STATE EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE RELIGIOUS ALLEGIANCES: THEMES AND ARGUMENTS OF ANTI-ISLAMIC PROPAGANDA DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

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STATE EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE RELIGIOUS ALLEGIANCES: THEMES AND ARGUMENTS OF ANTI-ISLAMIC PROPAGANDA DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

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The Soviet Union was the first great power to make extensive and continuing use of propaganda as a means of achieving social revolution and maintaining social control. The study identifies and analyzes the changing strategies, themes, arguments and styles of propaganda attacks on Islam and Muslim believers during the Soviet period of Russian history. For purposes of the study, "propaganda" is viewed as an organized, or concerted, group effort to promote a specific body of thought, doctrine, ideas, or information.

An early and major imperative facing the successful Marxist revolutionaries was to prepare the way in human terms for the long-term success of the new society. They were dedicated to the creation of Soviet Man. As an aspect of that preparation, it was important to clear away the remnants of bourgeoise society, including religion. Islam was but one of the religions subjected to substantial attack.

The study included a substantial review of major primary Soviet sources, and includes an annotated Appendix of articles relating to Islam in the journal *Bezbozhnik*. Although the study is centered on anti-Islamic propaganda during the Soviet period, the Soviets were not the first to colonize the Muslim lands on the periphery of what came to be the USSR. Nor were the Soviets the first to engage in active propaganda directed against Islam. Accordingly, the study includes a substantial review and

analysis of the anti-Islamic literature that emerged from the nineteenth century Russian Orthodox missionaries.

A chief conclusion of the study is that the propaganda themes and arguments of the Soviet propagandists were little changed from those used by the Orthodox missionaries. Related to this conclusion is the observation that the results of the two sets of propagandists were not markedly different. Both ended in failure.

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That this study was undertaken and completed can only be attributed to the inspiration, guidance, advice, patience, encouragement, and effort of many others.

For inspiration and initial guidance I am indebted to my late father, Alexandre Bennigsen. At a time when the Soviet Union was still a closed society, he suggested the topic. As it turned out, however, the study was quite different from what had been envisaged. For continuing guidance and advice as the study moved towards its present form, I am especially indebted to Professor Diane P. Koenker. She helped me resurrect the topic in light of the transformation of the Soviet Union. For reading through various drafts of the manuscript as it descended upon them in dribbles and drabs and for their continuing patient advice as the study progressed, I am indebted to Professor Ralph T. Fisher and Professor M. Mobin Shorish.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the changing strategies, themes, arguments and styles of propaganda attacks on Islam and Muslim believers during the Soviet period of Russian history. The Soviet Union was the first great power to make extensive and continuing use of propaganda as a means of achieving social revolution and maintaining social control.[1] In colloquial usage the word "propaganda" often carries a strong pejorative overtone. That need not be the case, and the word is not used in that sense in this study. Instead, "propaganda" as used herein retains its formal meaning: an organized, or concerted, group effort to promote a specific body of thought, doctrine, ideas, or information. In this context, it is possible to view as propaganda a wide variety of media and materials containing varying levels of intellectual content -- from scholarly studies to slogans to leaflets.

For decades, the study of numerous aspects of life within the Soviet Union was effectively denied to Western scholars. For periods when such limitations were operative, the study of propaganda offered one means of drawing inferences about unseen phenomena. It is reasonable to believe that the themes and arguments being used by the propagandists were responsive to concerns or threats perceived by the state. In turn, in the absence of wild paranoia it is plausible to believe that the concerns or threats perceived by the state were responsive to objective events. That is, they were responsive to something that was, in fact, going on. Alternatively, there may not have been changes in external events or conditions, but there may have been shifts in policy toward those events or

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1 Among studies of Soviet propaganda see: Hopkins; Hollander; Powell, *Anti-religious Propaganda;* Kenez; and Benn.

conditions. Hence, the interpretation of propaganda changes must be approached with caution.

The study of propaganda can be of substantial value even if other avenues of investigation are open. An historical analysis of propaganda is important in those social systems in which propaganda has been an important instrument of control. The identification of propaganda shifts may provide additional insights into factors motivating policy changes. Propaganda changes, or their absence, may reinforce our understanding of policy changes that have been inferred from other data, or even those that have been officially announced. For example, expanding on this latter point, an attitude of skepticism may be appropriate for an announced change in policy that is not accompanied by a corresponding shift in propaganda.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the groundwork for the dissertation. Its initial focus is to show how anti-Islamic propaganda fit into the overall purposes of the Soviet state.

Soviet Man and Anti-Islamic Propaganda

An early and major imperative facing the successful Marxist revolutionaries was to prepare the way in human terms for the long-term success of the new society. A dominant theme of the Marxist Revolution consisted of the promise to alter the relationship between the production process and the distribution of income. In the words of Marx "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." Such an arrangement had not been an aspect of the Tsarist system, nor has it been an aspect of any large system known to modern society.

Even before Marx, the desire to create heaven on earth had been man's dream for centuries. The utopias of Plato, Thomas More, Campanella, Muntzer,

Babeuf, Winstanley, Fourier, Owen, Saint-Simon had attracted many followers. In virtually each case, the utopia consisted of a golden age brought about by renewed and purified men. For centuries the dream of the new man remained inseparable from the idea of God. Renewal was made possible by God's grace. In the nineteenth century the dream was changing. Rather than to bring himself into conformity with his idea of God, man sought to achieve perfection through the use of the laws of Science and History. Lenin viewed Marxism as "the science of sciences," a philosophy encompassing the laws that would enable its adepts to transform the world and the human genre. In October 1917, Lenin and his co-thinkers seized power with the proclaimed goal of creating an ideal order.

Soviet ideologists were right when they proclaimed that the October Revolution had marked the dawn of a new era. It was not the first time in history that a group of men had made a revolution with the purpose of seizing power. But, notwithstanding similarities to the French Revolution, the Bolsheviks went further than the French in their announced intention to create a different political, economic, and social system. The *coup d'etat* represented the first step in the accomplishment of the project. Its full realization necessitated the creation of a new man, commonly referred to as Soviet man. Moreover, the idea of Soviet man was not ancillary or transient. Seventy years later, the nominal goal remained the same and each leader had proclaimed its importance.[2] Thus, as late as 1983 Konstantin Chernenko asserted that "the formation of the new man is not only an essential goal to reach, but a vital condition for the building of Communism."[3]

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2 For the pronouncements about the new man by Soviet leaders see for example *KPSS o Formirovanii* .

3 *Pravda*, 15 June 1983.

In the course of Soviet history the model of Soviet man changed somewhat. From the "pure revolutionary" of the twenties there emerged the "scientific and industrialized" man from whom fidelity, initiative, and energy were demanded. In 1961, Khrushchev predicted that 1981 would mark the birth of the new Soviet man. This new man was supposed to "combine harmoniously a high ideological conscience, a vast culture, moral purity, and physical perfection."[4] But whatever the variations of the model, the underlying purposes for its creation remained the same: to bring about uniformity of minds and souls as defined by the leaders; and to develop in each individual the sense of belonging to the state, of being a lowly fraction of the machine, of being a member of the collective who would obey without question the leaders of the state.[5]

Never before in history had there been an attempt to create a new man on "a strictly scientific basis." Having seized power, Lenin's party had only a vague idea of the actions it would undertake. The transformation of man, however, implied, first of all, the destruction of the old social, economic, and state system. Society was the first recipient of what contemporaries of the Revolution have described as disorganized and chaotic actions. The social tissue of human relations became an early target. At length, religion, the family, history, and languages were to come under attack. The old terms of reference for the individual were to be destroyed, to be replaced by a set of terms established and approved by the state. Conditions were to be created wherein man would cease to behave, think, or feel as he had before the Revolution. For seventy years, the thought processes of the individual in the Soviet state were subjected to more or

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4 *Pravda*, 18 October 1961.

5 For a study of the system of formation of the new Soviet man see for example: Heller; Ro'i; Powell, "Rearing New Soviet Man"; and Bauer.

less intensive efforts to create Soviet man. The rationale had been that each successive Soviet generation was supposed to increase progressively its reserve of socialist feelings and to begin to see normality in the new order.

The formation of an atheist was an important aspect of the creation of Soviet man. "Communism begins at the outset ... with atheism," wrote Karl Marx, and Lenin fully adopted the premise. Although Lenin's chief source of inspiration was undoubtedly the thought of Marx and Engels, he was also influenced by the nineteenth century Russian tradition of political atheism of Belinsky, Herzen, Pisarev, Bakunin, etc.[6] Lenin's writings on religion are rather limited.[7] Even so, as Bociurkiw pointed out "it would be far from correct to minimize either the importance of atheism in Leninist theory or the political significance ascribed by him to the role of religion in Russian society."[8] Indeed, Bochenski argued that Lenin's rejection of religion, became "one of the logical bases of his philosophy -- perhaps the most important one."[9]

Lenin upgraded the importance of the active struggle against religious ideology to such an extent that it became a means, if not indeed a condition, of a successful struggle against political and economic oppression.[10] Some argue that the virulence of Lenin's opposition to religion reflects the political atheism of the

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6 For studies of the Russian background to Marxism see: Berdyaev; Berlin; Billington; Bochenski, *Dialectical Materialism;* Kline; Thrower; and Walicki. See also the invaluable work of Venturi.

7 Lenin, *Ateisticheskie Proizvedeniia.*

8 Bociurkiw, "Lenin and Religion," 107-8.

9 Bochenski, *Dialectical Materialism*, 31.

10 Bociurkiw, "Lenin and Religion," 109.

Russian radical tradition, an atheism that sprang from the rejection of the interdependence between the autocracy and the Orthodox church.[11]

Marxism as a complete *weltanschauung* was a Leninist contribution to original Marxist thought.[12] For Lenin, Marxism was a complete and harmonious world view, "all powerful because true." As such, it was the correct alternative to any and all religious understandings of man and the world.[13] Because there was room for nothing else, the philosophical and political, even personal, atheism of Lenin provided the context for his further dealings with religion in the Soviet Union.

Lenin's principle of the materiality of all existence was a principle that excluded the supernatural *in toto*. Thus, he rejected all religions and all "churches." The Soviet anti-religious campaigns were directed against all religions.[14] However, the focus of the dissertation is narrowed to the consideration of one religion, Islam. And as we shall see, the dissertation is narrowed further to one aspect of anti-Islamic activities, propaganda.

Soviet Activities Within a Broadened Perspective

Having motivated the study by viewing anti-Islamic propaganda as flowing from Marxist efforts to create Soviet Man, it is appropriate to consider the subject matter within a broadened perspective. For, after all, the expansion of

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11 Bociurkiw, "Lenin and Religion," 109; and Thrower, 113.

12 Lenin built upon Engels' attempts to formulate a Marxist world view. See *Anti-Duhring* written in 1877.

13 Thrower, 120-1.

14 Surveys of church-state relationship can be found in: Timasheff; Anderson; Curtiss, *Russian Church;* Kolarz, *Religion;* Struve; Conquest; Fletcher; Simon; and Pospielovsky, *Russian Church.*

north European caucasions into territories occupied by others, including those of Muslim faith, is anything but exceptional. The Russians themselves had attempted to gain access to year-round ports for more than a century. As we shall see in Chapter II, the tsars had had their own reasons to engage in active anti-Islamic propaganda.

In short, it is plausible to view the Soviet experience in Muslim lands as an aspect of colonialism. Thus regarded, it could be asserted that the Soviets were little different from the French, English, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, Italians, Portugese, Americans, and anyone else who pushed themselves into the lands and peoples of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, south and central America and elsewhere. Within this context, attempts to spread atheism in an effort to create Soviet Man can be regarded as substantially similar to attempts to spread Christianity and western culture.

Why Study Anti-Islamic Propaganda?

The choice of Islam as a case study is based on a number of considerations. Among the religions of the Soviet Union, Islam possesses characteristics that have made it particularly intractable to outside influences. In their attempts to destroy Islam, the Bolsheviks encountered a series of problems, not only religious but also cultural and political. The Bolsheviks had not encountered these problems with Orthodoxy, and they were ill prepared to deal with them.

It is well known that Islam is both a faith and a socio-cultural system. The prescriptions of Islam, probably more than in any other religion, permeate all aspects of everyday life. Islam transcends the purely spiritual domain and, by regulating many aspects of personal and collective social discourse, becomes for its adherents a way of life. The Muslims of the Russian Empire, molded by centuries of Islam, possessed certain spiritual, social and psychological attitudes

conditions. Hence, the interpretation of propaganda changes must be approached with caution.

The study of propaganda can be of substantial value even if other avenues of investigation are open. An historical analysis of propaganda is important in those social systems in which propaganda has been an important instrument of control. The identification of propaganda shifts may provide additional insights into factors motivating policy changes. Propaganda changes, or their absence, may reinforce our understanding of policy changes that have been inferred from other data, or even those that have been officially announced. For example, expanding on this latter point, an attitude of skepticism may be appropriate for an announced change in policy that is not accompanied by a corresponding shift in propaganda.

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Even before Marx, the desire to create heaven on earth had been man's dream for centuries. The utopias of Plato, Thomas More, Campanella, Muntzer,

the propaganda arena. And they have neglected the arguments and mechanisms used by the Soviet state in an effort to shape the religious beliefs of its Muslim population.

Plan of the Study

The study consists of five additional chapters and a conclusion. Chapter II discusses the tsarist experience with Islam. The early Bolsheviks inherited a large Marxist anti-religious literature, and a long anti-clerical tradition from the nineteenth century Russian socialists and revolutionaries. But among this vast heritage were only very limited references to Islam. Thus, the Bolsheviks could not find much among the pronouncements of their ideological ancestors to guide them in a practical way against Islam. In contrast, the Tsarist experience with its Muslim population was an important source of reference to the Bolsheviks. A large anti-Islamic missionary literature had developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Soviet authorities copied some of the tsarist tactics and used the rich legacy of the anti-Islamic missionary literature.

Chapter III traces the major policy shifts of the Soviet period *vis a vis* Islam. These shifts formed the background against and within which anti-Islamic propaganda was conceived. The discussion begins with the period of uncertainty toward Islam immediately following the October Revolution and continuing through much of the decade of the 1920s. Major anti-Islamic policy initiatives were mounted during the Cultural Revolution and continued for the remainder of the 1930s. After a period of religious *detente* during World War II and Stalin's last years, Khrushchev returned to an aggressive anti-Islamic stance, but within the context of a new ideological approach. In a somewhat less aggressive tone, the new ideological approach was maintained throughout the remainder of the Soviet period.

The Soviet Union's propaganda approaches and aspects of its apparatus are described in Chapter IV. The Soviet commitment to a long-term educational effort was worked out during the course of a decade-long debate during the 1920s. As it turns out, however, the educational approach was not implemented until the debate was renewed during the Khrushchev period.

Chapters V and VI analyze the major themes and arguments of Soviet anti-Islamic propaganda. The word "themes" refers to the elements of Islam coming under attack; the word "arguments" refers to the theses used by the propagandists to undermine those elements. Chapter V deals with changing themes and arguments during the NEP and the Stalin era, and Chapter VI considers these same factors during the remainder of the Soviet period.

The main target of propaganda in the 1920s and 1930s was the religious establishment. The Soviet authorities believed that by destroying the church -- the mosques and the Muslim clerics -- they would seriously weaken the power of Islam over the population. The aspects of Islam coming under propaganda attack during that period were the outwardly identifiable elements. There were practically no attacks on the specific beliefs of the Islamic faith.

The post-Khrushchev period was characterized by a relatively more liberal treatment of Islam. The strategy was based on the premise that Islam could be destroyed ideologically; the chief practical tactic involved co-opting the Muslim elite. Anti-Islamic propaganda in the late sixties and seventies used an eclectic approach. The themes and the arguments were vastly increased in comparison to the earlier periods and were more subtle. There was an effort to oppose Marxism to Islam at every possible level: spiritual, moral, philosophical, cultural, artistic, scientific, and political.

In the late 1970s Soviet sources began to talk of Islamic revival. Soviet propagandists began to question the efficacy of the ideological strategy against

Islam. They had come to the view that the strength of the religion was not wholly in the ideology; instead, its strength was found in its social traditions. By the 1980s, the strategy of the Brezhnev period had been abandoned, and a systematic campaign was pursued to destroy Islam at the grass-roots level. The themes of the propaganda were directed mainly toward the way of life, customs, rites, and traditions of Islam. In the late 1980s, anti-Islamic propaganda again shifted. The traditional arguments against Islam were retained, but they were advanced in a subdued manner. In their place, a massive pro-internationalist campaign was undertaken in the Muslim republics.

Conclusions and suggestions for future research are presented in Chapter VII.

Sources and Limitations

The primary sources for this study are printed missionary anti-Islamic literature and printed Soviet anti-Islamic literature, both periodical and non-periodical. In the context of our definition of propaganda, the sources range from scholarly studies of Soviet Islamists to primitive attacks on Islam by low-level propagandists.

An exhaustive coverage of anti-Islamic literature could not be achieved. The chief problem relates to the uneven availability of sources in the West. For example, prior to 1941 a number of journals specializing in anti-religious propaganda were published in Turkic languages in various Muslim republics. Those journals are not generally available in the West. However, they were published by the Society of Militant Godless which also published, at the same intellectual level, the journal *Bezbozhnik* (The Godless). *Bezbozhnik,* discussed more fully in Chapter IV and the Appendix, is available in the West. It is reasonable to assume that the themes and arguments against Islam printed in

Bezbozhnik are the same as those printed in Turkic journals. An annotated bibliography of articles appearing in *Bezbozhnik* during its period of publication forms an Appendix to this study.

Another problem preventing complete coverage is that Soviet non-periodical local publications on Islam are typically published in limited editions, usually between five hundred and three thousand copies. They are aimed at domestic consumption rather than foreign observers. Hence, it is not easy to find them abroad, and only a few Western institutions have gathered such material. In contrast, publications issued in Moscow are often printed in large quantities and are for foreign consumption. These can be found in most well-stocked libraries in the West, but they are likely to be much less instructive regarding the life of Muslims in the Soviet Union.

Finally, an exhaustive coverage of anti-Islamic propaganda is difficult because of the tremendous increase of the material since the 1950s. Information relating to Islam is disseminated throughout the Soviet press. Atheistic literature against Islam can be found in such unexpected journals as *Sovetskaia Industriia* (Soviet Industry). An analysis of everything that has become available would require the work of a team.

It is unlikely, however, that anything new would be forthcoming in the material to which we have not had access. Anti-religious literature in general, and the anti-Islamic propaganda in particular, is extremely repetitive -- at all levels, from the scholarly to the crude. Therefore, the already enormous amount of available literature is more than sufficient to give a well-defined picture of the themes and arguments of the anti-Islamic propaganda.

Chapter II: Islam and Its Adversaries in Pre-Revolutionary Russia

As tsarist Russia expanded toward empire after the mid-sixteenth century it encountered a series of peoples that were culturally and religiously different from the Orthodox Russians. It encountered animists, Buddhists, and Muslims, along with Jews and other non-Orthodox Christians. As an aspect of political expansion, the tsars had entrusted the Russian Orthodox Church with the mission of spiritual expansion.[1] Only with a successful conversion of these disparate populations to Orthodoxy could there be a complete assimilation of these peoples into the Russian Empire. As Mozharovskii, a pre-Revolutionary historian, put it: "To win a decisive victory ... the Russians had yet to conquer the heterodox populations morally, by the spiritual sword, by the word of God, to conquer them by the Christian Orthodox faith. Only then could the infidels become loyal subjects of the Russian Christian State."[2] The task of the Church continued with varied success until the Revolution.

This chapter discusses the activities of the Russian Orthodox missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century and presents an analysis of their literature. The interest in presenting a review of the missionary literature in this dissertation is that the Soviet anti-Islamic literature repeated and expanded upon the same arguments. In the process of discussing the Orthodox missionaries, the chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the condition of Islam to be faced by the Bolsheviks following their successful Revolution. The chapter proceeds as follows: First, there is a discussion of the spread of Islam in tsarist Russia as viewed from the perspective of the missionaries. This discussion provides a

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1 Lemercier-Quelquejay, "Les Missions Orthodoxes," 369 and 375.

2 Mozharovskii, 2.

picture of the vitality of the religion in the daily life of the Muslim population of Russia. Next, there is a broad review of the chief contours of the Russian Orthodox literature, its general character and its intended audiences. Finally, the chapter moves to an analysis of the messages and themes of missionary literature.

The Setting

Practicing Russian Orthodox often boast that they have not needed to devote resources toward missionary work. That assertion is not entirely accurate. It is true that the Russian Orthodox Church's missionary activities abroad have been quite limited. The Orthodox Church's main efforts have been carried on within the borders of the empire, among animists, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and non-Orthodox Christians.

The low visibility of the Russian Orthodox Church in missionary activities resulted chiefly from the fact that for centuries the Church has come under close supervision by the state. As a consequence of its subordination to the tsarist Russian state, the missionary activities of the Orthodox Church in conquered territories were limited both in terms of geography and in time. In Muslim territories, missionary activities were undertaken only in regions where and at times when the tsarist state wanted to pursue a policy of assimilation of the non-Russian populations. Such was the case at three different periods in the territories of the Middle-Volga, Ural, and Western Siberia. The first surge of missionary activity occurred in the second half of the sixteenth century; then, about a century later, between 1710 and 1765, missionary activities were renewed; finally, missionary activities were pressed between 1865 and 1905, the only period that produced a rich anti-Islamic literature.

Missionary work was also undertaken where desirable outcomes were most likely, such as territories where the influence of Islam was considered to be

superficial. For example, missionary activities were pursued in the Kazakh steppes and in some regions of the Caucasus during the nineteenth century. In territories where Islam was strongly implanted or where there was no desire to assimilate the populations, missionary work was discouraged or specifically prohibited (e.g., the Crimea, parts of the Caucasus, and Turkestan).[3]

The historical setting is organized around four topics. First, there is an overview of the advance of Islam in the nineteenth century. Second, there is a discussion of the reactions of the Russian missionaries to the renaissance of Islam. Among the missionaries, that renaissance created alarm and paved the way for anti-Islamic initiatives, the next topic to be discussed. The final part of this section describes the tenuous position of the missionaries after 1905.

The Advance of Islam

The Tatars of the Middle-Volga had been subjected to strong pressure for conversion to Orthodoxy prior to the reign of Catherine II. Following her Decree of Toleration of Faith in 1773, the Volga Tatars quickly reasserted their Muslim identity. In the following century, the proselytizing activities of the Volga Tatars in eastern Russia resulted in steady conversions to Islam. First and foremost, Islam was spread among Christian Tatars, including both *starokreshchenye* (old converts) and *novokreshchenye* (recent converts). The *starokreshchenye* had been converted to Christianity in the sixteenth century, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. They lived in communities, separated

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3 A history of Orthodox missions in eastern Russia remains to be written. Studies, other than by Russian missionaries, include: Grigor'ev; Lemercier-Quelquejay, "Missions Orthodoxes," 369-403; Mozharovskii; Kreindler, *Educational Policies;* and Saussay, "Il'minskij." Also see the bibliographical work by Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, "Musulmans et Missions."

from their Muslim brethren or intermixed with Russians.[4] They were considered authentic and firmly Orthodox and, at least until 1866, were not affected by the periodic mass apostasies that plagued the *novokreshchenye*. The *novokreshchenye* had been converted in the eighteenth century, mostly through coercion, and were only nominally Christian. They often continued to live intermixed with the Muslim Tatars, and were under constant pressure to revert to Islam.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, apostasies and reversions to Islam of *novokreshchenye* remained a continual problem for the Orthodox Church. There were two major movements of apostasy in the Kazan *guberniia* (province), one in 1827 and another in 1866. In 1866, for the first time whole communities of Tatar *starokreshchenye* petitioned the Tsar to allow them to return to Islam.[5] In the same Volga-Ural region, Islam also gained adepts among those who had never been Muslims, among the animist and Christian Turkic or Finnic tribes, the Chuvash, the Cheremiss (Marii), and the Votiak (Udmurt). Always proselytized by the Volga-Tatars, Islam was also growing deeper roots among the poorly Islamized Kazakh masses.

An intensified concern about the spread of Islam in eastern Russia led to a renewal of missionary activity in the second half of the nineteenth century. The scale of the apostasies had shaken not only the Orthodox Church but also the Russian administration. In the government's view, defection from Orthodoxy

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4 Lemercier-Quelqujay, "Missions Orthodoxes," 379; and Saussay, "Apostasie," 24-5. The order to separate the baptized Tatars from their Muslim brethren was given by Tsar Fedor to the voevodas of Kazan on June 18, 1593. See "Spisok s Gosudarevy Gramoty o Novokreshchennykh Tatarakh. Ot Otvedenii Dlia Nikh Osobykh Pashen i Istreblenii Mecheti, 18 Iiulia 1503," reproduced in *Istoriia Tatarii v Dokumentakh,* 147-150.

5 For the reasons and consequences of the 1866 apostasy movement see Saussay, "Apostasie."

was akin to treason.[6] However, in the atmosphere of relative liberalism of the 1860s, openly coercive methods of conversion were no longer possible. As an alternative, the Middle-Volga-Ural and the Kazakh steppe witnessed a renewal of missionary activities. The missionaries recognized that they faced a formidable force, but they were confident, at least in the mid-nineteenth century, that they could be successful. In particular, in view of the Kazakhs' lukewarm attitude toward Islam, the missionaries believed that the Kazakhs were strong candidates to be won over to Russian Orthodoxy.[7] But by the end of the nineteenth century the confidence of the missionaries had begun to fade.

It was with a certain admiration and envy that the missionaries viewed the Muslim Tatars' community spirit, religious convictions, and moral behavior. To the missionaries, the Tatar communities appeared to be closely knitted communities, striving to maintain their faith, their religious traditions and the customs inherited from their ancestors. The Tatars sought to keep their communities as hermetically closed from Russian influence as possible. In this closed environment there reigned a powerful religious and community spirit. Each member considered the defense of the interests of his community to be his duty. The smallest Tatar community was a "parish." Each parish represented a miniature state with its laws, rules, and customs, all drawing their strength from Islamic tradition. Each parish had its own school and its own mosque which were endowed by the parish.[8] Wherever destiny had spread them, a few Muslim

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6 Kreindler, *Educational Policies,* 74.

7 Kreindler, "Ibrahim Altynsarin," 104; and id., *Educational Policies,* 164-9.

8 Il'minskii, a prominent missionary, claimed that Muslims had more more funds for education than the Orthodox, and he envied their customary practice of endowing schools rather than churches, icons, or bells as was the case among Russians. See Il'minskii, "Shkola," 91, cited by Kreindler, *Educational Policies*, 102.

families immediately grouped themselves around a mosque and a school. Furthermore, they immediately established contacts with the closest *madrasah.*[9] Such small Muslim communities were spread in numerous regions of Russia. In spite of the fact that the Tatar communities had been embedded among Russians for centuries, they had not lost their Tatar-Muslim character.[10]

In contrast, the missionaries drew attention to the frequent disorder of Russian colonization. In Siberia and in the Altai in particular, Russian settlers often lived for years without churches or schools.[11] In those areas it was not unusual for non-Muslim natives and even Russians to send their children to the Muslim Tatar village schools (*maktab*). Russian disorder was viewed by the missionaries as an obstacle to the spread of Orthodoxy among animists, even among those who had sympathy for it such as the Votiaks (Udmurts). "We like your Russian faith," said the Votiaks, "we like your religious ceremonies, but you have no order and that is why we stay in our own faith."[12] In contrast, the assimilative power of the Tatar was such that not only did non-Muslim natives become Tatarized, but, to the great horror of the missionaries, so did a great number of Russians.[13]

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9 *Madrasah* is a Muslim higher educational establishment. The *madrasah(s)* were not all located in urban areas. In the Volga-Ural a number of them were in the countryside. Il'minskii mentioned the role of *madrasah(s)* in the spread of Islam among non-Muslims living in their vicinity. In particular, he complained about the influence of the *madrasah* of Sterlibash, in the Ufa province, upon surrounding Christian Chuvash communities, cited by Saussay, "Il'minskij," 409.

