

“Official” Islam in the Soviet Union

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In a former article* we analysed the development of conservative, underground trends in Soviet Islam. The present article is devoted to the official Muslim establishment in the Soviet Union.

The official Muslim administration was created during the war on the initiative of the Mufti of Ufa, Abdurrahman Rasulaev, who approached Stalin at the end of 1942 with a project for “normalizing” relations between Islam and the Soviet government. Rasulaev was one of the few Muslim clerics who had survived the fearful persecution in the Muslim territories during the period 1932–1938, when Muslim clerics were hunted down as “counter-revolutionaries”, “saboteurs”, and “agents” of German, Japanese or British intelligence. His aim was a relatively modest one: to stop pressure against Islam, to obtain legal recognition for it as well as some limited advantages—a situation comparable, on a more modest scale, to the “concordat” which Metropolitan Sergi managed to obtain for the Russian Orthodox Church.

Stalin accepted Rasulaev’s proposal for different reasons. There was the obvious incentive of propaganda: such a move would win approval from the Allies and from the Muslim world abroad; but above all, it would be of advantage at home. In 1942, trouble broke out in the Caucasus and a million Muslim mountain-dwellers as well as the entire Crimean Tatar community were deported and subjected to reprisals which amounted to genocide. Therefore, a “concordat” with the Mufti Rasulaev was needed to help counterbalance the disastrous impression made by the deportations. But more important was the need to establish a central Muslim organization which would be loyal and submissive, and through which the Soviet government could exercise complete control over its Muslim subjects.

The Muslim administration created under the above circumstances has no parallel in any other Muslim country. Sunni Islam is a decentralized religion which has no “clergy” and therefore does not need an “ecclesi-

* “Muslim Religious Conservatism and Dissent in the USSR”, *RCL* Vol. 6, No. 3, 1978, pp. 153–61. *Ed.*

astical establishment". Nevertheless, the administration in question followed closely the tradition of Imperial Russia: in 1783, Catherine II organized a similar control system – the Central Spiritual Muslim Directorate (*Upravlenie*) for European Russia and Siberia in Orenburg (later in Ufa).

This official Islamic establishment has no central organization, apart from a coordinating centre in Moscow with limited competence: the Department of Foreign Relations, created in 1962, is in charge of relations between the four Spiritual Directorates and Muslim countries abroad. The establishment is divided geographically between four Spiritual Directorates (*Dukhovnye Upravleniya*). Three of them are Sunni, the fourth is mixed – Sunni-Shia.

1. *Spiritual Directorate of Central Asia and Kazakhstan*

Sunni of Hanafi rite.

Founded at the first congress of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan which was convened in Tashkent on 20 October 1943.

Seat: Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Chairman: Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov.

Vice-Chairman: Sheik Yusufkhan Shakhirov (1979).

Language: Uzbek.

The Directorate is represented in each of the five Turkestani republics by a *Kaziyat* (delegation).

2. *Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of European Russia and Siberia*

Sunni of Hanafi rite.

Seat: Ufa, Bashkir ASSR.

Chairman: Mufti Abd al-Bary Issaev (since 1976).

Vice-Chairman: Faiz ur-Rahman Sattar.

Language: Volga Tatar.

3. *Spiritual Directorate of the North Caucasus and Dagestan*

Sunni of Shafe'i rite.

Seat: Makhach-Kala (before 1974, Buinaksk), Dagestan ASSR.

Chairman: Mufti al-Hafiz Omarov (since 1976).

Language: Arabic.

The authority of this Directorate covers all the autonomous republics of the North Caucasus (except Abkhaziya, which belongs to the Directorate of Baku) and the territories (*krais*) of Stavropol and Krasnodar.

4. *Spiritual Directorate of the Transcaucasia Muslims*

Mixed: Shia (of Ja'fari rite or *Ithna-Asharia*: the "Twelvers"),¹ and Sunni of Hanafi rite.

Seat: Baku, Azerbaidzhan.

Chairman: the Shia Sheikh ul-Islam. The former chairman, Sheikh ul-Islam Ali Aga Suleyman, died in 1978 at the age of 93.

Vice-Chairman: the Sunni Mufti Ismail Ahmedov (1976).

Language: Azeri Turkic.

