prof. Gidathubli assumes it to have a partial or rather a mixed reaction. From one perspective, it is mutually advantageous to have a large economic unit open at a global level including the West. It projects the prospect for providing a larger market and better economic space as an alternative to EU. However, in view of Putin's broader agenda to forming the Eurasian integration program like that of the former Soviet Union, the establishment of EEU can be seen as a major concern for the present global powers. In the wake of increasing Chinese penetration in the East, North and Central Asia and Russia's dependence on China—containment of China's aggressive expansionist policy is one of the major concerns of Putin. However, in spite of the doubts casted upon the reality reflection of EEU in comparison with EU, one has to acknowledge the difference in the nature of both the institutions and hence the difficulty of total emulation. As issues such as defining of the prerogative space of EEU, fixation of regional currency and sources of authority, uniform adherence of international laws and so on remain yet to be resolved and act as a challenge to the proposed objective realization of the EEU by 2015. But nonetheless, the EEU remains a significant endeavor in building up of the supranational body from the geo-political and geo-economic perspective in the region.

Sreemati Ganguli focussed on the integrationist idea based on the Silk Route concept linking South Asia with Central Asia. While enumerating the several project initiatives under the name of Silk Route Policy undertaken over the years, she hinted upon the larger contentious geopolitics at play. Constant promotion of transit routes to Central Asia through Afghanistan with an observable missing link with China can be considered as the careful underplay of American strategy of integration. Nonetheless, one has to agree with the prospects that the Silk Route strategy fosters, such as it provides the Eurasian region a wider market area with the transit corridors offering greater opportunities to advance trade, transport and communication which are vital for the economic restructuring of the region. The silk routes act as significant means economic and traditional interactions promoting inter-regional and trans-regional cooperation in the era of globalization which were long stalled. The silk roads offer the region to reach out to the outside world and Afghanistan being acting as a significant hyphen linking the Central Asia and South Asia. On one hand as the development and advancement of this region can be seen as advantageous to the West for its own economic developments; on the other hand threat of economic competition from post-soviet Russia and China remain a great concern for the West. All these highlight the fact that transit routes, their accessibility and geo-politics are intrinsically interconnected with each other. However, one has to remember that history of original Silk Routes is civilizational which has been interpreted and reinterpreted over the period of time. And especially in the recent post-Soviet, post-Cold War contexts and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it remains yet to be seen how much this shared vision of regional integration and cooperation remain a mere vision in itself rather than a geo-political tool in the hands of the sponsor states. In the new Silk Road Policy, Afghanistan posits herself as the

center whereas India as the market. Ms. Ganguly ended by throwing the question upon the audience by saying that India should rather be a promoter of Silk Road than its market merely.

At this point the Chairperson, Gulshan Sachdeva summed up the session by reiterating the point that in the current scenario it becomes crucial for India to best define her outlook towards this Eurasian integration process at large.

#### Q & A

The relevant questions that were raised in this session are as follows:

1. Prof. Jayanta Kr. Ray asked in view of the recent economic crisis in Western Europe, to what extent the Russian politics and economy is going to get affected by it since it had suffered after the Soviet disintegration?

In replying to this question, Paul mentioned that Russia's economics is greatly dependent upon European economy thereby extending the impact of economic crisis in Europe on Russia as well. However, total switching away from EU for Russia will be absolutely unsustainable. Prof. R. G Gidadhubli, however stated that the crisis scenario in the west can be seen as both advantageous and disadvantageous for Russia, in light of which a careful closer cooperation with the West needs to be sought.

2. Drawing a comparison between Russia and China, Prof. Jayanta Kr. Ray stated that while Russia has sustained to the several threats to its political stability, can the same be argued for China in the near future?
3. What is going to happen in and around Afghanistan after 2014 when the retreat of the NATO forces is scheduled? Professor Ray further asked about the chances of Kazakhstan to step in this region to restore the sanity of this troubled Af-Pak region.

In Prof. R. G Gidadhubli's view situation in Afghanistan is an evolving issue with definite spillover effect on Russia as well. Nonetheless, EEU can emerge as a major platform for India and Afghanistan both from defense perspective. India can avail a greater market for cooperation, joint ventures, trade and export in sectors such as Pharmaceuticals, Information Technology etc. and the prerogative of authority of the EEU space will be important in this case.

4. Professor Gidadhubli was asked about the shifts in Russian policy formulations.
5. He was also asked to respond to the question whether a certain extent of reluctance on the part of Russia is observable regarding the inclusion of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan in the EEU, in light of the fear of these countries acting as liabilities rather than as effective partners?

Professor Gidadhubli's argument was President Putin will definitely try to integrate with these countries as these central Asian countries are central for Eurasian integration to become a reality.

6. Finally what are the Russian viewpoints for including Ukraine in the EEU which is uniquely posited in between the EU and The EEU?

In this case position of Ukraine itself can be seen as a unique bargaining tool for the country to decide over the two camps.

The session finally came to an end with the views of Prof. Hari S. Vasudevan that the notion of 'Eurasianism' itself has to be analyzed in a more elegant way.

[Srimanti Sarkar]



Organizers of the conference

#### **PANEL VI : Images of Eurasia's transition**

Presentations:

Yang Cheng, *Chinese Acts shape the behavior of Central Asian countries in the post-Soviet period: research on contemporary political developments from the perspective of regime security*

Gulshan Sachdeva, *Evaluating India's New 'Connect Central Asia' Policy*

Athar Zafar, *Uzbekistan's Approach Towards Regional Security Structure*

Raj Kumar Kothari, *Russia's Policy towards Central Asia in the Post-Soviet Years*

Yang Cheng's paper primarily focused on the role of China in promoting good governance, restoring stable growth and sustainable development in post-Soviet Central Asia. China's engagement with the Central Asian republics in the initial period was primarily confined to trade and economic relations. However, China, although in a limited way, along with Russia and other important Western powers contributed largely in the process of transition and together they formed regional security regime in this region. But the great power rivalry in this region has proved to be somewhat detrimental to the balanced security regime which actually influenced the efforts of internal transformation in the region. This volatile situation in a way may prove as a viable opportunity in administering China's significant role for securing its avenues of substantive engagements as well as facilitating the prospect of peaceful and stable development in Central Asia.