10 The description of this typical Tatar "parish" can be found in Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 242-3.

11 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma,* 221-2.

12 Cited by M. Platonov, 378.

13 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii,* 292-3.

In their proselytizing activities, the Tatars had an advantage over Russian missionaries. Whereas the conversion to Orthodoxy always involved the acceptance of a certain degree of assimilation to the alien Russian cultural pattern,[14] the conversion to Islam represented no such cultural change. The missionaries often talked of the "Tatarization" of the Volga natives who adopted Islam. However, Finnic and Turkic tribes and even Kazakhs were not very different from the Tatars by their languages, general way of life, customs, habits, dress, and diet. It is true that those who adopted Islam adopted some characteristics of the Tatars. However, those were often secondary tokens of Islam, such as the wearing of beards and turbans, or a diet without pork or wine. To become a Muslim, therefore, did not really mean a break with the traditional way of life. The missionaries were perfectly conscious of the problem, nowhere more so than among the Kazakhs. As a missionary among the Kazakhs explained,

> Pressed by governmental considerations on the necessity to Russify the Kirghiz (Kazakh), the mission had decided for practical reasons, to transform converted Kirghiz, who were nomads, into sedentary people. It had attempted, not only to introduce among the Kirghiz a "Christian" faith but also a "Russian" faith. For the poorly educated Kirghiz the new faith had become more "Russian" than Christian. To accept the Holy Baptism meant to become Russian, by the mode of life, the physical appearance ...[15]

The Kazakhs who had accepted Christianity were, in that act, alienated from their own people. Henceforth, "they were persecuted by their relatives and peers as 'apostates,' and were deprived of tribal protection."[16] As a consequence, the

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14 The Orthodox Church insisted that baptized natives must change their way of life. See for example Malov, "Ocherk Religioznago," 138-9.

15 Kiprian, 450.

16 Theodorite, 467. In the same vein Il'minskii reported that in some regions Muslim Tatars were so secure in their positions that they exercised reprisals against their converted brethren, *Pis'ma*, 9.

missionaries were most successful in attracting those who were already outcasts from their own society.

The Orthodox missionary himself was an alien by his way of life, even if he were not a Russian. He lived a sedentary life, a life different from the Kazakh nomad. He was dressed differently and ate different food. By comparison, a Tatar or a Kazakh *mullah* lived with the Kazakh nomads, ate their food, dressed like them and spoke their language.[17] Their effectiveness as missionaries over the Russian Orthodox was evident. As representatives of the Russian culture, the missionaries could not easily afford to compromise certain cultural positions. If missionaries in the field were inclined to make such compromises, they were rapidly checked by the church boards. The Russian church in the nineteenth century did not want its priests to live the life of the masses. As a result, the Orthodox "priests did not mix with the native masses. They were neither welcomed, nor respected or loved. The Christian Tatars, Chuvashs, and others, were not eager to pay for the maintenance of their churches and religious services."[18]

The behavior of the Orthodox priest contrasted strikingly with the behavior of the Tatar *mullah*. In every Tatar village there was a *mullah*, and his role was central in the community.

> In every parish, the *mullah* is simultaneously a spiritual leader full of authority, a judge, a teacher and a moralist. ... The *mullah* is using every opportunity to reinforce and expand Islam. He is constantly talking about and teaching religion. When he is visiting the sick, he reads the *Qur'an* and talks about religion. If he is invited to a wedding, he talks about religion. To a traveller he talks of God. And for all that he enjoys consideration and respect. He is loved and listened to. He is obeyed. People go to him for

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17 Kiprian, 461; and Theodorite, 466.

18 M. Platonov, 377.

> advice and spiritual help. People bring children to be taught religion and religious law. And such *mullahs* are numerous, in fact, innumerable. ... The *mullah* is everywhere, in the mosque, at the school, at meetings, in the family, in court, and everywhere his authority is absolute because everywhere he acts according to the *Qur'an* in the name of God and for God.[19]

Proselytizing was not the work of the *mullah* alone. All Tatars, together or separately, whatever their means or trade, rich or poor, man or woman, even scoundrels (*prokhodimtsy*), diligently propagated their faith. Women in particular were zealous missionaries among the non-Muslim native feminine population. The wife of the *mullah* was always the teacher in schools for girls, which also existed in every village. Not infrequently, non-Muslim natives sent their girls to the Muslim girl *maktab*.[20]

Included among the major instruments in the propagation of Islam were the itinerant Tatar merchant who went from village to village, and the Tatar who hired himself and all his family to a non-Muslim master.[21] Mixed marriages with Christian women or even animists were another channel for the propagation of Islam.[22] Working places, fairs, village markets, and *chaikhanes* (inns) were all choice places for Tatar proselytism. The missionaries often pointed to the

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19 M. Platonov, 376.

20 Ermolaeva, 384.

21 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 397; and Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 257.

22 The Orthodox Church did not accept marriages between Christian and non-Christian, and was, therefore, deprived of the possibility to convert the infidel partner to Christianity. It insisted on baptism prior to the marriage. Marriages of Christian or animist women to Muslims did occur often enough to attract the attention of missionaries. Such women accepted in Muslim families were immediately converted to Islam. Their conversion, however, was generally not registered with the authorities. See: Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 302-6; M. Platonov, 377; and Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 261-2.

creation of Muslim industrial and commercial establishments in the Kazan region as a reason for the conversion of entire native villages to Islam.[23]

Muslim proselytizers made a point of explaining their doctrine, rituals and law, always comparing them to the Christian doctrine, rituals and customs. The conscientiousness with which Muslims performed their rituals -- the fasting, the five daily prayers at specific hours performed in public if possible, and the periodic ablutions -- played an important role in gaining additional adepts.[24] In contrast, except for schismatics (*raskol'niki*) and old believers, Russians rarely talked about their own religion.[25] Orthodox missionaries blamed their lack of success in spreading Christianity on the poor example set by Russian colonists.[26]

> Because of the deceit, drunkenness, sexual perversion, conscious or unconscious neglect of the external and internal requirements of religion by the Russians, they (the natives) are suspicious of the Russian religion. Rather than accept your faith, says the animist, I would become a Muslim. If I have to change religion, I will choose the one which pleases my heart. Your faith, in spite of everything you can tell me is, repulsive. A good religion must have good followers. I know the adepts of your faith since my childhood and I can say only bad things about them. They do not respect their parents, nor their elders, they are false witnesses, and they eat horse flesh though religion forbids it. As for the Tatars, I can say nothing but good. They respect their parents, venerate their elders and observe strictly their religion.[27]

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23 Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 257-8.

24 Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 257. The cleanliness of the Muslims seemed to have particularly impressed many natives.

25 Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 258.

26 It is understandable, therefore, that Russian missionaries had mixed feelings regarding the settling of non-Russian lands by Russians. If the missionaries generally favored the expansion of Russian influence, they had serious reservations about Russian colonization, since they viewed Russian settlers as a bad element.

27 M. Platonov, 378-9. For the same arguments also see: Bryzgalov, 419-420; and Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 220, 222.

Islam a Political Menace

The missionaries were the first to raise the specter of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. In the second half of the nineteenth century there was an important Islamic reformist movement (*Jadidism*) in Russia. The missionaries were in violent opposition to the reformist movement and advocated its suppression.[28] As Validov, a Tatar historian, pointed out, the reform movement in its early phase was almost completely ignored by the authorities, with the exception of "Orthodox missionaries with Il'minskii at the head, who, sensing a Muslim renaissance, had become uneasy."[29] A progressive, reformed Islam, ready to accept the achievements of western civilization, and stressing a modern system of education for its schools, was in their view a much more potent threat to Orthodoxy and Russia than the conservative Islam which had changed little since the late Middle-Ages.[30] The missionaries also sensed within the reformist movement a heightened national consciousness and an awareness of bonds among the Muslims of Russia and beyond.

In 1882 the missionaries warned the authorities that the Tatar intelligentsia was "beginning to adopt a national-political viewpoint under the disguise of enlightened progress."[31] They repeatedly drew attention to the activity of Muslim reformers, whose aim they viewed as being "to unite the millions of Muslim Russian citizens under the banner of rational Islam, perfected by a European civilization and filtered through the prism of Turkish

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28 For detailed analysis of the Islamic reformist movement in Russia see: Abdullin; Devlet; Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*; Validov; and Zenkovsky.

29 Validov, 50.

30 Soviet historians generally concurred with the missionaries that a reformed Islam was a greater danger than traditional Islam. See *Istoriia Tatarskoi ASSR*, 389.

31 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 2.

Constantinople."[32] The idea that a reformed Islam could correspond to basic Russian interests was incomprehensible to the missionaries.

The dream of some Muslim reformers, such as Ismail Gasprinskii, was to form a covenant between Russia and Russian Islam for the greater glory of both and of the eastern world. Ismail Gasprinskii, the theoretician of the *Jadid* movement, believed that Russia's interests lay in the east, specifically the Muslim east. In his view, cooperation between Russians and Russian Muslims could only enhance Russia's interests in the east. "I believe," wrote Gasprinskii,

> that, sooner or later, Russian Islam, nurtured by Russia, will be the vanguard of the intellectual development of the Islamic world. ... If eastern civilization had been renewed in the west by Romans and Arabs, then maybe Providence has earmarked Russians and Tatars to lead the renaissance of western civilization in the east.[33]

This dream was rejected by the missionaries as useless, objectionable, offensive, and even dangerous.[34]

Anti-Islamic Initiatives

The Russian missionaries viewed Orthodoxy as the only possible force that could block the strong cultural and religious influence of Islam in eastern Russia. However, they understood that only firm, inspired adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church could be capable of resisting Muslim attraction. In these views they were supported by K.P. Pobedonostsev and D.A. Tolstoi, influential figures in government circles. Pobedonostsev had been the tutor of Alexander III and

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32 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 63-4; and id., 321-2.

33 Gasprinskii expressed his ideas in two studies: *Russkoe Musul'manstvo* (from which this quote is taken), 30-1; and *Russko-Vostochnoe*. Gasprinski's ideas were later developed by Muslim communists such as Sultan Galiev.

34 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 7 and 50-1. Also see Fisher, "Ismail Gaspirali"; and Lazzerini.

Nicholas II, and was to be Procurator of the Holy Synod from 1880 to 1905. Tolstoi was Minister of Education from 1866 to 1880 and Procurator of the Holy Synod until 1880. Starting in the 1860s the missionaries in eastern Russia began to deploy an important educational activity among nominally Christian natives, animists and even the lukewarm Muslim Kazakh.[35]

Christian Natives, Animists, and Non-Committed Muslims. The major and most radical ingredient of the missionary educational activity was the use of native languages as the medium for conveying the Orthodox message. The missionaries were convinced that genuine Orthodoxy could only take root, and take root rapidly, in one's mother tongue.[36] The educational activities of the missionaries were multi-faceted. They set up networks of schools. For the first time, they translated and published church services, religious texts and explanations of these texts in local languages.[37] Many native languages were only spoken. In many instances written languages were created by the missionaries, who devised alphabets in Russian script. In addition, they formulated grammars, compiled dictionaries, and wrote textbooks.[38]

The missionaries hoped that the native Christians could hold their ground against the Muslims, and could eventually attract their Muslim brethren to

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35 For the best account of the missionaries' educational activities see the work of Kreindler, *Educational Policies;* and id., "Nikolai Il'minskii."

36 Kreindler, "Nikolai Il'minskii," 11; and id., *Educational Policies*, 10.

37 The Russian missionaries' approach of teaching in native languages contrasts with most European missionary activities of the time. European missionaries relied essentially on European languages in churches and schools. See Kreindler, "Nikolai Il'minskii," 21.

38 In 1870 the Ministry of Education adopted the missionaries' (Il'minskii's) system of education in native languages for all eastern nationalities. The ministry became convinced that it was the best system of russification. In theory, it remained the only official tsarist system of "native education" until the end of the regime.

Christianity. Their educational activities were devised "to instill universal values and Russian sympathies," and "to produce people with a peaceful, friendly attitude toward the Russians."[39] Ultimately, the missionaries hoped that with the attainment of a higher cultural level the animists and uncommitted Muslims would voluntarily drop their superstitions and convert to Russian Orthodoxy. Such converts could then, in turn, become missionaries among their tribesmen.[40]

The main purpose of the educational activities of the missionaries in eastern Russia was to develop an effective conveyor belt to bring Orthodoxy into non-Russian communities. Contrary to those who accused them of promoting nationalism among natives, the missionaries firmly believed that Russification would be a by-product of Orthodoxy.

> If from fear of separate nationalities we do not allow the non-Russians to use their language in schools and churches on a sufficient scale to ensure a solid, complete, convinced adoption of the Christian faith, then all non-Russians will be fused into a single race by language and by faith -- the Tatar and Mohammedan. But if we allow the non-Russian languages, then, even if their individual nationalities are thus maintained, these will be diverse, small, ill-disposed to the Tatars, and united with the Russian people by the unity of their faith. ... I believe that such diverse nationalities cannot have any solid existence, and in the end the very historical movement of life will cause them to fuse with the Russian people.[41]

As it turns out, wherever the system of education in native languages was systematically applied, it served to slow the spread of Islam among the Orthodox natives. However, it stimulated the development of national cultures, native

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39 Il'minskii, *Vospominanii,* 167-8, cited by Kreindler, *Educational Policies,* 127.

40 Il'minskii, "Religioznoe," 140, cited by Kreindler, *Educational Policies*, 127.

41 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 398-9.

intelligentsias, and national self-consciousness. In these respects, the practice worked directly against Russification.[42]

Committed Muslims. Among committed Muslims the activities of the missionaries were somewhat different. Among committed Muslims, the Russian Orthodox missionaries engaged in active proselytizing and anti-Islamic polemic. Furthermore, they did everything in their power to thwart and oppress the Muslims culturally and politically.[43]

The influence of the missionaries in government circles was considerable, at least until the late nineteenth century. Il'minskii, the prominent missionary who devised the system of education in native languages, was a *de facto* consultant to such powerful men as K.P. Pobedonostsev and D.A. Tolstoi. As active consultants to these men, Il'minskii and his followers exercised substantial influence in the area of Russian nationality policies in the east.

Missionary influence extended over a substantial variety of actions and policies. Missionaries were responsible for what the Muslims regarded as poor choices for the headship of the Muslim Religious Administration.[44] They saw any recognition or any honor bestowed on the Muslim community as an affront to Orthodoxy. The missionaries contributed greatly to Muslim difficulties with

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42 Kreindler, *Educational Policies*, 181-9 and 199-210.

43 See Kreindler, *Educational Policies*, 102-12; and Saussay, "Il'minskij," 414-21.

44 The missionaries were critical of Catherine II's creation of the Muslim Religious Administration. They would have liked to see it abolished. Short of that, they wanted it rendered impotent by appointing as its head the most ineffective man possible. See Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 64, 174-5, 175-6, and 176-7. Also see Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 375-6.

censorship,[45] to the limitation of Muslim participation in the institutions of local self-government (*zemstva*),[46] and to repressive policies against Muslim proselytizers and apostates.[47] The missionaries opposed any kind of government-sponsored schools for Muslims. They objected that if the State were to become involved with Muslim schools "it would have to concern itself with their blossoming." And what the missionaries feared most was a combination of Muslim dynamism and European culture. They warned that such a combination would fail to achieve Russification and could become "a weapon against the Russian people and the Russian State."[48] On balance, even for the nominally Muslim Kazakhs the missionaries opposed secondary and higher education.[49] Their emphasis on native language for Kazakh government-sponsored schools had only one purpose -- to block the strong Muslim influence coming via the Tatars so as to preserve the Kazakhs as potential converts.[50] In short, the Russian missionaries were vocal critics of virtually all liberal policies of the government toward the Muslims.[51] As a consequence, they did much to destroy the

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45 The missionaries proposed and obtained the nomination of professor V.D. Smirnov who "harbors no love for Islam" as censor of the Muslim press. Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 320-1 and 338-9. Also see Pobedonostsev, 147, cited by Kreindler, *Educational Policies*, 109.

46 In particular, the missionaries opposed the election of Muslims to school boards, township courts, and as elders. In 1888 the missionaries won their point when all non-Christians were barred from school boards. See Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 9, 218-20, and 247-50.

47 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 213-4 and 396-7.

48 Il'minskii's letter to N.P. Ostroumov, 29 September 1877, quoted in "Dva Prilozheniia," 6. Also see Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 238-9.

49 Il'minskii, *Vospominaii*, 187, cited by Kreindler, "Ibrahim Altynsarin," 112.

50 Kreindler, "Ibrahim Altynsarin," 112,

51 See for example Ostroumov, "Kolebaniia."

atmosphere of cordial relations between the tsarist state and its Muslim subjects that had come into existence with Catherine's policies.[52]

Tenuous Position of the Missionaries

The position of the Russian Orthodox missionaries had become extremely tenuous by the turn of the century. Their missionary activities had been unsuccessful. Beyond that, increasingly they were politically vulnerable both within Russian government circles and within the Orthodox Church itself. As Il'minskii had written prophetically to Pobedonostsev:

> For a long time, the Muslim religion and the Tatar nationality have been swallowing all Volga native nationalities, not only the animists but also the Christian converts. This process is still going on today irresistibly (*neuderzhimo*). ... Today, the Tatar Muslim population of the Kazan *guberniia* has a strong mixture of Chuvash, Cheremiss and Votiak. And now, before our very eyes, entire villages of animist and Christian Cheremiss, Votiak and Chuvash of the Perm, Ufa and other *guberniias* are becoming Tatarized. ... If no obstacle is placed on its path, fifty or a hundred years from now, it may bring a complete conversion of all our native tribes, Chuvash, Cheremiss and Votiak and their transformation into Muslim Tatars.[53]

A report of the Kazakh Orthodox mission in 1899 read as follows:

> It is sad to see that Islam gets stronger by the day among the Kirghiz (Kazakh) and that their conversion to Orthodoxy becomes more difficult every year. One missionary serves several tens or thousands of inhabitants dispersed over an immense territory, when there are Kirghiz *mullahs* in every aul. ... Religious fanaticism is increasing among the Kirghiz nomads. Five or ten years ago, Islam in the steppes was still weak. Today, the propaganda of Islam is done by hundreds of *mullahs* and *Hajjis* who roam the steppes as teachers or merchants. ... Kirghiz who listen to missionaries, if only through simple curiosity, are admonished by *mullahs* who put them on guard against such conversations. Recently, *mullahs* from Bukhara,

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52 Kreindler, *Educational Policies*, 104.

53 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 397-8.

> Arabia and Kazan have appeared in the steppes. These preachers reinforce the fidelity of the Kirghiz toward the false doctrine of Mohammed. Because of the numeric inequality of the preachers of Islam and that of the doctrine of Christ, we (the missionaries) can hope only in help from Heaven.[54]

The Orthodox missionaries also found themselves increasingly in an ambiguous position within the political spectrum in Russia and in the Orthodox Church. Their educational activities had gone counter to the rising tide of Great-Russian nationalism, with its stress on the unity of the Russian Empire and its emphasis on the Russian language. Strong opposition to their activities from the right had always existed in Russia and within the Church itself. The right argued that Orthodoxy outside of Russian culture was an impossibility.

By the turn of the century, outright Russification of natives was becoming the principal aim of the government's nationality policies. Many of the missionaries who had formerly advocated the use of native languages in church services and schools were coming to the view that Russification was the most formidable obstacle to the spread of Islam. As one missionary explained, only the "merging (*sliianie*), assimilation and Russification of culturally inferior, primitive natives" could maintain peaceful coexistence within the empire. As for Russian Muslims, "because they are imbued with a spirit of religious exclusiveness, and religious fanaticism ... the first and foremost principle of education must be Russification."[55] Russification, which had been viewed earlier as merely a by-product of Orthodoxy, had become the goal.

But on the left of the political spectrum, missionary activities were opposed by an increasingly vocal liberal intelligentsia. Within western European

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54 Cited by Kiprian, 461-2.

55 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 73-4.

intellectual thought, ideas relating to pluralism were gaining in popularity. It was increasingly less fashionable to argue the superiority of one culture, one ethnic group, or one religious community over another. In Russia proper, there was a liberal, even radical trend advocating the relaxation of the rigid monolithic Russian-Orthodox course.[56] These liberals were advocating a pantheon in which "all gods could abide."

The issue at hand related to which way Russia should go. Should it continue the monolithic Russian-Orthodox course or turn toward a pluralistic society? It was at the heart of this rich controversy that the missionaries found themselves.

The ultimate failure of the missionaries was sealed by the Proclamation of the Freedom of Faith. The decree, one of the consequences of the Revolution of 1905, provided that any person could leave the Orthodox Church and join another religious establishment. Soon thereafter, some fifty thousand Tatars left the Orthodox Church, and "there were probably many more who did not want to register their change of faith with the police."[57] Conversion to Orthodoxy could no longer be considered a realistic goal. The cement for holding the empire together could only be the Russian language and the Russian culture.

Missionary Literature

Missionary activity in the second half of the nineteenth century generated a rich and varied anti-Islamic literature, but its period of bloom was relatively brief. Although missionary activities had accelerated a decade earlier, anti-

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56 See the study of the Soviet historian Batunsky, 4. Freedom of conscience and the equality of all churches before the law was also the position of Social-Democrats as expressed by Lenin in his 1903 article "To the Village Poor," *Collected Works*, V. 7, 173.

57 McCarthy, 309. Also see Curtiss, *Church and State*, 228.

Islamic literature was quite sparse prior to the 1870s. Thereafter, the literature grew in importance, maintaining an impressive pace until its decline following the 1905 Proclamation of Freedom of Faith. Most of the anti-Islamic literature was published in the cities of the Middle-Volga-Ural, especially Kazan. Outside of the Tatar country, anti-Islamic literature was published in St. Petersburg or in Moscow, and infrequently in Turkestan.

An understanding of the missionary literature itself may be furthered by a review of the combination of organizations and people from which it emerged. In addition, it may be useful to discuss the perspectives from which the literature was written and to identify the functions and audiences toward which it was directed.

Societies and Brotherhoods

The growth of anti-Islamic literature was spurred by the creation of a number of societies and brotherhoods dedicated to the spread of Orthodoxy, such as the Orthodox Missionary Society (*Pravoslavnoe Missionerskoe Obshchestvo*) in Moscow and the Brotherhood (*Bratstvo*) of Saint-Gurii in Kazan. The Moscow Society for Assistance in the Propagation of Christianity Among Animists (*Moskovskoe Obshchestvo Sodeistviia Rasprostraneniiu Khristianstva Mezhdu Iazychnikami*) was created in 1865. It was renamed the Orthodox Missionary Society in 1870. Placed under the patronage of the Empress, the organization centralized all missionary activities within the empire. In dioceses with heterodox populations, the Society was represented by diocesan committees. By 1894, forty-four such committees were in existence within the empire. Of these, sixteen were engaged in anti-Islamic work.[58]

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58 For studies concerning the society see: Nikol'skii; and E.K. Smirnov.

In 1867, the Saint-Gurii Brotherhood was founded by Il'minskii under the supervision of the Archbishopric of Kazan. It served as a model for the creation of other brotherhoods in the dioceses of the Middle-Volga-Ural region. The brotherhoods directed their efforts toward enlightening the nominally Christian natives, animists, sectarians, and Muslims. The defense of nominally Christian natives against Muslim influences and anti-Islamic apologetic were among their major preoccupations.[59]

The Writers

For the most part, the authors of the anti-Islamic literature were clerics or lay missionaries. Many had been students of the Anti-Islamic Section of the Theological Academy of Kazan.[60] Among the authors were a few high dignitaries of the Russian Orthodox Church. Many belonged to various brotherhoods for the spread of Orthodoxy: Saint Gurii in Kazan, Saint Basil in Riazan, Saints Cyril and Methodius in Astrakhan or Saint Michael-Archangel in Orenburg. Some were well known scholars in the field of Orientalism. Outstanding work was produced in the fields of philology, ethnography, pedagogy, history and even archeology, by missionaries such as Il'minskii, Ostroumov, Sablukov, Malov, or Katanov.

Almost all the specialists in polemics against Islam were Islamists, well-versed in Muslim theology. They possessed an excellent knowledge of Turkic languages, Arabic and even Persian. They were well acquainted with the social,

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59 Studies concerning the brotherhoods are rare. See Mashanov, *Obzor Deiatel'nosti.*

60 In 1723 a Theological Seminary (*Dukhovnaia Seminariia*) was created under the supervision of the Archbishopric of Kazan. It was later elevated to the rank of Theological Academy (*Dukhovnaia Akademiia*). Its task was to train missionaries. In 1854, an Anti-Muslim and Anti-Animist Missionary Section (*Missionerskii Protivomusul'manskii i Protivoiazycheskii Otdel*) was organized within the Academy. For studies devoted to the anti-Islamic section of the Academy see: Malov, "O Missionerskom"; and Ostroumov, "Vospominaniia."

intellectual, and political life of the Turkic populations of eastern Russia. Yet, notwithstanding their backgrounds and training, their anti-Islamic writings are surprisingly shallow.

General Perspectives of the Literature

Russian Orthodox missionary literature is distinguished from other Christian missionary literature chiefly by the violence of its tone. Orthodox missionary literature on abstract Islam does not present much novelty. A similar treatment of Islam may be found in other missionary literature of the nineteenth century, both Catholic and Protestant. Anti-Islamic arguments also may be found in a substantial portion of nineteenth century secular literature on Islam, both Russian and Western.[61]

The missionaries viewed Russian Muslims as enemies to be unmasked, although Russian Muslims were generally loyal subjects of the tsars. Islam was a cancer, an alien religious phenomenon within the empire. While Islam's spiritual center was in Istanbul, it was a religious force in Russia. Because Islam was so widespread, the missionaries recognized that it was not possible to expel its adepts from the empire. Instead, Islam was an adversary in place that needed to be destroyed.

The writings of the Russian missionaries were cast within the framework of Slavophile culture. Of course, they viewed Russian culture as Orthodoxy in a broad sense. Looking beyond the Slavic world, however, they emphasized that the interests of all Christians -- Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants -- were placed in jeopardy by an awakening of the Muslim world. Thus, the fight of the missionaries against Islam was not only in defense of traditional Orthodox-

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61 For the treatment of Islam in the Russian secular literature of the 19th century see Batunsky, "Islam."

Russian values; it was in defense of Christianity in general, and, perhaps, the whole of western civilization.

The Russians and the Russian clergy were often contemptuous of all natives, be they Christians or not. Russian missionary literature echoed that contempt for eastern people, carrying strong racist overtones.[62] Later, the missionaries admitted that such an attitude contributed to their lack of success in converting both Muslims and animists.[63]

Functions and Audience

Missionary literature ranged from scholarly work to writing of a pedestrian character. Surprisingly, the arguments used against Islam in the scholarly criticism were the same as those relied upon in the low level attacks. The arguments were only more elaborated, more subtle, and not as outwardly violent as in the crude attacks.

One category of Russian missionary literature relating to Islam was of a distinctively scholarly character. That literature, directed primarily toward the missionaries themselves, consisted of workmanlike studies of the life of the Prophet and of thorough research relating to the *Qur'an* and the *Shari'ah*. However, it is quite clear that Islam was evaluated from a missionary orientation. There was no genuine effort to tap the spirit of Islam. There was no suspension of disbelief for purpose of critical evaluation. And the polemical character of that literature was pronounced.

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62 McCarthy, 323 and 331-2.

63 See for example Mashanov, "Sovremennoe Sostoianie," 294. The fundamental Russian nationalism of the Orthodox Church may partly explain the small representation of the native clergy. The Russian Orthodox church was never successful in attracting and training native clergy. In 1904, only sixty-eight of the 743 Orthodox priests of the Kazan province were natives. Thus, natives represented only nine percent of the priesthood in a province where forty-five percent of the Orthodox population was native. See Bobrovnikov, 177-8.