The authority of this Directorate covers all the Shia (Ja'fari) communities of the Soviet Union and extends to the Sunni communities of Transcaucasia, Sunni Azeris (30 per cent of the total population), Abkhaziyans, Kurds, Ajars and Ingilois (Georgian Muslims – 100,000?), Hemshins (Armenian Muslims – 5,000?); Meskhetian Turks (less than 100,000?). Other Muslim religious groups – Ismailis, Bahais, Ali-Allahis – have no officially-recognized spiritual authority.²

Because of the importance of Central Asia, where 75 per cent of the Soviet Union's Muslims live, and because of the personality of its Chairman, the Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov, the Directorate of Tashkent is exceptionally important. It is the only one to publish a religious periodical, and the only two official *medressehs* are on its territory. Nevertheless, each Directorate is autonomous, not only as regards administration but also as regards canonical matters. There are great differences between the Directorates, especially between the more advanced, modernist Directorates of Tashkent and Ufa and the conservative Caucasians.

Until recently the leaders of the Spiritual Directorate of the North Caucasus and Dagestan kept aloof from the Spiritual Directorate of Tashkent, considering that the latter was betraying the spirit of Islam. . . . The Mufti Kurbanov, Chairman of the Buinaksk Directorate, when asked for his opinion on the Tashkent *fetwas*, said: "I think that Zia ud-Din Babakanov's *fetwas* do not correspond to Islam. . . . Close ties between the two Muftiats were only established at the Muslim conference of Tashkent in 1970".³ [*fetwa* = official Muslim pronouncement.]

The four Spiritual Directorates are empowered by the Soviet government to control the religious life of Muslim believers. All the "working" mosques, *medressehs* and religious publications are placed under their strict supervision. Any religious activity outside the "working" mosques is forbidden by Soviet law. All Muslim clerics must be "registered" with the Directorates and paid and nominated by them. "Unregistered" clerics who perform various religious rites are branded as "parasites" and hunted down. The Directorates and their registered "clerics" alone are entitled to represent Islam *vis-à-vis* the Soviet authorities, and only members of the Directorates may act abroad on behalf of Soviet Islam.

The small group of "registered" clerics (certainly less than 2,000) is composed of the executives of the four Directorates and their delegates in the republics and regions, and also the staff⁴ of the "working" mosques:

imam-khatibs and their assistants, *mutevvalis*, *muezzins*, *kadis*, *mudarris*, designated by the general name of mullahs or *akhunds* (among the Shias). We may accept the average number of four to five "registered" clerics for every "working" mosque.

This group is heterogeneous. We find a few old survivors of Stalin's purges, trained in the pre-revolutionary Turkestanian or Tatar *medressehs*, and also young *ulemas*, graduates of the two Central Asian *medressehs*, who, in some cases, finished their education abroad, in Egypt, Morocco, Syria or Libya. Members of this last group may be subdivided into two categories: former Soviet intellectuals, who, before joining the Muslim establishment, completed their studies in regular Soviet schools and even in universities, and sons of *ulemas* for whom clerical careers were hereditary (this is especially true of the Caucasus and of Central Asia). The intellectual and cultural level of the young *ulemas* is excellent, often outstanding. In the case of Central Asia, their "professional standard" is certainly higher than that of their pre-revolutionary predecessors.⁵

Administrative Activity of the Spiritual Directorates

Only a few of the 25,000 mosques that existed before the Revolution are still "working". The massive destruction of Muslim prayer-houses in Russia started in 1928 and lasted until the Second World War when some of them were reopened. *Soviet War News* boasted in 1943 that 1,200 mosques existed in the USSR. This figure is acceptable and, it seems, the number slowly increased until Stalin's death. In 1959 when Khrushchev launched the second campaign against Islam, the number of mosques was estimated at 1,500. This short but violent campaign lasted until 1964⁶ and during this period most of the mosques – in particular almost all village mosques – disappeared. Their number remained stationary until 1978, when a modest revival of official Islam was marked by the opening of a few mosques.

It is impossible to ascertain the number of "working" mosques today. The executives of the Directorates are very cautious in answering indiscreet questions, and the data published by Soviet sources is incomplete and unreliable. However, the figure of 450 "working" mosques seems plausible.

In 1976 executives of the Spiritual Directorate of Tashkent acknowledged the existence of 143 "working" mosques in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. All major cities have one or several mosques. Tashkent has 12 "cathedrals" (*Juma* mosques) and several smaller ones (*mahalla* mosques);⁷ in Bukhara there are at least four⁸; and Namangan, Dushanbe, Ashkhabad are said to have "several".

