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DOFFING "MANKURT'S CAP"

**CHINGIZ AITMATOV'S
"THE DAY LASTS MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS"
AND THE TURKIC NATIONAL HERITAGE**

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The appearance of Chingiz Aitmatov's *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* (*The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*) in December 1980 created a major literary sensation in Moscow. There was something in the novel for everyone, and reviews in the Soviet Union, the Western press, and in emigre periodicals were overwhelmingly positive. Soviet critics especially welcomed the novel for its timely appearance after a serious discussion about the crisis of the genre "novel" in contemporary Soviet letters. As such Aitmatov's novel was singled out as the work pointing the way Soviet literature should go in the 1980s.¹

Chingiz Aitmatov is one of a number of prominent non-Russian writers whose works are becoming increasingly popular in the Russian-dominated contemporary Soviet literary scene. Like the Abkhazian, Fazil' Iskander, the Moldavian, Ion Drutse, and the Belorussian, Vasyli' Bykov, Aitmatov is bilingual. He has written and published his fiction both in Kirghiz and Russian. Since 1966, however, Aitmatov's works have appeared first in Russian; only later does he translate them into Kirghiz, and often with considerable time lapse. Like other non-Russian Soviet writers, Aitmatov realizes that the publication of his works in Russian is the best path to attaining broad recognition both in the Soviet Union and abroad, where there are very few literary scholars capable of reading the national languages of the smaller Soviet nationalities. Because Aitmatov now writes almost exclusively in Russian and has been perceived as a Russian writer by the West,² critics often fail to take into account the degree to which the author's Turkic national heritage is reflected in his fiction. While it would be a mistake to reduce the author's fiction to that of a "parochial nationalist," an examination of the neglected Turkic dimension of Aitmatov's work will invariably enhance our understanding of a writer who spans *two* cultures. One should note, for example, that there are far more Turkic than Russian characters in Aitmatov's novels³ and almost all of his works are set in his native Central Asia. The two exceptions, "Gazetchik Dziuiio" ("Dziuiio the Newsboy," 1952) and *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria*, (*The Piebald Dog Running Along the Seashore*, 1977) are both set in Asia. Although greatly indebted to

classical Russian literature (in particular to Tolstoy and Dostoevsky) and educated at the prestigious Gorkii Institute in Moscow, Aitmatov, nevertheless, continues to direct his art toward Soviet Central Asia, presenting problems and conflicts with unique Central Asian manifestations.

Born in 1928 in northern Kirgizstan, Aitmatov was able to experience the age-old ways of his ancestors before forced sedentarization, begun in the 1930s, put an end to their nomadic traditions forever. Aitmatov was also old enough to remember the collectivization efforts in Kirgizstan, which resulted in the migration of thousands of Kirghiz and Kazakhs to Siankiang province in northern China. He saw the famed *manaschi*, and heard them recite the century-old Kirghiz oral epic, *Manas*. Steeped in the folklore of his people as a youth, the writer has returned over and over again to its legends, myths, and lyrical pathos. Indeed, Aitmatov's unique epic world view, which finds expression throughout his work in the contrasting of timeless nature and ancient folk wisdom with the pressing problems of Soviet contemporaneity, clearly stems from his deep respect for the Turkic national heritage. On many occasions Aitmatov has spoken of his indebtedness to *Manas*, and today he is seeking to preserve as much as possible of the epic by serving as editor of its four-volume edition -- the most complete edition to date.⁴ To be sure, in everything he writes, Aitmatov strives to touch upon the universal in the human condition, yet at the same time he never misses a chance to defend the interests of his people, calling attention to the rich cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia and seeking to rectify the patronizing attitude of the Soviet Union's Russian cultural establishment toward Central Asia.

The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years provides a perfect illustration of Aitmatov's dual purposes. On the one hand, the author goes to great length to expand the temporal and spacial dimensions of the depicted events to give his work universal and global significance: the novel has three temporal planes (the legendary past, the recent past/present, and the hypothetical future); the setting shifts from

Kazakhstan to Nevada, from the Pacific to an orbiter in outer space, and finally even to a planet in another galaxy. On the other hand, however, there is much in the novel that moves from the universal to the specific, probing into the complicated relationship between the national minorities of Central Asia and the Russian-dominated Soviet political and cultural establishment. Thus, while the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in outer space may appear to be the novel's most dramatic conflict, the significance of *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* for non-Russian Soviet letters lies in its cautious, yet effective portrayal of several of the burning issues facing Soviet Central Asians today.

On the surface Aitmatov's popular novel appears to use the language and realia of Central Asia for "local color," to appeal to the exotic tastes of his Russian and Western readers. Like the many other literary works from Central Asia available in Russian, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* contains numerous Turkic words dispersed throughout the narration to evoke the flavor of life in the Muslim East: *koketai* (dear one), *atan* (camel), *agai* (teacher), *ashi* (funeral repast), *zhylrau* (nomadic bard). Muslim proverbs and even parts of prayers are given in Kazakh with explanation in Russian. For example, "Mal iesi kudaidan" ("the beast's master is determined by God"), "Kiush atasyntanymaidy" ("might acknowledges no father"), and "Ashvadan lia illa khil' alla" ("there is no god other than Allah").⁵ Other elements of local color found in countless other works from Central Asia and in Aitmatov's novel as well are the romanticized image of folk bard with *dombra* (Central Asian stringed instrument) and the personification of animals -- in Aitmatov's novel the camel Karanar serves as the hero's alter ego. Yet unlike much of middle-brow literature from Soviet Central Asia, Aitmatov's presentation of the national Turkic and Muslim legacy runs much deeper, and frequently touches upon painful events in recent Central Asian history.

When speaking of the world view of Muslim Central Asia, experts frequently note its "past-centered awareness." Unlike the Christian West, which awaits a "Golden Age" in the future, Muslims experience a sense of

obligation to the past -- to their ancestors or to some glorious bygone age.⁶ Such an orientation to the past has proven quite tenacious among Soviet Muslims. It has survived seventy years of sovietization with its emphasis on the future "new man" and "new society." Nowhere is this "past-centered awareness" more evident today than in the contemporary literature of the non-Russian peoples of Soviet Central Asia. This concern for the common Turkic or Islamic heritage among the indigenous intelligentsia of Soviet Central Asia has been labeled *mirasism* by Western observers.⁷ The Arabic word *miras* denotes "heritage" or "legacy." While those who study contemporary Russian literature can point to a similar fascination with the past in the prose of Soloukhin, Belov, Astafiev, Rasputin and others, Central Asian *mirasism* has a different orientation. In the prose of Russian writers, the pre-revolutionary values and way of life of the Russian village are emphasized as a corrective to the present sad state of affairs brought about by the Party's aggressive disregard for the Russian national heritage -- resulting in the destruction of churches, architectural monuments, village traditions, etc. In Muslim Central Asia *mirasism* seeks to call attention to the national heritage to emphasize the national identity of the Muslim population as distinct from that of the Russians, who have determined the fate of the area for over a century. Thus, to a significant degree *mirasism* is anti-Russian or anti-Western in the sense that it seeks to bring attention to and eventually rectify the long-standing cultural prejudices of Russian policy makers, both pre-revolutionary and Soviet.⁸

Chingiz Aitmatov has consistently sought to place his prose at the service of Central Asian interests. His mature fiction draws upon the ancient folklore of Turkic Central Asia to heighten in parabolical fashion the portrayal of controversial events from the recent Central Asian past (1930-1980). In a well-wrought chain of literary allusion Aitmatov evokes past wrongdoings, scorning the shallow and deceptive political justifications commonly offered in defense of man's inhumanity to man. Aitmatov's style has been aptly characterized as having a "now-you-see-it-now-you-don't" quality.⁹ While the pursuits of socialist realism

demand that the position of an author be clearly defined in his work, Aitmatov has long since turned his back on such primitive monotony, taking great care to "hide" behind several narrative voices when depicting sensitive political issues. Consequently Russian and non-Russian Soviet readers can vary greatly in what they "see" in Aitmatov's fiction.