While missionary writings may be regarded as scholarly and even authoritative, even then they were not held in universally high esteem. They were strongly criticized on ideological and methodological grounds by members of the St. Petersburg Oriental Faculty and the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages. In turn, the missionaries criticized the members of the St. Petersburg Oriental Faculty and Lazarev Institute for their "lack of patriotic and missionary orientation," and for the fact that "they study the literature, history and ethnography of the Asian people *objectively* (stressed in the text) and feel sympathy for them."[64]

Another category of Russian missionary literature, perhaps the most important, had a directly Christian apologetic character. The function of this type of literature was to demonstrate that Orthodoxy was the truth, and Islam the error. It was directed primarily toward the nominally Christian natives. Comparing Christianity to Islam, it sought to prove the truth of Christian dogmas (Divinity of Christ, Holy Trinity, etc.), and the superiority of Christian rituals and customs over those of the Muslims. It is within that category of writings that we find the most vitriolic attacks on Islam.

Some missionary writings had an internal function. They were written to acquaint other missionaries with Islam. In particular, such was the case of writings in the serial publication *Missionerskii Protivomusul'manskii Sbornik*, published by the Theological Academy of Kazan. Other missionary writings, those with a directly Christian apologetic character, were directed primarily to the communities of *kreshchenye* (converts), mostly to Tatar converts, whose Christian faith was vacillating. But, the majority of missionary literature appears to have been addressed to the larger, intellectual, mostly Russian, public. Aside

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64 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma,* 77 and 117.

from its role in familiarizing the Russian public with Islam, its main purpose was to emphasize the political danger of a militant Islam to Russia. In general, the literature did not appear to address directly the Muslim communities. However, one exception was the direct polemic with Muslim reformers, who were attempting to present in print their version of Islam to the Russian public.

Messages and Themes of the Literature

The writings of the Russian Orthodox missionaries can be organized around three main themes. One theme was an outright condemnation of Islam as a legitimate religion. A second theme emphasized Islam's incompatibility with science and progress. The third theme drew attention to Islam's divisive political character within the empire. The analysis of the Russian missionary literature on Islam, which follows, is organized around these themes.

Islam Not a Legitimate Religion

The central message of the Russian Orthodox missionaries was that Islam did not constitute a pure, legitimate, valid, spiritual body of religious thought. Of course, its inadequacies could not be proved directly. Consequently, the Russian missionaries were forced to attack Islam around its fringes. They used arguments against the *Qur'an*, attacks on Muhammad, questions relating to the sources of Islamic precepts, and complaints regarding the inadequacies of Islamic morality and the paucity of its spiritual character.

Arguments Against the *Qur'an*. A series of arguments advanced by the missionaries to deny the revealed nature of Islam had emphasized the physical characteristics of the Holy Book. They argued that the chaotic organization of the *Qur'an*, its many contradictions, and its nonsenses and incongruities

concerning God, man, faith, and morality are incompatible with belief in a direct Divine message.

In missionary writings such as that by M.A. Miropiev, the *Qur'an* was described as "a chaotic combination of the most diverse sayings, admonitions and resolutions. It does not have any reasonable order, neither systematic nor chronological. ... The *Qur'an* contains many useless or meaningless words and expressions, and much idle talk. .. It is full of repetition which makes reading tedious."[65] With many citations from the *Qur'an*, the missionaries emphasized what they called its "lies" and "contradictions." Some counted as many as 140 "contradictions."[66] Specifically, they pointed to the *mansukh* and *nasikh* verses, arguing that the whole Theory of Abrogation is incompatible with "the understanding of God's being the Pure Truth" as, "a God who changes his commands each day cannot be a God."[67] Therefore, the *Qur'anic* God is not "a representation of God as a spiritual Being," but only an anthropomorphic vision.[68]

The lack of an apparent systematic logic of the *Qur'an* was ascribed by the missionaries to Muhammed himself. As a creative work of Muhammad, the *Qur'an* was written in response to the changing needs of his religious community. Muhammad, claimed the missionaries, came forth originally only to preach

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65 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii,* 130. Virtually all missionary works say the same things about the *Qur'an*. For more detailed studies see: Ostroumov, *Islamovedenie*, V. 2; and Sablukov, *Svedeniia o Korane.*

66 See, for example, Vinogradov, 70 and 78.

67 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 136. In establishing the chronological order of the *Qur'anic* text, Muslim scholars and jurists, rather than attempting to explain away the inconsistencies in passages giving regulations for the community, came to acknowledge the differences, while arguing that the latest verse on any subject "abrogated" all earlier verses that contradicted it. Eventually, lists of abrogating (*nasikh*) and abrogated (*mansukh*) verses were drawn up.

68 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 157; and Vasil'ev, 94-8.

monotheism. All other aspects of Muhammad's teaching were added to his original "program" in response "to events of the day, or to questions arising in market places, streets, bath-houses, harems, justice, battles, at occasions of acts of charity or plunder, in reveries and dreams."[69]

Attacks Against Muhammad. The portraits of Muhammad given by Russian missionaries ranged from that of a charlatan to that of a man "who was spiritually gifted, who possessed a healthy intelligence, capable of grasping the intriguing, and possessing unusual creativity. He was a gifted maker of the sublime and the grandiose. He possessed a vast memory, a fervid imagination, a rich fantasy, and a talent for poetry."[70] For some missionaries he was "a religious genius" or a "religious maniac." For most he was "an unintentional prophet, sincerely convinced of his call at the beginning of his preaching but later turning into a deceiver ... in whose hands religion became a political instrument ... an instrument of coercion and violence."[71]

The missionaries claimed that the life and teaching of Muhammad did not conform to the ideal Biblical models of a prophet. If Muhammad were to be considered a prophet, they argued, then so should "Confucius, Buddha, and all our Avvakums, Sil'vanovs, and other wild religious agitators, because each one ... was seized by a religious idea, devoted himself to it, and mistook it for Divine

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69 Cherevanskii, 279. Also see, a study devoted exclusively to demonstrate that Muhammad's teaching was a series of responses to the changing environment, F.A. Smirnov, "Zavisimost'."

70 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii,* 87. The life of the Prophet was, of course, a choice subject for the missionaries. Among the studies devoted exclusively to Muhammad see: V. Solov'ev; S.A.S.; F.A. Smirnov, "Mukhammed"; and Tsvetkov.

71 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 91, 93, and 109; andVasil'ev, 87.

revelation."[72] Furthermore, if Muhammad may be called a reformer, he certainly was not a religious revolutionary. He only manipulated pre-existing sets of religious ideas and symbols.

Denial of Divine Sources. Another means of undermining belief in Islam's claim to a divine source was to point out, or argue, that it contains nothing new. If everything in Islam could be traced to pre-existing religious doctrines, it might be easier to believe that Islam had merely copied bits and pieces of those doctrines, and only adapted them to a specific Arab milieu.

In this vein, most anti-Islamic studies argued the point that "Muhammad had not brought into the world a single new idea," that "Islam was not some kind of new religion, created upon some kind of new principles," that it only combined and perverted beliefs borrowed from Judaism, Christianity and Arab paganism.[73] Specific aspects of Islamic practices -- the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), the fasting of the month of *Ramadan*, the popular veneration of the saints, the *Qur'anic* names of God, even the *Shahada* (proclamation of faith) and the *Sadaqa* (alms giving) -- were traced to pre-Islamic origins.[74] Among the less virulent works, there was a tendency to see Islam as, in one way or other, a truncated version of Christian truth. All or virtually all the truth to be found in Islam was to be found in Christianity. But, the missionaries argued, Christianity

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72 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 97-8.

73 Most anti-Islamic works mentioned at least briefly the Judeo-Christian or pre-Islamic Arab origins of Islamic beliefs. For detailed studies see: Bogoliubskii; Malov, *Moiseevo*; Razumov; and Zabrovskii.

74 On the origin of the *Hajj* see Miropiev, "Religioznoe." On the origin of the *Ramadan* fasting see Ostroumov, "Mukhammedanskii." On the veneration of saints see Iablokov, "O Pochitanie." On the names of God see Sablukov, *Slichenie*. On the Shahada and Sadaqa see Kudeevskii.

led beyond that truth to a crowning truth that had eluded Islam's grasp. As one writer put it, Muhammad "realized the emptiness of paganism, and was not satisfied by the chimeras of late Judaism, but he did not comprehend the mysteries of Christianity."[75] A view of Islam as a Christianity *manque* was, of course, not specific to Russian Orthodox missionaries.

Particular attention was paid by the Russian missionaries to the idea of God in the *Qur'an*. The image of God in the early Meccan *suras* was viewed by the missionaries as keeping within the Christian idea of God. However, in later Medinan *suras* they claimed that Muhammad broke his ties with Judaism and Christianity. The idea of God changed from that of a merciful and redemptive God to that of an "oriental despot." Correspondingly, man's free will in the religious act was abandoned in favor of total predestination.[76]

In their discussion of the rise of Islam, most missionaries subscribed to the widely held Semitic theory. They argued that Islam could have arisen only in a purely Semitic environment. Narrowing it down, only an Arab historical, intellectual, psychological, and geographical substratum could have given birth to Islam, which therefore reflects its Arabic characteristics.[77] Muhammad was a man of his time, and the *Qur'an*, the creative work of Muhammad, was a book of its time.[78] Islam, a religion designed for Arabs, was viewed as unsuited for non-Arab people.[79] Consequently, Orthodox missionaries explained the spread of

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75 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 88-9; and Iablokov,"O Sushchnosti," 82.

76 Vasil'ev, 98-120; and Voronets, 38-9. Also see Razumov.

77 See for example: Mashanov, "Ocherk Byta Arabov"; and Ostroumov, *Araviia.*

78 It was a widely held view, including that of the revolutionary-democrat N.A. Dobroliubov, "Zhizn' Magometa," *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, Moscow, 1936, V. III, 334-9.

79 A common view among missionaries was that the *Qur'an*, written in Arabic, was incomprehensible to non-Arabs. See for example: Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 101; and Bagin, 4.

Islam by the fact that it was imposed by the sword.[80] Not all Orthodox missionaries admitted the theory of an Arab determinism, which had a strong racial component. Some missionaries working among Muslims were themselves from Turkic or Finnic ethnic groups. As such they were less inclined to share racial theories than their Russian colleagues.

Inadequacies of Islamic Morality. The missionaries argued that moral standards in Islam were lower and fewer because the demand for moral behavior is not based in divine revelation. Instead, Islam's moral precepts were based on human moral behavior and customs of Muhammad's time. Russian missionaries did not deny the presence of "good aspects" in Islam, of moral precepts and humanism. Otherwise, "Islam would not have been a religion but some kind of monstrous teaching."[81] However, they argued that "the *Qur'an* does not disclose many moral acts. Consequently, it does not teach man to raise himself to moral perfection."[82] Instead, the missionaries suggested that the *Qur'an* "may permit the Prophet and other believers to engage in activities that, strictly speaking, are criminal. ... It allows and sanctifies vindictiveness, perjury, and other vices to which Muhammad was subject. On the whole, Islamic morality resembles Jewish morality after it had turned pharisaic."[83]

The missionaries claimed that Islam makes fewer moral demands on new converts, thereby accounting for its continued success among animist or nominally Christian populations of the Russian Empire. They suggested that the

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80 See for example S.A.S., 187-8.

81 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 125.

82 Petrov, 129.

83 A. Volkov, "Islam," 220-1.

simplicity of Islamic doctrine makes it readily understandable to untutored minds. Because Islam stands on a lower intellectual level than Christianity, it is less removed from primitive people.[84] It can be argued, however, that the Muslim doctrine of God is not obviously well-suited to primitive people. The Muslim doctrine of God is characterized by an abstract, stark simplicity. Such a God does not offer an ease of access for people accustomed to the intimately involved cults and myths of most animist tribes.

A series of arguments against Islamic morality advanced by missionaries concentrated upon attitudes fostered by Islam among its adherents. The fear of God, unquestioned obedience to His wishes, and the absence of free-will have developed among Muslims a sense of fatalism, and submissiveness.[85] Many missionaries saw in this "gloomy fatalism" one of the main destructive forces in Islam, responsible for the decadence of Muslim societies.[86]

Similarly, Islam was viewed as teaching its adepts intolerance, impatience, mistrust, and xenophobia toward unbelievers.[87] Sharing a view with Karl Marx, the missionaries insisted that the teaching of the *Qur'an* "divided the world into two antagonistic parts, the World of Islam (*Dar ul-Islam*) and the World of War (*Dar ul-Harb*)."[88] It preached hatred of mankind and fanatical antagonism to non-Muslims. Because it was an obstacle to the drawing together of the people of

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84 See for example: Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 278; Glagolev, 58 and 195; Tsvetkov, 413; and V. Solov'ev, 15.

85 See for example: Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 85; Vinogradov, 10; and A. Volkov, "Islam," 235.

86 See for example Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 164-5.

87 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 217; Petrov, 136; "Dzhikhad Ili Gazavat," 103-4; and Ostroumov, "Istoricheskii," 654-5. For more detailed studies see: Agronomov; Mashanov, "Evropeiskie"; and Voronets.

88 Russkii Khristianin, 251.

the empire, the missionaries insisted that Islam was a source of political sedition and disturbance in the Russian-Muslim world.[89]

The position of women in Islam was always advanced by missionaries as an example of the "cynicism" of the *Qur'an* and of its "amoral" teaching. "Even in the animal kingdom, the behavior of males toward females may be more decent than among Muslims."[90] The Russian Orthodox missionaries advanced a series of arguments concerning the situation of women in Islamic societies. Many of these arguments have become associated with twentieth century thinking about women's liberation. The missionaries asserted that the institutions of polygamy, the harem, and the veil were bestowed upon Muslims only because of Muhammad's "passion for women."[91] They argued that within Islam women were slaves, were deprived of their rights, and were inferior to men even in a spiritual sense.[92] To this, the missionaries contrasted the position of free women in Christian societies.[93] Some missionaries believed that it could be advantageous to direct their energies toward the conversion of Muslim women. If the missionaries were able to ally themselves with women, the conversion of Muslim men would be facilitated.[94]

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89 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 238. Also see Cherevanskii.

90 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii,* 174.

91 Russkii Khristianin, 242-3; and S.A.S., 168.

92 One of the arguments of the missionaries was that in Islamic societies women were deprived of education. Evidence given by the same missionaries, however, indicated that "in the territory (*krai*) of Kazan, among the Russian population, the proportion of educated women was 1 in 55; among Muslims the proportion was 1 in 12. Furthermore, proportionally more Muslim girls received an education than Russian boys." See Ermolaeva, 384.

93 Most anti-Islamic missionary works at least mentioned the "inferior" position of women. For works devoted entirely to women see: Mashanov, "Mukhmmedanskii"; and Viktorin.

94 See for example Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 376-7.

The missionaries claimed that the moral code in Islam was not fully mature. In an effort to make up for its inadequacies, the missionaries argued that Islam had developed a code of rituals. The rituals encompassed to the smallest details all aspects of spiritual and secular life.[95] Pushing further, some said that "the Muslim faith is nothing more than the outward manifestation of belonging to Islam."[96]

Paucity of Islam's Spiritual Character. Muslim worship, theorized the missionaries, was entirely attached to exterior appearances. Acts of worship consisted "primarily and exclusively of important exterior ritualistic acts, severely and to the smallest details dictated by the law."[97] The missionaries argued that the attachment of Islam to the minute details of ritual constituted an effort to hide the spiritual emptiness of their worship.[98] For example, the ritual of ablution prior to prayers was "nothing but an exterior act of purification."[99] Indeed, the prayer itself "is an empty repetition of the same *rak'at*."[100] According to the missionaries, Muslim holy days were without deep spiritual meaning. *Uraza-bairam*, the holy day marking the end of *Ramadan*, for example, was described as only a manifestation of human enjoyment at the end of a

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95 Vinogradov, 11; and Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 85.

96 Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 84. Also see M.G. Ivanov.

97 Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 87.

98 Petrov, 132.

99 Bagin, 4; Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 97; and Petrov, 135.

100 Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 101. Also see Tikhov-Aleksandrovskii. A *rak'at* is a complete act of worship with the prescribed postures and the unit of the *namaz* (prayer).

difficult fast.[101] *Ramadan* itself was described as an exterior act of abstention from food or drink, without deep impression upon the mind or feelings of the person fasting. The missionaries pointed to the fact that at nightfall, when the fast was broken, all "pleasures" were permitted, including sexual relations with women.[102] The *Hajj* was criticized on the grounds that it developed and encouraged religious fanaticism. The same was said of the *Ashura*, the commemoration for the Shi'is of the death of *Imam* Husayn.[103]

Other attacks on the *Hajj* consisted in explaining that it was unhealthy and dangerous. Missionaries pointed out the organizers of the *Hajj* were making excessive profits and that rich people could pay someone to do the *Hajj* for them. They accused the *Hajjis* of being quacks using their reputation to deceive and cheat.

Sufism, as an aspect of Muslim worship, found a place in missionary writings. As is the case with many mystical movements, Islamic mysticism has two faces. It has a spiritual face, relating to the individual quest for God, and a temporal face, the collective rigorous discipline of the holy war. Most pre-Revolutionary anti-*Sufi* writings concentrated on the temporal aspect, the holy war, and its danger for Russia. There were, however, a few missionary studies attempting to present a synthesis of *Sufi* teaching.

The missionaries described *Sufism* as an heterodox body of teaching, having incorporated ideas and beliefs from many different origins. They emphasized the shamanistic borrowings, but also borrowings from Buddhism,

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101 Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 99-100.

102 Iablokov, "O Sushchnosti," 98; and Ostroumov, "Mukhammedanskii," 271 and 275.

103 Iarovyi-Ravskii, 149-52; Il'minskii, *Pis'ma,* 368-71; and Miropiev, "Religioznoe," 190-1. For a description of the *Ashura* (or *Shakhsei-Vakhsei*) see Berezin, *Puteshestvie po Vostoku.*

Zoroastrianism, and Neoplatonism.[104] Therefore, the missionaries claimed, *Sufism* was a pantheistic teaching totally contrary to the spirit of the *Qur'an* and the *Shari'ah*.[105] They tended to play down the spiritual aspect of *Sufism*, reducing it to ritual magic. The *zikr* ceremonies were described as "mentally unhealthy collective hypnoses."[106] According to the missionaries, the *zikr* destroyed the psychological equilibrium of the *Sufi*, leaving him in a state of "semi-imbecility" or "melancholic insanity." Thus depersonalized, the *Sufi* adepts became instruments of fanatic actions in the hands of their leaders.[107]

Sufis were accused of intolerant fanaticism, intellectual obscurantism and social backwardness. They were said to poison the mind of the populations with superstition.[108] They were viewed as charlatans, scoundrels or quacks, unfit for normal activities. Sufis led a parasitic way of life, taking advantage of the uneducated masses.[109] Their moral behavior was often described as not conforming to Islamic religious law.[110] Among specific accusations against the *Sufis* were such behavior as using wine or narcotics, engaging in sexual perversions, and displaying a passion for vagrancy.

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104 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 16; Kazanskii, 35-46; and E.T. Smirnov, 51. Also see the work of Pozdneev.

105 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 15-6; and Kazanskii, 47.

106 The *zikr* is the principal ceremony of the Sufi brotherhood. It consists of recitation of litanies founded on *Qur'anic* verses, fixed phrases repeated in the mind or aloud in ritual order accompanied by a complicated technique of posture, breath control, and in some cases rhythmical movements. Nearly all Soviet specialists who have witnessed a *zikr* comment about its exceptional emotional and aesthetic quality. By comparison, the missionaries did not acknowledge that aspect.

107 See for example the descriptions of the *zikr* by: Kazanskii, 71-100; and Mallitskii, 90-3.

108 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 61 and 73; and E.T. Smirnov, 70-1.

109 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 17; and Mallitskii, 95-6.

110 See for example Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 17; and Kazanskii, 101-20. Also see Berezin, *Puteshestvii po Dagestanu.*

The cult of saints, probably the most important element of popular Islam, was the target of special attacks. The missionaries pointed out that the veneration of saints was contrary to the teaching of Orthodox Islam.[111] Muslim saints, they believed, did not display the spiritual characteristics of Christian saints.[112] For the most part, the Muslim saints were barely disguised pre-Islamic deities.[113] Furthermore, the cult of saints was a nursery for anti-Russian feelings, as the venerated saints were often associated with resistance to the Russians. Thus, for example, some of the venerated saints dated to the conquest of Kazan in 1552.[114]

Islamic Incompatibility with Science and Progress

The most surprising aspect of the Russian Orthodox missionary literature was its appeal to reason and science in its attack on Islam. In the name of reason and science, Islamic dogmas were judged as primitive, superficial, absurd, and irrational. In the name of progress, Islam's conservatism and social traditionalism were attacked. It is with a measure of astonishment that we see Orthodox missionaries refer to the authority of rationalist philosophers, such as the French philosopher Ernest Renan, as a source of arguments against the religion of the Prophet.[115]

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111 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii , 37; and E.T. Smirnov, 62. Also see *Pochitanie Musul'manami.*

112 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 37, 43, 47, and 52-3. Also see a more detailed study, M. Ivanov.

113 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 22; and E.T. Smirnov, 63.

114 Iablokov, "O Pochitanii," 29 and 32-4.

115 See for example: A.K. Volkov; and Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 264-8. Ernest Renan (1823-1892), French philosopher, historian, and scholar of religion was a leader of the school of critical philosophy. The text of his lecture "L'Islamism et la Science," may be found in *Oeuvres Completes*. Renan's attacks on Islam in the name of reason and science drew a strong response from the Russian Muslim reformers, in particular from the St. Petersburg's *ahund* Baiazitov

Islam, argued the missionaries, was alien to rational thinking. By denying free-will and disapproving of science, Islam denied its followers the use of reasoning to interpret religion and the world.[116] It barred the pursuit of science as useless, frivolous, impious, and competitive with God. With unrecognized irony, the missionaries argued that Islam was opposed to any form of progress because it advocated the view that theology should govern society.[117] Furthermore, the belief in the unalterability and infallibility of the *Qur'an* made changes impossible. By teaching that faith cannot be acquired and truth cannot be explained, Islam forced its adherents to renounce the use of reasoning in all matters, and persecuted anyone who dared to use his mind to understand his faith or the world around him.[118]

The missionaries acknowledged that there had been substantial growth of science, philosophy, and industry in early Islamic history. However, according to the missionaries, that growth occurred in spite of Islam. The vast movement of Muslim scholarship had been a carryover from Greek and Persian civilizations. Indeed, the most important scholarship was the work of Christians, Jews, Ismailis, or Muslims in revolt.[119] In any event, the missionaries asserted that Islam had been liberal in its early history only because of its weakness.

The missionaries claimed that the world of Islam condemned itself to complete political and cultural inferiority by opposing the pursuit of science. They generally viewed the world of Islam as having been frozen in the form it

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(*Vozrazhenie*). Renan's text and Baiazitov's response were widely circulated among the Volga Tatars, cited by Saussay, "Il'minskij," 413.

116 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii,* 2; and A. Volkov, "Islam," 223. Also see Ostroumov, *Koran.*

117 A.K. Volkov, 313.

118 Petrov, 135-6.

119 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 267-8; and A. Volkov, "Islam," 231-2.

had acquired in the Middle Ages. In particular, they argued that the Law (*Shari'ah*) elaborated by the twelfth century excluded any further development; it therefore represented a dead body.[120] The missionaries suggested that the Muslim world had since fallen into laziness, narrow-mindedness, imprecision and chaos. Having the most profound contempt for European education, the Muslim world was unable and unwilling to open itself to new ideas.

However, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Orthodox missionaries were confronted with a Muslim reformist movement at home. The reform (*Jadid*) movement touched upon all aspects of life: religious, cultural and, in its later phase, political (post 1905). The Orthodox missionaries tried to argue that the *Jadid* movement was an artificial phenomenon because it contained inner contradictions. According to the missionaries, a reformist movement that touched upon the religious, moral, political or civil order would lose its Muslim character.[121]

Islam a Political Danger

Russian missionaries greatly feared the potential combination of Muslim reformers with the Russian intelligentsia. They believed that the Russian intelligentsia "was not unsympathetic to the blossoming of Muslim culture."[122] The intelligentsia certainly advocated a reasonable liberalization and access of natives to education, but without its Orthodox orientation. The missionaries warned that "the rising Tatar intelligentsia is now offering its venomous poison in the form of gilded pills in a literary and urbane manner that enchants our near-

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120 Glagolev, 58; and Miropiev, "Religioznoe," 383-4. Also see Ostroumov, *Islamovedenie*, V. 4.

121 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 51-2; and Tsvetkov, 412-3.

122 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 53.

sighted intelligentsia. This is much more dangerous than fanaticism ... especially since our ruling circles do not possess any zeal for Orthodoxy, nor any basic religious or political convictions."[123]

The missionaries approached the question of Islam and politics in a number of ways. Some of their writings simply consisted of descriptions of the type of governments Islam had produced. Their unvarying conclusion in those writings was that the absence of separation between the temporal and spiritual in Islam led to oppressive forms of government in Muslim societies. "The form of absolute despotism of Muslim rule arose under the influence of Islam and not because of some Asiatic characteristics of the people."[124] The *Qur'an* and the *Shari'ah* were the instruments with which coercion, oppression and tyranny were imposed.[125]

Other missionary writings were targeted to explain to the Russian public why Islam was a potential danger to the empire. Because Muslims recognized only one authority combining the spiritual and the temporal, they could be truly obedient only to a Muslim ruler. "A Muslim who remains true to his religion cannot recognize the supreme power of a non-Muslim state. In such states, Muslims and Christians cannot form one organic body ... Muslims cannot be active participants in such governments. ... Therefore, Muslims in non-Muslim states represent an alien part, which only creates problems and obstacles for the state."[126] Moreover, true believers represented a danger in a non-Muslim state because they were bound to lead a *jihad* (holy war) against the unbelievers.[127]

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123 Il'minskii, *Pis'ma*, 63. Also see Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 30.

124 Mashanov, "Verkhovnaia," 231.

125 Ostroumov, *Islamovedenie*, V. 4, 2.

126 Mashanov, "Verkhovnaia," 237.

127 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 217; and "Dzhikhad," 114 and 120-1.

The missionaries viewed every Muslim as a potential enemy of the Russian state.[128] In particular, they mistrusted the clerics, especially the educated clerics. The missionaries accused the clerics of being responsible for religious fanaticism, backwardness, and stagnation. Furthermore, the clerics were "antagonistic to Russian power which they regarded as a competitor for the clerics' influence over the masses."[129]

But first and foremost, the missionaries mistrusted the *Sufis* and their teaching. Said Miropiev in 1901:

> What frightful danger for us (Russians) is concealed in that teaching! We have already experienced that danger with the Caucasian *murids* led by Shamil, and with the Andijan uprising in 1898 under the leadership of *ishan* Muhammad Ali Khalfi.[130] ... The main ideas, zealously propagated by the *ishans*, are the spread of Islam and the rise of its adherents, resentment over the existing (Russian) order and the overthrow of that order ... For us Russians, *Sufism* constitutes an obstacle to our influence in the (Muslim) areas, and the utmost political danger to our rule. *Sufism*, with its *ishans* and *murids*, never can be our ally. It can only be our enemy, always and in everything. It is unforgivable and even criminal on our part to let it exist.[131]

Conclusions

The legacy of the Russian Orthodox missionaries' actions and writings was heavy. Missionary activities served to worsen relations between Russians and

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128 See Cherevanskii. To support their point, the missionaries often brought up the "divided loyalty" of the Russian Muslims in Russia's wars with the Ottoman Empire. See for example Mashanov, "Verkhovnaia," 238.

129 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 370. Most missionary writings have at least some remarks regarding Muslim clerics. For a study devoted solely to clerics see Koblov.