It is harder to establish the number of "working" mosques in the European part of the USSR. We know that they exist in every important town of the Tatar and Bashkir republics, as well as in all the major cities

of Russia and Siberia with a Tatar colony – Leningrad, Astrakhan, Moscow, Gorki, Penza, Irkutsk, Omsk, Saratov. We may estimate their total number at 200 at the most.⁹

We have more precise information about the North Caucasus. According to recent Soviet data, there are 27 "working" mosques in the Dagestan ASSR¹⁰ and only two in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (both opened in 1978).¹¹ There are no "working" mosques in the Karachai-Cherkess autonomous region since the deportation of the Karachais in 1943.¹² In the cities of central and western North Caucasus, Nalchik, Ordzhonikidze, Maikop, the number of mosques may be estimated at ten. Thus the total number of "working" mosques controlled by the Makhach-Kala Directorate is probably no more than 45. Except in Dagestan, almost all the mosques are in cities.

In Transcaucasia the situation is even worse. In 1976 only 16 "working" mosques remained in Azerbaidzhan: two in Baku and one in each important city such as Nukha, Zakataly, Sheki, Kuba, Khachmas, Gökchay, Nakhichevan, Lenkoran. Mosques are in general mixed (Shia-Sunni) and the same ceremony is often conducted by two imams, and attended by believers of both rites.¹³ Some mosques exist in Georgia and Armenia in the cities of Yerevan, Tbilisi, and Batumi.

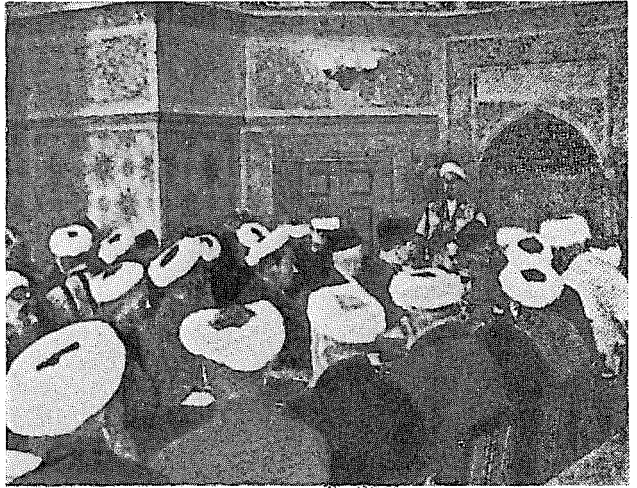
This article was finished when new figures for "working" mosques were provided by the Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov in a Moscow Radio broadcast in Arabic (1 April 1979, 15.30 hrs. GMT). The figures given by the Mufti for Central Asia seem reasonable, at least as regards what he calls "the grand mosques": 12 in Tashkent, three in Samarkand, four in Bukhara, and a total of 200 for the five republics of Central Asia. To these figures he adds a certain number of "small mosques" (?): 100 in Tashkent, 15 in Samarkand, and "more than ten" in Bukhara. Zia ud-Din Babakhanov's information on other Muslim territories is vague and less reliable. For Siberia and the European part of the USSR he relies on figures given by the Mufti Abdul-Bari Isaev of Ufa who claims that there are "over 1,000 grand and small mosques" – a highly exaggerated figure, which is difficult to accept since the Muslim population under the jurisdiction of the Ufa Directorate does not exceed eight million (as compared with some 30 million in Central Asia). The figures for Azerbaidzhan ("200 grand and small mosques") and for Dagestan ("approximately 300 grand and small mosques") contradict the figures given recently by Soviet sources, which limit the number of mosques in these two areas to 16 and 27 "working" mosques respectively.

The general distribution of mosques is an indication of the way in which official Islam in the USSR has evolved since the Second World War. The overwhelming majority of "working" mosques are to be found in the cities. Whereas before the Revolution the strength of Russian Islam resided in the countryside, now Soviet "official" Islam is moving back to