While avoiding any idealization of the past as a "golden age," Aitmatov aims at making readers aware of the lessons to be learned from the past. Perhaps the most important theme in Aitmatov's fiction is the moral responsibility of generation for generation. The veneration of one's immediate ancestors has both pre-Islamic and Islamic roots among the Kirghiz, and there can be no doubt that it has exerted considerable influence on Aitmatov and his work. In an autobiographical essay published in *Sovetskie pisateli: avtobiografii*, Aitmatov, before moving on to a discussion of his grandfather and father, writes about the importance attached to the veneration of one's ancestors in Muslim society:

In our village it was considered absolutely obligatory to know one's ancestors to the seventh generation. The old men were very strict about this. . . . And if a boy happened not to know his genealogy, then reprimands would reach his parents' ears. People would say, "What kind of father is that who has neither clan nor forebears? Where is he looking? How can someone grow up without knowing his ancestors?" And the questions would go on and on. In this lay a sense of continuity from generation to generation and a sense of mutual responsibility in one's clan.¹⁰

The boy hero of Aitmatov's highly successful *The White Steamboat* (1970) is similarly taken aback by a Kirghiz youth who has lost such a sense of family responsibility:

"Really, they never taught you to remember the names of your seven ancestors?" the boy asked.

"No they didn't. And what for? I don't know them, and am none the worse for it. Life goes on."

"Grandfather says that if people don't remember their fathers' fathers, they'll go bad."

"Who will go bad? People?"

"Yes."

"But why?"

"Grandfather says that no one will be ashamed of their evil deeds because their children won't learn about them anyway."¹¹

The responsibility of generation for generation, of course, is borne in two directions. The present generation is responsible for succeeding ones, but is likewise called upon to fulfill the will of the previous one.¹² Indeed, it is this particular sense of obligation to one's male ancestors that makes it imperative to consider the fate of Aitmatov's own father before moving to a discussion of the Central Asian aspects in the author's fiction.

Torekul Aitmatov (1903–1937?) was a leading Kirghiz communist, who was accused of "bourgeois nationalism" and liquidated in the 1937 purge. This same charge was used to destroy the Party elite throughout Central Asia. Although Aitmatov's father has since been posthumously rehabilitated, the author continues to feel a sense of obligation to carry on the ideals of his repressed father. At the beginning of his career, Aitmatov even spoke of his desire to write a book about his father:

I would like very much to write an autobiographical book: about my father (he was the secretary of an Obkom in Kirghizia and perished in 1937) and about myself, my generation, about the characteristics of these two generations and their bond of *continuity*.¹³

Aitmatov has yet to write the book of his father; the time is still not ripe for it in the Soviet Union. Yet in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* one finds a scene reminiscent of the events that led to

the arrest of Aitmatov's father, and the author speaks out on contemporary political and national issues in a manner that, no doubt, would have appealed to his father.

Aitmatov has never completely freed himself from the agony experienced at being deprived of his father at age nine. Throughout his prose one finds heart-rending depictions of young boys who lose their fathers. In *The White Steamboat* (1970), for example, the boy hero perishes as he makes a desperate attempt to swim to his father, who he thinks works as a sailor on a steamboat. In *Early Cranes* (1975), all the main characters are fatherless boys, who strive to live up to their idealized images of their fathers. The novella *The Spotted Dog* (1978) portrays the boundless love of a father for his young son. The boy returns home from a fishing trip an orphan, after his father sacrifices himself so that the son might live. And in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* two young boys witness the arrest of their father by NKVD agents and his departure to the Gulag. The father never returns; the boys yearn for him and dream of his miraculous return throughout most of the novel.

In his journalistic writings and interviews Aitmatov has hardly mentioned his father, noting briefly Torekul's Party positions and the fact of his unjust repression in 1937. The only direct reference to Torekul Aitmatov in the author's fiction can be found in the epigram to the novella *Mother's Field* (1963), a moving story about a Kirghiz woman who loses her husband and three sons in the Second World War. The epigram is a dedication to the author's parents. It reads:

Father, I do not know where you are buried. . .
I dedicate this book to you, Torekul Aitmatov.
Mama, you raised all four of us. . .
I dedicate it to you, Nagima Aitmatov.¹⁴

Most Soviet readers, no doubt, misunderstood the dedication as referring to Torekul's death during the war. But one can speak of

Aitmatov's mother as a war widow only if one considers Moscow's decimation of the indigenous communists of Central Asia as an "undeclared war" on the Muslim population of the region. The fact that Aitmatov emphasizes that he does not know where his father is buried is important for someone of Muslim background. Islamic custom places great responsibility on the relatives of the deceased to see that a proper burial is performed.¹⁵

Torekul Aitmatov was a highly educated Kirghiz for his time. Before the Russian Revolution he attended a Russian-Tartar school in Aulie-ata, present-day Dzhambul, Kazakhstan.¹⁶ Like many literate Muslims of his day, Torekul Aitmatov welcomed the Russian Revolution for its promise to put an end to the political abuse and cultural insensitivity of the Russian tsarist administration in Muslim Turkestan. Such an acceptance of the revolution is all the more understandable if one recalls that only a year earlier Central Asia was the scene of a Muslim uprising against the tsarist administration and Russian settlers. The bloodshed was widespread, testifying to much pent-up resentment among the indigenous population.¹⁷

These events were fresh on the minds of the Kirghiz intelligentsia after the fall of the Romanovs, and it is no wonder that Torekul Aitmatov embraced the revolution and its call for equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, which included the right to self-determination. From 1921 to 1924 Torekul Aitmatov studied in Moscow at the Communist University of Workers from the East (KUTV), an institution that took the leading role in the propagation of the ideas of Muslim national communism. The staff of the university was not purged until 1924, the year of Torekul's graduation. Among the permanent instructors at the university were the most important Muslim national communists of the time: Sultan Galiev, Turar Ryskulov, Nariman Narimanov, Fayzullah Khojaev, and others. These men worked hard to give communism an eastern face. Their theories and arguments would be espoused by many of the university's most famous students: the Turks Nazim Hikmete, Vala Nureddin, Sevkhet Sureyya¹⁸ Aydemir, the Chinese Liu Shao-Shi, and the Vietnamese Ho Chi Minh.