130 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 220. Muhammad Ali Ishan of Mintube (or Madali Ishan), who led the revolt of Andijan in 1898, was a *Sufi Naqshbandi*. He was hanged by the Russian authorities.

131 Miropiev, *O Polozhenii*, 386-8. Also see: Ippolitov; and Mallitskii, 99.

Muslims and were largely responsible for the hostility of the Muslims of eastern Russia toward the tsarist regime. The activities of the Russian missionaries contributed to the political hardening, even radicalization, of Tatar nationalism.

After the Revolution, the Muslim Communist leadership was strongly opposed to anti-Islamic propaganda.

> In spreading anti-religious propaganda among the Muslims we risk comparison with the recent "adversaries of Islam," the Russian missionaries who spent millions of public funds for this "battle." It was not long ago that these inveterate reactionaries swarmed over all the Muslim regions of Russia and spread throughout them the nauseating odor of missionary corruption. Recently still, these territories were covered with a dense network of "scholarly establishments" -- seminaries and religious academies destined to train "specialists" in the combat against "Mohammedism." Inept anti-religious propaganda runs the risk of evoking this recent past in the Muslim mind and would only have very negative results. ... We must proclaim loudly that we are fighting no religion as such, but wish only to propagate our atheistic convictions, as is our natural right. This kind of approach alone can ensure that we will not be confused with the retrograde Russian missionaries. We must make the Muslims understand that in spreading anti-religious propaganda we are not continuing the work of the Pobedonostsevs and the Il'minskiis, but rather that of their own intellectuals, who recently had been working in this same direction.[132]

At the same time, the Bolsheviks learned from the legacy of the missionaries. From the perspective of this study, the most important aspect of the missionaries' legacy is their anti-Islamic literature. Themes and arguments from this literature were continued throughout the Soviet period. But other aspects of the legacy were of value. The Soviets' nationality program -- "National in Form and Socialist in Content" -- continued the emphasis on the teaching of native languages. In Lenin's view, the national language formed the essence of the nationality policy, the "National in Form" being primarily equated with the

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132 Sultan Galiev, "Metody," 46 and 48.

national language. In this connection, the change of the alphabet from Arabic to Cyrillic had already been adopted by the missionaries.[133]

The basic problems concerning the relations between the Russian state and its Muslim subjects had not been resolved when the February Revolution brought the end of the Romanovs' monarchy. None of the tsarist policies, from the most liberal policies of Catherine II to the most repressive policies of General Kaufman in Central Asia, had produced satisfactory results. Religious or cultural assimilation, practiced intermittently from the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, had touched only a marginal minority. In contrast, these policies had created a heavy legacy of suspicion, rancor and hatred between the Russian and Muslim communities. The Revolution of 1905 had brought freedom of faith, but the hope for cooperation and power-sharing between Russians and Muslims that the Revolution had stirred was not followed by concrete results. Furthermore, the rise of slavophilism and Great-Russian nationalism still aggravated the already uneasy relationship between Russians and Muslims.

On the eve of the October Revolution, neither the government in St. Petersburg nor the Russian or Muslim political parties were able to present solutions to the unsolvable problem of relations between the colonizers and the colonized. The Soviet regime inherited the problem and attempted to solve it by applying a new policy based on Marxism-Leninism.

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133 Kreindler contends that Lenin in his youth had seen the most successful application of the missionary system of native education among the Chuvash in his native Simbirsk. Furthermore, Lenin's father, superintendent of schools in Simbirsk, was a supporter and a personal friend of Il'minskii who devised the system of education in native languages. See Kreindler, "Neglected."

Chapter III: Historical Background to Anti-Islamic Policies of the Soviet Period

With the success of the Revolution, the Bolsheviks had acquired the bulk of the Russian Empire. Thus, the creation of a socialist society was not to be confined to a single, more-or-less homogeneous people -- such as would have been the case if the revolution had occurred in Germany or England. Instead, the Bolsheviks were faced with the monumental task of creating a socialist society over a huge land area and within a varied population. The population was disparate in virtually every possible way: ethnically, linguistically, culturally, socially, politically, and, the focus of this dissertation, religiously. The Muslim lands were but one among many of the diverse elements with which the Bolsheviks had to deal.

Marxist thought, a product of nineteenth century ideas, was firmly rooted in the belief that man's environment shaped his institutions, philosophies, values, ideals, thought patterns, and religions. The Bolsheviks, therefore, were confident that they could, through a long-term educational process, create a Soviet society and a Soviet man.

Islam on the Eve of the Revolution

Unquestionably, the Bolsheviks faced a difficult problem when they came to power. The Muslims of the Russian Empire were not a homogeneous group. They were divided geographically, ethnically and linguistically.[1] They were separated by traditional attachments to tribe, clan, and city or village community.

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1 For the ethnic diversity of Soviet Muslims see for example: Akiner; Wixman; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*.

The various peoples ranged from nomads to sedentary people, from clans to nations in formation. In addition, Islam had been assimilated in varying fashion and degree by different socio-cultural units. The sophisticated Bukharan orthodoxy of the largely sedentary Uzbeks contrasted with the varied beliefs and practices of the nomadic Kazakhs, Kirghiz or Nogais.

Even in the communities where Islam was firmly established there was substantial diversity in the conception of religious law. Conceptions of the law varied from the system emerging among the advanced and liberal bourgeoisie -- in Kazan for example -- who were trying to adapt Islam to modern progress, to the interpretations of the peasants of the Chechen country who were fiercely and unyieldingly conservative. However, like all Islamic communities isolated among foreigners, Russian Muslims were profoundly conscious of their religious affiliations, and all the more so as the pressure of the infidels became more severe.

Thus, on the eve of the Revolution, various traditional identities co-existed simultaneously among the Muslim masses of the Tsarist Empire. These identities varied from familial, kinship, regional, linguistic, and tribal, to the *ummah*, the community of believers.[2] The great Russian orientalist Vladimir Bartol'd defined the national identity of the popular masses of Turkestan before the Revolution in the following way: "When you ask a Turkestani what is his identity, he will answer that he is, first a Muslim, then an inhabitant of such city or village, ... or if he is a nomad, a member of such or such tribe."[3] Hence, the first and by far most important identity was the religious identity. Other

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2 For a discussion of the various levels of consciousness in tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union see: Bennigsen, "Several Nations"; and Lemercier-Quelquejay, "Tribe to Umma."

3 Bartol'd, *Istoriia Kul'turnoi.*

traditional forms of identity were defined and maintained within the larger context of an Islamic moral order.

Before the Revolution, membership in the *ummah* -- the community of believers -- was understood by all the Muslims of the Russian Empire. Until the Revolution, nobody, not even the few dedicated Marxists, would dare proclaim their opposition to Islam and their desire to look for another basis of identity. To leave the *ummah* was still an unthinkable act. By abandoning Islam a Muslim becomes a traitor, even worse than a Russian *kafir*.

For the masses the religious identity had no political meaning. The *ummah* was not a nation in the modern sense of the word. Religious identity represented a kind of primal awareness, differentiating a Muslim from Christians, Jews, and others. In contrast, for intellectuals and city dwellers in some areas of the Russian Empire, Islam was becoming a kind of surrogate political national identity. That shift in thought evolved from the Tatar *Jadid* (reformist) movement of the late nineteenth century. At the turn of the century, a pan-Islamic doctrine appeared for the first time in the writings of Tatar political philosophers.[4] Pan-Islamic doctrine proclaimed the political -- not only religious and cultural -- unity of all the Muslims of the Russian Empire. Thus, the *ummah* was, at least for some, in the process of becoming a political, not only a spiritual, establishment.

Muslim intellectuals had another kind of awareness, an ethnic awareness, also deeply rooted in the history of Islam. They defined themselves generically as "Turks." Only a few intellectuals among a sub-set of Turks had begun to differentiate themselves -- as was the case among some Tatars, Kazakhs, and

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4 The pan-Islamic doctrine was first expressed by the Tatar reformist A. Ibragimov in *Chulpan Yildizi*.

Azeris. The Turk or Tatar ethnic identity did not replace, supersede, or destroy the religious identity. Rather, the religious identity remained the most important. In 1918, Klevleev, delegate of Kazan to the first Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan, defined himself as follows: "I am first a Muslim, then a Tatar, and only then a communist."[5]

On the eve of the Revolution, the Muslim political elite was convinced pan-Islamists and pan-Turkists. Despite sub-ethnic differences, they formed one nation, belonged to one culture, and were united by a common religion and historical tradition. This unity was a practical and vital necessity, not a political-philosophical exercise as it had been in the Ottoman Empire..

The Tsarist administration had shown little concern for the self-perception of its Muslim subjects, and had made only spasmodic efforts to influence their identity. In contrast, for obvious ideological reasons, the Bolsheviks viewed the traditional identities, especially religious and tribal, as incompatible with the new society they wanted to build.

The First Ten Years

Among the Muslims of Russia, Marxist influence had been virtually non-existent. Prior to 1917, Russian Muslims had been far more influenced by the thinking of liberals and of Socialist Revolutionaries than by Marxists.[6] For all practical purposes, in November 1917 the Soviet government had no basis for political action in the Muslim borderlands of the Russian Empire. Submerged in revolution and civil war and facing the immediate task of establishing their

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5 Cited by Monteil, 58.

6 For the impact of socialist ideas on Muslim intellectuals before 1917 see Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National*, 7-13.

authority in newly reconquered territories, the Bolsheviks seemed unsure of the direction their rule should take among the non-Russians. Lenin and his regime were willing to go to some lengths to win the political support of the Muslim people in Russia. The desire to gain the support of Russian Muslims was illustrated by the appeal issued by the Soviet government over the signatures of Lenin and Stalin dated 19 December 1917:

> Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sarts of Siberia and of Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, and all you whose mosques and prayer houses have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled upon by the tsars and oppressors of Russia: Your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are forever free and inviolable. Organize your national life in complete freedom. This is your right. Know that your rights, like those of all the people of Russia are under the mighty protection of the Revolution and its organs, the Soviets of Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants ... .[7]

Notwithstanding such appeals, the Civil War had created an environment in which there were abuses directed against religious establishments. Mosques were closed and clerics were executed. Such excesses had led to two important anti-Soviet uprisings in the Muslim borderlands. In the Ferghana valley in Central Asia, a revolt by the Basmachi erupted in 1918. In 1920 there was an uprising in North Daghestan and Chechnia led by religious leaders (*Sufi Naqshbandis*).[8] Uprisings such as these, bearing a religious (in the North Caucasus) or partially religious character (in Central Asia), led the Russian Bolsheviks to avoid further direct confrontation with the Islamic religious establishment. Such confrontations

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7 Reproduced in Castagné, 7-9.

8 In Soviet historiography the Basmachi revolt lasted from 1818 to 1928. In some areas of southern Uzbekistan and the Turkmen steppe, however, the fighting continued until the mid-1930s. The revolt in the North Caucasus was crushed in 1921. Fighting broke out in 1929 in Chechnia, and again in 1940.

might have endangered further the shaky existence of Soviet power in Muslim territories. In order to strengthen their foothold in the Muslim borderlands following the Civil War, sensitive areas of Muslim consciousness, such as religious orthodoxy, pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism, and national autonomy were played upon by the Bolsheviks.[9]

The cautious attitude toward Islam in the early period of the Soviet regime stemmed also from foreign considerations, both in the short run and in the long run. In the short run, Bolshevik leaders were interested in preventing hostile powers from using the Muslim communities within the Soviet Union against their new regime. Furthermore, for several reasons Lenin was cautiously interested in using possible turmoil, or threats of political turmoil, in peripheral Muslim countries. One aim was to pressure western powers to break the "capitalist encirclement" on the southern border of Soviet Russia and to ease the economic pressure exerted by capitalist Europe against the new revolutionary regime. The threat of unleashing a *Jihad* (holy war) led by Soviet Muslims was indeed raised several times against Europe by the Bolsheviks.[10] In the long run, Lenin was sensitive to the potential impact of Soviet treatment of nationalities, especially Muslims, on the millions of Asians who might be recruited to the cause of world revolution. Such considerations led Lenin to advise a cautious course.[11]

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9 Pipes, 155.

10 The threat of a *Jihad* was brandished by Zinoviev at the First Congress of the Toilers of the East in Baku in September 1920, cited by Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 138.

11 See Lenin's note on "Nationalities and Autonomy," dated 31 December 1922, *Collected Works*.

The Civil War

For a variety of motives, many Muslims sided with the Bolsheviks during the Civil War and their role had been vital.[12] But for most Muslims who joined the Bolsheviks, the Revolution had been a liberation. It had brought an end to domination by the Russian tsars and their surrogates, the Whites. The decision by the Muslim elite to side with the Bolsheviks was in large part a reflection of their distaste for the Whites, whose goals were known and understood. By comparison, the goals of the Bolsheviks were less well known to the Muslim leadership. And, despite their excesses during the Civil War, the Bolsheviks were looked upon by the Muslims as the lesser of two evils.[13]

As the Muslim Communists saw it, one of the important tenets of Marxism was that a socialist state cannot be imperialist. As Hanafi Muzaffar, an important Muslim Communist theoretician, noted: "It would be a great mistake for us people oppressed by Europe to fail to recognize that Marxism is fighting imperialism. As the Communist Party is fighting this same imperialism in Russia and abroad, we must accept Soviet power."[14] Beyond that, the Muslim leadership was able to rationalize its support of the Bolsheviks by arguing that communism and Islam were compatible. Notwithstanding evidence of the anti-religious character of the Bolsheviks, some among the Muslim leadership were convinced that Marxism was an ideology that could be adapted to Islam. It was suggested that the Muslim traditional way of life was already close to communism. Similarities between Marxism and Islam were identified: like

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12 See Lemercier-Quelquejay, "Muslim Minorities."

13 See for example Baitursunov.

14 Muzaffar, *Din ve Millet Meseleri* (Religious and National Problems), Kazan 1922, unpublished but used by most national communists. Large sections of Muzaffar's work are quoted in Arsharuni and Gabidullin, 146. Also see Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 97-8.

communism, Islam rejects narrow nationalism; like communism, Islam is international, recognizing only the brotherhood and unity of all nations.[15]

The Period of the New Economic Policy

The period of the NEP (New Economic Policy) began with an attempt by the Bolsheviks to treat their Muslim comrades as equal partners. Until 1927 Muslim Communists enjoyed substantial power of decision-making in the Party and Soviet apparatuses in their respective republics. In Moscow, Muslim Communists served as Stalin's colleagues in the Commissariat of Nationalities (*Narkomnats*). It is not an exaggeration to say that nationalist intellectuals dominated the political and cultural life in the Muslim republics of the Middle Volga, the Caucasus and Central Asia. During the first years of the new regime the term Muslim was officially used as an ethnic denomination. There was a Muslim Red Army, a Muslim Commissariat, and even a Muslim Communist Party for a while.

In part, the Bolshevik attitude toward their Muslim colleagues stemmed from Lenin's long-term interests in preserving the prestige of the Marxist revolutionaries in promoting world revolution. Lenin advocated forbearance in attempts to achieve central control over the Muslim borderlands in a note on nationalities and autonomy dated 12 December 1922.

> The misfortune that could result for our state from the lack of control over the national apparatuses by the Russian apparatus would be considerably less than the misfortune that would result from an excess of centralism -- not only for us, but for the whole International, for the hundreds of millions of Asians who, marching in our footsteps, will soon appear on the scene of history. It would be inexcusable negligence if on the eve of the

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15 See for example: Muzzafar, 147; and Baitursunov in *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Kazakhstana*, Alma-Ata, 1930, 26.

> flight of the Orient, at the dawn of its awakening, we ruin our prestige in the eyes of the Asians -- even by the smallest brutality, the smallest violence against our minorities.[16]

Another important consideration promoting forbearance turned on Lenin's views of the sources of culture and cultural power. Lenin believed that cultural power, unlike political power, could not be seized by revolutionary action. Instead, it must be patiently acquired and assimilated. These views prompted him to encourage his communist comrades to be open to the knowledge and insights of bourgeois specialists, despite their identification with a pre-revolutionary social class.[17]

Most Muslim Communist leaders had been former militants of the pan-Islamic/pan-Turkic movements. The Revolution did not stop the development of pan-Islamic/pan-Turkic conceptions. On the contrary it gave them a new impulse. The early contact of many Muslims with the Bolsheviks during the revolution and the Civil War had convinced them that Marxism was an ideology that could be adapted to their own national demands. Muslims who joined the Bolsheviks accepted literally the Marxist-Leninist lexicon: national autonomy, anti-imperialism, and internationalism.[18] Some had even come to view a socialist regime as the only regime that could, in one blow and in one generation, destroy imperialism and thereby lay the foundation for true national liberation. Muslim Communists therefore had come to Marxism with a program of national

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16 Lenin, "Nationalities." Also see Lewin, 105-16.

17 Fitzpatrick, 8.

18 See Narbutabekov. Narbutabekov's report was given at the First Congress of the Toilers of the East in Baku in September 1920. Also see Pipes, 255 and 260.

liberation, thereby standing in stark contrast to the Marxist-Leninist principle that developing socialism would end the national question for all time.

The Muslim Communists brought several types of adaptations to communism. On the one hand, by stressing the desirability of adapting socialism to their own economic, historical and social conditions, they sought to distinguish clearly between the Russian way and their own national road to communism. Within this context, the Muslim Communists offered their own interpretation of the class struggle as it applied to the Muslim societies; in addition, they set forth their own views of the way the religious question should be approached in the Muslim lands. On the second hand, there were adaptations that were tempered by the Muslims' natural suspicion -- flowing from a history of Russian domination -- that the dynamic Russian Bolsheviks might attempt to perpetuate the imperial policies of tsarist times. To prevent Russian domination, the Muslim Communists were concerned with achieving parity within the Soviet State and within the communist movement. The Muslim solidarity implied by the preservation of the *ummah* was an important means by which Muslim Communists could seek to offset the numerical superiority of the Great Russians. In addition, by advocating the export of the revolution to the east (Eastern Strategy) the Muslim Communists sought to leverage their position within the communist movement.[19]

The Class Struggle. Observing that they had not yet developed a proletariat within their own societies, Muslim Communists argued that conditions were not ripe for the emergence of a class struggle. Therefore, they advocated the postponement of efforts to facilitate the class struggle within their societies.

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19 On the theories of Muslim national communists see: Rubinshtein; von Mende; Bennigsen and Quelquejay; Pipes; Rodinson; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National*; Rorlich, *Volga*, 125-156; and Tengour.

Perhaps more to the point, they pressed for delay until their own national liberation had been fully achieved.[20]

To buttress their efforts to postpone the class struggle within their own societies, the Muslim theoreticians pointed out that the process of economic and political development was substantially different across various areas of the world. Relying heavily on Lenin's analysis of the role of imperialism in dividing the world into nations of "haves" and nations of "have-nots," into nations of "oppressors" and nations of "oppressed," it was but a small step to apply the analysis of classes, which was normally focused on the analysis of society within a given nation or a homogeneous set of nations, to the analysis of differences among nations.[21] Muslim theoreticians argued that the oppressed nations, the victims of capitalist oppressor nations, could be viewed as proletarian. In short, Muslim Communists articulated the innovative concept that the class struggle could be acted out among nations. Within this concept, their own national liberation was an aspect of the class struggle.[22] Because they regarded the Muslim nations as having been among the most oppressed in the tsarist empire, they qualified as "proletarian nations."

Attitudes Toward Religion. Muslim Communists recognized that a frontal assault on Islam, advocated by Russian Bolsheviks and even tried during the Civil

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20 See for example: the report of Faskhuddinov at the 4th Tatar *obkom* of the RCP(b) on 15 September 1927, quoted in Rubinshtein, 24; the declaration of R. Validov, People's Commissar for Agriculture of the Tatar Republic, quoted by Rubinshtein, 80; and the Crimean Tatar, A. Ozenbashly, quoted by Bochagov, 83-4. Also see Bennigsen.and Quelquejay, 101-5.

21 Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National*, 41-2.

22 The theory of proleterian nations and national versus class struggle was developed by Sultan Galiev as early as 1918 in an article in *Znamia Revoliutsii,* 8 March 1918, N. 44, quoted by Arsharuni and Gabidullin, 142.

War, would surely spell disaster for Marxism. They believed that the successful promotion of Marxism in their societies would require the integration of Marxist teachings with those of Islam. Muslim Communists suggested a carefully tailored approach to Islam. Sultan Galiev -- member of the Little Collegium of the *Narkomnats*, editor of *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei*, the organ of the *Narkomnats*, and the theoretician of Muslim national communism -- argued that the relationship of the Communist Party to Islam should be one of opposing fanaticism and obscurantism in particular quarters of the Islamic community.[23] By such an approach, the Communist Party could align itself with moderate elements within the Islamic establishment in opposition to extremists. In this way, the Party could be viewed as continuing the work of the *Jadid* reformers of the nineteenth century.[24] Sultan Galiev noted that pre-revolutionary theologian reformers such as Musa Jarullah Bigi, Ziya Kemali, and Abdullah Bubi had been particularly effective in their attempt to adapt Islam to modern conditions. Sultan Galiev suggested that their work should serve as a model for subsequent propagandizing.[25] The gist of Sultan Galiev's arguments was therefore that Islam should be secularized, not destroyed.[26]

Muslim Communists attempted to institutionalize their moderate line toward Islam. For example, a special *Shari'at* commission was created in 1922 by the national Communists who controlled the Tatar Republic. This

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23 Sultan Galiev, "Metody."

24 Rubinshtein rightly stated that for Sultan Galiev and other Muslim communists the October Revolution was only the continuation of the reformist movement of the Tatar Jadids. See Rubinshtein, 35.

25 Sultan Galiev, "Metody," 55-9.

26 For similar arguments see the writing of the first secretary of the Daghestani *obkom* Samurskii (Efendiev), 137.

commission, created within the Commissariat of Justice, was entrusted with the task of reconciling and coordinating Soviet and *Qur'anic* laws.[27] A similar commission was created in Daghestan in 1921.[28]

The liberal treatment of religion advocated by the Muslim Communists contrasted sharply with the bitter and sustained attacks mounted during the same period by Russian Bolsheviks against the Orthodox Church.[29] Reflecting the influence of Muslim Communists, systematic attacks on Islam did not begin in the Muslim republics until 1928. Aside from the *Zhenotdel* assault in Central Asia on the veiling of women and the campaign against self-flatellation processions of the *Muharram* in Azerbaijan, there was very little organized anti-religious activity.[30] Issues relating to the equality of women question along with the abolition of self-flatellation processions of the *Muharram* had been on the agenda of pre-revolutionary Muslim reformers.[31]

Later, Soviet authors accused the Muslim Communists of being true religious believers and therefore of being unacceptable socialists.[32] Such accusations were questionable. There is little doubt that the Muslim Communists

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27 *Izvestiia Tattsika*, 26 April 1923, N. 911, cited by Klimovich, "Marks," 73; mentioned also by Kasymov, *Ocherki Po Religioznomu*, 27.

28 Kolarz, *Russia*, 198-9.

29 See for example Pospielovsky, *Russian Church*, V. 1, 93-112.

30 For a detailed study of the activities of the *Zhenotdel* in Central Asia see the study of Massell.

31 See the resolutions on the woman question passed at the First and Second All-Russian Muslim Congresses held respectively in Moscow in May of 1917 and in Kazan in July of 1917. The various resolutions of the congresses are reprinted in *Programmnye Dokumenty*, 15-20 and 43-4. Campaigns against the practice of self-flagellation had been undertaken in the pre-revolutionary journals *Ekinci* and *Molla Nasreddin*. See Khadzhibeili, 22-3.

32 See for example: Kobetskii, "Sultan-Galievshchina"; Arsharuni, "Ideologiia"; Kasymov, *Pantiurkistskaia*, 87-8; and Khairov. Also see: Ukhanov; and the material gathered in *Protiv Sultangalievshchiny*.

were sincere Marxists, at least within the context of their interpretation of Marxism. Muslim Communists were certainly secularists. It is plausible to believe that they were essentially indifferent to religion, maybe even hostile to it. Their interest was in the preservation of Islamic society and culture, nct the Islamic religion.

The Preservation of the *Ummah*. An important aspect of the Muslim communists' struggle for parity with the Russians was the maintenance of Muslim lands as one nation. Some Muslims advocated the creation of one Muslim nation, the "Republic of Turan."[33] If division were necessary, the Muslims argued for a small number of states: a Tatar-Bashkir republic in the Volga-Urals (an old idea relating to a state called Idel-Ural borrowed by the Muslim Communists from the pre-revolutionary Tatar national bourgeois organizations); a Turkestan republic; a North Caucasian republic; the republic of Azerbaijan; and the republic of the Crimea.[34] Islam, secularized and purged of its most outdated aspects, but preserving all its moral, cultural and social values, was to remain the basis of the unity. In this way the *ummah* would be preserved.

But the unity of the Muslim *ummah* was a potential ideological and political danger to the Russian Bolsheviks. Against the wishes of Muslim Communists, the Bolshevik leadership opted for a substantial subdivision of the Muslim territories, based on a set of criteria proposed by Stalin. Stalin's criteria for nationality

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33 The Republic of Turan was a project of Sultan Galiev elaborated after his expulsion from the Party in 1923. See Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 180-1.

34 On the desirability of a single Tatar-Bashkir State see Said Galiev (not to be confused with Sultan Galiev). On the efforts of the Tatar Communists to create a Tatar-Bashkir State see Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 119-23 and 141-3. On the Idel-Ural State see Iskhaki. For a unified Turkestan see the program of the ERK Party (Will), an underground Muslim socialist organization created in 1919/20 to strive to establish an independent, sovereign, and undivided Turkestan. The program of the ERK Party has been reproduced in *Programmnye Dokumenty*, 105-27.

consisted of considerations relating to territory, language, economic life and psychological makeup.[35] The Muslim Communists rejected these criteria. While ethnic and linguistic differences were real, they were regarded as a less significant basis of identity than the existing identity based on cultural, historic, and religious loyalties. Gajaz Maksudov, a prominent Muslim Communist, expressed a widely-held view of Turkic intellectuals when he asserted that " ... we cannot separate the culture of the Tatar people from the cultures of other Turko-Tatar people, as all Turko-Tatar people are closely tied together."[36]

Starting in 1919, Soviet leaders moved to break up the *ummah* by dividing the Muslim community of the Middle Volga into Tatar and Bashkir states, by enforcing *razmezhevanie* (the demarcation of the Muslim communities of Central Asia), and by creating a number of small states in the North Caucasus. The breaking up of the *ummah* was designed to accomplish two goals. Its purpose was to replace the clanic and tribal sub-national awareness with larger loyalties, and to replace the Islamic and pan-Turkic supra-national consciousness with more restricted allegiances to modern Soviet nations.

In retrospect, it is plausible to believe that the Bolshevik leadership had opted for the extensive division of Muslim lands in order to prevent the emergence of vibrant political forces based on a viable Muslim identity. Consistent with Russian tradition and sound policy of conquerors of any political persuasion, the Bolsheviks had merely attempted to divide and rule. Muslim Communists certainly viewed the division of the Turkic people as an attempt to

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35 Stalin's concept of a nation was first spelled out in an essay on the national question written in 1912. Lenin had entrusted Stalin with the writing of the essay. "Marksizm i Natsional'nyi Vopros." The essay was originally published in *Prosveshchenie*. See Stalin, 296.

36 Cited by Rubinshtein, 28.

divide and rule, as the re-establishment of the "Russia one and indivisible," and as a return to "pure Russian imperialism."[37]

The break-up of the Muslim lands may have been responsive to motives even more far-reaching than those related merely to the exigencies of political governance. The Bolsheviks knew that the success of the revolution rested upon their ability to create a homogeneous Soviet socialist society free from class distinctions. Members of that society would assume a Soviet identity and would express exclusive loyalty to Soviet ideology and to the Soviet state. It is tempting to argue that the extensive subdivision of Muslim lands was an aspect of this long-run, comprehensive effort to create a revolutionary socialist consciousness, i.e., to create Soviet man. Atheism was viewed as a part of the consciousness of Soviet man. On the road toward spreading atheism, it was useful, indeed necessary, to undermine existing religious loyalties.