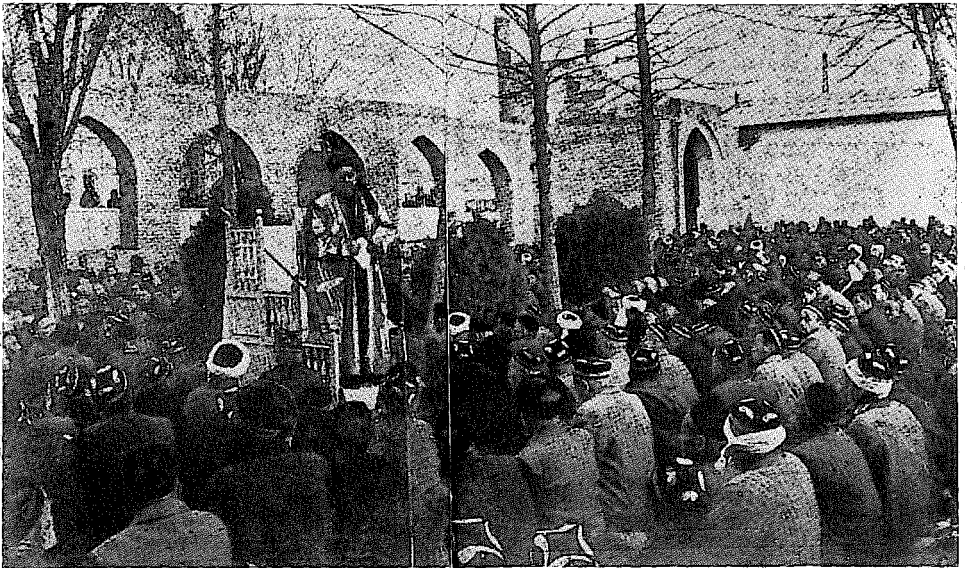
The leaders of the Spiritual Directorate of the North Caucasus and Dagestan. The official Islamic establishment has no central organization and consists of four Spiritual Directorates. See "Official Islam in the Soviet Union" pp. 148-59. (© Novosti Press Agency)



A conference on the defence of world peace held in Tashkent by Soviet Muslim leaders in 1962. (© Novosti Press Agency)



Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov, Chairman of the Spiritual Directorate of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, preaching to the faithful. This Spiritual Directorate is the most important in the USSR: 75 per cent of Soviet Muslims live in Central Asia. (© Novosti Press Agency)



Fr Gheorghe Calciu, a Romanian Orthodox priest, arrested on 10 March 1979. See "Dismantling a Human Rights Movement" pp. 166-70.

Below left

Dimitrie Ianculovici, a Romanian Baptist, who as a human rights activist in Romania helped form in April 1978 the Christian Committee for the Defence of Religious Freedom and Freedom of Conscience (ALRC).

Below right

Pavel Nicolescu, a Romanian Baptist who founded ALRC with Dimitrie Ianculovici. This Committee has called for a "free Church in a free State". See document pp. 170-3.

(All photographs, courtesy Keston College)



the cities because there are not enough "registered" clerics to run the rural mosques. This trend corresponds to the traditional character of Islam. The countryside remains the realm of an "unofficial" or "parallel" Islam,* represented by the Sufi brotherhoods or, simply, by the numerous "unregistered" mullahs.

The religious level of the population is in no way dependent upon the number of "working" mosques. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR – a real bastion of Muslim faith – did not possess a single mosque between 1943 and 1978.

There is not a single registered cleric who could propagate his religious ideology among the believers; but propaganda of Islam is being conducted secretly by the *mürid* (Sufi) societies . . .¹⁴

In recent years – particularly in 1978 – some new mosques have been opened: in Gorki (1978), Saratov (1978), Tashkent (1975), Zhizak (1977), Ak-kurgan (1977) and two in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (in Prigorodny, in the neighbourhood of Grozny and in the *aul* of Surkhohi – the centre of Sufi activity in the Ingush territory).¹⁵ It is not impossible that these new favours granted to "official" Islam stem from the authorities' wish to reinforce the liberal moderate and loyal establishment, and to check the expansion of the radical-conservative and anti-Soviet "parallel" Islam.

According to foreign visitors and various Soviet sources, the number of believers attending prayers at the mosques is significant. Because of the "national" aspect of some religious ceremonies, thousands of believers (and also non-believers) fill the mosques during the great Muslim festivals (e.g. *Aid al-Fitr*, *Aid al-Kebir*).¹⁶ During recent years, Soviet sources have reluctantly acknowledged that the number of believers attending religious ceremonies is increasing:

Based on some external facts, such as the number of people who attend mosques or perform religious rites, an erroneous opinion may arise as to the general increase of religious feelings among the masses. We certainly must not exclude the possibility of active religious agitation which might lead to an increase in the active participation of believers in Muslim ceremonies and rites. But such a phenomenon can neither be long-lasting nor deeply-rooted.¹⁷