Gulshan Sachdeva's presentation pointed to India's recent efforts in engaging with Central Asia in a meaningful way. Previously, China and Russia's intensity of engagement and influence on the region



had somewhat limited India's interest in building up a durable relationship with Central Asia. This restraint is now replaced by new initiatives especially by prioritizing issues like security cooperation in the Central Asian neighbourhood and economic connectivity through north-south corridors. This apart, post-2014 uncertainty in Afghanistan has also added new dimension to India-Central Asia relations. India's image as a strong political and diplomatic partner in the South Asian region has stimulated her bilateral relations with Central Asia. Sachdeva's contention is that the importance of the Central Asian region lies in its role in Eurasian trade as a whole rather than regional trade. India has to synchronize these developments within the emergent space of the Eurasian Customs Union—a reality that is becoming more and more evident in the context of its new Connect Central Asia policy.

Rajkumar Kothari engaged in a discourse about Russia's renewed attention towards Central Asia in the post-Cold War period, reflecting on the opportunities in the Caspian Sea region which has become the hub of activities of the international oil companies that includes countries like USA. Russia's engagement with Central Asia is considered to be an effective countermeasure to US presence in the region. Russia is prioritizing the security of the Russian speaking population in the region. However, Russia does not follow a single line of engagement towards the Central Asian states, but tends to shift its position in accordance with its foreign policy prerogatives.

Athar Zafar seeks to analyse the Uzbek decision of pullout from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The criticality of this move tends to be judged in the context of the NATO pullout from Afghanistan after 2014. It is speculated that after the 2014 pullout regional players like Uzbekistan might have a decisive role in the region and to strengthen such a position it would be necessary for Uzbekistan to disengage herself from US-led institutions like CSTO and be more open to alternative options from the West. The obvious reasons of the pullout are: (a) internal dissensions within the CSTO, especially between Russia and Uzbekistan, (b) strained relations between Tashkent and Dushanbe over regional issues (c) energy interests like the commencement of the gas pipeline leading to China that would create less dependence on Russia's Gazprom for gas export. It is to be seen how Tashkent continues to maintain the balance with the entry of a new player like China. It appears that Tashkent is attempting to maximize its foreign policy options and secure maximum benefits.

### **Observations of Discussant**

The scholarly assessments about bilateral relations within Central Asia and multilateral engagements between the CARs and the extra-regional powers have assumed immense significance. A close scrutiny of the presence of extra-regional actors and role of influential regional organizations like EU, SCO and NATO in this region has become a focal issue of analysis. Basically a game of balance of power among the multiple actors in this region is visible. A significant aspect of power equation is apparent between Russia and USA over gaining their respective hold on this region. Thus Central Asia has turned into a theater of power rivalry given the presence of multiple actors. The competitiveness among the major powers in this region about gaining access through routes, goods and aid adversely affects the region's interests to a great extent. However there is a significant confusion regarding the procedure of the image engineering of this region. Another pertinent question would be whether Central Asia should be viewed as a single regional unit or it would be dealt from country-specific angle. More intensive study should be conducted on constructive measures of engagement with Central Asia.

[Satrajit Banerjee]



Many scholars came from Russia, Europe, and Central Asia

**Panel VII: *Image of the region in the Archives on bilateral relations- the India case***

Chair: Kimitaka Matsuzato

Discussant: Arai Yukiyasu

**Presentations:**

Prof. Sobhanlal Duttgupta, *Divergent approaches: Nationalism and imperialism*

Hari Vasudevan, *Activism in the East: Archival findings on Communist University Workers of the East and the Eastern Board of Trade*

Purabi Roy- *India-Russian Relations: Ideological Concerns*

Professor Dattgupta's work mainly is based upon Comintern archives and highlighted three ideological approaches in policy making that shaped Indo-Russian relations. His contention is that Soviet viewpoint of the East is Russia-centric and there is a universal Soviet viewpoint regarding all countries of the East. The author, based on his archival findings, point to the leadership differences between Lenin and M.N. Roy. Lenin's Thesis, despite its widespread dissemination, seems to have limited appeal compared to the Supplementary Thesis of M.N. Roy, which Stalin praised explicitly. Roy's perception and understanding of the East was in line with the reality in the East. His critical line of thinking, especially in connection with Soviet policy towards India, was guided by his conception of 'India as Soviet colony'. Comintern documents reveal that the Party was actually toeing the line of the British Communist Party. Such a line was not followed in the case of other Asian countries. Dattgupta's

archival research reveals inner debates in the Comintern and M.N. Roy's cardinal role in the Comintern debates.

In the course of his research on the primary source documents related to the Communist Party University of Workers of the East and the Eastern Board of Trade, Professor Hari Vasudevan points to the underlying tone in these documents—he elaborates on the fine point of distinction between external relations and bilateral engagement. He shows that the workers of the East were not only trained in a variety of Communist Party activities but also motivated through world views of the Party that were disseminated through Party literature. The literature was mostly in the nature of text books and research material that constituted the basic study material of the Soviet establishment. So, an entire generation in the east were taught and trained in this ideological atmosphere of the Communist University. The University, founded in 1921, was meant to handle the cadres of the East. It was under direct control of the Comintern at least upto 1939. His narration of the history of study in the Communist University—which reveals an enormous wealth of resources on the dissemination of Communist ideology in the East, is largely based on his extensive archival research (in about 6-7 archives) in the Russian Federation. Vasudevan's research highlights the Communist educational system and the pattern of teaching. The material that was generated also reflects the urgent desire to reform the method of communist teaching. It was an inclusive method of pedagogy, the complications of which have to be comprehended in order to assess the effect of dissemination of communist literature. The literature that Vasudevan refers to is: articles in *Novyi Vostok*, *Revolutsionnyi Vostok*, etc. A series of preferences which are distinctively early Soviet in character come to light in these archival records, argues Vasudevan.