The Eastern Strategy. Another means by which Muslim Communists believed they could achieve parity within the communist movement was to shepherd the strategic direction of the revolution. They argued that the colonial east was a powder keg ready to explode, whereas the revolution in Europe was dead. Hence, Muslim Communists advocated the export of the revolution to the east.[38] In this respect, the views of the Muslim Communists were virtually

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37 See the articles by S. Atnagulov, "Soltangaliefchelken Tarikhi Tamrlary" (The Historical Roots of Sultangalievism), 39; the report of M. Razumov, First Secretary of the Obkom of the CP(b) of Tatarstan at the reunion of the aktiv of the CP(b) of the Kazan region, the 12 October 1929, 7; and Ia Chanyshev, "Soltangaliefchelken Gimerelie" (The Destruction of Sultangalievism), 51. The above mentioned articles were published in *Kontrrivolütsiyon Soltangaliefcheleke Karshy* (Against the Counter-Revolutionary Sultangalievism), Kazan, 1930, cited in Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 178-9.

38 These views were expressed by Sultan Galiev in a series of articles entitled "Sotsial'naia," and in the article "K Ob'iavleniiu." Also see Narbutabekov.

identical to those of the *Jadid* reformer, Ismail Gasprinski (see Chapter II). The Muslim Communists saw the opportunity to attract millions of Muslims into the communist world. Clearly, they regarded themselves as best qualified to lead such an enterprise.[39] If the Muslim Communists were successful in exporting the revolution to the east, they would be the dominant players in a political arena outside Russian control.[40] Such a power base would enable them to neutralize the Russians in the communist movement.

The Muslim Communists were not the first to express interest in the colonial world. Prior to 1917 Lenin had expressed himself regarding the possible role of the Orient in the struggle for power. He believed that oppressed people in the colonized world could play an important, if secondary, role in world-wide revolution. It was in this vein that Lenin supported the slogan of national self-determination.[41] In the Lenin-Stalin December 1917 appeal to the Russian Muslims, they expanded their appeal ...

> To the Muslims of the Orient, Persians, Turks, Arabs, Indians, to all who have been exploited during the past centuries, and to all those whose goods the plunderers of Europe wish to divide, we declare the treaties of the tsars, concerning the seizure of Constantinople, and also those confirmed by Kerensky, to be today annulled. The Russian Republic and its government, the Council of People's Commissars, declare themselves against the seizure of foreign countries. Constantinople must remain in the hands of the Turks. We declare null and void the treaty concerning the partition of Persia ... and the treaty concerning the partition of Turkey.[42]

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39 Such opinion was expressed by: Sultan Galiev at the Conference of Tatar Communists in 1920, cited by Rubinshtein, 26; Burundukov (a companion of S. Galiev) in an article in *Znamia Revoliutsii*, 26 November 1919, N. 268, cited by Rubinshtein, 27; and Alkharizi.

40 Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National*, 51-2.

41 On Lenin and the national question see: Pipes, 34-49; and Lewin, 105-16.

42 Reproduced in Castagné, 7-9.

Although most Bolsheviks looked on the colonial world as presenting a useful opportunity to create tempting entanglements for the European powers, they showed no sustained interest in exporting their revolution to the east.[43] They were particularly reluctant to use their own revolutionary Muslim cadre as a vehicle for exporting the revolution to the Islamic world. Soviet Muslims were excluded from the apparatus of the Comintern, from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (*Narkomindel*), and from any political work in the outside Muslim world.[44] In the only attempt made by the Bolsheviks to export the revolution to the Muslim world, Muslims had not been used.[45]

The Bolshevik leadership was very suspicious of the Eastern Strategy. To easternize the revolution in a manner consistent with the views of the Muslim Communists meant to change entirely the basis of revolutionary support and leadership. The Muslim Communists envisaged a purely Asian revolution. As they saw it, the revolution would result from a permanent alliance between the revolutionary national bourgeoisie and the Asian peasantry, an alliance led by the Muslim Communists. In contrast, the Comintern viewed a potential revolution in the colonized world as resulting from a Bolshevik-led alliance between the European proletariat and the Asian peasantry.[46]

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43 Muslim Communists defended their thesis for the export of the revolution to the east at the Second Congress of Communist Organizations of the People of the East in Moscow in November/December 1919, the Second Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in July/August 1920, and the First Congress of the Toilers of the East in Baku in September 1920. Their theses were not favorably accepted by the Bolshevik leadership. See: Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 134-40; and Carr, 251. Also see: *S"ezd Narodov;* and *Protokoly Kongressov.*

44 Bennigsen, "Soviet Muslims," 213.

45 In the spring of 1920 a division of the Red Army, composed entirely of Russians, had been sent to Gilan (Iran) to help the Jengelis of Mirza Kuchuk Khan to fight British imperialism.

46 For the Muslims' views see the report of Ryskulov at the First Congress of the Toilers of the East in *S"ezd Narodov*, cited by Bennigsen and Quelquejay, 138; for the Russian Bolsheviks' views see Carr, 251. Also see *Protokoly Kongressov.*

The Stalin Era

Notwithstanding Lenin's sensitivity towards the potential resurgence of Russian chauvinism, and notwithstanding considerations relating to the prestige of the revolution in the eyes of the Orient, the patience of the Russian Bolsheviks came to an end. The path charted by the Muslim Communists, especially their heretical views relating to the class struggle, their struggle for political autonomy, and their Eastern Strategy, ran counter to the mainline Bolshevik views. Stalin, whose power was in clear ascendency and who had been in charge of nationality affairs from the very beginning, had accumulated his full share of disagreements with Muslim Communists. Although he may have needed their cooperation earlier, no longer was that the case.

The Frontal Attack on Islam: 1927/1928-1941

The Cultural Revolution which began in 1927/1928 brought with it an attack on the Muslim Communists, and with that a frontal attack on Islam. The class war, the hallmark of the Cultural Revolution, ran directly counter to the Muslim communists' efforts to postpone the class war in their societies. By the terms of the class war, the proletariat was to mount an attack " ... against bourgeois elements which are supported by the remnants and survivals of the influence, traditions, and customs of the old society." These bourgeois elements had attempted " ... to increase their share, fighting for their own school, their own art, their own theater and cinema, trying to use the state apparatus for that

purpose."[47] The Muslim Communists were an obvious target of the Cultural Revolution.

This is not to suggest that the Muslim Communists had had no occasion to be concerned about their standing in the movement prior to the Cultural Revolution. There were warnings against nationalism at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1921. With Stalin's criticism of Sultan Galiev in 1923, the first accusations of "national deviation" had been levelled at national Communists.[48] That same year marked the beginning of expulsions of Muslims from the Communist Party.[49]

In 1927/1928, the destruction of Islam, both as a religion and as a way of life, began on a large scale. To facilitate industrialization, Russians with requisite skills were placed in positions of power within the Communist Party and the Soviet apparatus in national republics. With the removal of Muslim national Communists from positions of leadership, the frontal assault against the Islamic infrastructure was fully underway.[50]

Although the Cultural Revolution provided the occasion for the initial assault against Islam, the more or less complete destruction of its infrastructure became an aspect of the Great Purges. With the suppression of the *Shari'at* courts, begun in the late 1920s, the judicial basis of the Islamic religion was destroyed. The economic basis of Islam was undermined with the requisition of

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47 Declarations by A.I. Krinitskii, head of the agitprop department of the Central Committee, cited by Fitzpatrick, 10.

48 The accusation was levelled by Stalin at the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) with the Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions, 10 June 1923. See Stalin, *Works*.

49 Sultan Galiev was arrested for the first time in May 1923 and excluded from the CP shortly thereafter.

50 See for example Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, 155.

the *waqfs*, which had insured the economic independence of Muslim clerics.[51] All the 14,500 primary (*maktab*) and secondary (*madrasah*) *Qur'anic* schools were closed, and nearly all the mosques on the territory of the Soviet Union were closed or destroyed by 1940. Before the revolution there were between 25 and 30 thousand mosques (excluding Bukhara and Khiva), but by 1940 only about one thousand remained. Having been accused of parasitism, counter-revolutionary sabotage, or espionage for Japan, Germany, or England, Muslim clerics were arrested, then deported or executed. Fewer than three thousand of the approximately 45 thousand clerics survived.[52] All contact between Soviet Muslims and their brethren abroad were cut; pilgrimages to holy places in Saudi Arabia, Iran or Iraq were forbidden; and Soviet Muslim republics were closed to foreign Muslims. The isolation from the rest of the *Dar ul-Islam* was further heightened by the change of the alphabet imposed upon Soviet Muslims. Soviet Muslims were forced to change their alphabet from Arabic script. First a Latin script was progressively imposed starting in 192, then there was a shift to a Cyrillic script in 1936.[53] With the exception of the 1933-1936 period, characterized by moderation throughout many aspects of Soviet society, an intense anti-Islamic propaganda had supported the entire campaign.

Of course, Islam was not an isolated target for attack. The Cultural Revolution also provided the occasion for an onslaught against other religions.

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51 Tentative measures to destroy Islam's judicial and economic foundations were undertaken in fits and starts in the mid-1920s. See the early steps in the process of separation of church and state in Muslim territories in Gidulianov, *Otdelenie.*

52 For the data see Bennigsen and Broxup, 47-8.

53 The change from Arabic to Latin alphabet was discussed and adopted at the First Congress of Turcology in Baku in February/March 1926. The staunchest opponent of the change was G. Ibragimov chairman of the Academic Center of the *Narkompros* of the Tatar Republic. See *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi*, 277-80. A decree issued by the Presidium of the Central Committee of Sovnarkom on 7 August 1929 made the change into a law. See Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, 151.

Similar to the treatment of Islam in the 1920s, the Russian Christian sects had been more-or-less immune from attack. These sects had been something of a curiosity for the Marxist intellectuals.[54] After a fashion, the Marxists and the Christian Russian sects had shared a few ideological precepts. Also, in light of sectarian resistance to tsarist policies, they were somewhat admired by the Bolshevik revolutionaries. In contrast, the Orthodox Church had been subject to attack throughout the NEP.[55]

The assault upon Muslim Communists coincided with a change in the Comintern's policy. At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1927, the delegates, under Soviet pressure, adopted a "class versus class" strategy. Such a strategy was completely impractical for application in the colonized world, and was the exact opposite of what had been advocated by the Muslim Communists. Not until well after Stalin's death would the Soviets play their Muslim card in foreign policy.

World War II and Stalin's Last Years

In terms of Soviet policy initiatives, World War II provided the occasion for an ideological *detente* between the Soviet government and what remained of the Muslim religious establishment. In July 1942, a cleric of the former *muftiat* in Ufa, Abdurrahman Rasulaev, took the initiative in establishing contacts with Stalin.[56] In exchange for Muslim support for the war effort, the anti-Islamic campaign was slowed. A few mosques were allowed to reopen. Toward the end of the war, Islam was even given an official standing with the reactivation of the

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54 See for example: Stites, *Revolutionary*, 121-2; and Thrower, 430-8.

55 See for example Pospielovsky, *Russian Church*, 93-112.

56 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Musulmans Oublies*, 187.

former *muftiat* in Ufa and the creation of additional Muslim Spiritual Boards in Tashkent, Baku, and Buinaksk (later to be transferred to Makhach-Kala). To train officially registered clerics, a *Qur'anic* school, the *madrasah* Mir-i Arab, was established in Bukhara in 1945.

The *detente* between the Soviet state and religion continued until Stalin's death. Despite the Central Committee's adoption of a number of resolutions calling for renewed anti-religious effort, little was done.[57] The *detente*, however, was purely tactical; religion and thus Islam remained the enemy. The Party line concerning Islam, as reflected in the second edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* issued before Stalin's death, repeated the accusations that had been leveled against Islam in the darkest days of Stalin's rule:

> Islam, as all religions, has always played a reactionary role. It was used by exploiting classes as an instrument of spiritual oppression of the laboring masses, and it was used by foreign colonizers as an instrument of exploitation of the people of the East. ... After the victory of the Great October Revolution in Russia, during the period of foreign intervention and Civil War, Islam was used by the forces of the counter-revolution within Russia and by foreign imperialists to fight the Soviet government. ... During the period of construction of socialism in the USSR, the remaining exploiting classes attempted to utilize Islam to combat socialism. As agents of these classes, Muslim clerics led the struggle against Soviet legislation on family and marriage, resisted the emancipation of women, and defended the veiling. Acts of terrorism were committed by Muslim clerics, and the *Qur'an* and the *Shari'ah* were invoked to resist industrialization and collectivization. In the USSR today, Islam exists only as a survival of the ideology of the exploiting classes. ... Anglo-American imperialists utilize Islam to combat revolutionary movements and movements of national liberation in Muslim countries ...[58]

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57 See for example Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda*, 38.

58 "Islam," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 2nd ed., 1949.

Why the *detente* continued after the war, its *raison d'etre*, had ended is an open question. It is easy to suggest that the authorities were continuing to court popular cooperation in the immense task of rebuilding the nation in the wake of the war. However, at the same time that there was *detente vis a vis* religions the Party was actively engaged in the *Zhdanovshchina*, a militant reaffirmation of communist ideology and culture. What the crude facts suggest is that Stalin himself played a critical role in maintaining the *detente*. For upon his death the Party renewed its commitment to atheism and to an active anti-religious offensive.

The Post-Stalin Era

The post-Stalin period included several twists and turns in the Soviet government's policies toward religion. The *detente* that had characterized World War II and Stalin's last years was brought to a halt during the Khrushchev period, with a marked hardening in anti-religious, including anti-Islamic, policies. That hardening continued until late in the Khrushchev period, then eased during the Brezhnev period. Not until the 1980s, accompanying the invasion of Afghanistan, did the Soviets again harden their anti-Islamic policies.

The Khrushchev Period

The Khrushchev period can be viewed as a transitional period for anti-religious policies. Khrushchev's "return to Leninism" put an end to the period of religious *detente*. The anti-religious activities during the Khrushchev period were two-pronged. One prong was ideological, the other practical. On the ideological level, the Communist Party, returning to Leninist purity regarding the long-term commitment to lay the foundation for the creation of Soviet man, for the first time began to take steps toward an all-out, multi-faceted, long-term

educational approach to the creation of an atheistic mentality among the masses. However, on the practical level, under Khrushchev's personal push, the attacks on religion returned to the old ways of Stalin.[59] While outright executions tended to be eschewed, administrative and police measures were once again applied on a large scale to liquidate religion once and for all.

Ideological Approach. It became obvious that the older style atheist offensive must give way to an approach more in keeping with the changed times and with a better educated society. This came to light when, starting in 1954, the Communist Party issued a series of decrees on atheism.[60] Those decrees emphasized an ideological approach against religion. The decrees suggested that all branches of knowledge should be involved in the process of propagating, defending, and studying atheism. It was at about this time that scientific atheism began to differentiate itself as a fully-rounded discipline. Although there had been serious studies of religion in the pre-war period, in response to the post-war Party decrees the study of religion in the Soviet Union began in earnest. Numerous new channels of inquiry developed, opposing Marxism to religion, including Islam, at every possible level: spiritual, philosophical, moral, scientific, political, cultural, and artistic. For the first time religion was attacked as a body of thought.

Consistent with Lenin's over-arching goal, the new ideological approach continued to be directed toward the creation of a new Soviet identity, a new Soviet Man. The post-Stalin leadership had good reason to feel optimistic as to

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59 Pospielovsky believes that it was Khrushchev's personal commitment to atheism that led to religious persecutions during his tenure. See Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism,* V. 2, 121.

60 For the 1954 Party's decrees on atheism see *KPSS v Rezoliutsiiakh*, 8th, V. 6, 502-20.

the favorable outcome of their efforts to create an homogeneous Soviet society and a Soviet man. During Stalin's purges, the old Muslim national elite, carrier of pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic ideas, had been virtually eliminated. The Muslim community, the *ummah*, had been divided into nation-states. It was reasonable for the Soviet authorities to believe that those new nations were not sufficiently powerful, in a cultural and historical sense, to hinder the development of an overriding Soviet identity -- based on a common interest, a common culture, and, at length, a common history.

A principal target for the ideological campaign was the native elite. Following Stalin's famous formula "it is cadres who decide everything," Soviet authorities believed that by coopting the native elite to the Soviet ideology the masses would follow. The Soviet leadership was in a position to note that a new Muslim elite, better fitting the profile of Soviet man, was emerging. That new elite was increasing its representation in official apparatuses, in educational institutions, in technical and scientific occupations, and in political representation at both the local and republican levels.[61] This new native elite had been brought up and educated within the Soviet context. Nearly all had been educated in Russian schools and used Russian as their professional language. The majority probably was of peasant background, as the working class was virtually nonexistent in the 1930s and 1940s in Muslim areas (with the exception of Baku). The ties of the native elite with the masses had not been severed. As intellectuals, the new elite was less sophisticated, less iconoclastic, and less revolutionary than

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61 See for example the studies by: Critchlow; Burg; Brill-Olcott, 250 and passim; and M. Rywkin, "Power and Ethnicity: Party"; and id., "Power and Ethnicity: Regional." Also see Rywkin, *Moscow's*, 125-129 and *passim*.

its predecessors, the national Communists.[62] Consequently, it was more uniform in experience and attitudes, a pre-requisite for a homogeneous society.

The Soviet leadership could reasonably believe that Soviet Muslims were becoming well integrated politically and economically into the Soviet system, and that they were developing a stake in that system. The new native elite would accept the identity that best corresponded to its interests, and those interests lay in the Soviet system. Only education and time were necessary to eradicate survivals of obscurantist ideologies such as Islam.

The leadership's plan for achieving homogeneity was formalized in the Party program in 1961. Its operative slogan was, "Come Together, Merge as One."[63] In the first stage of the plan, *sblizhenie*, the peoples of the Soviet Union would draw closer together; in the second stage, *sliianie*, they would merge as one -- culturally, spiritually, and even biologically. The dialectical overtones of such a process are clear. But as a practical matter, there was little doubt for the non-Russian elite as to what *sliianie* meant. It meant Russification.[64]

Practical Approach. The new anti-religious campaign launched by Khrushchev in 1959 lasted until his removal from power in 1964.[65] That new drive was as brutal as Stalin's pre-World War II campaigns. All religion

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62 Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National*, 102.

63 *XXII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza,* Moscow, 1961, 362 and 402. Also see Kaltakhchian, 24 and 43.

64 The goal of *sliianie* ran into the hostility of non-Russian elites. See for example some controversies, on the surface simple scientific discussions, that pitted partisans and opponents of *sliianie*: Ananchenko; Tsarmerian; Isaev; Drozddov; Dzhunusov; Ragochev and Sverdlin; and "Narod: Reshaiushchaia." Also see Hodnett.

65 There was a short anti-religious campaign in 1954, but the major drive did not occur until 1959. See: Delaney-Grossman; and Lowrie and Fletcher.

suffered. Once again the anti-religious campaign was aimed primarily at the liquidation of the mosques and the clerics. Two-thirds of the mosques still open at Stalin's death were closed during the Khrushchev period, leaving about four hundred working mosques for the entire territory of the Soviet Union. The number of registered clerics was reduced to roughly two thousand.[66] Most of the major holy places were closed. An intensive anti-Islamic propaganda, undertaken with the help of all the media, supported the campaign. Quantitatively, the anti-Islamic propaganda was quite extensive. For example, nearly a thousand anti-Islamic non-periodical publications were issued during that campaign in various Muslim languages.[67] Qualitatively, despite the emphasis on ideology, the literature was a return to incendiary propaganda, barely less vicious and crude than during the pre-war years. Thus, for example, there was a return to the crude language of the class struggle and, in that context, the maligning of Muslim clerics.

The Brezhnev Period

After Khrushchev's downfall relations between the Soviet government and Islam moved into a *modus vivendi* that persisted until the invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979. The tone of anti-Islamic propaganda was considerably softened and direct attacks against religious institutions were slowed. Attacks against religious dignitaries and officially registered clerics, judged counter-productive, were abandoned.[68] A few mosques were reopened, and a new *Qur'anic* school, the

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66 Bennigsen and Broxup, 48.

67 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Musulmans Oublies*, 188.

68 Attacks on registered clerics had already been declared to be counter-productive in the Central Committee's decree of 10 November 1954, "Ob Oshibkakh v Provedenii Nauchno-

madrasah Imam Ismail al-Bukhari, was created in Tashkent in 1971.[69] The Muslim Spiritual Boards were given increased freedom of action.

Accompanying the domestic improvements, Muslim religious dignitaries and native elite were permitted limited contact with the Muslim world abroad. These were the first authorized contacts since the late 1920s. The pro-Soviet demeanor of Soviet Muslims abroad served the foreign policy interests of the USSR in their super-power rivalry in the Middle East. It projected a picture of the Soviet Union as a great Islamic power, and as a traditional friend of Islam.[70]

Notwithstanding changes in tone, the Brezhnev period continued the ideological combat that had been renewed by Khrushchev. In particular, there was a marked increase in the quantity of anti-Islamic literature. Even so, the results of the totality of Soviet efforts to combat Islam were surprisingly disappointing, as indicated by Soviet surveys of the level of religiosity taken during the early 1970s.[71] These results, along with other developments, resulted in a stiffening of anti-Islamic policies in the 1980s.

Ideological Combat. The relatively more liberal treatment of Islam and other religions during the Brezhnev period was only a change of strategy. The fundamental anti-religious basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology remained. Indeed, under Brezhnev's tenure many of the secret instructions aimed at suppressing

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Ateisticheskoi Propagandy Sredi Naseleniia." See *KPSS v Rezoliutsiiakh*, 8th, V. 6, 516-20. But the decree had not prevented Khrushchev's violent campaign against the clerics.

69 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Musulmans Oublies*, 189.

70 In 1969 the Muslim Spiritual Board in Tashkent began the publication of a review, *The Muslims of the Soviet East*. Published only in foreign languages (Arabic, Persian, French, and English) or in Uzbek but in Arabic script it was targeted for a foreign audience. The review was a major source of information on the activities of the Soviet Muslim dignitaries in the Muslim world abroad.

71 For a sample of surveys see chapter IV, footnotes N. 24, 100, and 111.

religion were made into law and published. Because Soviet-style communism could not tolerate other competiting religions, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union continued to proclaim that it could not remain indifferent or neutral to religion. Religion was destined to disappear. The difference between the Lenin, Stalin, or Khrushchev periods and the Brezhnev period was in the tactics used by the Soviet authorities to bring about that disappearance. From 1964 to 1980, the authorities seemed to have preferred an ideological combat, through education and persuasion, rather than administrative pressure or police measures.

The Soviet authorities continued to be optimistic as to the favorable outcome of their fight against all kinds of "obscurantist" ideologies, including Islam. A rather large field of Islamic studies emerged in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev period. The literature on Islam in the 1960s and 1970s developed numerous new channels of inquiry into the philosophy, history, and culture of Islam. Using an eclectic approach, there was a marked increase in anti-Islamic propaganda themes and arguments at all levels. Conducted within an advanced didactic-philosophical frame of reference, the propaganda became substantially more subtle. A concentrated effort was made to involve all branches of knowledge in the scientific refutation of Islam.

Reality Tests. The results of the 1970 census and of other sociological data must have seriously shaken whatever illusions the Soviet leadership may have harbored for the success of the merging of the Soviet people into one homogeneous society.[72] Not only was the demographic shift finally recognized, but judging by language criteria and the rate of intermarriage between Muslims

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72 Much has been written on demographic changes in the Soviet Union and on its Muslim dimension. See for example: Carrere d'Encausse, *Decline*, 47-120; Feshbach; and Besemeres.

and non-Muslims, Soviet Muslims demonstrated almost no inclination to assimilate with the Russians.[73] Nor were the national boundaries withering away. The Soviet leadership had expected that national boundaries would become less significant as the processes of Sovietization led to increased contacts between Russians and Muslims. But these expectations were not realized. For example, the 1970 census revealed that less than one percent of Central Asians lived outside of their national ethnic territories. Apparently, the Central Asians preferred to live within territories that were largely immune from Russian pressures. At the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Communist Party in 1976, for the first time since 1961, the speeches devoted to the nationality policy saluted the "flowering" and "friendship" of the nations but omitted the contested goal of *sliianie*.[74]

Sociological surveys dealing with religion had been conducted in all Muslim territories during the 1970s. As the results of those surveys were coming out, it became increasingly clear that the anti-Islamic campaigns were not particularly successful and that a new phenomenon was brewing. In the late 1970s Soviet sources began to make reference to Islamic revival, not merely to Islamic survival. Worst of all, the native elite was showing renewed interest in Islam. The surveys made it quite clear that the masses were not becoming more atheistic, but were remaining deeply attached to Islam and to their *Türklük*. To

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73 See for example: *Sotsial'noe i Natsional'noe*, 279-302; Terent'ev, 472-3; Gadzhieva and Iankova, table 5; Saidbaev, *Islam i Obshchestvo*, 194; Bromlei; Kalyschev, 72-3 and 75; "Kul'turno-Bytovye," 32; A. Volkov, "Etnicheskie," V. 7, 16 and 20; and V. 8, 19; and Borzykh, 110-2. The last article gives an idea of how little the pattern of mixed marriages has changed since the 1930s.

74 *XXV S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, Moscow, 1976, 113. For an analysis of the new terminology replacing or adding to *sblizhenie* and *sliianie*, and reflecting more political realism in the nationality area see: Rywkin, *Moscow's*, 140-2; and id., "Impact," 94-5.

the authorities' bafflement, there was a slow but steady re-Islamization of the intellectual and bureaucratic elite.[75]

In part, the re-Islamization may have been a consequence of the cultural thaw set into motion by Khrushchev. Muslims and other non-Russians, with increased access to their respective cultural patrimonies, began searching for their pre-Marxist roots. In the search for their lost cultural heritage, Muslim intellectuals encountered the ubiquity of Islam. So prominent was this flurry of investigation that it has earned a special designation in Soviet literature, *mirasism* (from the Arabic word *miras* meaning heritage).[76]

In the late 1970s, the Soviet authorities had begun to question the efficacy of their ideological strategy against Islam. They came to the view that the strength of Islam was not wholly in its ideology. Instead, its strength was to be found in its social traditions and in its "confusion" with nationalism.

The Islamic revival in the Soviet Union was an internal phenomenon, not strongly influenced by similar trends in the Muslim world. Muslim society in the Soviet Union possessed the internal dynamism to produce its own regeneration. Soviet anti-Islamic campaigns and Soviet social engineering had never destroyed the Islamic religion nor the Islamic culture, leaving the bedrock for intense beliefs as solid as ever. Clearly, later on, knowledge of events and ideas from the Islamic Revolution in Iran and, particularly, from the Soviet engagement in Afghanistan made their way into the Soviet Union and found resonance among Soviet Muslims.[77] But those ideas only stimulated a movement already in progress.

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75 For an analysis of these trends see Bennigsen, "Islam in Retrospect."

76 Gosmanov; Rorlich, "Not by History Alone"; and Bennigsen, "The Crisis."

77 Braker, "Implication," 121.

The Decade of the 1980s

It was not until after 1980, following the invasion of Afghanistan, that the attitude of the Soviet authorities toward Islam again hardened. The combination of the Iranian Revolution and the Afghan War appears to have alerted the Soviet authorities to the dynamic vigor and mobilizing power of Islam combined with nationalism. The unthinkable, that Islam could be more attractive than Marxism-Leninism, was brought home to the Soviet authorities.