What exactly were the aspirations of Muslim national communists? Most of the movement's most cherished ideals were expressed by the group's leading theorist Sultan Galiev (1880-1939?), a highly educated Tartar, who was also an instructor at the KUTV. As a political theorist, Galiev sought to adapt Marxist ideology to meet the national needs of Muslim Russia. Dividing the nations of the world into colonial oppressors and their oppressed, Galiev argued that the socialist revolution must be first and foremost a revolution of national liberation. Downplaying the existence of class antagonism among Central Asians, Galiev gave little credence to the belief that a proletarian Russia would be any more willing to forego the colonial benefits derived from the subjugation of Turkestan than its imperialist predecessor had been. Secondly, Galiev sought to preserve Islamic culture and the Moslem way of life. In an essay, "On Methods of Antireligious Propaganda Among the Muslims," Galiev, an admitted atheist, called attention to the positive features of Islam, and argued that Islam should be secularized, but not destroyed.¹⁹ Galiev rightly cautioned Russian communists to be careful in waging an antireligious campaign in Muslim areas lest their efforts be associated with those of "retrograde Russian missionaries" whose aggressive Christianity offended Muslim sensibilities during tsarist rule. In short, Galiev envisioned a strong autonomous united Turkic-Islamic state, whose influence would further the goal of world revolution by spreading its ideas to the peoples of the East:

The proximity of the victory of the world socialist revolution obliges us to pay special attention to the most backward peoples of the East . . . We, communists, must help our younger brothers. We Muslim communists, with our better knowledge of the languages and the customs of the Eastern peoples, must play a capital role in this sacred task.²⁰

While it is probable that not all the students at the KUTV agreed with Galiev's "eastern strategy," most of them most certainly would have supported his idea that the Muslims of Turkic Central Asia be given the right to determine the way the revolution should shape their political and

cultural lives. Certainly most of them sought to rectify the abuses of Russian rule in the recent tsarist past and to put an end to the confiscation of Central Asian lands.

Torekul Aitmatov completed his studies at the KUTV in 1924 and returned home to Kirghizia to carry out Party work. In the same year Soviet Central Asia was divided into five national republics: Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, and Turkestan. The national delimitation was Moscow's answer to the aspirations of indigenous communists to form a united Muslim state. This action came on the heels of Galiev's arrest in 1923 on charges that he sought to undermine the Party's decisions in the field of nationalities policy. Galiev was released within a month, but was demoted to insignificant Party positions and lost access to the journal *Life of the Nationalities*, which had been used as a forum for the ideas of Muslim national communists. In the years 1923–1928 Galiev is said to have formed conspiratorial groups whose goal was "to raise the anti-Russian consciousness of the native masses and oppose cultural, administrative and biological assimilation as well as the forced linguistic division of the Turkic territories."²¹ In 1928 Galiev was arrested for a second time and most likely perished in the camps.²² His arrest signaled the beginning of a campaign against "sultangalievism" throughout Central Asia. The repression of national communists culminated in a massive purge of the Party in 1937. Accused of being "bourgeois nationalists" and fascist agents, the cream of the Muslim intelligentsia was arrested and destroyed. There is some evidence that the Kirghiz Party displayed a high degree of solidarity in resisting Moscow's pressure to denounce their national leaders and expell the so-called "bourgeois nationalists." The first congress of the Kirghiz Communist Party (June 1937) conducted its work in a defiant mood. In the words of one witness,

The Kirghiz intelligentsia occupying Party posts made a final attempt to stand up for their rights against the terror and coercion of the NKVD.²³ Thanks to their solidarity they triumphed at the congress.

In a *Pravda* article of 13 September 1937 following the congress, Moscow prepared the scene for a final reckoning with the national cadres of the Kirghiz Party. The article makes the point of naming Torekul Aitmatov as sympathizing and harboring Muslim nationalists:

In Kirghizia he is well known. When he was the secretary of the Osh *raikom* he energetically attracted to his region, and defended, nationalists who had been exposed elsewhere. And comrade Ammosov [first secretary of the Kirghiz Party] came to Aitmatov's defense at the Party congress.²⁴

The article concludes by accusing the Party of sympathizing with "fascist agents and enemies of the people." While it is difficult today to determine the degree of Torekul's nationalist aspirations, there can be no doubt that he was a popular leader, familiar with the ideas of prominent Muslim communists, and, in the eyes of Moscow, a threat to the total subjugation of Soviet Kirghizia. Within months after the *Pravda* article, virtually all of the national members of the Central Committee of the Kirghiz Party were arrested and liquidated. Torekul likewise disappeared. The nine-year-old Chingiz never would accept the thought that his father was an "enemy of the people," and would dream of vindicating his father's name:

My brother and I were hurt very much by all that they had written about our father, but she, Karagyz-apa [the author's paternal aunt], was not ashamed of our disgrace. Somehow this illiterate woman understood that it was all a lie, and that it was impossible. But she could not explain her conviction. At that time I was already reading books about Cheka counter-espionage agents and dreamed secretly that someday I would be sent to catch a spy, and that I would catch him and perish in order to prove in such a way the innocence of my father before the Soviet state.²⁵

The positions of the purged Party elite were soon occupied by indigenous cadres who were far less educated than the nationalist-minded

intelligentsia, yet more compliant vis-a-vis Moscow. In 1938, for example, the chairmanship of the Central Committee of the Kirghiz Party went to a barely literate miner from Kyzul-Kiza, Kulatov. For decades he served as the Chairman of the Presidium of the Kirghiz Supreme Soviet. Such compliant opportunists rose rapidly in the vacuum created by the purges, and therefore were frequently more critical of any expression of nationalism than their Moscow superiors. Until recently many of these people have occupied powerful positions in the Kirghiz political and cultural establishment. Although Aitmatov's recent works are immensely popular in Moscow, appearing in the leading literary journals, the author has frequently experienced the ire of his "russified" compatriots. As recently as 1984 the head of the Kirghiz Writers' Union, T. Askarov, chose to slight Aitmatov by leaving the author and his works unmentioned in a major article discussing the development of recent Kirghiz letters.²⁶ Askarov's boldness is all the more amazing when one recalls that in the time period discussed in the article, several of Aitmatov's most successful works had appeared: *The White Steamboat*, *Early Cranes*, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, and *The Ascent of Mount Fujiyama*. The latter two enjoyed immense popularity throughout the Soviet Union and abroad. During Askarov's regime a play based on Aitmatov's *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* was banned from the theaters of the Kirghiz capital.²⁷

Yet despite the decades of russification and the taboo of mentioning the facts of the liquidation of the Kirghiz national intelligentsia in the 1920s and 1930s, Aitmatov has persistently sought to take up the baton of his father, and has fought for many of the ideals cherished by his father's generation. Indeed, in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* the very question, "whose son are you?" is of central importance and serves as the key to understanding Aitmatov's concept of himself as a writer. In the novel Aitmatov attempts to answer that question for the Muslim peoples of Central Asia, carefully touching upon a number of sensitive issues in the recent history of Central Asia and decrying the loss of national identity among his Muslim contemporaries.