Professor Purabi Roy's talk began with an account of around 200 Indian revolutionaries, who were a part of Soviet Comintern, labelled as British agents after the disintegration of Soviet Union. Her archival work extensively based on as many as 18 archives traced the Indo-Soviet relations from since the time of Nehru and Stalin immediately after India's independence. It is important to mention that Jawaharlal Nehru's relationship with J.V Stalin was in no way close and intimate thereby triggering Indo-Soviet relationship fostering only after the death of Stalin in 1955. Prof. Roy traced the Indo-Russian Relations through the archival narratives on the three great Indian nationalists and travelogues of the time namely, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Rahul Sankrityayana. Tagore's association with Russia can be traced from his accounts of his visits to Russia in his descriptive letters. However, they reveal a time when Soviet Union was not very cooperative in forging a strong political relationship with India. Accounts of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose from the Russian archives do highlight the establishment of a harmonious relationship between Japan and British India. However, Prof. Roy asserts her disagreements in considering Japan as the axis power at that time. Rahul Sankrityayana who is called the Father of Hindi travel literature, was one of the most widely-traveled scholars of India, is also referred as a great Indian nationalist, an eminent Tibetologist and a polyglot who tried to visit Soviet Union to do research on Central Asia. It is through the narrations of the individual characteristics of these nationalist luminaries and the counter Soviet behaviour extended towards them and as depicted in the archives; that Prof. Roy bases her study on Indo-Soviet relations.

The few pertinent questions and observations that came up during the extended discussion session of this panel are as follows:

1. Sobhanlal Duttgupta was asked by the discussant Arai Yukiyasu about the prominence of the ethnic issue in Party documents or the tenor of a possible relationship between the Indian Communist Party and Burmese or Vietnamese Communist Parties.

To this question Prof. Duttgupta pointed out that the issue of ethnicity was never cardinal in the policy prescriptions of the Communist Party of India. The idea was introduced by M.N Roy and it was only 'class' as a category that featured in CPI documents. However, Professor Duttgupta mentioned that Birendranath Chattopadhyay, presented a document entitled "Thesis on Indian Revolution" in 1921 in the Third Congress of Communist International, mentioning the need to understand ethnicity and class both in order to understand the Indian revolutionaries' idea. This resembles Ho Chi Minh's understanding of revolution to a large extent which mingles the category 'class' with other social categories.

Professor Vasudevan commented on this question by saying that Indian leaders of the Communist Party were also recruited from Latin America and the US. So, there was a large cadre base among the Indian communist diaspora.

2. Nandini Bhattacharya, a Kolkata-based researcher and teacher in a college asked Professor Vasudevan to reflect upon archival documents that depict the procedure about student-enrolment in the Communist University.
3. Suchandana Chatterjee had a specific question for Arai Yukiyasu keeping in mind his research in the Mongol archives---are there any specific findings related to Mongol and Buryat revolutionaries and intellectuals of the revolutionary era?

The session ended with the Chairperson Kimitaka Matsuzato's final note highlighting the difficulty in accessing the crucial archival resources in the ex-Soviet countries as most of them still lie unclassified. This aspect perhaps further increases the appeal of archival research on the Soviet Union.

[Srimanti Sarkar]

### **Panel VIII-Northern, Central, and East Europe: Macro-regional and comparative approaches**

Chair: Professor Purusottam Bhattacharya

Discussant: Marta Zdzieborska

#### **Presentations:**

Hiroshi Fukuda, *'Milan Hodza's idea of Central Europe: Agrarian Democracy between Germany and Soviet Russia'*

Dmitry Seltser, *'Comparing Post-communism Big and Small: The Inaugural Elections in Russia (1991) and Macedonia (1990)'*

Yoshiyuki Morishita, How is the area constructed? Form the analysis of Czech-Polish border 'Beskidenland' "

Takahashi Minori, 'The EU 'Regulatory Empire' and Whale Protection Regulation'

Fukuda started with two regional concepts remerged in Europe, such as Central Europe and Central and Eastern Europe - controlled by two great powers Germany and Russia. For instance, small nation like Czech did not want the obliteration of the Habsburg Monarchy to protect from the great powers. Second was Mitteleuropa, designed by Germans. He used F. Naumann (1860-1919) thoughts of the formation of a Central European community on the initiative of Germany during First World War. At the end Fukuda transported the idea of Milan Hodza's (1936) agrarian democracy in Czechoslovakia. Since 60% of the population is related with agriculture in Central Europe Hodza forwards the idea of agrarian democracy in the order to stabilize the political situation in the whole region.

Dmitry Seltser sought to distinguish the formation of democracy in Russia and Macedonia in 1990s. He has used comparative approach to define the arguments. He stated with asking questions: what tasks or problems do 'inaugural elections' decide and solve? What kinds of transition results ought to be seen in real terms? What are the similarities and differences in the Russian and Macedonian cases of 'inaugural elections'? Seltser argued that 'inaugural elections' have to be means for democratizing to an all-encompassing socio-political system. However chairperson of the panel was not convinced the comparative analysis between Russia and Macedonia since diversification between the countries and next to impossible to compare.

Yoshiyuki Morishita looks into the problematic of an area as 'local' that was treated as the political and international problem. He dwells on this aspect taking into account the construction of the notion of Czech-Polish-German border or 'Beskidenland'. 'Beskidenland' - is a name that has been used by the German homeland-associations who were deported from this area to Germany and Austria after the Second World War. End of 19<sup>th</sup> century, unlike Czeck or Polish, German residents had indicated this area as 'Beskidenland' beside 'Teschen-Silesia', which was deriving from Beskiden Mountains. Their idea and the domain of 'Beskidenland' were a little dissimilar from Czech or Polish 'Teschen-Silesia', because

this sphere also contained the area, where German residents had lived outside ‘Teschen-Silesia’. Therefore he concludes that the example of ‘Beskidenland’ demonstrates us that the area was not self-evidence but was constructed according to the political aim by special residents groups.