The hardening in official Soviet attitudes toward Islam during the 1980s was in evidence from top to bottom. Within party congresses of Muslim republics, First Secretaries spoke at length about Islam in their keynote speeches. They warned about illegal religious organizations; they expressed concern about the rise of pan-Islamism; they told stories about the flirtation of party officials with Islamic rites and customs; they excoriated anti-religious propagandists for their failure to understand the political acuteness of the Islamic problem in the USSR.[78] Such official presentations were unusual in the extreme, and were in marked contrast to the experience and practices of the preceding decades. On 25 November 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev made a personal call on the Central Asian Communist Party leaders in Tashkent, to urge them to " ... wage a resolute and uncompromising struggle against religious revivals, and to step up mass atheistic propaganda."[79]

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78 See for example: Bagirov's report to the CP of Azerbaijan Congress, *Bakinskii Rabochii*, 1 February 1986; Kunaev's report to the CP of Kazakhstan Congress, *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda*, 7 February 1986; Makhkamov's report to the CP of Tajikistan Congress, *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, 25 January 1986; Niiazov's report to the CP of Turkmenistan Congress, *Turkmenskaia Iskra*, 18 January 1986; and Usmankhodzhaev's report to the CP of Uzbekistan Congress, *Pravda Vostoka*, 31 January 1986.

79 See the report of the meeting in *Pravda Vostoka*, 25 November 1986.

A vigorous anti-Islamic campaign was undertaken in all the Muslim republics. It consisted of a drastic increase of attacks against Islam in all media, and of a sharp increase in arrests, trials, and condemnations of believers and unregistered clerics.[80] Soviet experts, perhaps having determined that Marxism-Leninism was not winning the ideological competition, moved the struggle between atheism and Islam into a different arena. The religious and social traditions of Islam became the main targets of the anti-Islamic campaign. Returning to a practice initiated in the early years following the Revolution, the aim was the replacement of the traditional religious and semi-religious rites and customs, viewed as a breeding ground of nationalism, by equivalent new Soviet rites.

At the same time, the denunciation of "parallel Islam," especially of its most active element, the *Sufi* brotherhoods, attained an unprecedented level. The *Sufi* orders were attacked as carriers of obnoxious traditions and as the most radical form of nationalism. The tone of the anti-Islamic literature also changed. There was a reduction in scientific discussions, or dialectical explanations. In addition, the Soviets abandoned their polite efforts to offer the extended hand of friendship to Muslim believers who were otherwise loyal to the Soviet system. Instead, the aggressive and brutal tone of official publications was reminiscent of the Stalin era.

The campaign against Islam gained in intensity and vigor until the late 1980s when it shifted course. After 1988/1989, traditional attacks against Islam

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80 Among many others see reports of arrests and trials of believers, fanatics, and unregistered *mullahs* in *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, 9 October 1987; *Sovet Uzbekistani*, 19 May 1987; *Sovetlik Kyrgyzstan*, 30 May 1987; and *Tadzhikiston-i Soveti*, 7 September 1987. Also see the report delivered at the Eigth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Tajik CP in December 1987 by V.V. Petkel, Chairman of the Tajik SSR KGB, revealing that dozens of trials of unofficial clerics had been held in 1986-1987, *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, 30 December 30 1987.

in the periodical press virtually disappeared. Propaganda extolling the virtues of internationalism replaced direct anti-Islamic propaganda. Because Islam was viewed as reinforcing national differences and promoting a sense of ethnic exclusiveness, it was regarded as antithetical to the development of internationalism, a sense of oneness in the Soviet Union. Islam was again seen as a factor undermining the political viability of the Soviet Union.

Conclusions

Seventy years after the Revolution, the problems posed by Islam to the Soviet authorities were strangely similar to those faced by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s. Islam had survived as a religion and as a way of life. A widespread religious revival in the 1980s manifested itself at all levels of the population, from the popular to the intellectuals. The religious identity of Muslims and their attachment to the *ummah* have not been destroyed. Rather, they have shown renewed vitality.

Chapter IV: Propaganda Issues and Apparatus

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the Soviet Union's propaganda apparatus, the configuration of people and media that carried out the State's propaganda policies. That apparatus changed in response to the changing policies of the evolving leadership. It is important to reemphasize that the word propaganda is used here in its formal sense. It refers to an organized effort to promote a specific body of thought. Hence, interest is not confined to the slogans or leaflets of hands-on propagandists. Equally within the definition employed are materials of varying levels of scholarship and sophistication, and alternative means of communicating those materials.

The central issues at the heart of the propaganda policy debate are of interest in that they hampered the application of a persistent, cohesive propaganda policy throughout the Soviet era. It is also useful to be acquainted with the propaganda apparatus. Just as the death of Stalin serves as a major demarcation for the formulation of anti-religious and anti-Islamic policy, it serves to distinguish between fundamental changes in propaganda approaches and the propaganda apparatus. Accordingly, this chapter first examines issues and practices relating to propaganda approaches and apparatus during the period following the 1917 Revolution and preceding World War II, then moves to a consideration of those same topics during the post-Stalin era.

From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin

After the successful revolution there was substantial intellectual ferment within the Communist Party, both among their leadership and among the Party ranks, about how to deal with religion. Part of that intellectual ferment dealt with the design of an appropriate approach to anti-religious propaganda.

Decisions relating to overall approach had implications for the propaganda apparatus itself.

Approaches to Propaganda

The Bolsheviks came to the task of rebuilding society without a substitute set of ethics or ritual that could command allegiance. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Russian intelligentsia had been engaged in a continuing debate regarding, among other related moral issues, the role of religion in a culturally and economically enlightened society. The Russian Orthodox missionaries and the Muslim reformers played a part in that debate, as did the socialists, including the Bolsheviks. An important participant in the debate was A.V. Lunacharsky. Although a Bolshevik and an atheist, he promoted the view that Marxism and modern science were insufficient to create " ... solidary ecstasy, the psychic cement of common love and struggle."[1] To overcome this shortcoming it would be necessary to create a new, socialist-oriented body of dreams, myths, sounds and rituals to accompany Marxism. By so doing -- that is, by constructing a new "God system" -- socialism would come to possess a dimension comparable to that found in traditional religions. Lenin rejected Lunacharsky's thesis out of hand. He argued uncompromisingly that "Godbuilding" was dangerously close to traditional religion, and would be counterproductive to the building of socialism.[2]

After the Revolution there continued to be confusion among the Communists about how to deal with religion. On the one hand, reminiscent of earlier views about "Godbuilding," there was an impulse, especially among the

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1 Stites, *Revolutionary,* 102

2 Stites, *Revolutionary*, 103

ordinary Party members, to create a communist morality to replace the moral structure based on religious values. There was an inchoate view among the Communist membership that bread and politics alone were not enough. For life to be lived fully, it must be enriched by emotions. Religion must be replaced by something. In practical terms, these impulses were manifested in more-or-less spontaneous adaptations leading to the creation of quasi-religious Party ceremonies to serve as surrogates for religious rituals.[3] The religious rituals most missed were those associated with major rites of passage -- such as birth, marriage, and death.

On the other hand, on a more formal platform the Marxist intellectuals were engaged in a debate about how to conduct the anti-religious campaign. That debate, which took place in the 1922-1926 period, focused on one chief issue. That issue concerned the nature of the problem itself. Was the anti-religious attack to be directed against a deeply-seated, firmly-rooted world view that would only respond over a long period of time to an intelligently organized educational process? Or, was the attack to be directed against a relatively superficial phenomenon that could be destroyed quickly and directly?[4] The alternative views regarding the nature of the problem led to different prescriptions for its resolution.

According to the first view, arguments against religion should be drawn from its mythological roots and should be marshalled in a careful, analytically respectable manner. Religious assertions should be contrasted with science, progress, technology, and so forth. Anti-religious spokesmen should include people from all walks of life and should not be confined to party members. It

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3 For studies of ritual building in the 1920s see the work of: Stites, *Revolutionary*, 101-123; id., "Bolshevik Ritual"; and Veresaev.

4 Delaney, 119-20; and Stites, *Revolutionary*, 106.

was argued that the propaganda itself should be presented tastefully, without mockery or insult. Supporters of that view gathered around E. Iaroslavskii, editor of the newspaper *Bezbozhnik* and the journal *Bezbozhnik*, and founder and president of the Society of Militant Godless (*Soiuz Voinstvuiushchikh Bezbozhnikov*).[5]

The second view, that religion was relatively limited and superficial, led to a markedly different approach. Proponents of this view held that attacks on religion should not come from the past. Rather, they should emphasize the religious life of the present. More to the point, religious practices should be fought as an aspect of the class struggle, directed principally against the clerics. The propaganda should not spare crudity and strong words in order to disabuse the readers from their beliefs. Necessarily, anti-religious spokesmen should come only from the Communist Party. Advocates of that approach gathered around M.M. Kostelovskaia, secretary of the Moscow Party Committee and editor of the journal *Bezbozhnik u Stanka*.[6]

There was yet another approach, the *samotek* or liquidationist theory, that was somewhat outside the debate about how to deal with religion, or how anti-religious propaganda should be conducted. According to that approach, nothing need be done. Religion, like the state, would wither away with advances in literacy, increases in secularization, and rising standards of living -- in short, as a a by-product of the successful socialist revolution.[7] Although historians have

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5 For the views of Iaroslavskii and his group see: Krylov, 185-6; Delaney, 118-9; and Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism*, V. 1, 51-2. On Iaroslavskii see: Mints; Sheinman; and Savelev. Also see Iaroslavskii, *Protiv*.

6 For the views of Kostelovskaia and her group see: Krylov, 188-9; Delaney, 115-9; Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism*, V. 1, 50-1; Savelev, 38-9; and Iaroslavskii, *Protiv*, V. 3, 102-21.

7 Delaney, 120; and Stites, *Revolutionary*, 106.

identified the Ukrainians as the principal advocates of this view, Muslim Communists also played a prominent role in advancing the position.[8]

By the time the major assault against Islam was begun, the debate had been settled concerning how the attack against religion should be conducted. The Communist Party had accepted the view that the anti-religious battle would be fought over the long run.[9] The chief proponents of this view, E.M. Iaroslavskii and his Society of Militant Godless, became the *de facto* organizers of the anti-religious battle.

Even though the Iaroslavskii view prevailed, the resulting propaganda did not confine itself to tastefully presented, carefully documented, argument. Rather, as a practical matter, anti-religious propaganda of both the Iaroslavskii and Kostelovskaia variety was widely published. For example, it was not uncommon to find propaganda focused on priest-baiting and mockery of religious practices in publications committed to the long-term educational process (*Bezbozhnik*). Nor was it uncommon to find propaganda dealing with religious myths in hard-hitting, superficially oriented publications (*Bezbozhnik u Stanka*). In short, each side of the analytical debate used the techniques and approaches of the other side.

It should also be recognized that, although Iaroslavskii had received official Party support, his long-term approach, devoid of coercion and persecution, was short-lived as a practical matter. Even though the anti-religious campaign had

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8 M.S. Sultan Galiev, "Metody," 51-2.

9 The commission of the Central Committee concerned with anti-religious propaganda came out against *Bezbozhnik u Stanka* in 1923. The commission requested that the Central Committee merge the journal with the newspaper *Bezbozhnik*. The merger of *Bezbozhnik u Stanka* with *Bezbozhnik* did not occur until 1932. See: Delaney, 116; and Shishakov, 324-5, and 328. Also see the resolution of the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923, "O Postanovke Antireligioznoi Agitatsii i Propagandy," in *KPSS v Rezoliutsiiakh,* 1954, 7th ed., 743-5.

begun as an educational process in the early 1920s, when Stalin unleashed his "Revolution from Above" the campaign turned to direct force.

Consider, for example, the anti-religious thrust against the *Ashura* in Azerbaijan. For *Shi'ah* Muslims, the *Ashura* is the commemoration of the martyrdom of *Imam* Husayn, grandson of the Prophet. The day of the *Ashura* was commemorated with mourning processions accompanied by self-flagellation. From the perspective of Bolsheviks, this practice was the height of barbarism, superstition, and general idiocy. In addition, the practice was most common among workers and peasants, those for whom the Bolsheviks were creating a new world.[10] After the fall of Azerbaijan to the Soviets in 1921, the Bolsheviks took direct action. They forbade the self-flagellation processions. Unfortunately, the practice persisted, notwithstanding the ban. More than that, there was popular pressure for lifting the restriction. In 1923 the ban was removed by a special decree, and the Bolsheviks turned toward the long-run approach.[11]

But the long-run educational approach was not without its difficulties. In 1924 and 1925, the *Ashura* was the object of ridicule in the form of caricatures and articles in newspapers. These were published in a brief period just before the festival was to begin. In addition, anti-*Ashura* lectures were presented by Party members at special meetings. These measures resulted in essentially no diminution of participation in the festival. In fact, there was no reduction in participation by Party members.[12] Consequently, in 1926 the anti-*Ashura*

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10 Khadzhibeili, 22-3. According to Khadzhibeili, the intellectuals, editors of the pre-Revolutionary journals *Ekinci* and *Molla Nasreddin*, had already begun a campaign against the practice of self-flagellation.

11 On the ban and its lifting see Giduianov, *Otdelenie*, 64.

12 On the anti-*Ashura* campaign in 1924-1925 in Azerbaijan see Khadzhibeili, 23 and 27-8.

campaign was begun 42 days before the festival.[13] The campaign was broadened to include appeals from the Party, the Soviet of People's Commissars, the *Komsomols*, and the Society of Militant Godless, urging the population to refuse to fall prey to the exploiters. Workers from some factories drafted resolutions renouncing the *Ashura* and calling on other factories to join their movement. During the campaign special seminars were organized to help lecturers. Brigades of youth, *Komsomol*-members, Party atheists were sent to the rural areas to agitate against the *Ashura*. Attempts were made to enlist elders, women and even clerics to come out against the self-flagellation. Fifty-six thousand books and pamphlets, eight thousand posters and one thousand copies of themes for lectures were printed and distributed.[14] Films, concerts, and plays were presented and special issues of satirical journals provided. No longer was the propaganda mere irony. Rather, it was aggressive and insulting, with a strong class-struggle flavor. Notwithstanding all these propaganda efforts, the celebration of the *Ashura* continued with active participation of Party and *Komsomol* members.

The campaigns of 1927, 1928, and 1929 against the *Ashura* began two months before the festival.[15] The campaigns were stepped up, particularly in the countryside. After each festival, those who participated in the processions notwithstanding the recommendations of the Party and the government, were expelled from the Party, the *Komsomol*, and the Society of Militant Godless. In 1927, resolutions of the *TsIK* (Central Executive Committee) and *Sovnarkom*

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13 On the anti-*Ashura* campaign of 1926 see Khadzhibeili, 29-31.

14 *Bakinskii Rabochii*, 30 July 301926, cited by Khadzhibeili, 31.

15 On the anti-*Ashura* campaigns of 1927, 1928 and 1929 see Khadzhibeili, 32-5. The stepping up of the anti-*Ashura* literature in 1926 is confirmed by Sattarov and Kocharli, 49 and 51.

(Soviet of People's Commissars) of Azerbaijan forbade the processions.[16] Finally, organizers of processions in 1929 were arrested, some were executed and others were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one to six years.[17] The executions had the desired effect. The public processions, certainly in urban areas, came to a halt. The massive newspaper propaganda campaigns effectively disappeared after 1929. Even so, condemnation of the mourning (minus the practice of self-flagellation) appeared on an irregular basis.[18]

The discussion relating to the *Ashura* is but one example of a pattern of dealing with unwanted religious practices. First, the practice received moderate condemnation by the propagandists. Later, the educational process was stepped up. Finally, during the period of the Cultural Revolution the tempo of repression quickened.

The Propaganda Apparatus

The Soviet anti-religious propaganda apparatus had an institutional structure, along with the people who gave those institutions life. The institutional structure included organizations devoted to atheism, the print media, the performing arts, and the visual arts. As a practical matter, this review of propaganda is limited to the print media. Even so, the themes and arguments are sufficiently general to apply to the overall propaganda effort.

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16 *Bakinskii Rabochii*, 27 July 27 1927, cited by Khadzhibeili, 33. Sattarov and Kocharli, 50, gave the year 1926 for the ban on the procession.

17 *Kommunist* (in Azeri), 2 December 1929, cited by Khadzhibeili, 33.

18 See for example: *Magerram*; Ordubady; A.S. Ibragimov; and Klimovich, "Proiskhozhdenie Shakhsei-Vakhsei." In 1968 Sattarov and Kocharli, 57, noted that the mourning of the *Ashura* remained one of the most observed religious practice in Azerbaijan.

The Society of Militant Godless (1925-1942). One of the most important organizations associated with the anti-religious, including anti-Islamic, effort was the Society of Militant Godless. In 1922, Iaroslavski had founded a newspaper named *Bezbozhnik* (The Godless), around which there formed a group of "friends of *Bezbozhnik*." That circle of friends held a congress in April 1925, out of which grew the Society of Militant Godless.[19]

The Society of Militant Godless was controlled by a central council. The Society had branches in the republics, each of which had a network of cells. The earliest branch to appear in a Muslim republic was in Azerbaijan in 1926, but such branches remained substantially inactive until the early 1930s.[20] Defying their by-laws, ignoring orders from the Moscow Council, competing with the *Komsomol* and other Party organizations, it was not until the early 1930s that the republican branches were effective in achieving their underlying anti-religious purposes. Total membership in the societies was estimated at only about 123,000 just before the Cultural Revolution.[21] Even such a scant membership may overstate the societies' importance as an instrument for conducting anti-religious activities in the 1920s. It is said that members were attracted by the festive nature of the evening meetings, rather than by the subject-matter at hand.[22]

However, membership in the Society jumped sharply thereafter. According to E. Iaroslavkii in an interview with an American delegation in 1932, there were 6 million members in the Society, plus no less than 10 million Godless

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19 Details concerning the Society of Militant Godless can be found in: Krylov; and Kanovalov.

20 Khadzhibeili, 55-6; and Sattorov and Kocharli, 52.

21 Stites, *Revolutionary*, 106; Curtiss, *Russian Church*, 206-46; and Fainsod, 430-5.

22 Khadzhibeili, 56.

kolkhozniks.[23] Data on membership published by the Society showed considerable increases between the years 1930 and 1932, the period of the Cultural Revolution. In Bashkiria, membership was said to have increased by 257 percent, from 12,000 to 43,000 members; in Tatarstan it expanded by 173 percent, from 22,000 to 60,000; in the Crimea membership increased by 181 percent, from just under 15,000 to 42,000; in Uzbekistan membership rose by 1,114 percent, from 13,000 to 160,000; and in Azerbaijan there was a 2,233 percent expansion, from 3,000 to 70,000. During a single year (1931-1932) in Daghestan, the membership increased by 388 percent, from 10,000 to 49,000 members. Between 1929 and 1932, Kazakhstan membership rose by 583 percent, from nearly 5,000 to 33,000.[24]

Militants of the Society were overwhelmingly male, and said to be almost exclusively under the age of forty (90 percent between 14 and 45 years of age). Membership in the Society was reported to be almost equally divided between Party and non-Party people. Members were mostly workers and peasants, but also petty employees, students, and soldiers. *Komsomol* members were prominent in the Society.[25]

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23 Cited by L.D., 21. The number of 6 million members is also given by Kalinin, 351. In 1938 the number of about 2 million members was given in "V Organizatsiiakh SVB," 56.

24 Kalinin, 346. It is plausible to suggest that the sudden and marked expansion in reported membership of the Society reflected simple exaggeration. Within an environment dominated by sloganeering calling for overachievement during the First Five-Year Plan, the Society may have been seduced into such behavior. According to a 1937 attack on Iaroslavkii published in *Izvestiia* on 10 March membership statistics had been falsified. It was asserted that the Society was in total disarray. District committees of the Society had been, or were being, liquidated almost totally, even in and around Moscow. In sixteen regions, districts and republics, the organization had never even existed in fact, although it had been reported. Shortly after, Iaroslavskii acknowledged the breaking up of the Society in an article in an article in *Pravda* on 17 March 1937.

25 Kalinin, 350-1.

The anti-religious activities that had been conducted by the Society consisted of the publishing of a weekly newspaper and several journals, as well as the printing of pamphlets, posters, and monographs.. The Society also conducted seminars and ran correspondence courses to train anti-religious propagandists; it initiated study groups in places of work; and it organized debates designed to highlight the power of atheism.

Membership statistics relating to ethnic background were apparently not collected. But the term Godless was anathema to a Muslim, even if only a casual religious participant. Hence, it is unlikely that explicit and open association with the Society could be tolerated in Muslim communities. Muslim membership, such as it was, had often been brought about by trickery. For example, Muslims *Komsomol* members were enrolled in the Society and given membership cards written in Russian.[26] In any event, whatever the impact of the Society of Militant Godless, the anti-religious movement came to a halt in 1941. With World War II, the Great Patriotic War, external fears became paramount. Stalin turned his attention toward rallying the Soviet people to the defense of the Motherland. Anti-religious activities were stopped.

The Print Media: The Daily Press. The most important vehicle for attacks against religious practices was the daily press. These attacks were to be found among the other articles that made up the common fare of ordinary newspapers. By their very nature, however, the newspaper attacks against religion were summations. They were arguments by hurried conclusion, rather than by careful reasoning. The articles did not often contain persuasive explanations of why a

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26 *Dagestanskaia Pravda*, 18 January 1934, cited by Khadzhibeili, 53.

given religious practice was undesirable. Other parts of the print media attempted to deal more extensively with the religious question.

The Print Media: The Journals. Some publications were solely devoted to anti-religious literature. Those journals written in Russian that had a life span of more than a few issues consisted of the following: *Ateist* (2 numbers in 1922, 1925-1930), a non-Party publication, was issued in Moscow; *Bezbozhnik u Stanka* (1923-1931) was issued by the Moscow *obkom*. Upon their demise, each of these journals was taken over by the Society of Militant Godless. Journals issued in Moscow and published by the central committee of the Society of Militant Godless consisted of *Antireligioznik* (1926-1941), *Bezbozhnik* (1925-1941), *Derevenskii Bezbozhnik* (1928-1932), and *Voinstvuiushchii Ateizm* (1931), a follow-up to *Ateist*. In addition, the Society issued a newspaper, also called *Bezbozhnik* (1922-1934 and 1938-1941).

The republican branches of the Society issued their own publications in local languages. *Hudosizlar,* or Godless (1928-1933), was issued in Tashkent and written in Uzbek. *Dahri,* meaning Godless, later renamed *Allahyz*, or Without God (1928-1935), was issued in Ufa and written in Bashkir. *Fan ham din*, which means Science and Religion, later renamed *Sugyshchan Allahsyz,* or Militant Without God (1925-1937), was issued in Moscow and written in the Tatar vernacular of Kazan. Finally, *Allahsyz*, or Without God (1931-1933), was issued in Baku and written in Azeri; it replaced *Molla Nasreddin* (1922-1931).

Of all the specialized anti-religious journals, *Bezbozhnik* survived the longest and had the largest press runs. At its height (1932), *Bezbozhnik* printed 200,000 copies. While such a printing would have been sufficient to satisfy the needs of other anti-religious propagandists and to enable Party facilities and libraries to make copies available, it would have been insufficient for mass

distribution. Hence, it is plausible to conclude that the anti-religious publications were not directed toward attracting a mass readership. Rather, it is probable that they were directed toward those propagandists who were engaged in direct contact with the target population. These would include militants of the Godless Society, Party cadre, *Komsomol* members, and educators. Such publications were useful in providing hands-on propagandists with themes and arguments for their anti-religious work.

The various anti-religious publications were aimed at a variety of publics. *Bezbozhnik* and the publications of the republican branches of the Society of Militant Godless were targeted toward the broadest public, including both workers and peasants. *Bezbozhnik u Stanka* (The Godless at the Workbench) was aimed especially at city workers. *Derevenskii Bezbozhnik* (The Village Godless), directed toward a rural audience, had been started as a counterpart to *Bezbozhnik u Stanka*. The latter had been deemed too harsh for the countryside. *Antireligioznik* was a methodological journal for hands-on propagandists. Its purpose was to help propagandists to carry on their anti-religious work. For example, it explained how to conduct anti-religious propaganda among women, or how to organize propaganda in the countryside during the summer. *Antireligioznik* contained advice on how to prepare a lecture, and provided themes and arguments for lectures. It presented information relating to the progress of anti-religious work in various regions. Periodically it provided articles dealing with such specialized subjects as holy places or religious holidays.

Bezbozhnik and its republican counterparts, *Bezbozhnik u Stanka*, *Derevenskii Bezbozhnik*, and even *Antireligioznik* were targeted toward a popular readership. *Ateist* and its follow-up, *Voinstvuiushchii Ateizm*, had more ambitious aims. Judged by the academic standing of their authors and by the subject matter of their articles, their aim was to attract an intellectual readership.

They were the only specialized anti-religious journals to publish articles signed by professional scholars. For example, in 1930 *Ateist* presented a discussion among well-known historians on the rise, history, and nature of Islam.

Of course, most journals did not specialize in anti-religious propaganda. As it turned out, however, most journals, whatever their principal aim, had occasion to contain outright attacks on religion. An interesting case in point is *Novyi Vostok,* (1922-1930), a journal published by the All-Union Scientific Association for Oriental Studies attached to the *TsIK SSSR* (Central Executive Committee of the USSR). It began as a scholarly publication whose purpose was to discuss the literature and the social life of peoples of the East, mostly the Muslim East, both Soviet and foreign. As time passed, this journal began to include attacks against Islam. Even so, as early as 1930 the journal was suppressed. According to later reports, that journal had been unable to present its material within an appropriate ideological context.[27]

Other journals that most frequently contained anti-Islamic material included: *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok* (1927-1937) issued in Moscow by the Scientific-Research Association for the Study of National and Colonial Questions; *Revoliutsiia i Gorets* (1928-1933) issued in Rostov-na-Donu by the North Caucasian Territory's (Krai) Committee of the All-Union CP(b); *Revoliutsiia i Natsional'nosti* (1930-1937) issued in Moscow by the Committee for Nationalities attached to the Central Executive Committee of the USSR; *Kommunisticheskaia Revoliutsiia* (1920-1935) issued in Moscow by the Central Committee of the All-Union CP(b); *Kommunisticheskii Vostok* (1931-1932) issued in Tashkent by the Central Asian Economic Consultative Board; a journal devoted to women, *Kommunistka* (1920-1930) issued in Moscow by the Central Committee of the

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27 N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 150.

All-Union CP(b). The journal *Revoliutsiia i Tserkov'* (1919-1924) was issued in Moscow by the Eighth Division of the Commissariat of Justice, and was concerned mostly with questions relating to the separation of church and state. In the five years of its existence it published only five articles relating to Islam. It ceased publication before the anti-Islamic propaganda got under way. Similarly, *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei* (1919-1924), issued in Moscow by the *Narkomnats* (People's Commissariat for Nationalities) and edited by Sultan Galiev, published a number of articles on questions related to Islam. The articles of *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei*, which was terminated before the anti-Islamic propaganda campaign was fully underway, were a fairly objective contribution to the overall propaganda effort.

Most of the anti-religious journals, along with others dealing with the Muslim East, were terminated in the early 1930s. By that time, Stalin's Cultural Revolution had come to an end. In addition, earlier social and intellectual experiments, unleased as a consequence of the successful 1917 Revolution and spurred during the Cultural Revolution, had either played themselves out or had been explicitly rejected by the Party. The Soviets began groping for a more stable society, including a relaxation of religious suppression. Excesses of the Cultural Revolution such as the forcible closing of mosques or violence against clerics were condemned.[28] Even so, anti-religious propaganda and campaigns did not stop completely. They continued in desultory fashion until the period of the Great Purges. After the mid-1930s, anti-religious campaigns were stepped up, and the tempo of anti-religious propaganda quickened sharply.

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28 Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism,* V. 1, 47-8 and 64; and Khadzhibeili, 63-5 and 82-3.