* * *

The Tashkent Directorate controls the only two Muslim religious educational institutions. All *mektebs* (lower level schools) and *medressehs* (medium level) were closed in 1928. In 1945, however, the *medresseh* Mir-i Arab of Bukhara was opened: this is a medium level establishment, with students from all over the Soviet Union who enter the *medresseh*

* See "Muslim Religious Conservatism and Dissent in the USSR" by Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejaye, *RCL* Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 153-61. Ed.

as a rule after graduating from a Soviet school or even from a university. Graduates from Mir-i Arab – some 20 every year – either become *imam-khatibs* of the "working" mosques, or complete their education at the higher level *medresseh*, Imam Ismail al-Bukhari of Tashkent. (This was founded in 1971 and named *medresseh* Ismail al-Bukhari in 1974, producing its first graduates in 1975.) Some students of this institution complete their education in various Muslim universities abroad, such as Al-Azhar of Cairo, Qarawyin of Fez, al-Baidha of Libya and the University of Damascus.¹⁸ Graduates from the Tashkent *medresseh* become executives of the four Spiritual Directorates. According to our information, the education offered in both *medresseh*s is remarkable, and Soviet Islam possesses today a small but efficient body of Muslim clerics (*ruhani*) whose learning and competence can compete with that of clerics in any other Muslim country.

* * *

The Tashkent Directorate is also the only one of the four Spiritual Directorates which is producing a number of publications. In 1946 it published a quarterly review in Uzbek (in Arabic script), *Urta Asia va Kazakhstan Musulmanlarining Dini Nazariia Zhurnali* (*Journal of the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan*), which was replaced in 1969 by *Muslims of the Soviet East*, a quarterly journal in two editions – an Arabic edition (*Musulmanan .fi al-Sharq al-Sufiyati*) and an Uzbek edition in Arabic script (*Sovet Sharkining Musulmanlari*). In 1974 an English and a French edition were added. The journal is the Muslim equivalent of the *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*) but it surpasses its Christian equivalent both in presentation and contents. It is a beautifully illustrated publication and gives an excellent idea of the political and spiritual life of the Directorates. It contains the texts of the most important *fetwas*, editorials on purely religious themes, detailed studies of the foreign relations of the Directorates, and sometimes excellent historical articles, often signed by scholars from the Academies of Sciences and by members of universities.

The Directorate has also published a limited number of books and pamphlets: a collection of *fetwas* by the former Mufti Ishan Babakhan (1945), a remarkably beautiful album of Islamic monuments in the USSR (1956) and four or five editions of the Koran.¹⁹ In 1970 it brought out a collection of *hadith* of Imam al-Bukhari, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*, and in 1973 his second big collection of *hadith*, *Jami' al-Sahih*. Referring to this last publication, the Sheikh Abdulgani Abdullah, Vice-President of the Tashkent Spiritual Directorate, wrote this remarkable but somewhat ambiguous commentary:

The edition of *Sahih* of al-Bukhari marks the final victory of Islam over superstition and obscurantism. The book is to be found already in

many Muslim families, in the hands of believers in Central Asia, Siberia, the Caucasus and elsewhere. This book will fully satisfy all the spiritual needs of Muslims. We are now well armed to defend ourselves against the temptations of false theologians and false prophets. This edition is a divine gift which will help our advance along the right path.²⁰

* * *

The other legal activities of the Directorates are more modest. No *Shariyat* courts are left (the last one was closed in 1928).²¹ There are no *waqfs* to administer, and all social and economic activity is strictly forbidden; the collection of the *zakat* came to an end in 1928. Muslim parishes are wealthy and prosperous,²² but their intellectual and spiritual life is limited to prayers, to the reading of the *fetwas*²³ and to the preaching of the *imam-khatibs*.

Intellectual Activity and Relations with "Unofficial" Islam

It is obvious that "official" Islam alone could not preserve religious feeling among the mass of believers. Too few mosques are left, too few "registered" clerics remain to satisfy the spiritual needs of the believers and to perform the necessary rites. Without the activity of "unofficial" or "parallel" Islam, religion in Muslim territories would have degenerated long ago into ignorance (*jahiliyat*) and shamanism.