Takahashi Minori elucidates the political complexities of the Whale Protection Regulation Act that operates between EU and Denmark. He argued that the regulation was drawn up by the Environment Council of Luxembourg in 2008 for all the European member states. Denmark does not openly play a role in either the protection of whales or in pro-whaling. Denmark is the only member state of European Union maintains a politically neutral standpoint because of Greenland. Greenland is the exceptional region where whaling is permitted because of International Convention of the Regulation of Whaling clause 13; allocated the ‘indigenous subsistence whaling’ status. He concludes that Denmark’s politically neutral standpoint concerning whaling somehow reveals the so called ‘regulatory empire-ness’ of the EU.

The discussant of this panel Marta Zdzieborska summarised the papers, but was a little more critical on Fukuda’s intervention of Hodza’s idea. She was saying that agrarian democracy is not the only means for the stability of nation states, there are issues need to be consideration for instance, socio-political democracy, cultural democracy etc. Like chairperson she was also unhappy with the Seltser’s comparison of democratic participation between Russia and Macedonia. This comparison has some fundamental limitations in both Russia and Macedonia for instances size of the countries, cultural diversity, political history, etc. Coming to the Morishita’s presentation Zdzieborska was apprehending that the both ‘Beskidenland’ and ‘Teschen-Silesia’ constructed because of some political reasons but cultural dimension both inside and outside the border is missing in the paper. Though the paper was enriched us to know the fact that territorial dispute is still challenging the so called ‘regulatory empire-ness’ of the European Union. She was little sceptic about the fact that Danish standpoint of the protection of whales is cultural rather political. However, this issue has been politicized by the international game players. The ‘regulatory empire-ness’ of the EU is always challenged either by the standpoint of the member states or by the border disputes between the members states. She congratulates all the panel speakers and showing her humble thanks to MAKAIAS.

Two questions were raised. The first was addressed to Fukuda – whether Hodza has any master plan on educational democracy. Minori was questioned on the cultural aspect—whether there was any such issue as far as the Danish objection to the whaling protection regulation monitored by the EU. One important issue that was taken up by the Chairperson was the sustainability of the ‘empire-ness’ of the European Union.

[Sk Akhtar Ali]

### **Panel IX-Aspects of Eurasian Literature and Society**

Chair: Munira Shahidi

There were six presentations in the panel. Ranjana Saxena spoke on “Representing the Region: Creative Writings ‘then’ and ‘now’; which was followed by Joyshree Roy’s presentation entitled “Contextualizing Anton Chekov in the critical writings of his time;” Michael Nicholson’s discourse on “Patterns of Contemplation and Resistance in early writings of Solzhenitsyn;” Isabelle Faure Jaitly’s interpretation of “The Eurasian philosophical movement and Solzhenitsyn’s vision of Russia”; Junna Hiramatsu’s exploration on “Property and Desire in early Soviet Literature” and the final presentation; that of Maeda Shiho entitled “Gender Hierarchy in Representation of War in Soviet Culture and Literature in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.”

Ranjana Saxena’s inclusive presentation was dedicated to the plethora of creative writings which emerged as a consequence of the troubled relationship between Russia and Chechnya. The central theme of Saxena’s exposition was the attraction of the Caucasus for the Russians with an emphasis on the geographical character of the region with enigmatic connotations and the subsequent decline in its literary significance with its characteristic implications in the realm of literature. She categorised the literary representations of the region in terms of “then” and “now” referring to the disjuncture epitomized in the periodization of the literature of the region in terms of a) Classicist imagination; b)

Romanticist imagination and c) the decline in the writings on the Caucasus. Saxena focussed on the works of German Sadulaev and Leo Tolstoy to accentuate her contention.

Joyshree Roy in her exposition sought to contextualize Anton Chekov in the critical traditions of his time, a period where the likes of Vissarion Belinsky, the father of literary criticism in Russia created a tradition which stressed upon the necessity to create a national literature and employ it as a tool for providing proper cultural guidance to society thereby elevating art from the level of the abstract. At this juncture, Roy elaborates, philosophical deliberations on the issue of art took a turn towards utilitarian realism, sustained by the likes of Chernyshevsky, Dobrolibov and Pisarev who gave a call for a new intellectual maturity through critical and committed literature. Roy puts forth the argument that Chekov emerged against this backdrop with the innate ability to traverse the two worlds of popular and serious literature with equal ease combining a strong sense of personal freedom with adequate attention to the imperfections of the social environment, underscoring the need for social rejuvenation without explicit philosophizing and preaching.

Michael Nicholson's interpretation of the literary evolution of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn places an emphasis on the argument that *One day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* does not mark a turning point in his work. Nicholson sets forth the contention that the key decades in the evolution of Solzhenitsyn's literary journey are the 1940s and 1950s, culminating in the year 1959, which witnessed the publication of the widely acclaimed *One day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* as well as the little known literary film-scenario *Tanks Know the Truth*, a piece in which Solzhenitsyn saw the essential spirit of his writings. Nicholson's presentation explores this period of Solzhenitsyn's literary evolution and proposes that the vacillation between positions manifested on the one hand by an introspective, universal human perspective and on the other hand by a sense of distinctiveness, resistance and revolt that extends beyond the literary works of the 1950s inspires and influences Solzhenitsyn's reading of nationhood and Russianness.

Isabelle Faure Jaitly in her construal of Solzhenitsyn's vision of Russia with its emphasis on a geographically modest nation, an independent continent, looking inwards, towards the east and not the west, without an expansionist tendency; interlinks it with the Eurasian philosophical movement with its spiritual, geographical and historical dimensions and brings out not only the similarities but also the differences between the Eurasian approach and Solzhenitsyn's approach to Russia's destiny. In the process of clarification, Jaitly delves deep into the literary works of Solzhenitsyn conveying his vision and his place in the history of Russian thought in the twentieth century.