The Writers. Roughly speaking, there were three groups of writers. One group, emerging in the late 1920s and early 1930s, consisted of the first wave of intellectuals who were products of the Marxist Revolution. Chiefly historians, ethnographers, and perhaps well-educated journalists, this group of intellectuals was substantially untouched by a bourgeois past. Prominent among the group were M.A. Reisner, L. Klimovich, M. Tomara, S. Asfendiarov, E. Beliaev, and N. Smirnov, well-regarded historians, along with S. Tolstov, B. Puretskii, and I.N. Vinnikov, important ethnographers.[29] These men brought their newly-acquired Marxist education into the anti-religious arena. The writings of this group were anti-religious, usually atheistic. Their writings were carefully crafted within Marxist phraseology and their ideas were the outgrowth of Marxist doctrine. Considered as a whole, their literary contributions constitute a concerted effort to set forth a single point of view. Even so, the writers probably did not regard themselves as propagandists. With rare exception, they did not publish in the explicit propaganda vehicles of their times (in stark contrast to practices during the post-Stalin era).

A second group of writers were those who published in popular anti-religious publications and who probably viewed themselves as propagandists. Although their writings were signed, their credentials were not generally given. Judging from the names of the anti-Islamic propagandists associated with *Bezbozhnik*, the writers were mostly Russians, some were clearly Jewish, others were Armenians, and a few were Muslims. It is not possible to know how many of the names were pseudonyms. It is clear that some of the Muslim-like names

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29 Some among these young Marxist intellectuals had long and successful careers. Klimovich, Beliaev, Smirnov, and Tolstov became members of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and remained prominent in the field of Islamic studies in the post-Stalin era. Klimovich's last work *Kniga o Korane* was published in Moscow in 1986. But many others simply vanished in the 1930s or, at least, their names disappeared from the list of publications. Some, such as S. Asfendiarov for example, are known to have perished in the Great Purges. See Tillett, 33-4.

were pseudonyms. Directed toward an uneducated readership, the writings of these propagandists were crude anti-religious attacks, often consisting of gross mockeries and derision. Notwithstanding the differences in arguments and approach, the propaganda themes of this group of writers were substantially identical to those of the first group.

There was a third group of writers whose work in one way or another related to Islam. Those were the orientalists of international standing, members of the Academy of Sciences, whose working life generally spanned both the Tsarist and Soviet periods. The academic perspective of these scholars had been influenced by the brilliant school of Orientalism of tsarist Russia. Those scholars never abased themselves to write for anti-Islamic propaganda organs. Their work was not set forth within a Marxist framework, and they ignored much of the Marxist writings dealing with their subject matter. In his history of Russian Arabic studies, I.Iu. Krachkovskii, a leading Russian Arabist, dismissed in one sentence the Marxian discussion and analysis of the rise of Islam. As mentioned above, that Marxian analysis had dominated the pages of *Ateist* in the early 1930s.[30] With one exception, Krachkovskii ignored the large body of work of historians who took part in the *Ateist* debate. Aside from its general Western academic orientation, the thinking of the Orientalists in this third group was not confined to any single, unyielding intellectual framework. For that reason, they were criticized by Marxists on ideological (not academic) grounds.[31] During the post-Stalin era, however, academicians were drawn into the propaganda business.[32]

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30 Krachkovskii, 225.

31 N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 235-6.

32 The work unrelated to propaganda of Bartol'd, Krachkovskii, Gordlevskii, Krymskii, Semenov, and others is not included in this dissertation.

The Post-Stalin Era

During the Stalin era anti-religious campaigns had concentrated on ripping away the pre-revolutionary social and cultural fabric. Religious institutions had been destroyed or closed, the clerics had been mostly eliminated, the observance of religious holidays had been discouraged, and anti-social religious practices had been condemned. Therefore, the anti-religious propaganda that accompanied those campaigns had concentrated on attacking the religious institutions, the clerics, and the popular forms of religion. Even though the views of Iaroslavskii had been officially adopted in the early 1920s, the anti-religious practices in the pre-World War II period had concentrated on direct, practical attacks, rather than on education.

The religious *detente* during World War II continued until Stalin's death, despite perfunctory calls for a resumption of anti-religious activities. This is not to say that there had been a complete absence of anti-religious propaganda. There was, in particular in the daily press. But the volume and intensity of atheist propaganda had diminished substantially.[33] The *detente* was accompanied by a widespread resurgence of religion. Nowhere was this more true than within Islam. In the eyes of the post-Stalin leadership, the easy resumption of religious practices within the daily lives of the masses constituted evidence that the roots of the problem had not been destroyed. The Party concluded that the failure of the pre-War anti-religious campaigns resulted from their neglect of the Lenin-Iaroslavskii prescriptions for a long-term educational process.[34]

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33 Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda*, 38-9; and Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism*, V. 1, 72.

34 Lane, 236-42; and Thrower, 139-40.

The post-Stalin era witnessed an approach to propaganda organized around education and scientific atheism. Thus, the apparatus of propaganda embraced the school system from top to bottom as well as all the usual propaganda media.

Approaches to Propaganda

The continuing influence of religion was of substantial concern to the Party. With the successful conclusion to the Great Patriotic War and with Communism on the march throughout the world, the Soviet Union regarded itself as the model to the world for its Marxist future. But, as suggested, there remained a substantial discrepancy between the Soviet Union's internal practices regarding religion and what theory would have predicted. The time had come for the Soviets to deal with that portion of the population at home who continued to be held in the grip of religious superstition. As Khrushchev observed,

> The battle with the survivals of capitalism in the consciousness of the people ... is a prolonged and not a simple matter. Survivals of the past are a dreadful power, which, like a nightmare ... are rooted in the modes of life and in the consciousness ... long after the economic conditions which gave them birth have vanished. ... A well thought-out and well-proportioned system of scientific atheist propaganda is necessary, which will embrace all strata and groups of society ... . The interests of building Communism require that such questions of communist education stand at the center of the attention and activity of each Party organization, of all communities.[35]

During Khrushchev's tenure the Communist Party issued a number of decrees, directives, official and semi-official texts that made clear how it wanted the atheistic education of the masses to proceed.[36] Propaganda was to be

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35 *Pravda*, 18 October 1962, reporting Khrushchev's speech at the XXII Party Congress (1961), cited by Thrower, 142-3.

36 For an analysis of the decrees, and other texts issued by the CP see: Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism,* V. 1, 72-82; and Thrower, 140-8.

increased at all levels. The Ministry of Education was to include atheistic education in the school and university curriculum. Trade Unions, Party and youth organizations were to assume responsibility for the atheistic education of their members. The publishing houses were to issue selections from the Marxist classics on religion and atheism, and translations of the best works on atheism by foreign scholars. Journals and newspapers were to publish popular materials on atheism. Other media were to cooperate in the anti-religious work.[37]

Scientific atheism underwent an extensive development beginning with the Khrushchev period. Scientific atheism was proclaimed to be an integral component of the Marxist-Leninist world view, and was articulated accordingly.[38] Scientific atheism was to be based on rational scientific knowledge. The Party expected cooperation from all segments of its intelligentsia, including historians, philosophers, ethnographers, sociologists, artists, and other scientists. Thus, for example, philosophers were to provide the philosophical refutation of religion. Historians and ethnographers were to undertake basic work on the varieties of religion and religious experience. Sociologists were to investigate the causes of persistence of religion. Psychologists were to analyze the mentality of Soviet believers. It was necessary for the duplicity, one-sidedness and contradictory character of religion to be exposed by scientists, epistemologists and logicians. The "modernization" of religions and their claim to be able to co-exist with modern sciences and socialism were to be disavowed by careful study of their dogma. The emotional aspects of religion were to be examined. Experts in ethics were to elaborate a Marxist-

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37 See the Central Committee's decree of 7 July 1954, "O Krupnykh Nedostatkakh v Nauchno-Ateisticheskoi Propagande i Merakh Eia Ulucheniia," *KPSS v Rezoliutsiiakh,* 8 th, V. 6, 502-16.

38 Thrower, 135. On Soviet scientific atheism also see: Bochenski, "Three Components"; Wetter; Blakeley; Andreev; De George; Acton; and Bociurkiw and Strong, "Soviet Research."

Leninist system of values that was superior to that of any religion. Similarly, lawyers, pedagogues, artists and others engaged in related disciplines were expected to add their contribution to the study of religion and atheism. At length, scientific atheism was to consist of a

> ... system of views which submits religion to a critical analysis ... and which reveals the philosophical, natural scientific and historical implausibility of religion from a materialistic point of view. The philosophical criticism of religion reveals the origin and nature of religious illusions, their social and epistemological roots; scientific criticism confirms the implausibility of the religious picture of the world and historical criticism reveals the origin and evolution of religion, shows its reactionary role in the historical process, its transitory character, and the certainty of its dying out. A scientific criticism of religion is possible only on the basis of materialistic analysis of its nature, its social base, and its social role.[39]

The Communist Party wanted those engaged in propagating atheism to present it attractively and with all its "potential richness." Popular propaganda was expected to be more refined than in the past so as to be more in tune with the sensitivity of believers. Popular anti-religious propaganda targeted toward believers was to focus on religious ideology, to criticize it, and to contrast it with scientific atheism. Although the Party was against religion, it claimed that it could not countenance personal attacks on, and administrative discrimination against, believers who, on the whole, were loyal Soviet citizens.[40]

It is of interest to observe that, at least under Khrushchev, these policies of moderation were so disregarded in practice as to cast doubt on their underlying authenticity. As a case in point, virtually simultaneously with an announcement of Party injunctions against personal attacks on believers, those injunctions were

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39 *Istoriia i Teoriia,* 5-6, cited by Thrower, 149.

40 See the Central Committee's decree of 10 November 1954, "Ob Oshibkakh," *KPSS v Rezoliutsiiakh*, 8th ed., V. 6, 516-20.

nullified in practice by the renewed anti-religious campaign. In the realm of propaganda there was a return to attacks. The themes and arguments of the propaganda, directed against clerics and believers, consisted largely of poking fun and mockery. They were similar to those used in the 1920s and 1930s.[41]

The Propaganda Apparatus

In the post-Stalin era, coordination of the anti-religious struggle was moved to a very high level within the State's educational system. There was also a burgeoning of the organizational structure within which scientific atheism and popular propaganda were pursued.

Scientific Atheism in Higher Education. In response to the Communist Party's decrees, the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences in 1959 created a council for coordinating work on atheism and religion within the Divisions of Economic, Philosophic, and Legal Sciences of the Academy. A faculty on atheism was established in the Academy's Institute of Philosophy, and special groups for the study of the history of religious criticism were set up in the Academy's Institutes of History, and Ethnography, and in the Institute for the Study of the Peoples of the East. Chairs in the History and Theory of Atheism were established in many of the country's universities and in other institutes of higher education. Courses on Scientific Atheism were introduced in the curriculum of higher education and soon became compulsory.[42]

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41 See for example the series of anti-clerical and anti-believer articles published in *Nauka i Religiia* in the first year of its existence: I. Vagabov; "Po Shariatu"; "Tak Gasla Moia Vera"; Talotbek; Mamakaev, "Chert "; Novoselova; and Avksent'ev, Leonov, and Shamanov.

42 Although originally voluntary, courses on scientific atheism in universities became compulsory in 1964 due to the paucity of student response. See: Thrower, 144; Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda*, 56; and "O Meropriiatiiakh, 23.

Coordination of the anti-religious effort was centralized in 1964 when, under its direct supervision, the Central Committee of the Communist Party approved the creation of an Institute of Scientific Atheism within the existing Academy of Social Sciences. The management of the new institute was sufficiently broad to encompass elements from those engaged in research on scientific atheism, administrators responsible for important segments of the Soviet educational system, as well as those actively engaged in the anti-religious propaganda effort. The management of the Institute was made up of representatives from the Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Higher and Special Education, the Ideological Commission and other Party organizations, and the *Znanie* Society.[43]

The task of the new Institute of Scientific Atheism was to oversee and to coordinate all work in the field of scientific atheism carried on in the various institutes of the Academy of Sciences, the institutes of the Ministry of Higher and Special Education, and to supervise the Ministries of Culture. Coordination was carried out across disciplines and, within disciplines, across the various republics. The Institute of Scientific Atheism was divided into two sections, a research section and a managerial section. The purpose of the research section was to study the theory of scientific atheism and to investigate modern religious ideologies. The managerial section was to organize education and upbringing in atheism.[44]

The *Znanie* Society. The All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific knowledge, or *Znanie* (or Knowledge) Society, was

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43 "Aktivno Vesti Ateisticheskoe Vospitanie," *Pravda*, 2 March 1964; and "V Institute Nauchnogo Ateizma," *Izvestia*, 19 February 1964.

44 Lopatkin.

formed in 1947 as heir and successor to the defunct Society of Militant Godless. After Stalin's death it became the main organizing body for anti-religious propaganda. The All-Union Society had branches in each of the republics. The governing unit of the society at the level of the republic controlled the activities of its regional, district, city, village and large factory branches.

The activities of the *Znanie* Society were multifaceted.[45] It managed an important publishing activity in Moscow and in capitals of the republics; it maintained a huge staff of paid and voluntary lecturers, both full- and part-time; it organized congresses, seminars, and round-table discussions for active propagandists; finally, it supervised innumerable anti-religious museums, exhibitions, films, plays, radio broadcasts, and other means of popularizing atheism. The Society cooperated hand-in-glove with Party organizations also concerned with the training of agit-prop activists.

The Communist Party. The Communist Party sponsored specialized schools to train propagandists. There were Universities of Marxism-Leninism (*Universitety Marksisma-Leninizma*) at the republican level of the Party. At the regional levels of the Party, there were Universities of Scientific Atheism (*Universitety Nauchnogo Ateizma*) providing a two-year course for the training of anti-religious lecturers; at that same level of the Party, and for the same general purpose, there were Schools for Anti-Religious Lecturers, which provided courses of study ranging from one to two years. At the district level, the Party sponsored an adult education program in the form of People's Universities (*Narodnye Universitety*); at these universities, atheism was a major topic in their two- or three-year curriculum. Also at the district level, the Party

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45 On the activities of the society see Fishevskii.

ran Methodological Universities (*Metodologicheskie Universitety*) that analyzed results of the anti-religious propaganda and conducted conferences explaining useful procedures and methods for conducting anti-religious work.[46] Besides those relatively important educational institutions, the Party ran various schools, courses, and seminars. These included Schools of Elementary Knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, designed for semi-literate adults; Schools of Elementary Knowledge of Nature, Society, and Man, intended mostly for house-wives; and anti-religious seminars targeted for certain professions, mostly teachers and doctors.[47]

The Print Media. As during the Stalin era, nearly all elements of the print media were involved in presenting material relating to the anti-religious propaganda effort. Both daily and weekly newspapers continued to carry periodic pieces dealing with religion. The post-Stalin era is distinctive in that, increasingly, anti-religious articles found their way into journals unrelated to religious issues. Thus, for example, it became increasingly common to find anti-religious articles in journals directed toward such specialized subjects as Soviet medicine, sports, or industry.[48]

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46 Sources are not explicit about the Universities of Scientific Atheism, the People's Universities, or the Methodological Universities. In spite of their titles, they seem to be simply permanent seminars for the training of local specialists of agitation and propaganda.

47 There is no comprehensive monograph explaining the organization and mechanisms of anti-religious propaganda. Information concerning the institutions involved, the cadre, and the training of cadre is scattered in numerous publications. The task of finding relevent information is complicated by the fact that similar institutions had different names in different republics and appeared at different times. Information concerning the training of propagandists in the Party's educational system may be found in: Bokov, 82-93; *Narodnoe Obrazovaniie*, 351-2; Leshan; A.K. Aliev, 25-7; R.P. Platonov, 180-3; Kalaganov, 48-51; Bobosadykova, 195-6; Amangel'dyeva, 206-7; and Shoev, 211-2.

48 See for example: Baltanova; V. Stavitskii and V. Khrustalev, "Ili Ustav KPSS Ili Koran: Dvoedushie," *Sotsialisticheskaia Industriia*, May 1987, N. 5; or V. Khrushtalev, "Dvoedushie: Pora Skazat' Pravdu," *Sotsialisticheskaia Industriia*, February 1988, N. 34.

Several new specialized journals dealing with religion began publication after the war. The Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow initiated *Voprosy Istorii Religii i Ateizma* in 1950. However, there was a four-year hiatus between the first and second issues of what turned out to be an annual publication through 1964. In 1957 the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism in Leningrad began publication of *Ezhegodnik Muzeia Istorii Religii i Ateizma,* an annual publication that also continued through 1964. Both publications were folded into and superseded by *Voprosy Nauchnoga Ateizma* in 1966, published on an irregular basis, chiefly biannually, by the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences of the USSR.

The *Znanie* Society also began two new anti-religious releases. In September 1959 the Society initiated a popular anti-religious journal, *Nauka i Religiia*. The journal, published monthly, was designed to propagate scientific atheism. Substantive articles in this journal were written by professional historians, scientists, ethnographers, and philosophers. A semi-popular periodical, *Nauchnyi Ateizm*, was begun by the Society in 1964. Each monthly issue dealt with a single topic on religion. For example, an issue might consist of a single signed article dealing with a topic such as the origin, history and current status of Islam. These articles, targeted for a popular audience and for the use of propagandists, were written for the periodical by well-known scholars, academicians, and university professors.

Anti-Islamic propaganda was most frequently found in the Party journals of the Muslim republics. Within the Muslim republics, the Party produced a abundance of journals, generally published on a monthly basis, designed specifically for agitation and propaganda. Among such journals were *Bloknot Ateista*, and/or *Propagandist*. Agit-prop journals such as these were to be found

in each of the republics, apparently customized for each republic, and written both in Russian and in the language of the republic.

In the non-periodical media, especially among manuscripts and books, there was a sharp acceleration in anti-Islamic titles beginning with Khrushchev's renewal of the anti-religious campaigns. There was a major effort to publish anti-Islamic literature in Muslim republics written in the language of the republics.

The Writers. By the time the anti-religious campaigns resumed, there had been a marked change in the composition of the Soviet intelligentsia. By then, the bulk of the Soviet intelligentsia had been educated within the Soviet system. Whereas in the 1920s and 1930s it had been possible to identify groups of writers who stood outside the anti-religious process, or whose training was essentially western, this was no longer the case. A scholar whose subject matter brushed against religion no longer faced options regarding how that subject would be treated. Soviet religious studies emerging after Stalin's death did not develop in an environment characterized by critical challenge.[49] In this vein, the development of Islamic studies did not include a meaningful dialogue with Islam. Because of the lack of access to western scholarship, there was an absence of serious criticism of Marxism-Leninism and no real intellectual opposition by non-Marxist philosophers.

There was an increase in the number of Muslims involved in publishing anti-Islamic monographs, books, and pamphlets. In part, this increase may reflect a growth in the number of Muslims who had moved through the Soviet educational process and who had come to occupy positions of importance in

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49 Thrower, 118 and 136-7.

academic fields. Also, it is plausible to believe that the expansion resulted from an intensified Soviet effort to involve the nationality groups in anti-religious efforts in their republics, especially at the level of popular propaganda.

Conclusions

The early years of the Soviet period provided the occasion for an important debate. That debate served to define the nature of the religious problem and to cast the die for the supporting propaganda effort. As it turned out, however, the decisions made during these early years were not converted into action programs until after World War II and Stalin's death. Instead, anti-religious activities consisted chiefly of direct efforts to liquidate the religious institutions, including the Islamic religious institutions.

The post-Stalin era witnessed the flowering of the Soviet anti-religious effort, as the decisions taken during the early years of the revolution were finally implemented. The Party apparatus moved to the vanguard of the anti-religious struggle; scientific atheism became a fully-rounded academic discipline; the Soviet educational system cooperated fully in the anti-religious effort; and all media were enlisted into the campaign.

The next two chapters present analyses of the themes and arguments of anti-Islamic propaganda during the NEP and Stalin era and the post-Stalin era. As it turns out, these themes and arguments shifted in response to changes in historical conditions, the evolution of Marxist thought, and advances in educational attainments of the target audiences.

Chapter V: Anti-Islamic Propaganda in the Stalin Era

The early 1920s found the Soviet leadership focused on the practical problems of organizing a new state, a state based on an untried social and economic ideology. It is not surprising that the anti-religious aspects of that newly emerging state were directed toward practical matters, and that the range of concerns was limited to issues closely related to the establishment of Bolshevik power and authority.

We have seen that the Bolsheviks began their period of governance without a well-conceived set of popular thought -- principles, notions of socialist morality, myths, socialist rites, and the like -- that could be substituted for traditional religion. Nor did they begin governance with a blue-print for their attack against the detritus of bourgeois society generally, or with a plan for their attack against traditional religion specifically. Within this milieu of disorder, it is obvious that the Bolsheviks would have not yet have articulated a strategy for dealing with Islam.

What is clear is that any plan, if and as it emerged, would begin within the context of Marxism itself. Accordingly, it is of interest to review the intellectual legacy of Marx and Engels on the subject of Islam. While Lenin wrote on the subject of religion in general, he did not write about Islam. Following an analysis of the remarks of Marx and Engels, the chapter turns to its chief purpose, an analysis of the main themes used by the Bolshevik anti-Islamic propagandists. For the most part, the themes are those that were used more-or-less directly by the hands-on propagandists themselves, and were targeted toward a Muslim audience. These themes relate to Islam vs. science and progress, attacks against the Islamic religious establishment, and attacks against Islam in daily life. Another type of propaganda had its origin within the ranks of scholars and

academics, chiefly historians. Such scholarly propaganda -- in the sense that it resulted from an effort to present a consistent Marxist doctrine about which none would be free to disagree -- was a prerequisite to simplified presentations to the Muslim masses. At this level, there developed an extensive literature relating to the materialist origin of Islam, the existence of the Prophet, along with questions relating to the *Qur'an*.

Marx and Engels on Islam

The collected writings of Marx and Engels on Islam are quite brief. Moreover, if we confine our attention to those writings identified by the citations of Soviet anti-religious specialists, we are reduced to a scant and disjointed set of comments.

Two brief remarks on Islam were made by Karl Marx in dispatches to the *New York Daily Tribune* concerning the Crimean War. In a dispatch entitled "The War Question, Financial Matters, Strikes" dated October 1853 on the eve of the war, Marx wrote:

> On Friday last, *The Morning Chronicle*, in its fourth edition, communicated a telegraphic dispatch, according to which the Sultan had declared war against Russia. ... The hosts of the two religions which have long struggled for supremacy in the East, the Russo-Greek and the Mohammedan are now fronting each other, the one summoned by the arbitrary will of a single man -- the other by the fatal force of circumstances, according to their mutual creeds, as the Russo-Greek Church rejects the dogma of predestination, while the Mohammedanism centers upon fatalism.[1]

In an article entitled "Declaration of War: On the History of the Eastern Question" dated April 1854, Marx analyzed the origin of the question of a

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1 London, 7 October 1853, printed in *New York Daily Tribune*, Nr. 3904, 21 October 1853, reprinted in Marx and Engels, Pt. 12, 444.

protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Muslim State -- ostensibly a question that lay at the bottom of the Crimean War. Marx began his analysis by pointing out that:

> The Koran and the Mussulman legislation emanating from it reduce the geography and ethnography of the various people to the simple and convenient distinction of two nations and of two countries; those of the Faithful and of the Infidels. The Infidel is "*harby*," i.e. the enemy. Islamism proscribes the nation of the Infidels, constituting a state of permanent hostility between the Mussulman and the unbeliever. In that sense the corsair-ships of the Berber States were the holy fleet of the Islam.[2]

Rather disjointed comments on the emergence of Islam were made by Marx and Engels in correspondence in the spring of 1853. In a first letter, Engels commented:

> (T)hat fake religion ... seems to follow from the ancient inscriptions in the South, in which the old national-Arabian tradition of monotheism still predominates ... and of which tradition the Hebrew constitutes only a small part, that Mohammed's religious revolution, like every religious movement, was formally a reaction, an alleged return to old, the simple.[3]

In his response to Engels, Marx added the following point:

> With regard to the Hebrews and the Arabians your letter interested me very much. By the way ... in Mohammed's time the trade route from Europe to Asia had been considerably modified and the cities of Arabia, which had taken a great part in the trade with India, etc., were in a state of commercial decay; this in any case also lent impetus.[4]

In Engels' follow up letter, he agreed with Marx's views of:

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2 London, 28 March 1854, printed in *New York Daily Tribune*, Nr. 4054, 15 April 1854, reprinted in Marx and Engels, Pt. 13, 151-2.

3 Manchester, 24 May 1853, *Karl Marx,* 120.

4 London, 2 June 1853, *Karl Marx*, 121.

> ... the destruction of the South-Arabian trade before Mohammed, which you very rightly regard as one of the chief factors in the Mohammedan revolution. ... I shall take up the history of Mohammed himself in the next few days; so far, however, it seems to me to bear the character of a Bedouin reaction against the settled but degenerating fellaheen of the towns, who at that time had also become very decadent in their religion, mingling a corrupt nature-cult with corrupt Judaism and Christianity.[5]

In later works, Engels made two additional statements concerning Islam. In his article "Bruno Bauer and early Christianity," written in 1882, Engels set forth reasons why Islam was self-limiting and could not expand beyond the Orient.

> In all previous religions rituals had been the main thing. Only by taking part in the sacrifices and processions, and in the Orient by observing the most detailed diet and cleanliness precepts, could one show to what religion one belonged. While Rome and Greece were tolerant in the last respect, there was in the Orient a rage for religious prohibitions. ... People of two different religions (Egyptians, Persians, Jews, Chaldeans) could not eat or drink together, perform any everyday act together, or hardly speak to each other. ... Christianity knew no distinctive ceremonies, not even the sacrifices and processions of the classic world. By thus rejecting all national religions and their common ceremonies and addressing itself to all peoples without distinction it became the first possible world religion. ... Islam itself, on the other hand, by preserving its specifically Oriental ritual, limited the area of its propagation to the Orient and North Africa, conquered and populated anew by Arab Bedouins; here it could become the dominating religion, but not in the West.[6]

In his work "On the History of Early Christianity," written in 1894, Engels compared the role of the religious mass movements of the Middle Ages with the

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5 Manchester, 8 June 1853, *Karl Marx*, 125-6.

6 April 1882, printed in *Der Sozialdemokrat*, No. 19 and 20, 4 and 11 May 1882, reprinted in *Karl Marx*, 203.

role of the modern working-class movement. In this context he introduced a footnote concerning religious movements in the Islamic world.

> Islam is a religion adapted to Orientals, especially Arabs, i.e., on the one hand to townsmen engaged in trade and industry, on the other to nomadic Bedouins. Therein lies, however, the embryo of a periodically recurring collision. The townspeople grow rich, luxurious and lax in the observation of the "law." The bedouins, poor and hence of strict morals, contemplate with envy and covetousness these riches and pleasures. Then they unite under a prophet, a *Mahdi*, to chastise the apostates and restore the observation of the ritual and the true faith and to appropriate in recompense the treasures of the renegades. In a hundred years they are naturally in the same position as the renegades were: a new purge of the faith is required, a new *Mahdi* arises and the game starts again from the beginning. That is what happened from the conquest campaigns of the African Almoravids and Almohads in Spain to the last *Mahdi* of Khartoum who so successfully thwarted the English. It happened in the same way or similarly with the risings in Persia and other Mohammedan countries. All these movements are clothed in religion but they have their sources in economic causes; and yet, even when they are victorious, they allow the old economic conditions to persist untouched. So the old situation remains unchanged and the collision recurs periodically. In the popular risings of the Christian West, on the contrary, the religious disguise is only a flag and a mask for attacks on an economic order which is becoming antiquated. This is finally overthrown, a new one arises and the world progresses.[7]

It is of interest to understand how, over the years, Soviet anti-Islamic specialists were able to construct a body of anti-religious comment that, in one way or another, can be tied to the six remarks described above. We have seen the disparate origin of the comments themselves. But, each stated in a specific context, fit into a body of anti-Islamic thought.

Marx's statement that the Islamic creed centers upon fatalism has been quoted in the context of attacks upon Islamic morality. The argument runs as follows: Marx pointed out that the central element of the Islamic faith is the belief in predestination, everything that happened on earth is God's will. According to

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7 Printed in *Die Neue Zeit*, vol. 1, 1894-95, 4-13 and 36-43, reprinted in *Karl Marx*, 317.