But the real significance of "official" Islam and its ambitions lie elsewhere. It represents the last legacy of the brilliant pre-revolutionary *jadid* reformism. The Soviet *ulemas* of today are the sole heirs of the prestigious constellation of modernist and liberal theologians and philosophers such as Shihabeddin Marjani, Abdullah Bubi, Musa Jarulla Bigi and Ismail bey Gaspraly. Thus "official" Islam resembles a highly intellectual "General Staff" which guarantees the preservation of the purity and integrity of Islam at its peak. The Soviet Muslim leaders of today are executing the liberal programme of the Islamic renaissance, which was established a century ago by the greatest of the Tatar reformers, Shihabeddin Marjani:²⁴ they are advocating the refusal of the *taqlid* – blind obedience to scholastic authorities; the restoration of the *ijtihad* – the right to interpret the meaning of the Koran, and, more broadly, the necessity to replace "blind" faith by a "reasonable" faith, thus reconciling Islam with science and progress and guaranteeing its survival and revival in the modern scientific world.

The official Muslim leaders have adopted a cautious attitude towards the conservative "parallel" Islam, whose roots are spreading deep within the popular masses. So far they have refused to follow the advice of the Soviet authorities and to denounce Sufism as heretical or unorthodox. The few *fetwas* published by muftis against various Sufi practices (pilgrimages to holy shrines, the collection of the *zakat* by the Sufi brotherhoods, the

performance of the *zikr*) remain moderate and vague, and reveal the Directorates' unwillingness to sever relations with a trend that personifies the second, popular aspect of Islam. Some of the better-informed Soviet observers even doubt whether the official clerics are at variance with the adepts of the Sufi orders :

We must not exaggerate the difference between the modernists and the conservatives. These differences exist only within the limits of Islam and have a purely scholastic character.²⁵

Other specialists even hint at a secret alliance between the two :

Official representatives of the Muslim clergy often spread their propaganda indirectly, through the channel of non-official fanatics. . . . Thus, nobody can accuse them of violating Soviet legislation (on the separation of Church and State).²⁶

The Soviet Government and "Official" Islam

Vis-à-vis the Soviet regime, the religious leadership appears totally loyal and recommends such loyalty to Muslim believers. Official clerics have at no time protested against the anti-religious propaganda, much less against the atheistic character of Soviet society; at no time have they criticized the policy of the Communist Party or denounced Marxism because of its opposition to Islam. They even accept that believers can become members of the Komsomol or the Communist Party, on one condition only, that in the secret of their heart they remain loyal to the dogmas of Islam.²⁷ It thus seems that all Soviet Muslims, Sunnis included, have adopted the traditional Shia practice of *taqiya*.

Official religious leaders act as valuable allies of Soviet *agitprop* when, on the pages of *Muslims of the Soviet East*, they counter-attack foreign observers – Muslims or non-Muslims – who express doubts about the existence of religious freedom in the Soviet eastern republics.²⁸ During their frequent visits abroad, Soviet religious dignitaries maintain the same line of absolute loyalty towards the Soviet regime, proclaiming on every possible occasion, and whatever evidence there is to the contrary, that in the USSR Islam is free, happy and prosperous.²⁹ The same intense, though rather crude, pro-Soviet and anti-imperialist propaganda is propagated by Muslim leaders when foreign delegations visit Central Asian republics, and is particularly stressed at the international congresses organized in Central Asia by the Spiritual Directorate of Tashkent. For example, a Congress of Muslims of the USSR, held in Tashkent in August 1970, adopted a strong anti-imperialist and anti-American stance. The Congress of November 1973, also held in Tashkent, was even more violently anti-Israeli in character.

The danger and the limits of cooperation between the Soviet authorities

and official Islam have been stressed many times by Soviet leaders. Sharaf Rashidov, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, approached this problem in his report at the VIIIth Plenum of the Central Committee :

The clerics are cleverly adapting to the new conditions; they don various masks, they are fighting for each soul . . . they are especially interested in the young. . . . It would be a great mistake to imagine that they are fighting a losing battle. Their power and their influence are proved by the number of people at prayers in the mosques, and by the number who observe religious festivals and religious rites.⁸⁰

And a central Asian specialist of anti-Islamic propaganda went so far as to proclaim that :

Because of their ability to adjust themselves to the Soviet regime, Muslim modernists (i.e. the "official" Muslim leaders) are as dangerous as the conservatives.⁸¹

At all events, so long as the cooperation between "official" Islam and the Soviet authorities persists – and it seems to be destined to persist for some time to come – it is certainly more profitable to the Muslims than to the Soviet regime. Moscow might certainly obtain some limited advantages by using Muslim officials as propagandists abroad and "moderators" at home, but Islam, thanks to the combined action of its two faces – the official and the non-official – has succeeded in surviving half a century of oppression and persecution, and its leaders may justifiably view the future with optimism.⁸²

¹ The "Twelvers" Shiites, who recognize 12 visible Imams, are represented in the USSR by 70 per cent of the Azeris and by small communities in Central Asian and Lower Volga cities: Bukhara, Samarkand, Krasnovodsk, Mary, Ashkhabad, Astrakhan. Their total number probably does not exceed 2,700,000.