The whole structure of the novel is based upon memory and *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung* -- the coming to terms with the Central Asian past. The main character, Edigei Zhangel'din, traverses the sun-baked Kazakh steppe to bury an old friend, Kazangap Asanbaev, with whom Edigei had lived and worked for over thirty years at an isolated railroad switching post in the arid Kazakh steppe. In a sense both men are displaced persons, since circumstances have caused them to leave their home villages on the Aral Sea. As the funeral procession slowly makes its way, Edigei, in observing Muslim tradition to bethink one's own life when accompanying the deceased to a cemetery, silently recalls the memorable events that had an impact on his life. On the long trek Edigei also ponders the meaning of the ancient folklore of his people. Structurally, the folklore in the novel provides the work with a number of important interlocking symbols, which serve to interpret the events and people in Edigei's life.

The cornerstone of the novel's structure is Aitmatov's rendering of the Central Asian legend of the *mankurt*, which Edigei recalls at the beginning of the trip to the ancient cemetery of Ana-Beit. According to the legend a fierce nomadic tribe, the *zhuan-zhuany*, gained infamy through its brutal treatment of captives. The tribe tortured and eventually enslaved its prisoners by shaving their heads and pulling taut caps of wet camel hide (*shiri*) over their skulls. As the leather contracted in the blistering heat of the steppes, the prisoners usually died an agonizing death. The few survivors -- referred to as *mankurt* by the *zhuan-zhuany* -- suffered a complete loss of memory, and as a consequence became loyal and submissive slaves. In Aitmatov's version of the legend,²⁸ one such *mankurt* even kills his own mother, Naiman-Ana, at the behest of his captors, when she desperately tries to revive her son's memory by repeatedly asking him to tell her the name of his father -- Donenbai. When Naiman-Ana falls, pierced by her son's arrow, her scarf turns into a white bird which, as legend has it, has flown ever since over the Kazakh steppe crying: "Whose son are you? Donenbai,

Donenbail!" The spot where the legendary Naiman-Ana fell came to be known to the inhabitants of the harsh Kazakh steppe as Ana-Beiit (mother's repose). Through the centuries the legend-veiled site became the sacred burial ground of generations of Central Asian nomads. Although the legend occupies only ten pages in the novel, it serves as the key to an appreciation of several important episodes occurring in the two other narrative planes.

The word *mankurt* is evoked in several important episodes in the novel. One of the most significant comes at the end of Edigei's long trek to the cemetery. The men of the funeral procession are taken aback when they discover that the burial ground has been fenced off without their knowledge, incorporated into the territory of a top-secret space center. This particular scene addresses the fear many Central Asians have of the russification of their culture. As the funeral party requests permission to enter the territory of the cosmodrome to bury Kazangap, the Kazakh lieutenant refuses to hear their entreaty in Kazakh, demanding instead that they address him in Russian. The lieutenant, who is unwilling to speak in his native language, is likewise oblivious to the religious and cultural heritage of the cemetery, Ana-Beiit, which is now enclosed behind barbed wire. He refers to his Kazakh brothers as "postoronnie" (outsiders, aliens), and behaves in the same way as the *mankurt* in the legend, who is placed by his superiors to guard not a cosmodrome, but a herd of camels. The negative association is clearly intended by the author. For Edigei, the lieutenant and all those like him have turned their backs on their nation and fathers. The question Edigei puts to the lieutenant -- "Slushai, a kto tvoi otets?" ("Hey, who's your father?") -- is the very question Naiman-Ana addresses over and over to her *mankurt* son. Thus the narrative relegates lieutenant Tansykbaev to the role of a modern-day *mankurt*. By implication, the lieutenant's superiors are thus cast in the role of the cruel inhuman *zhuan-zhuany*:

They had discovered the means to deprive slaves of their memory. By doing so they inflicted upon human nature the most horrific of all thinkable and unthinkable crimes. (302)

Depicted in the novel as the national cemetery of the Kazakh people, Ana-Beiit symbolizes the very soul of the nation: "Here were buried the nation's most famous and revered people -- people who had lived long and learned much, and who had earned great honor by word and deed" (299). The barbed wire fence which severs the characters -- all of whom are Kazakhs -- from Ana-Beiit, is in a sense a *mankurt's* cap which is to rob them of their right to memory, and thereby cut them off from their national heritage. Those living within the confines of the fence are by implication, arising from the same imagery, already *mankurt*. In this context it is significant to note that the city serving the space center has no name. It is referred to only as the "mail box." The space center and its inhabitants thus emerge as an alien and nameless citadel, built on the bones of a culture the authorities care little about. Edigei's response to such an affront to his national pride is outrage. The shame involved in returning with the body of his friend unburied prompts him to compromise, and he completes the burial just outside the fence.

In depicting a modern Central Asian as unable or unwilling to speak his native language, Aitmatov evokes the spectre of the politically motivated linguistic "reforms" which were carried out throughout Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. Until 1924 important articles and documents written by Muslim national communists appeared in Central Asian newspapers in Arabic script, which has since become unintelligible for the vast majority of today's Central Asian intelligentsia. In this sense a *mankurt's* cap has been pulled over the heads of Central Asian intellectuals, depriving them of the cultural and political legacy of their fathers. The manner in which Moscow introduced the alphabet reform throughout Central Asia was exceedingly heavy-handed, reminiscent of the callousness of the *zhuan-zhuany* of Aitmatov's legend. First, to counter the influence of Islam in the region, the Latin alphabet was introduced to replace the Arabic in the late 1920s.²⁹ Although "latinization" met strong resistance in Central Asia, its introduction was largely complete by 1935. Then came a sudden volte-face. The fear of a rise in pan-Turkic nationalism in Central Asia, under the influence of a modern Turkey (which

was using the Latin alphabet), caused Stalin to abolish the use of the Latin alphabet and introduce the Cyrillic. The Cyrillic alphabet would assure the region's orientation toward Moscow³⁰ and forestall the strengthening of cultural and political ties with Turkey, which was beginning to experience a sense of responsibility for the Turkic peoples inside the Soviet Union. Linguistic planning in contemporary Central Asia is still a touchy issue, and the imagery in Aitmatov's novel casts the consequences of the policy in a particularly pernicious light.³¹

Coupled with the question of Moscow's linguistic policies in Central Asia is the whole question of the national delimitation of the region in 1924. Dividing up an essentially homogenous Turkic territory into five "independent" Central Asian states and then seeking to exaggerate the cultural and linguistic differences of each republic has been seen by scholars as part and parcel of Moscow's policy to counteract the centripetal forces operating in Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. The decision proved expedient for its time, but evidence today reveals that Central Asians' sense of national identity transcends the borders of their respective native republics.³² Indeed, throughout Aitmatov's novel the fences, dividing lines, and constraining barriers are all cast in a negative light, alien to the natural life of the Central Asian steppe. The railroad tracks, for example, cut the steppe in two. Their unnaturalness is emphasized in the opening pages of the novel as a fox in search of food is repelled by the roar of the trains and the garbage scattered along the tracks. The fences around the cosmodrome are threatening to the members of the funeral procession, depriving them of access to the ancestral burial ground. The division of Central Asia into five republics put an end to the dream of a united Turkic state cherished by Muslim communists in the years following the 1917 Revolution. Moscow pursued a policy of heightening regional differences in the area, elevating, for example, regional Turkic dialects to the status of national languages. Aitmatov's novel does not seek to turn back the clock, but it does make clear the unnatural implications of the delimitation through the frequent use of images of fences and barriers.