Junna Hiramatsu's presentation surveyed the aspect of property and desire in Soviet literature. It focussed on the neglect of economics in Soviet literature and the rejection of private property in the Soviet communist system, which was in turn reflected in Soviet literature. Hiramatsu's principal argument was that Soviet writers considered to be the "engineers of human souls," epitomize the negation of private property and the desire for possession in their *bildungsroman* (coming of age story) of the new Soviet man, the main narrative of early Soviet literature. In this context, Hiramatsu states that there was a distinctive focus on the texts from the transitional era between the NEP (New Economic Policy) period, an age where the revolutionaries were anxious about partial restoration of the market economy and private property, and the era of Stalin's revolution, which enforced rapid collectivization and industrialization.

The final presentation of the session was in the form of Maedo Shiho's perspective on the stereotypes of women in the sphere of Soviet public memories and literature of the Second World War. Shiho asserts it was anticipated that Soviet women would advance as a consequence of national policy by virtue of which they became emotionally independent but from the perspective of gender studies the emancipation of Soviet women did not result in any essential egalitarianism as demonstrated by the fact that in the public sphere, male images continued to command an unqualified presence. She exemplifies her argument by affirming that in the Soviet culture and literature of the Second World War, the images of women were in the form of an *affectionate mother* or the *charming, romantic medic* notwithstanding the fact that around 800,000 of them were registered as combatants. By interpreting the images of women in war depictions and clarifying the structure of gender hierarchy in these illustrations, Shiho essentially tackles the function of images in the process of uniting the "imaginary community" in Soviet culture and society.



Participants from Japan

**Panel X- Policies and Structures**

Chair: Professor Ajay Patnaik

Discussant: Dr. Bijoy Kumar Das

**Presentations:**

Rupakjyoti Borah, *The energy factor in India's foreign policy towards Russian and Central Asia*

Lopamudra Bandyopadhyay, *Nation-building in Turkmenistan: A comparison with the Evolution of Nations within the Central Asian Sphere*

Rupakjyoti Borah's paper was an assessment of energy as a critical requirement for every country and especially for developing and energy-consuming countries like India, China, Indonesia and Vietnam. There are manifold reasons for India's requirement of energy. India needs energy due to its highest economic growth estimated to grow by 6.9% in 2011-12. It has a population of approximately 1.2 billion, will overtake China as the most populous country in the years to come. It is an energy deficient country. India has bucked the global trend with regards to nuclear energy. At present nuclear power accounts for 3% of India's total energy basket, will grow 20,000 MWE by 2020. While dwelling upon the reason why energy security is one of the crucial plans in India's foreign policy towards Russia and Central Asia it has multiple causes. There is growing pressure on India from the Western powers to cut down on oil imports from Iran and moving towards countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait. The proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is a failure. Iran has dropped down from its position as the second largest crude oil supplier to India. India-Bangladesh-Myanmar gas pipeline is also in limbo. India is unable to invest heavily in large hydroelectric power projects due to environmental concerns. The MBI pipeline was proposed to cut across Shwe in Myanmar's Arakan province to the North East Indian states of Mizoram, Tripura then onto West Bengal via Bangladesh. This was shelved due to three countries' discrepancies of opinions. ONGC option seems more viable. India's energy collaboration with Russia and Central Asian countries is backed by certain facts. Russia has provided assistance to the Kundankulam Nuclear Power Project in Tamil Nadu. ONGC and Kazakhstan's KazMunaiGaz has signed an agreement on the Satpayev oil block in Kazakhstan. China has made considerable headway in this respect. MOU has been inked between Nuclear Power Corporation of India and Kazatomprom envisaging cooperation including supply of uranium to India. In May 2012, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan signed the sale purchase agreement for \$ 7.6 billion. Russia has supported India's bid for full membership of the Nuclear Suppliers group and other export control regimes like MTCR and Wassenaar Arrangements. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have surplus hydro power. In 2011, ONGC Videsh Ltd signed an agreement with Uzbekistan's Uzbekneftegaz to undertake joint activities in third countries allowing to tap into Central Asia's energy resources. The challenges and possible recommendations were also reviewed in considerable detail. Lack of connectivity, maintaining cordial relations with Iran on one hand and Saudi Arabia on the other hand is a crucial factor. India is one of the biggest donors in Afghanistan and will continue to play more critical role once the US vacate in 2014. Russian cooperation in Kundakulam Project is needed. Security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan is worrisome for the security of the TAPI pipeline. Energy is a decisive factor in India's foreign policy. India slowly and of late has upped the ante on the Bashar Al-Assad regime in Syria due to commercial gains. At present India spends more than \$400million each day on oil imports which makes 70% of its oil consumption. It should strive harder to get energy from Russia and Central Asia. It should cache in feel-good factor in India's historical and cultural ties with these countries. Silk Route camaraderie can be revived. Middle East is a volatile region and to widen the scope it should bank on Russia and Central Asia. To put all the eggs in one basket is not a viable option so must divert the concentration.

The second paper of Lopamudra Bandyopadhyay was an honest attempt to understand whether national identities in Turkmenistan are socially constructed or primordial and perennial. It is an intrinsic understanding of the role of the state, the charisma of the leader, influence of modern institutions like media and schools in the construction of national identity in a newly independent state. It delved into the role of international cultural factors in identity construction within the borders of an isolated Central Asian country such as Turkmenistan. Finally it was an endeavour to study the gradual evolution of the concept of national identity prevalent within Turkmenistan in comparison with the four Central Asian nations. Following the declaration of independence the process of nation-building was initiated by President Saparmurat Niyazov. President used the term "national revival" as an alternative to nation building. Moscow promoted Russian language and culture in Turkmenistan instead of genuine Turkmen values and prohibited nationalist studies and movements. The coherent system of nation-building in Turkmenistan had two main objectives-the unity of tribes and gradual socio-cultural de-Russification. The novelty of the Turkmen process of nation-building as compared to the other Central Asian countries lies in the fact that at present it is gradually moving towards its dream of an elevated Turkmen nation. Like its numerous other non-Russian minorities, the Soviet government had to foster national consciousness among the Turkmen in parallel to their Sovietisation. She made vivid illustration of Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' in understanding whether Turkmen national identity is perpetual and fixed or a socially constructed phenomenon. Following the declaration of independence, under the direction of Turkmenbashi, the Turkmen State initiated the