² Other Muslim religious groups are :

- the *Ismailis* of Nizari rite ("Followers of the Aga Khan") numbering probably less than 100,000 in the Pamirs. The majority of the Pamirian or "Galcha" peoples: Vanchis, Vakhis, Yazgulams, Ishkashims, Bartangs, Shugnis . . . belong to this sect.
- some small *Bahais* colonies in Astrakhan, Ashkhabad, Mary . . .
- a group of Extreme Shiites: the *Ali Illahis* ("Those who divinize Ali") among the Karapapakhs of Armenia, probably less than 10,000.
- the *Yezidis* or "Devil worshippers" – Kurds of Armenia (15,000 in 1926), are sometimes counted with the Muslims, but they really do not belong to Islam. Their religion has its roots in Manicheism.

³ M. A. Abdulaev and M. V. Vagabov, *Aktualnye problemy kritiki i preodoleniya Islama*, Makhach-Kala, 1975, p. 13.

⁴ Islam has no professional "clergy". Any believer knowing Arabic and the necessary prayers can perform a religious rite.

⁵ Nugman Ashirov, *Evolutsiya Islama v SSSR*, Moscow, 1973, p. 12.

⁶ Between 1948 and 1975, 923 anti-religious books and pamphlets were published in 21 "Muslim" languages, in addition to anti-Islamic books in Russian. The Uzbek language comes first, with 177 titles, then, in the following order: Dagestani

languages - 140, Kazakh - 126, Azeri - 96, Tadzhik - 70, Kirgiz - 69, Tatar - 65, Chechen-Ingush - 50, Turkmen - 44, Bashkir - 24, Kabard - 13, Adyge-Cherkess - 12, Karakalpak - 11, Abkhaz - 6, Uigur - 5, Georgian (for the Ajars) - 4, Karachai-Balkar - 3, Nogai - 3, Dungan - 2, Ossetian - 2, Abaza - 1. The great majority of these publications appeared between 1960 and 1964.

⁷ *Muslims of the Soviet East* (hereafter MSE), 1978 - II, p. 10. Among them: "Sheikh Zainuddin", "Hoja Alambardor", "Tilla Sheikh", "Yokha Saray", "Mirza Yusuf", "Allau", "Chupan Ata..."

⁸ MSE, 1978 - II, p. 17, including "Hoja Zaineddin" restored in 1974, "Tagban-Barta", "Shah-i Zanda", "Hoja Tabbat".

⁹ As against 2,200 in 1925 in the Tatar ASSR alone (L. Klimovich, "Borba Ortodoksov i Modernistov v Islame" in *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, II, 1955, p. 78).

¹⁰ According to A. Makatov, *Islam, Veruyushchii, Sovremennost - opyt konkretno-sotsialnogo issledovaniya Muslimanstva*, Makhach-Kala, 1974, p. 7; and the same figures in M. A. Abdulaev and M. V. Vagabov, *Aktualnye problemy*, op. cit., p. 179. In 1917, on the territory of the present-day Dagestan ASSR, there were 1,700 small mosques and 360 "cathedral mosques". Also, M. Z. Magomedov, "Iz istorii reshenii natsionalnogo i religioznogo voprosov na Severnom Kavkaze", *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, XIV, 1973, p. 45.

¹¹ All Chechen and Ingush mosques were destroyed in 1943 when the native population of this republic was deported. Cf. Yu. A. Aidaev and V. G. Pivovarov, "Problemy konkretnykh issledovaniy religii" in *Sotsiologiya, Ateizm, Religiya*, Grozny, 1972, p. 12, write: "There is not a single working mosque left in the Republic". Two mosques were opened in 1978. In 1917, there were on the territory of the present-day Chechen-Ingush ASSR 2,675 mosques (cf. *Revolutsiya i Goretz*, 1933, Nos. 1-2, p. 83).

¹² A. V. Avksentev, *Islam na Severnom Kavkaze*, Stavropol, 1973, p. 143.