The legend of the *mankurt* is evoked also in connection with Edigei's recollection of one of the most tragic events in his life -- the arrest of his colleague and friend, Abutalip Kuttybaev. The memory of this event, which occurs in 1953 in the last year of the Stalin regime, weighs heavily on Edigei because he had to face GPU interrogators, pressuring him to testify against Kuttybaev, whose memoir writing and collecting of Turkic folklore is construed as anti-Soviet agitation. The interrogator browbeats Edigei and gives him a lecture on history:

It is important to recall and depict the past in our words -- but especially in writing -- in a way in which it can be useful for us right now. And whatever doesn't help us, should not be remembered. And if you don't want to abide by this, then you are engaging in hostile action. (352)

Since Kuttybaev's arrest is partially connected with his collecting of Central Asian folklore, the scene calls attention not only to the sins of Soviet historiography, but also to Moscow's opportunist approach to Central Asia's cultural heritage.

As the interrogator's words imply, political expediency has marked the policy of the Party toward Central Asia for decades. Before 1937, Soviet historians condemned the invasion and annexation of Central Asia by Tsarist Russia as an "absolute evil," and placed it on a scale with the colonial conquests of the English and French. In 1922 Stalin himself had labeled Russia as the "hangman of Asia."³³ Yet as official policy toward Central Asian nationalism changed, Soviet historian Pokrovskii, the principal expounder of the theory of "absolute evil," was condemned as a consequence. From 1937 to the end of the 1940s, a new theory developed -- that of the "lesser evil." Thus, while Soviet historians criticized the tsarist acquisition as colonial, they nevertheless argued that the Russian conquest was preferable to that of the Turks, Iranians, or British, to whom the area might otherwise have fallen.³⁴ By the early 1950s this theory had already evolved into that of the "absolute good," and Central Asian historians were reminded that "their native chieftains, in

opposing tsarist armies, had not been patriots, but 'reactionary feudals.' " The tsarist conquest in turn was characterized as having brought to the peoples of Central Asia the benefits of the "more advanced Russian culture."³⁵ Accompanying this about-face in Soviet history was a reexamination of the folk epics of Central Asia. In the early 1950s a number of national epics from Central Asia came to be condemned as "pan-Islamic" and "feudal." In *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* the arrest of Kuttybaev is portrayed as representative of such a chauvinistic approach to the history and culture of smaller nations. His tragic death is stressed by the author to underpin the criminal nature of such an attitude toward Soviet Central Asia. The GPU agents who arrest and take Kuttybaev away are thus cast as modern *zhuan-zhuany*, who seek to destroy the memory and culture of the region. Significantly, the agents also confiscate Kuttybaev's diaries, in which he has been carefully recording the folklore of the Kazakh steppes. Included in his diaries is also the legend of the *mankurt*. Kuttybaev's death en route to the camps reveals that he is not made to become a *mankurt*, but is destined to share the fate of the prisoners in the legend who die from the torture:

Left alone in the steppe to face this dreadful torture, most of the prisoners perished under the hot Sarozek sun. Of the five or six prisoners, one or two would survive as *mankurts*.
(301)

Aitmatov sets Kuttybaev's arrest in 1953 to make an unmistakable literary allusion to Moscow's campaign against the oral epics of Central Asia. The attack provoked considerable opposition among Central Asian intellectuals. The controversy centered around the subject matter of the epics, which were purported to be narrowly nationalistic. The Kazakh epic *Koblandy-Batyr* was put on the Soviet index in October 1951, and in 1952 the same thing happened to the Uzbek *Alpanysh*.³⁶ The persecution of epics and Central Asian folklore was clearly due to short-sighted political expediency. The fate of the Kirghiz epos *Manas* is particularly interesting in this context. At a time when the Soviet Union was cementing the ties of Soviet-Chinese friendship, *Manas*, which has

numerous passages dealing with the ravages of Chinese invaders, was considered suspect. Kirghiz and Kazakh scholars defended their national epos against the accusations of its detractors. A conference designed to resolve the issue ended in a deadlock with the sides divided according to nationality -- Russian versus Central Asian. Eventually the issue was resolved according to Moscow's will, and the epos was condemned in the *Vestnik* of the Academy of Science of the USSR for its "pan-Islamism, bourgeois-nationalism, military adventurism, and disdain for the toiling masses."³⁷ Aitmatov, who was just beginning his literary career at the time, reopens the controversy in his novel precisely because he recognizes that the epics' calumniators were questioning nothing less than the right of Central Asians to the memory of their pre-revolutionary heritage. Throughout *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* Aitmatov brings the readers' attention to the beauty and wisdom of the folklore stemming from that very heritage. Nor does the author seek to avoid reference to the controversial figures of the Central Asian past. Thus it is hardly by chance that Aitmatov names the main character of *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* "Edigei." The same name was borne by a Tartar national hero, glorified in numerous Central Asian oral epics. As ruler of the Golden Horde from 1397 to 1410, Edigei (also spelled as Idegei) sought to reestablish the power of the Horde in Russia. In 1408 he destroyed a number of Russian cities and in 1409 even laid siege to Moscow.³⁸ The deep veneration of Edigei among Tartars caused Moscow to condemn and suppress his "cult" in the Tartar Autonomous Soviet Republic with a Party decree of 9 August 1944. Edigei is also remembered in Kazakh and Kirghiz folk epics. The Kirghiz are said to have revered him as a saint and national hero, bringing sacrifices to his grave.³⁹ The Kazakh version of the epic of Edigei was condemned in 1947 and later in 1952 in conjunction with the Party's campaign against the Central Asian epics.⁴⁰

Significantly, the notebook in which Kuttybaev writes down the legend of the *zhuan-zhuany* and which is confiscated by GPU agents bears the title "Ptitsa Donenbai" ("The Bird Donenbai"). Donenbai, of

course, is the name of the *mankurt's* father and as such symbolizes the will to remember one's national heritage. The destruction of the notebook and the arrest of its author in the 1950s, when coupled with Aitmatov's depiction of *mankurtism* in the 1980s, represent an eloquent, if not gloomy, pronouncement on the history and state of Moscow's cultural policy in Soviet Central Asia.

Aitmatov brings another important national concern to light in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* through his depiction of the Aral Sea. The fourth largest body of inland water in the world, the Aral Sea lies in the very heart of Soviet Central Asia. Abundant in fish and minerals, the Sea has always had a very delicate ecostructure, with a rate of evaporation roughly equal to the amount of water that flows into the sea from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. The annual rainfall in the area is only four inches, and consequently, the sea is directly affected by changes in the inflow from the rivers. Despite knowledge of the extreme vulnerability of the sea,⁴¹ Soviet planners chose to use the rivers for large irrigation projects upstream. As a consequence, by the end of the 1950s the water level in the Aral Sea began to fall noticeably. It is not by chance that Aitmatov portrays the major characters in the novel -- Edigei and Kazangap -- as hailing from villages situated on the coast of the Aral Sea. In several key scenes in the novel the author calls attention to the dismal plight of the once bountiful and unique sea. Due to the short-sighted grandiose irrigation projects the sea is drying up. In Aitmatov's novel the loss of one of nature's marvels becomes a symbol for the same irresponsible scientific attitude toward the people of Central Asia. This point is emphasized by the author in his depiction of Kazangap's youth. During the excesses of agricultural collectivization in the 1930s, Kazangap's family is driven away from its homeland on the banks of the Aral Sea. His father dies on his way home from the camps after the authorities release him, when they realize that they have gone too far in their efforts to "liquidate the kulaks as a class." His family destroyed, Kazangap never returns to live in his homeland again. Later, Kazangap becomes enraged at his son, Sabitzhan, when the latter laughs at

the suffering of thousands of Kazakhs who fled Kazakhstan for Siankiang province in China during the forced settlement of the nomadic Kazakhs in the 1930s. The loss of population in Kazakhstan greatly exceeded that of other Soviet Central Asian republics. One historian estimates that over a million Kazakhs perished as a direct result of the policy of forced sedentarization in the 1930s.⁴² When Sabitzhan suggests that one has no right to take offense at those in power, Kazangap demands that the instigators of such widespread suffering accept their responsibility:

Only God cannot be taken to task -- if He sends death, that means life's end has come; that's why we are born. But for everything else on earth there is and must be accountability! (259)

Those responsible for destroying the Aral Sea are linked in the novel to those responsible for the murder and exile of thousands of innocent Kazakhs, as well as for the attempt to rob the nation of its memory. Abutalip Kuttybaev is arrested precisely for trying to preserve the Kazakh heritage. It is no coincidence that in the last minutes before his departure to the Gulag he bids Edigei to tell his small sons about the Aral Sea. (359)

The plight of the Aral Sea is also integrated into the novel's other two narrative planes. In the science fiction line the theme appears in the image of the planet Verdant Bosom (*Lesnaia grud'*). The name Aitmatov chooses for the planet reveals its function in the novel as the Earth's double in the realistic narrative plane. In the pre-Islamic Kirghiz cult of nature the Earth is referred to as *toshu tuktuu zher*, which is rendered in Russian as *zemlia s pokrytoi rastitel'nost'iu grud'iu* (English: the earth with its verdant bosom).⁴³ On Verdant Bosom the inhabitants are facing the eventual death of their planet as desert areas continue to eat up more and more of the planet's inhabitable land. Significantly, in this plot line the inhabitants unite to fight the onslaught of the desert, whereas in the realistic plot line, set in modern Central Asia, only despair reigns as the main characters view the shrinking Aral Sea. The situation is clearly

reminiscent of the conditions on the dying planet. In present-day Central Asia wind-blown salt from the exposed bottom of the Aral Sea has led to a process of devegetation, turning pastures and swamp areas into deserts. In the opinion of experts this development might eventually alter climatic conditions in the region and catastrophically reduce the growing season.⁴⁴ The Sea is likewise tied to the legendary plot line of the novel by the rich folk culture it evokes. Edigei's recollection of catching a golden carp, and its importance as an expression of his wife's hope and aspirations during her first pregnancy are cast in mythic form and written in the same lyrical style as the legend of the *mankurt*. The child's death during Edigei's absence at the front, the couple's inability to renew their lives in their village on the Aral Sea after the war, and their decision to abandon it forever are suggestive of the cheerless fate that awaits the sea itself. The destruction of the Aral Sea is thus portrayed as an irreversible catastrophe for the peoples of Central Asia and serves as a warning for Soviet followers of the scientific myths inherent in a materialist approach to life and nature. Olzhas Suleimenov, a prominent Kazakh poet and chairman of the Kazakh Writers' Union, very recently decried the imminent loss of the sea and appealed to Soviet planners to be more circumspect in their drive to harness nature:

The water of the rivers feeding into it [the Aral Sea] has been diverted for agricultural and industrial needs, and the sea has receded from its former shore line by 40 kilometers. Abandoned fishing villages stand empty in the desert. Fishing boats are buried in the sand, having been turned into dunes. . . It took millions of years to create this unique sea in the desert -- within three decades the Aral Sea will disappear. . . . Will anyone feel sorry for it? I believe they will.⁴⁵

The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years speaks out strongly against the materialistic world view of technocrats. The rich spiritual reserves of Edigei and Kazangap are derived from their youth and national Muslim heritage. Part of that heritage includes a deep mistrust or even fear of technology. As a rocket launch lights up the desert sky in the

opening pages of the novel, Edigei's emotions reveal this fear:

Amazed by what he had seen, at the same time he was aware that for him the rocket was something alien, causing both wonder and fear. Suddenly he recalled the fox that had come up to the railroad track. What did it feel when it was surprised by the fiery storm in the sky? (216)

The death of Kazangap and his funeral serve to contrast the materialists with men imbued with spiritual values. Here it is important to point out that for Central Asian intellectuals, regardless of their profession or lack of profession of religious faith, the word "unbelief" (*dinsizlik*) has always had strong negative connotations. Alexandre Bennigsen remarks that the word denotes "a kind of collective blemish representing cruelty, dishonesty and lack of conscience":

It is in the fullest sense pejorative and it is therefore difficult to imagine that a Muslim, Communist or otherwise, would claim to be non-believing or, say, enter into an association bearing this label [Soiuz Bezbozhnikov]. To the Muslims a real atheist is not deemed to be a romantic rebel or a superior philosophical free-thinker, but a subhuman of limited intellect unable to grasp the conception of God and therefore degraded to the level of bestiality (*hayvanat*), if not below.⁴⁶

All men without belief are portrayed in Aitmatov's fiction as debased and insensitive. It is thus no coincidence that in the opening pages of *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, Edigei calls the station's duty officer a "*haivan*" after the latter reveals his indifference to the death of Kazangap and his lack of concern for the last rites traditionally accorded the deceased. Yet more than anyone else in the novel it is Kazangap's materialist son, Sabitzhan, who stands for the "godless" attitude toward human beings and nature. Significantly, the author couples Sabitzhan's godlessness with a ludicrous absolute faith in technology:

In the past people believed in gods . . . All that is nothing

more than myths and fairy tales. But our gods -- they live among us, right here, at the space center on our Sarozek soil. And we take great pride in this before the whole world. . . . And the time will come when with the help of radio waves they will control people just like they do those automated machines. I mean people, everyone, from the lowest to the highest. They already have the scientific data. Science has achieved that, in the name of higher interests. (230)

From Edigei's point of view Sabitzhan is an immoral scoundrel because he has lost the faith and world view of his father.⁴⁷ Edigei must talk Sabitzhan into accompanying his father's body to its final resting place at Ana-Beit. Sabitzhan sides with the guard-*mankurt* who turns back the funeral procession from the barbed wire fence surrounding the cemetery. Edigei refers to Sabitzhan as a *mankurt* and wonders if the years he spent in Soviet schools away from his parents are not responsible for the youth's callousness. Sabitzhan has truly forgotten who his father is, turning his back on his nation and paternity. His absolute faith in technology is for him an ersatz-religion, springing from the same materialistic world view which the novel portrays as responsible for the senseless destruction of the Aral Sea, as well as for the liquidation of thousands of Central Asians in ill-conceived and mismanaged social experimentation.

As Edigei addresses the "godless" generation during his final words at the graveside of Kazangap, he is deeply pained by their lack of faith:

They don't believe in God and know no prayers. But no one knows and never will know if God exists. Some say he does, others say he doesn't. I want to believe that You exist and that You are in my thoughts. . . . But they are young; they don't think about this and despise prayers. But what will they be able to say to themselves and others in the solemn hour of death? I feel sorry for them. How will they come to know their innermost human essence if they have no way to rise up

in their thoughts as if each of them were suddenly to become a god? Forgive me, Lord, my blasphemy. (480)

Although Aitmatov is careful not to depict Edigei as a traditional believer, he stresses the negative sides of disbelief and emphasizes the significance of religious values and customs.