nation building policy to fill the ideological vacuum, to maintain the source of legitimacy for the new nation-state and to adapt to the international system. The nation building process primarily focused on the unity of tribes. Turkmenbashi defined the government policy on the unity of tribes as 'national revival' by returning to the real history and spiritual sources rather than 'nation-building'. The tools for nation building in Turkmenistan are the development of Vernacular Language, the role of the Media, re-writing History, Propaganda and Education and the Personality Cult of the President. International cultural factors influenced Turkmen identity as Turkmenistan is geographically located at the crossroads of Russian, Islamic and Turkish cultures. It has faced a cultural vacuum and instability since the end of the Russian dominance, which allows the penetration of several cultures. Globalization encourages intercultural relations and interactions mainly because communication technologies empower cultures to flow across state borders. Russian, Islamic, Turkish and Western Influences contributed to the nation-building. President Berdymukhamedov moved to reduce foreign isolation and reversed some of the prior policies. He has been criticized for building a personality cult of his own. He is the only person whose first name is used in government press releases. He is also sometimes called the "Turkmen leader" by his country's press. It may be stated that Turkmen national identity is a socially constructed concept instead of primordial and fixed phenomenon. The analysis of the nation building process also reveals the state-society relations in Turkmenistan.

### **Observations of Discussant**

The papers have been comprehensive analyses of India's security policies and energy requirement from both historical and strategic point of view. The speaker has taken significant note of the fact that it has been reiterated by the Indian Prime Minister that energy security is second to the food security. But in case of oil requirement why India should be dictated by the Western terms? TAPI pipeline deserves special emphasis as both China and Pakistan are crucial for India's security point of view. The Indian and Chinese interests in the nation-building process in the Central Asian region needs detailed analysis. Whether Western culture or African culture will dominate the Central Asian culture is debatable.

### **Q&A**

India's immense hydro-electric potentialities need to be reviewed. Other alternatives like solar and wind power need to be explored. Does India possess the required efficacy to utilize these potentialities? The North-South Corridor and Sakhalin need to be reviewed. Turkmenistan is not very proactive in interacting with the countries like Europe, China, US like that of Kazakhstan. What about India's ability to join the market in Central Asia compared to that of China and Russia? America has no pipeline with any of the energy-producing countries but it has connection with those due to the purchasing capacity. India goes for lot of investment for oil and energy which might get swapped in the Persian Gulf. Geo-political considerations constrain Indo-China or Indo-Pakistan pipeline. Iranian pipeline is more viable. North-South Transport Corridor is another viable option. India is taking a balanced position and trying to take neutral stance with the US in case of Iran issue. (Saudi Arabia is not the safest basket for India).

[Sayantani Sen Mazumdar]

### **Panel XI: *The Indo-Persian Ecumene***

Chair: Prof. Jayanta Kr. Ray

Discussant: Diloram Karomat

#### **Presentations:**

Umedjon Majidi, *Tajik-Indian relations in 20th-21st centuries: Cultural Aspects*

Nandini Bhattacharya, *Re-Inventing Culture: The Tajik experience of Post-Soviet Years*

Anwasha Ghosh, *The Central Asia factor in Indo-Afghanistan Relations*



Umedjon Majidi at the outset stated that Indo-Tajik cultural relationship is based on civilizational connections through millennia. Commonalities in language, religion, literature, arts, architecture and so on have helped fostering the cultural relationship even more which dates back significantly to the Kushana period. India- Tajikistan relations have fostered along the various Silk Roads that connect India with Central Asia since the times of Soviet Union. Post-independence India was the first country to recognize Tajikistan as an independent nation in 1991. This probably has set the ground for Indo-Tajik relationship even stronger. Henceforth the speaker highlighted upon the various sectors along which the relationship between the two countries have developed; such as the Indian universities through its Eurasian study programs and various scholarship and student exchange programs have helped in extending cultural relations. International visits by the President of Tajikistan in 2006 and signing of various MoUs; exchange of great literary figures and cultural exchanges through dance, music and art exhibitions and even opening of Indian Cultural Centers providing Hindi language courses and so on has developed the mutual cultural relationship significantly in due course of time. Therefore, in the wake of Indian government's cooperative stand, the speaker provided a very optimistic overview of the steadily developing Indo-Tajik Cultural Relationship.

Nandini Bhattacharya gave a visual representation of Tajik culture that was being revived and reinvented in the post-Soviet years. Depicting a rich cultural experience over the last two decades in Tajikistan through an elaborate portrayal of historic heritage, Tajik language, poetry, music, and films; the presenter tried to show a heterogeneous approach for cultural revival that encompass both the religious and secular, Islamic and pre-Islamic, classical and folk trends working together in harmony yet in a loosely bound sense of the term. The central point of her argument was to show how the process of cultural regeneration underwent a revival without severing its ties with the immediate past-Soviet cultural lineage, and has gradually evolved from within it in due course of time. Her paper thus captures glimpses of a rich cultural collage that highlights the significance of soft power in the present world of international relations.

