

CultureTalk Ahiska Turks Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>  
**Living as Muslims in Russia**

**English translation:**

- Uzbeks were the same way. Uzbeks that were living with us were the same way, the ones that are Muslims. They have been through such persecution. They were covering their heads just as we did. "Uncover your head? Why are you walking around like this?" They have burnt their *paranjis*. They go out all covered -- we at least are a little more open. They are walking around completely covered with *paranji*. They have burnt them! They [the Russians] have done such harm to them as well. The ones that corrupted them are again the Russians. The Russians have degenerated us Muslims. They keep messing with Muslims. Muslims have not done any harm to anyone, ever.

- Why didn't they like Muslims?

- It's so. It comes from religion; they do not like Muslims, from the very beginning. Even so, Russians continued; for example, many of them were seeing Muslims as bad. If you really look at how we live, we do not have anything bad.

- We have lived in Russia so long; have there been any cases where Russians and Turks got married?

- Oh yes, many! There are many people who were married, migrated and became corrupted. You can talk one out or two out of it, but you cannot talk all of them out of it. They got married, and lived together.

- Even though they knew it?

- Even they knew it, yes.

- ... Muslims.

- Many of them were actually converted and became Muslims. They were converted and they lived that way. See, this is the case: we have been through all of these things and have come up to this point where we have survived through all of these difficulties. Umm....

- Was the treatment bad in schools?

- This was also the case in schools, too. Even when we went to school, they were saying "Oh, they are Turkish, they are Muslims, they are this and that." This was always the case for us. We never saw such good days in which we could, at least once, say, "Oh, we are happy." This was the case even when we came to Russia. We lived in Russia for

eighteen years. Without *propiska*<sup>1</sup> without permission, we lived hoping that it would get better every day. No one helped us out; they neither provided any solutions nor remedies.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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<sup>1</sup> *Propiska* is a state registration within a certain area, in some cases limiting one's ability to commute and apply for job.