In burying Kazangap, Edigei observes much of traditional Muslim ritual. He wraps the body before departure to the cemetery, only men depart with the body for the burial, they dig the grave with the prescribed *kazanak*, a side niche required by Islam, and they lower the body into the grave without a coffin, with the head of the deceased facing the west. Edigei washes himself before the final prayers, and the assembled turn to face the *Kaaba*. His prayer, however, is unorthodox, and expresses his free interpretation of the Supreme Being and creation:

And when I turn to You in prayer, I am really turning through You to myself, and in that hour it is given to me to think as if You yourself were thinking for me, Lord. If a man is unable to secretly see himself as a god, fighting for the good of the people, then You, Lord, will also cease to exist. And I wouldn't want You to disappear forever. (480)

Edigei's free personal interpretation of the nature of God reveals the practical side of his faith -- far from the rigidity of Muslim fundamentalism --, expressed in his willingness to accommodate it to the reality of his life. In many ways his belief is akin to the ideas of the late nineteenth-century *Jaddists*⁴⁸, whose legacy in "official" Soviet Islam is very evident today. Thus, Edigei foregoes the requirement that Muslim graves be completely hand-dug. He allows an excavator to do most of the work in the sunbaked desert soil, yet starts and finishes the grave by hand. In this manner not the letter -- *taqlid*, blind obedience to authority --, but the spirit -- *ijtihad*, of the law is obeyed. Such a position is consistent with that of today's young Soviet *ulema* (Moslem scholars), who are "endeavouring to reconcile Islam with science and progress, and to guarantee its survival in a socialist environment."⁴⁹ Here

it is important to note that exactly such a secularized form of Islam was advocated by Muslim national communists in the 1920s, who argued that Islam's "strong moral, social and political influence should be retained" in Soviet Central Asia.⁵⁰

Recent studies of contemporary Central Asian life confirm the lasting influence of these ideas. As a result, anti-religious propaganda has been intensified in recent years.⁵¹ Most Central Asians observe Muslim customs as a matter of respect for their national heritage. Universally practiced are the Muslim rites of circumcision, marriage, divorce, burial, and even some dietary prohibitions. One scholar has noted that "the norms of the Shariat are part of accepted national usage, especially in family matters."⁵²

This mixture of observing Muslim traditions, sense of ethnic pride, as well as the elements of *Jaddism* finds clear expression in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*. The depiction of the funeral is a powerful literary statement on tradition and belief in modern Central Asia. The fact that Soviet critics in Moscow preferred to ignore the novel's nationalist features in discussing Aitmatov's characterization of Edigei, is an eloquent statement of the significance they perceived in it. Instead they chose to praise Edigei's Socialist work ethic -- something that is easily divorced from the more important national content of the novel.⁵³

Yet, while the creation of a believable hard-working "positive hero" as well as the global dimensions of Aitmatov's novel are indeed elements that have influenced Soviet literature in the 1980s, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* promises to have its greatest impact on the literature of Soviet Central Asia. Aitmatov's novel marks a significant step toward the positive portrayal of the Central Asian heritage, and in particular the Muslim national legacy. The inseparability of the religious heritage and national pride among Central Asians has made Soviet attacks on Islam in the region particularly ineffectual. Aitmatov's novel will, no doubt, contribute to a strengthening of respect among Central Asians for the faith and traditions of their fathers. The word *mankurt*, with all its

negative connotations, has found a permanent place in the idiom of today's Central Asian intellectuals.

¹E. Sidorov, *Voprosy literatury*, 9 (1981), 42-43; 49.

²Aitmatov's work is discussed briefly in the chapter "Other New Voices of the Sixties and Seventies," in *Russian Literature Since the Revolution*, ed., Edward Brown (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 331-32.

³In Aitmatov's most recent novel, *Plakha* (appearing in *Novyi mir*, nos. 6, 8, 9), one of the central characters is Russian. The work, however, is set in Central Asia, and the majority of the characters are non-Russians.

⁴See N. Khokhlov, "Nachalo dnei nashikh -- Oktiabr'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 11 August 1982, 5.

⁵Turkic expressions are taken from the Russian text: Chingiz Aitmatov, *I dol'she veka dlitsia den' (Burannyi polustanok)*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, ed., S. Shevelev, II (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1982-83). Hereafter all references to Aitmatov's novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text by page number only. All English translations from Aitmatov's novel appearing in this paper are mine.

⁶See Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 98-99.

⁷Scholars are divided in their definition of *mirasism*. Alexandre Bennigsen stresses the Islamic component in the Turkic peoples' concern for the pre-revolutionary past. Others use the term in a broader sense, de-emphasizing the religious side of the Turkic peoples' preoccupation with the national heritage. For a discussion of the term see William Fierman, "Cultural Nationalism in Soviet Uzbekistan: A Case Study of *The Immortal Cliffs*," *Soviet Union/Union Sovietique*, 12, No. 1 (1985), 2-3.

⁸Perhaps the most striking expression of this side of *mirasism* can be found in a recent novel by the Uzbek writer Mämädäli Mähmudov,

Olmas qäyälär (*The Immortal Cliffs*, 1981). In the novel Mähmudov depicts events that occurred in the 1850s and 1860s, at a time of renewed Russian expansion into Turkestan. The author reminds contemporary Central Asian readers that the Russians conquered Turkestan by force. He appeals to the Turkic peoples of present-day Central Asia to recall their "proud traditions" and not rush to adopt foreign languages and customs. Although Mähmudov is far from advocating Central Asian separatism, his novel condemns complacent passivity and resignation in view of the Russian subjugation of Turkic Central Asia. For a detailed discussion of the novel see Fierman, 1-41.

⁹See Katerina Clark, "The Mutability of the Canon: Socialist Realism and Chingiz Aitmatov's *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, *Slavic Review*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Winter 1984), 582.

¹⁰Chingiz Aitmatov, "Zametki o sebe," in *V soavtorstve s zemleiu i vodoiu ...: Ocherki, stat'i, besedy, interv'iu* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1978), 149.

¹¹Chingiz Aitmatov, *Belyi parokhod*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, ed. S. Shevelev (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1982-1983), II, 77.

¹²Such a responsibility is sensed strongly in countries with a Muslim heritage. See Abdul Waheed Khan, ed., *The Etiquettes of Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications LTD, 1979), 203.

¹³Chingiz Aitmatov, "Otvetsvennost' pered budushchim," in *Soavtorstvo*, 120, my italics.

¹⁴Chingiz Aitmatov, *Materinskoe pole*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, I, 288.

¹⁵Islam demands that relatives and friends perform a number of funeral rites immediately after death occurs. Moreover, the body must be expediently interred. See Bismilla Hir Nir Rahim, *Death and Death Ceremonies* (Karachi: Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust, 1972), 100-101.