Drawing a brief historical background on Indo-Afghan relations, Anwesha Ghosh pointed to the prime strategic questions about the Central Asian factor as playing a decisive role in Indo-Afghanistan relations in the recent context. Assessing India's relationship with Afghanistan especially after the Cold War through the Taliban era, Anwesha highlighted upon the various strategic engagements between the two countries especially after 2001 till the present. This lays the ground for the assessing the Central Asia factor that works in India's foreign policy undertakings in the Central and North-Western region of Asia. The increasing geo-political significance of the region, in the wake of expansionist policies of the major powers of the world, has also led India to consider Central Asia as her 'extended strategic neighborhood'. And Afghanistan in this context acts as a vital hyphen between India and the Central Asian countries. Common security concerns, productive bilateral engagements, mutual economic engagements and development of trade and transport corridors in this region are thus the probable channels of cooperation that India seeks to cater from Central Asia in the backdrop of prime strategic considerations such as: reducing outside power influences, cultivation of the Central Asian economic and energy resources, countering Pakistani influence and preventing Islamic extremism in the region. In light of this, India's policy interest in support of a stable Afghanistan, especially after the proposed retreat of the NATO forces in 2014, has to be seen. The speaker further highlights upon India's recent diplomatic engagements with the several central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in order to underscore India's cooperative approach towards the Central Asian States. However, she concludes by posing the question whether Central Asia can actually provide a much needed 'strategic depth' to India's foreign policy and how so far Afghanistan can help India to balance Pakistani and Chinese influence in this region.

The panel discussion ended with an elaborate discussion initiated by the discussant, Dr. Diloram Karomat on the greater cultural discourse of Central Asia in general and Tajikistan in specific. Professor Jayanta Ray in light of Anwesha's presentation commented that indeed Indian foreign policy has seen various levels of maturity that have led her to abandon her earlier Non-aligned stand and engage more vigorously at the global level, as evident from her increasing engagements with the Eurasian nations.

The few pertinent questions and observations that came up during the extended discussion session of this panel are as follows:

1. Emphasizing on more cultural engagements between India and Central Asia, Munira Shahidi pointed out that academic interest on the same is declining in the present times. She thus highlighted upon the huge number of academic resources that are available in the central Asian archives that can help research immensely in this field.
2. Ms. Srimanti Sarkar, asked Mrs. Nandini Bhattacharya to reflect upon the possibly existent factors which marks the distinction between Tajik culture during the Soviet and post-Soviet period in order to call it a cultural 're-invention'.
3. Prof. H.S. Vasudevan while observing the fact that, there was a time when cultural imagination of Central Asia was intrinsically a part of India, asked Dr. Diloram Karomat to reflect from her own experience whether India's cultural sensibility towards Central Asia is persisting only at the academic level or has disappeared over the time at the practical level. And secondly, how strong is the cultural sensibility from the central Asian side still persisting today.
4. Prof. Gulshan Sachdeva made his observations on Ms. Anwesha Ghos's paper stating that the two major challenges that Afghanistan is likely to face during post 2014 are from the security perspective and economic perspective. Security problem and economic sustainability will be the major areas of concern for Afghanistan, in dealing which India will have her significant role to play.

## Panel XII: Culture and the region

Chair: Professor Anuradha Chanda

Discussant: Gautam Ghosh

Presentations:

Akiko Honda, *The “Ensemble” of People’s Bodies and Socialist Realist Architecture: The All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV) in Soviet Movies*

Munira Shahidi, *Eurasian culture/arts of Central Asia*

Takayuki Yokota Murakami, *Literary Harbin: A Culture life at the Crossing of Empires*

Rashmi Doraiswamy, *Presentation and representation: Subjectivity through history in Kazakh cinema*

Reyaz Mohammad, *Post-Soviet Media in Central Asia: With Special Focus on Coverage of Presidential elections of Kyrgyzstan*



Akiko Honda’s paper dealt with the usage of architectural work in media in 20<sup>th</sup> Century. During the first half of 20th century the center of architectural works shifted worldwide. They were no longer exclusively located on the construction site, but more and more were displaced into mass media such as photos, newspapers, magazines, movies, and so on. In her presentation she dealt extensively with, Grigori Aleksandrov's film *The Shining Path* (1940), especially its last scene which was devoted to the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV), functioned as a presentation of an architectural idea at that time. Building pavilions of the VSKhV was regarded as a prototype for construction of the Soviet Palace, which was the final goal of the socialist realist architecture as the Gesamtkunstwerk. In the end of the film, the heroine received the order of Lenin as an outstanding Stakhanovite worker in one of the pavilions of the VSKhV. Aleksandrov described this scene as the apogee of the heroine’s career and the film itself, combining fictional and non-fictional (real pavilion’s) images. In this scene, the ensemble of human bodies, sculptures of socialist leaders, stage settings, backdrops and other details made a

sublime vision of the ideal architectural space. Her paper considered the effect of the media on formation of the socialist realist architecture via analysis of soviet movies.

Munira Shahidi's presentation dealt with the evolution of culture and Art in the Eurasian region over the last hundred years. The culture/arts in Central Asia of the last century have both traditional and imported European ideas, institutionalized during soviet period. As a result, *new* forms of modern arts: novels, national songs, symphony music, visual arts and cinema have been accord, strongly impacting social identity. Although the most remarkable pieces of arts of soviet period rose from the common regional intercultural tradition of CA, transition from the soviet system to market economy makes them vulnerable and non-protected. She mentioned that legalization of the organic, Eurasian features of modern arts of CA as a supranational phenomenon is a core of the activity of the Z.Shahidi International Foundation for Culture, which she is a part of. Her presentation outlined the following four crucial periods from Tajik view.

1. The second half of 19th c.-20c. Building of national cultural infrastructure. Literature, theatre and music as the unifying power of all- regional movement. Terror and deportations in the artistic space.
2. 50th-70th of the last century. Adaptation of European classics and re-thinking of the Islamic arts in Tajik theatre. Power and arts.
3. 80th-90th of the last century. Legalization of Sufism and mysticism as the common features of arts in CA and Europe.
4. Contemporary discourses in national arts.