¹³ Nugman Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 82-3.

¹⁴ Yu. A. Aidaev and V. G. Pivovarov, "Problemy konkretnykh issledovaniy...", op. cit., pp. 12-13.

¹⁵ MSE, 1978 - II, p. 19.

¹⁶ N. Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, Moscow, 1975, p. 64: "Muslim festivals have a special attraction in the areas where Muslims live in non-Muslim territory. Even non-believers attend the ceremonies which are considered national tradition. In the Orenburg mosque, at the time of the Uraza Bairam, even school-boys attend the 'Tatar festival'. The same is true in Penza, Omsk, Leningrad, Astrakhan..."

¹⁷ A. Makatov, *Islam, Veruyushchii*..., op. cit., p. 100.

¹⁸ Shamsuddin Babakanov, Director of the *medresseh* "Imam al-Bukhari", MSE, 1977 - II, p. 6.

¹⁹ Official sources are not clear on this point: MSE, 1976 - IV, pp. 18-19, mentions two editions in 1963 (?) and 1970. But the same journal, 1976 - IV, p. 4, speaks of six editions; the issue 1977 - I, p. 9, mentions three editions with the fourth at the printers, and the issue 1978 - I, p. 6 mentions five editions.

²⁰ MSE, 1976 - IV, p. 19.

²¹ The *Shariyat* courts were abolished between 1922 and 1928. Cf. N. Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, op. cit., p. 110.

²² The *sadaqa*, voluntary contribution of the believers to the mosque, has been increasingly practised during recent years. Cf. A. Makatov, *Islam, Veruyushchii*... op. cit., p. 98.

²³ M. A. Abdulaev and M. V. Vagabov, *Aktualnye problemy*..., op. cit., pp. 179-80. The *fetwas* are solemnly read at the Friday prayers in Arabic, "which gives them a striking, emotional, artistic quality". They are then commented upon in the local language. They may deal with any problem: social, political, moral, religious, but "the necessary element in all *fetwas* is their absolute loyalty to the Soviet State and their modernistic character".

²⁴ Shihabeddin Marjani (1818-1899), Tatar religious reformer, historian and pedagogue, educated in a Bukharian *medresseh*, considered to be the father of Tatar *jadidism*.

²⁵ M. A. Abdulaev, "Za glubokoe kriticheskoe izuchenie ideologii Islama", *Sotsiologiya, Ateizm, Religiya*, Grozny, 1972, p. 30.

²⁶ M. A. Abdulaev and M. V. Vagabov, *Aktualnye problemy ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁷ Yu. A. Aidaev and V. G. Pivovarov, "Problemy konkretnykh ...", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁸ For instance, *MSE*, 1975 - I, pp. 8-13, a long article signed by the Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov. It attacks a certain Abd al-Hafiz Abdurrabbuh who published an article on "the communist terror against Islam" in the journal *Akhbar al-Alam al-Islam*; or *MSE*, 1977 - III, pp. 18-20, or an article by the sheikh Abdulgani Abdullah, Vice-Chairman of the Tashkent Directorate, who criticizes a Karl Lavrenevich for his anti-Soviet article in a Pakistani journal.

²⁹ Thus, in November 1977, the Mufti Haji Ismail Ahmedov, Vice-Chairman of the Baku Directorate, told the *Associated Press News* correspondent that in the USSR believers worship freely and observe Muslim holidays. He also emphasized the "unfailing humaneness of the Soviet State towards its believing sons".

³⁰ *Pravda Vostoka*, 13 July 1963.

³¹ T. Izimbetov, *Islam i sovremennost*, Nukhus, 1963, p. 78.

³² Recently and for the first time in Soviet history, the Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov gave the number of Muslims in the Soviet Union. Speaking in a Radio Moscow broadcast in Turkish (5 April 1979, 1400 GMT), he said: "I would like to tell you that there are over 40 million Muslims in the Soviet Union." Given the personality of the Mufti of Tashkent, these figures must be considered as official. They correspond more or less to the total number of people of various nationalities, which before the Revolution belonged to Islam. It is significant that some days before this broadcast, a certain Vladimir Pozner spoke in a Radio Moscow broadcast to North America (Radio Moscow, in English, 30 March 1979, 0030 GMT) and declared: "It would be hard to imagine more than ten per cent of the once Muslim population actually being religious today. So ten per cent means a bit over three million, and that is anything but a conservative figure."

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