¹⁶The Russian-Tartar school, developed by the Russian educator

N. I. Ilminskii in the 1860s to combat the influence of Muslim religious schools, provided instruction to Central Asian students in their own language and "elements of Russian civilization in translation" before Russian was introduced in the upper classes. Students, therefore, became literate in their own Turkic language (based on a modified Cyrillic alphabet) and in Russian. See Serge Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 29.

¹⁷The immediate cause of the rebellion in Central Asia was the tsarist government's decision to draft Muslims into labor battalions to serve at the front for the construction of trenches, fortifications, and other military structures. In particular, Central Asians were offended at being drafted to do menial labor. The Kirghiz and Kazakhs especially resented the obligation to perform military duty in the Russian army at a time when the Russian administration continued to condone the confiscation of their land by Russian settlers. After disturbances broke out among the Uzbeks, the rebellion assumed the character of a spontaneous mass rebellion among the Kirghiz. The Kirghiz attacked the settlers, killing over two thousand men, women and children. The Russian army was ordered to crush the rebellion, and Kirghiz losses are said to have been in the tens of thousands. Moreover, over 300,000 Kirghiz fled to China, only to return several years later. See Zenkovsky, 134-135. The most detailed study of this revolt is Edward D. Sokol's *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1954).

¹⁸Bennigsen and Wimbush, 110.

¹⁹Bennigsen and Wimbush, 83.

²⁰See Bennigsen and Wimbush, 55.

²¹See Bennigsen and Wimbush, 84-85.

²²See Bennigsen and Wimbush, 90.

²³Azamat Altay, "Kirgiziya During the Great Purge," *Central Asian*

Review, vol. 12, no. 2 (1964), 105.

²⁴V. Khodakov, "Gnilaia politika TsK KP(b) Kirgizii," *Pravda*, 13 September 1937, 2.

²⁵Chingiz Aitmatov, "Zametki o sebe," 153–154.

²⁶See Keneshbeb Asanaliiev, "Infantil'nye kriterii," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 4 June 1986, 6.

²⁷See Aleksandr Samoilenko, "Otchuzhdenie: Bespretsedentnyi reportazh iz Soiuza pisatelei Kirgizii," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 16 June 1986, 7.

²⁸To my knowledge the only other written rendition of the Kazakh legend is found in a short story by a contemporary Kazakh writer, Abish Kekil'baev, "Ballada zabytykh let," in *Ballada stepei*, trans. from the Kazakh by the author (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1975), 28–30.

²⁹See Michael Bruchis, "The Effect of the USSR's Language Policy on the National Languages of Its Turkic Population," in *The USSR and the Muslim World. Issues in Domestic and Foreign Policy*, ed., Yaacov Ro'i (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984), 134.

³⁰The switch to the Cyrillic alphabet, of course, greatly facilitated the teaching of Russian in Central Asian schools. Instruction in Russian became compulsory in 1937.

³¹As recently as August 1986 Aitmatov decried the russification of the Kirghiz language and noted that Kirghiz was not even spoken in the kindergartens of Frunze, the Kirghiz capital city. See Chingiz Aitmatov, "Tsena -- zhizn'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 13 August 1986, 4.

³²For a discussion of the complex sense of national identity among Central Asians see Michael Rywkin, "National Symbiosis: Vitality, Religion, Identity, Allegiance," in *The USSR and the Muslim World*.

³³Robert Conquest, *Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), 79.

³⁴Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge* (London: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1982), 100.

³⁵Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 100. This is the official position today. Recently it emerged again in the central press in an article by a Kazakh writer on the December 1986 race riot in Alma-ata. See Anuar Alimzhanov, "Chto proizoshlo v Alma-ate," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (1 January 1987), 10.

³⁶Conquest, 67.

³⁷Alexandre Bennigsen, "The Crisis of the Turkic National Epics, 1951-1952: Local Nationalism or Internationalism?," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 18 (1975), 471-72.

³⁸Internal problems in the Horde, however, prompted Edigei to lift the siege after exacting tribute from the city. See B. D. Grakov and A. Iu. Iakubovskii, *Zolotaia orda i ee padenie* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk, 1950), 394-97.

³⁹See N. I. Veselovskii, ed., *Sochineniia Chokana Chingisovicha Valikhanova* (Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiia glavnogo upravleniia udelov, 1904), 224.

⁴⁰See Thomas Winner, *The Oral Art and Literature of the Kazakhs of Russian Central Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1958), 154-55.

⁴¹See article on Aral Sea in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, vol. 2, F. A. Brokhaus, I. A. Efron, eds., (S. Peterburg: Tipo-Litografiia I. A. Efrona, 1894), 12-14.

⁴²Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 61.

⁴³See D. Baialieva, *Doislamskie verovaniia i ikh perezhitki u kirgizov*, S. M. Abramzon, ed., (Frunze: Ilim, 1972), 34.

⁴⁴See Philip Micklin, "Soviet Water Diversion Plans: Implications for

Kazakhstan and Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 1, no. 4 (April 1983), 22-23.

⁴⁵O. Suleimenov, "Preodolenie," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 2 April 1986, 10.

⁴⁶Bennigsen and Broxup, 62.

⁴⁷Despite intense efforts to displace the Muslim moral code in Central Asia, there still exists a strong bond between religion, faith (*iman*) and "morality, honesty and conscience (*khuждан*). The expression *imanly*, 'faithful,' 'believers,' is still used to designate an honest moral person, while *imansiz* (non-believer) is synonymous with an immoral scoundrel." Bennigsen and Broxup, 144.

⁴⁸The *Jadid* movement (1883-1917) sought to break with the rigidity of traditional Islam by propagating a liberal, personal interpretation of the Koran, thereby making the Muslim world more receptive to cultural and technological progress. A Crimean Tartar, Ismail Bey Gasprinskii, founded a reform school in Bakhchisarai, which soon became the model for *jadid* schools throughout Muslim Imperial Russia. Unlike the traditional *madrasa*, the reform schools taught secular subjects -- mathematics, history, geography -- as well as providing religious instruction. Pupils from the *jadid* schools would later play a big role in the sovietisation of Central Asia, yet despite their openness to European culture and their opposition to traditional Islam, most of these people remained very conscious of their Muslim heritage as distinct from that of the Russians. Consequently many became supporters of Galiev's pan-Turkic idea. See Zenkovsky, 34-35.

⁴⁹Bennigsen and Broxup, 70, 72.

⁵⁰Bennigsen and Broxup, 83.

⁵¹The numerous articles that have appeared in recent years in the Central Asian press stressing the need for more "atheist" education are an indication that "the more ethnically or nationally conscious groupings

among the major Central Asian peoples actively identify their national aspirations with their Islamic heritage." Yaacov Ro'i, "The Impact of the Islamic Fundamentalist Revival of the Late 1970s on the Soviet View of Islam," *The USSR and the Muslim World*, 168.

⁵²Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 90. Rywkin reports that Muslims tend to be much more family oriented than Russians. An average Muslim probably spends "two and a half times more of his free time with his family and relatives" than does his Russian counterpart.

⁵³One Soviet critic even compared Edigei to Pavel Korchagin from Ostrovskii's *Kak zakalialas' stal'*: "There is something firm, Korchagin-like, in Edigei Zhangel'din. Edigei's life is also an example of how steel was tempered." Levon Mkrtchian, "Ptitsa Donenbai," *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, 10 (1981), 38.