Murakami's presentation was on Harbin, a colony founded by Russians where both Japanese and Russians lived till the end of World War-II. The large Russian population were primarily White immigrants in exile and their nostalgia for homeland was typically expressed in the poetic works of *Alexandr Vertinsky*, who was an émigré for the considerable period from in different European states and eventually in China. The presentation also dealt extensively with the Japanese writer *Jiromasa Gunji*, who lived in Harbin when Vertinsky was settled in China. Guji was sympathetic to the decadent and desperate nostalgia for mother Russia, found in Vertinsky's works which he quoted profusely in describing lived of White Russian. Gunji's focus was on cultural life of Russia in Harbin only in its relationship to Russia and ultimately to the West and remained indifferent to China. For Vertinsky China was nothing but a "big secret and fantasy". Harbin showed scarce interest in Chinese civilization. The sense of exile thus was relative to the cultural environment of expatriates. Russians in Harbin, Orientalizing and other China, has a keener sense of expatriation than those in Paris and Berlin, which incited more acute nostalgia, but this sense of up rootedness and displacement that Russian and Japanese diasporic literature found in Harbin was, in the last instance, recuperation of their tacit identity as imperialists that they could not escape, thus demonstrating that literature in expatriation can be culturally imperialistic.

Of the five Central Asian Republics, Kazakhstan has taken the lead in matters of cinema. Apart from the Eurasia Film Festival that is hosted annually in Almaty, the country also has a strong cinema industry with state and independent studios. There is cinema for the art-house as well as cinema that is commercial. What is of interest is that the state is also using cinema to project itself globally. President Nursultan Nazarbayev's support to *Nomad* is an example.

Rashmi Doraiswamy's presentation dealt with the film titled *The Sky of My Childhood* (2011) by Rustem Abdrashitov which provide re-readings of history of the Soviet past from the viewpoint of post-Soviet contemporaneity and are interesting for the ways in which they are creating subjectivities that image and imagine the new times.

Reyaz Mohammad spoke about post-Soviet media with special emphasis on Kyrgyz Presidential elections. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Central Asian Republics (CAR) are undergoing transitions and facing enormous challenges in establishing secular democracy. The state of media in all five CARs is somewhat ambiguous – both in laws and in practice. Soviet system clearly fixed the role of the journalists – besides rights, they also had their duties towards the state, the party and its ideologies.

In post-Soviet CARs too journalists were expected to be loyal to the respective government. Their goal thus was 'not a vibrant press, but one that was uncritical of the regimes. Strategic liberalisation of different aspects of public life is enabling media to take active role in civil society. Kyrgyzstan, for long, liked to project itself as an 'island of democracy' in the otherwise totalitarian surroundings. On the parameters of freedom of expression, no doubt, the country enjoys the highest level of freedom and pluralism in the region, followed by Kazakhstan. By all account general public in Kyrgyzstan have more options than Kazakhstan, and certainly much more than other three republics in the region. Kyrgyzstan appears to be going through democratic upheavals and civil society in general, but media in particular, is playing the critical role. This paper aims to see to analyse the trajectories media in Central Asia is going through, with focus on Kyrgyzstan. Reyaz did a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the news content of a Kyrgyzstan based news agency and compare it with those based in the West.

### **Observations of Discussant**

Gautam Ghosh expressed his happiness to be part of a panel which showcased such interesting works of researchers and congratulated all the speakers on their brilliant presentations. Regarding Honda's Presentation, he said it was interesting to listen to her about the period and also the films she spoke about. He mentioned about the central character of the film 'Tania' and the projection of three dimensions (Past, Present and Future) with the help of mirrors. Her presentation also showed how to magnify, whom to magnify at which point of history. Speaking about Madame Munira's work he expressed his fascination on the art and cultural aspect which she had showcased and observed that the presenter threw light on the subject from different angles. Dr. Rashmi's works have been something he has always been fascinated about. He was overwhelmed as she explained the new waves of Kazakh cinema, which has been made in different style and threw light on the origin of "new wave of Cinema" in the country. He labeled Murakami's presentation as "vibrant and explosive" and as an eye opener for the works of Gunji and Vertinsky and repented that these works were never available in India. Finally on the last presentation he said it was a brilliant research work from a young scholar which depicted how press was controlled and decontrolled in Kyrgyzstan. He wished success to all the speakers for their research work.

### **Question and Answer Session:**

- ✓ Questions posed about the minimal Russian interest on Chinese Culture.
- ✓ Comments on the film by Dr. Rashmi Doraiswamy.
- ✓ Discussion on Islamic and pre-Islamic tradition in Kazakhstan.
- ✓ Role of cultural elite and gender issues were discussed.

[Arpita Basu]

## Closing Session



Professor Matsuzato commented on the intensity of the importance of the International Conferences on these areas. He highlighted the purpose of the forthcoming Makuhari Congress (2015)--to focus on the academic cooperation between Japan, Russia and India. Professor Murakami was inspired by liveliness of the presentations. He mentioned about the upcoming Regional conference in Osaka University in August 2013. Professor Yang Cheng conveyed Shanghai's enthusiasm in welcoming scholars from India. Professor Vasudevan reflected on the tradition of interaction among scholars of Central Asia, Russia and India. He also focussed on the widening of the scope of cooperation among the CIS scholarly community. East European specialists should be encouraged to reflect upon the changing trends in Eurasian Studies. Professor Patnaik indicated JNU's macro-level studies on Ukraine and Romania. The Indian conferences on Eurasia are mostly concerned with the evolving nature of Eurasian politics. Professor Gidadhbuli emphasized the opportunity for scholars to explore other related areas of research on the Eurasian region. There should be more concrete planning by various research institutes and area studies units to provide scope of diversified research on Eurasia. A valuable suggestion was more time allotment for the interactive sessions and discussions. Discussants' observations needed to be encouraged. Professor Mahavir Singh highly appreciated the collective strength of MAKAIAS. In India MAKAIAS is playing the role of a nodal centre connecting all the organizations focusing on these areas giving it a global character. Prof Ray communicated the tradition of the UN community that the end of a conference suggests the beginning of another conference.

The valuable insights and recommendations gained from substantive contributions of the participants stimulated an in-depth understanding of the critical tenets of the Conference. The presentations and discussions signify the scholarly environment and research endeavour which enriched the substance of the academic sessions.

[Sayantani Sen Mazumdar]