Marx's interpretation, this belief annihilates in man any spirit of initiative and teaches him submission, in particular submission to oppression. Furthermore, the sense of fatalism distracts man from his true duty, the class struggle.[8]

Marx's comment was never quoted in its totality or context. In fact, it was often mis-quoted, with Marx cited as having said that the Islamic creed centers upon "fanaticism," rather than fatalism. When given in that way, the quotation was generally brought up in support of arguments denouncing the anti-social character of Islam and its anti-Communist character. In particular, the mis-quotation was almost invariably given in works dealing with *Sufism*.[9]

The most frequent reference to Marx in Soviet work on Islam was Marx's comment concerning the *Qur'anic* division of the world into two nations. Soviet specialists used this comment in arguing the anti-social and anti-Communist character of the Islamic faith. By prescribing a state of permanent hostility between Muslims and non-Muslims, the *Qur'an* and the Islamic law were viewed as major obstacles to friendship among people. Therefore, they were obstacles to the drawing together (*sblizhenie*) of the various nations of the Soviet Union. Less frequently, this comment of Marx was cited by Soviet specialists who denounced Islamic morality. They argued that the *Qur'an* and the *Shari'ah* recognize inequality among people and, therefore, sanction injustice.[10]

Marx and Engels' correspondence was cited in a number of contexts. Engels' comment that Muhammad's religious revolution was formally a reaction was referred to by virtually every propagandist seeking to explain the reactionary

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8 See for example: Klimovich, *Koran,* 37; Mavliutov, 53; Izimbetov, 67; and N.M. Vagabov, 8.

9 See for example Mullaev, 31.

10 See for example: Mullaev, 8-9; N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki.*, 64; N.A. Smirnov, *Miuridizm,* 160; Abrarov and Batunskii, 63; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 84; Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 50; Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom*, 32; and Akhmedov, 22.

character of Islam. It was also referred to by those who argued that Islam is not particularly distinctive, as monotheism was endemic among the Arabs. Finally, Marx and Engels' correspondence was the primary reference in work analyzing the economic foundation of the emergence of Islam.[11]

Engels' reference to Islam and its rituals in his work on "Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity" was used by anti-religious propagandists to explain that Islam is only a reformulation of old pre-Islamic beliefs and customs. Going further, from Engels' statement some drew the conclusion that rituals are the main attributes of Islam, and that without the rituals it contains nothing. The quote was also used to explain the anti-social character of Islamic rituals. They were viewed as an obstacle to a Soviet way of life.[12]

Engels' last footnote on Islam in "On the History of Early Christianity" was cited by Soviet writers to develop an economic explanation of religious movements in the Muslim world. Even more frequently, it was used to emphasize that Islam is a foreign religion, adapted to Arabs and not to the Turkic people of the Soviet Union.[13]

The comments of Marx and Engels on Islam were quite similar to the writings of the Russian Orthodox missionaries on this same subject. In particular, each set of writers was drawn to comment on the Islamic division of the world into two distinct and antagonistic camps; on Islamic fatalism; and on its

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11 See for example: Abrarov and Batunskii, 62-3; Klimovich, "Marks," 60-3; Mullaev, 9-10 and 15-6; N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 59-60; Ditiakin, "Marks," 81-3; S. Tolstov, "Ocherki," 31; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 92.

12 See for example: Ditiakin, "Marks," 84; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 216; N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 62-4; N.M. Vagabov, 9; *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 89-90; and Kerimov, *Shariat*, 31.

13 See for example: Klimovich, "Marks," 60; *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 86 and 97; and Kerimov, "Islam," 14.

excessive emphasis on rituals. Indeed, comments about Islam such as these were common in both secular and religious literature of the nineteenth century.

Themes and Arguments

The anti-Islamic propaganda discussed below focuses on several sets of themes. An overriding theme throughout much of the anti-Islamic propaganda, whether explicit or as an undercurrent of presumption, was that religion will disappear in the face of science and progress. A second set of themes consisted of those attacking the observable aspects of the religious establishment. Another set was targeted toward observable manifestations of religion in the daily life of believers. Finally, a set of propaganda themes was generated in response to Lenin's appeal to intellectuals to examine the materialistic origins of religion. These themes, at length, were directed against the philosophical underpinnings of Islam.

Islam Versus Science and Progress

Soviet propagandists emphasized the anti-scientific aspect of Islam and its opposition to progress. They believed that Islam's opposition to science was an obstacle to the healthy cultural and political development of the masses.[14] As education replaced ignorance, so too superstitions of every character would fade away. Such propositions about religion in general applied equally to Islam. The scientific progress theme was especially prominent in hands-on propaganda. Using such simple technology as electricity, propagandists could point with pride

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14 Mochanov, 26. Islam as an obstacle to socialist construction is also the theme of Klimovich, *Sotsialisticheskoe.*

to the fact that they were man-made, not God-made.[15] They could hold out the promise that, with the advancement of such technology, there would no longer be the need for the mosque.

Soviet propagandists were able to insert the science and propaganda theme into presentations of utopian dreams of future socialist cities. A series of translations of "urban utopias" had inspired the workers, intelligentsia, and students -- not only in Russia, but throughout the industrializing world -- in the decades preceding the 1917 Revolution.[16] These visions of future utopian cities were natural emblems to be used by Soviet propagandists in the overall conversion process to Godlessness. Such dreams consisted of huge super-industrial cities tied together by trains and post offices, with radio, electricity, hospitals, and schools for all.[17] The cities would be clean and sanitary; the population would be healthy. All of these desirable outcomes were to stem from science and technology, not God. These would be Godless cities. These would be cities without mosques. Certainly, in cities such these, women would not be forced to breath through a disease-laden veil.[18]

Such socialist utopias could supplant the traditional religious myth of paradise. Beyond that, within the utopia -- made possible by advances of science and technology -- the masses could see at work the social relationships dominated by desirable characteristics of Soviet man. In these social relationships, the waiter is treated with as much courtesy as the doctor. There would be no

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15 See for example: V. Mal'tsev, "Nov'"; V. Mal'tsev, "Shaitan-Arba"; "Poezd"; Ozerskii, "V Strane"; Dorofeev; and Aristov.

16 A. Bebel, *The Society of the Future* (1879); E. Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1889); L. Braun, *Female Labor* (1891); K. Bellod, *A Glimpse into the Future State* (1898). Cited by Stites, *Revolutionary*, 31-2.

17 Kor. No. 111; Chernysheva, "Bezbozhnyi"; Ozerskii, "Gandzha"; and Paslavlev.

18 Gershenovich.

deference, no snobbery. The masses would be held together by discipline and by the religion of solidarity.

The Russian Orthodox missionaries had also accused Islam of being opposed to science and progress. To the missionaries, however, science and progress meant something different from its meaning to the Soviets. Science and progress to the missionaries involved the application of reason and rationality. It was not synonymous with advancing technology. Ironically, with all their emphasis on reason, the Soviets were diverted in their propaganda to an emphasis on utopia.

Attacks Against the Religious Establishment

The Islamic religious establishment was a visible representation of religion, a vestige of the bourgeois past. Hence, it must be destroyed. Beyond that, it represented a potential challenge to Soviet authority. Even more than was the case with the Orthodox Church in Russian society, the religious establishment of Islam stood as a source of authority in Muslim society. The most visible aspects of the Islamic religious establishment were the mosques and the clerics. Accordingly, those elements became the focus of attack. As we have seen, numerous mosques were torn down, damaged, or simply closed. The clerics and judges (*qadis*) of the pre-revolutionary *muftiats* were prime targets of Bolshevik attacks. Also subject to attack were the ordinary village *mullahs*, the *Sufis*, and the wandering *mullahs*.

Attacks on Muslim clerics formed the core of the anti-Islamic propaganda of the Stalin era. In fact, whatever the subject of Islamic practice or custom under attack, that practice or custom became a pretext to denounce the clerics. Attacks upon Muslim clerics were mostly the work of hands-on propagandists, but Soviet historians also made contributions. Initially, these attacks consisted

largely of ridicule. Later, anti-clerical literature shifted toward more serious accusations. Thus, there was a movement from relatively harmless characterizations to deadly serious charges. There was a shift in propaganda from mere ridicule to accusations that the clerics were class enemies. Later still, they were called counter-revolutionaries, enemies of the people, and finally enemies of the state.

Prior to 1926-1927, the ridicule heaped upon Muslim clerics centered on universal flaws that all people attribute to servants of the cloth, be they Muslim or Christian. Thus, for example, on a personal basis clerics were described as pompous, gluttonous, hypocrites, cheaters, tricksters, and self-serving.[19] On a professional basis they were depicted as obscurantists and superficial. Similar to arguments advanced by the Russian Orthodox missionaries, the Soviet propagandists argued that because of their lack of knowledge of the Arabic language clerics were incapable of interpreting the *Qur'an* and the prescriptions of the *Shari'ah*. They argued that clerics distinguished themselves by ignorance. Unfamiliar with elementary scientific knowledge, they found security in routine, fanaticism, and prejudice.[20] The ignorance of the clerics was said to affect their constituencies adversely, preventing them from taking advantage of opportunities offered by contemporary Soviet culture. Clerics opposed virtually anything that might bring merriment into the lives of Soviet Muslims, denouncing the theater, plays, movies, radios, and other aspects of Soviet entertainment.

Early Soviet propaganda was not without a certain humor. Propagandists made heavy use of the legacy of the pre-Revolutionary anti-clerical and satirical

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19 See for example: Gvozdev; Gorodetskii, "Pro Samykh"; and Chernysheva, "Bereket-Beresi." Such mockeries continued after 1927. See for example: Gorodetskii, "Allakh"; Lukovskii; Orlovets, "Svin'ia"; "Pro Mully i Osla"; and Mirer.

20 See for example K. Mal'tsev. Such attacks continued after 1927; see "Molitvy."

literature of Muslim progressives. In particular they made extensive use of the popular pre-Revolutionary satirical journal, *Molla Nasreddin*.[21] The *Molla Nasreddin* had been independent of any political party, but violently anti-conformist and revolutionary. Its attacks had been directed against all forms of conservatism. But the chief force of their ridicule was pointed toward religious fanaticism, denouncing it as an obstacle to progress.[22] Undoubtedly, some early Soviet anti-clerical pamphleteers were successors to the brilliant pleiad of writers, poets, satirists, dramatists, and pamphleteers of the pre-Revolutionary *Molla Nasreddin*. By the mastery of their prose and the gifted irony of their attacks upon the obscurantism of *mullahs*, the venality of *qadis*, and the stupidity of *mudarris*, some early Soviet pamphleteers served the anti-clerical cause better than any Party lecturer or agitator. However, as the anti-Islamic drive was stepped up there was a change in the tone of the anti-clerical literature. It became vulgar, insulting, and vicious.

Starting roughly around 1926, there was an outpouring of anti-clerical "contempt and hate-propaganda," whose purpose was to provoke the hostility of the masses toward the clerics.[23] Muslim Clerics were depicted as sexists, alcoholics, lechers and money-grabbers. Clerics were accused of hooliganism, sorcery, immoral and amoral conduct, mental deviation and criminal behavior. For individual clerics, the most personally difficult accusations were those charging immoral or criminal behavior. Immoral charges were often sexually

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21 Khadzhibeili, 40. Khadzhibeili referred to early Soviet pamphleteers of the journal *Kommunist* (in Azeri) of Baku.

22 On the *Molla Nasreddin* see: Bennigsen, "Mollah"; and Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La Presse* , 124-8.

23 "Contempt and hate-propaganda" are the terms used by D.V. Pospielovsky to describe the anti-religious literature published in the specialized anti-religious journals during the pre-World War II period. See Pospielovsky, *Soviet Atheism*, V. 2, 19-46.

oriented. Thus, it was common to charge that a cleric had sexual relations, not only with his maximum number of wives, but with numerous members of his spiritual flock.[24] Criminal charges included trading in white slavery,[25] instigating the murder of unveiled women,[26] and practicing abortion.[27] Anticipating later accusations that clerics were class enemies, the anti-clerical literature of the pre-1927 period centered around the theme that clerics were parasites, whose only efforts consisted of duping, fleecing, and in one way or another exploiting the naivete of people, especially the poor.

Caricatures often presented clerics as donkeys, wolves, or foxes. One such cartoon, among the less vulgar, depicted a *mullah* with the head of a donkey led on a bridle by a worker. The drawing symbolized the "awakening of the proletariat." The accompanying text proclaimed that: "Before, the *mullah* kept the masses under his yoke. Today, it is the reverse!" The text insulted the *mullah* as an "imbecile" and a "parasite," and invited him to retire to Khamadan (a town best known for the quality and quantity of its donkey breeding) "... as there is no stable here."[28] A favorite subject of Soviet anti-Islamic caricatures featured an old fat *mullah* salivating over a young fresh beauty. Another frequently used caricature showed a *mullah* preparing for the ritual sacrifice of an animal, generally a sheep, during the holy day of *Kurban-bairam*. Although

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24 See for example Agamali-Ogly, 5. Clerics were accused of seeking sexual favors by force or by tricks. See: Puretskii, 126-7; "Bedni Kishlaka" ; Aslanbek Shakh-Girei; Klimovich, "Religioznye Perezhitki"; and Gafurov, "Usilim," 27.

25 Chernysheva, "Protiv."

26 See for example the published archival material of public trials held in 1929, *Protiv Religioznogo,* 143-8. Also see: "Doklad," 136; and Lebedev.

27 This accusation was leveled against those clerics who performed circumcision. See Tavgazov, 8.

28 Cited by Khadzhibeili, 41.

the text of those cartoons were varied, one often featured a sheep as observing "It is the grease of the mutton that fattens the faith of the *mullah*." To that, the *mullah* would be shown rubbing his belly and exclaiming "My guts are my religion and my God. I could swallow the whole *Qur'an* and would not be satisfied!" In other texts, the sheep would complain that "The savage Muslim and his *Shari'ah* do not let us breathe in this world." Still other texts featured the sheep as pointing out that "The legacy of the prophet is to spill blood."[29]

Propaganda of this nature continued throughout the Stalin era. But with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1928 a political component was added to anti-clerical arguments.[30] Initially, clerics were denounced for encouraging the maintenance of the old conservative order. By perpetuating old customs such as religious marriage and burial, the observance of the religious Friday and other religious holidays, and by opposing the liberation of women, clerics were attempting to maintain their grip over the Muslim masses as a basis for continued exploitation. The severity of the accusations increased. Clerics were accused of breaking Soviet law. For example, they were accused of collecting the *zakat* (legal alms), by then forbidden.[31] Having been stripped of their political rights, they were then accused of infiltrating local Soviet and Party apparatus.[32] They were denounced for sabotaging Soviet reforms -- such as those relating to education and collectivization; they were also accused of undermining the Five-

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29 Cited by Hadjibeyli, 372-5.

30 Klimovich, "Religioznoe Dvizhenie"; Kobetskii, "Islam"; "Doklad," 133-8; Popov, "Novoe"; Mashchenko; Shelikhanov; Kasymov, *Ocherki po Religioznomu*, 30-34, and passim; Ageev; Zhukovskii; and Gafurov, "Religioznye."

31 The media complained that the *zakat* was paid more regularly than government taxes. See *Kommunist* (in Azeri), 28 July 1928, cited by Khadzhibeili, 45. Also see Kundukhov.

32 On the infiltration of Soviet and Party apparati see: "Doklad," 136; Logvinovich, 17; and Sakhat-Muradov, 144.

Year Plans.[33] Together with kulaks, nepmen, Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, Sultangalievists, Mussavatists, Alashordists, Milla Firkists, and other bourgeois-nationalist elements, they were labeled class enemies.[34]

Later, at the time of the Great Purges, a fatal accusation was levelled at Muslim clerics, as well as at clerics of other denominations. They were "unmasked" as spies for the fascist powers. Muslim religious organizations, especially the *muftiat* in Ufa and its head, Rizaeddin Fahreddin ogly, were accused of running information networks for Germany and Japan.[35] Similar accusations were directed at Muslim religious organizations outside the Soviet Union.[36] In Libya, for example, Muslim clerics were described as "agents of Mussolini."[37]

Starting with the Cultural Revolution, the scholarly professionals -- such as historians and ethnographers -- added their voices to those of the popular propagandists. The literature of scholars, directed toward two interrelated themes, was prepared for well-educated Muslims and popular propagandists. Playing on egalitarianism, a central symbol of the Revolution, Soviet scholars argued that clerics were always aligned with the ruling elites, wherever and whenever possible. In support of this position, historians marshalled evidence drawn from tsarist times, along with current events. An interrelated aspect,

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33 K. Mal'tsev; Kremen'; Gotchikhanov and Visaev; Amosov; L'vov; "Pravda Pobedila"; and Gil'iardi.

34 The denunciation of Muslim clerics linked to kulaks and to nationalist groups was a constant feature of the anti-clerical propaganda of the 1930s. See for example the work of the leading anti-religious expert E. Iaroslavskii, "Antireligioznaia Propaganda Na Novom Etape," *Pravda*, 15 October 1930, reprinted in his collected works, *Protiv*, V. 2, 309-16.

35 See for example: "Iaponskie"; and "Lektsiia," 53. Rizaeddin-Oglu, considered one of the greatest *Jadid* theologians, was killed in prison in 1936.

36 G. Ibragimov, "Islam."

37 Klimovich, "Pod Piatoi."

especially important to the educated Muslim public, dealt with the issue of colonialism and imperialism. Soviet propagandists believed that one of the most convincing ways to combat Islam was to show the role of Muslim religious organizations in the service of colonial powers.

A number of studies concentrated on describing the role of Muslim religious organizations in the service of tsarism. The chief arguments in such studies were simple in concept and limited in number. According to the Soviet historians, at every instance in which the Russian empire had extended itself into a Muslim territory the Russian authorities were quick to coopt the most influential among the clerics.[38] Although it could be pointed out that the Muslim experience with tsarist Russia was characterized by repression of Islam, some historians were able to argue that such repression had been unrelated to religion. These historians argued that the Russian repression was an aspect of a "political power play."[39] Although the pre-Russian ruling elite was suppressed, it was only a coincidence that they were Muslims.

Using many anecdotal examples, historians depicted Muslim clerics as tools of the ruling class, the landed and capitalist aristocracies. The Muslim religious organizations were used to reinforce the power and authority of the Russian autocracy on the periphery of the empire.[40] The official Muslim organizations prior to 1917 consisted of several Spiritual Directorates, or *muftiats*. One of the *muftiats* was created in Orenburg in 1788 (later transferred to Ufa); another was created in the Crimea in 1831; and two were created in Transcaucasia in 1872:

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38 Klimovich, *Islam v Tsarskoi*, 13; and N. Smirnov, "Klassovaia," 36-7.

39 L. Klimovich, *Islam v Tsarskoi*, 11-2.

40 Arsharuni and Gabidullin, *Ocherki Panislamizma,* 31-41; Kasymov, *Ocherki po Religioznomu*, 3-10; Klimovich, *Islam v Tsarskoi*, 25-56; id., "Islam v Azerbaidzhane"; and N. Smirnov, "Klassovaia," 36-40.

one for the *Shi'ah*, the other for the *Sunni* population. Soviet historians viewed those Spiritual Directorates as a basis of support for the tsarist regime. The positions of the clerics were said to depend on the good will of the reactionary tsarist leadership. The *mufti*, the head of the Directorate, was nominated by the Russian Minister of the Interior, and was, therefore, nothing less than a tsarist civil servant. Only those clerics would be nominated to the Spiritual Directorates who were politically safe, loyal to the Russian authorities, and who otherwise maintained an acceptable political posture. The officials of the *muftiats* were alleged to have had police connections and to have carried on spying activities on potential revolutionary groups.[41]

The Soviets pointed out that there had been a *quid pro quo*. The tsarist government permitted the clerics to retain their religious positions, to enjoy relative religious tolerance, and to receive economic advantages in the form of land and other endowments; in return, the clerics preached submission to the existing order, to the tsar.[42] The conservative *muftiat* in Ufa was a particular target of attack by Soviet historians. According to them, the *muftiat* "never raised its voice against the national, political, economic and cultural oppression to which the eastern people were subjected" by the tsarist regime.[43]

Both conservative (*Qadymist*) and reformist (*Jadid*) clerics were criticized for perpetuating the exploitation of their people. They were said to differ only in the methods they chose to carry on that exploitation. Conservative clerics were described by Soviet historians as representatives of feudal elements, and dismissed

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41 Arsharuni and Gabidullin, *Ocherki Panislamizma*, 32-3; Kasymov, *Ocherki po Religioznomu*, 6; Klimovich, *Islam v Tsarskoi*, 48; id., "Chto Takoe Musul'manstvo"; N. Smirnov, "Musul'manskie," 164; and "Religii Byvshikh."

42 See in particular Klimovich's attacks in *Islam v Tsarskoi*, 57-89; and Raiskii.

43 N. Smirnov, "Musul'manskie," 165.

as agents of the tsarist regime. Reformist clerics were described as representatives of the Turco-Tatar bourgeoisie whose interests were also reactionary.[44] The *Jadid* clerics were said to have accommodated themselves perfectly to the colonial tsarist regime, to have profited from its privileges, and to have helped spread it. Some Soviet historians argued that the reformist clerics may have played a progressive role in the nineteenth century. But by the time of the October Revolution they had fulfilled that mission and had joined the ranks of the exploiters.[45] The pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic ideology of the *Jadids* had become a tool to deflect class tensions and to postpone the class struggle.[46] Pan-Islamism was also a way for the *Jadids* to increase their influence and importance. On top of all this, Soviet historians insisted that the pan-Islamic movement was of foreign origin, as inspired by Muslim clerics of the Ottoman Empire and India.

Soviet historians argued that the interest of Muslim clerics in preserving the *status quo* can also be demonstrated by their counter-revolutionary activities. Muslim clerics, both conservatives and reformists, sided with the tsarist authorities in the revolution of 1905; later, they supported World War I; later still, they sided with the White armies and with foreign interventionists; finally, they associated themselves with bourgeois-nationalist parties after the establishment of Soviet power.

Soviet historians of the 1930s particularly emphasized the central role of Muslim clerics in counter-revolutionary movements during the Civil War. After the proletarian revolution, both conservative and reformist Muslim clerics joined

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44 See in particular: Klimovich, *Islam v Tsarskoi,* 171-216; Arsharuni and Gabidullin, *Ocherki Panislamizma,* 31-41; and N. Smirnov, "Klassovaia," 36-41. Also see "Islam (v Tsarskoi Rossii)," by N. Smirnov, *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed.

45 Shevrekei, 33.

46 N. Smirnov, "Musul'manskie," 165.

hands with the former exploiting classes to safeguard their class interests and to combat the proletariat.[47] Some Soviet historians even asserted that Muslim religious organizations were the driving force behind the counter-revolutionary movements throughout the oriental regions of the former empire. In support of this view, they pointed to a series of anti-Soviet movements during the Civil War: these included the establishment of an anti-Soviet government in the Crimea led by the *mufti*, Chelebiev;[48] the creation of the anti-Soviet Emirate of the North Caucasus headed by *imam* Uzun Hajji *(a Sufi Naqshbandi murshid)*;[49] and the Basmachi rebellion in Turkestan, which Soviet historians claimed was inspired by Muslim clerics.[50]

These anti-Soviet movements did not represent efforts of the Muslim clerics to liberate their own people. Rather, Soviet propagandists argued that Muslim clerics joined with the counter-revolutionary forces as a means of continuing their exploitation of the masses. Taking one of their own justifications for mounting an anti-Islamic campaign (that the clerics were a potential challenge to their authority), the Soviets argued that Muslim clerics had viewed Soviet power as a competitor for their influence over people. It is interesting to note that the Russian Orthodox missionaries also had believed that Muslim clerics were antagonistic to Russian power and to the advanced Russian civilization because they saw them as competitors for influence.

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47 For example: N. Smirnov, "Musul'manskie," 166-9; Mal'tsev, "Religiia"; "Oktiabr'skaia"; and Klimovich, "Musul'manskoe Dukhovenstvo." Also see Vassilevskii.

48 N. Smirnov,"Klassovaia," 41.

49 See Gatuev.

50 On the role of the clerics in the Basmachi revolt see: Soloveichik; M.N.V; and Vasilevskii, "Bazy."

An interesting side-show in the development of anti-clerical literature was provided by the Soviet problems in coming to grips with a consistent interpretation of *Sufi*-led anti-tsarist liberation movements. Despite the fact that by the early 1930s religious authorities as a generic group were uniformly condemned as reactionaries, historians were still ambivalent in their interpretation of specific national liberation movements under the banner of Islam in tsarist times. In particular, they were uncertain in their interpretations of the Caucasian Wars under the leadership of Shamil (a *Sufi Naqshbandi* leader), and of the Andizhan revolt in 1898 under the leadership of Madali *Ishan* of Min-Tube (another *Naqshbandi* leader).

The ambivalence of historians was due to the lingering influence on the history profession of M.N. Pokrovskii, the leading pre-revolutionary Bolshevik historian. Russian colonialism had been Pokrovskii's scapegoat. He could think of no better historical example of the manifold evils of colonialism than the story of Russian expansion. Unlike Russian historians before or after him, he saw no mitigating circumstances or positive by-products of Russian colonialism.[51] His views were essentially in agreement with the early Bolshevik interpretation. Indeed, he more than anyone had established the finer points of that interpretation.

In contrast to his low opinion of the Russian conquerors, Pokrovskii had great admiration for the leaders of resistance movements. His admiration for Shamil, for example, was unbounded. He regarded Shamil as a hero and a capable leader against an overwhelming power. Shamil's movement he viewed as democratic, although it was tied to a religious cause.[52] Under Pokrovskii's spell,

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51 For an analysis of successive re-interpretations of Russian colonialism in Soviet historiography see the work of Tillett.

52 M.N. Pokrovskii, 211-29.

early Soviet historians had generally placed a progressive interpretation on national liberation movements under the flag of Islam, ignoring or rationalizing religious elements of the struggle.[53]

In the mid-1930s, Pokrovskii's interpretations of Russian history were condemned as non-Marxist. Because Russian colonization of non-Russian lands set the stage for the first successful proletarian revolution, it began to be re-interpreted as a lesser evil.[54] Even so, the heroic imagery of individual patriotic religious leaders such as Shamil or Madali *ishan* lingered on, notwithstanding scattered attacks.[55] After all, Karl Marx had been a great admirer of Shamil, whose wars with Russia he had followed with keen interest.[56]

In parallel fashion, the mid-1930s witnessed a reinterpretation of national liberation movements in the Muslim colonized world. Earlier Soviet historians often had seen a progressive side to Islam and its religious organizations. They had acknowledged the progressive role of Islam and its clerics in various national liberation movements against imperialist colonizers.[57] In the 1930s, however, Soviet historians did an about face. They turned their attention to explaining how Islam, its religious organizations, and its "slogans" had been used to serve the

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53 On the Andizhan revolt see Galuzo, 63-72. On muridism in the North Caucasus see Oshaev.

54 Tillett, 45-9 and *passim.*

55 For an attack on Shamil and his murids see Klimovich, *Islam v Tsarskoi*, 25-30. For praise of Shamil written during the same period see: N.I. Pokrovskii; Bushuev, "Gosudarstvennaia"; id., *Bor'ba* ; and Magomedov. Not until the early 1950s did Shamil and Madali *ishan* officially join the group of reactionary oppressors. See the post-World War II reinterpretation of Caucasian Wars and of the Andizhan revolt in Tillett, 133-46, 174-6, and *passim.*

56 See Henze, 6 and passim.

57 See for example I. Reisner on the 19th century movement of Indian Muslims under the lead of Said Ahmed; and Muguev. The *Shi'i* clergy of Persia was viewed as democratic in its rivalry with the feudal monarchy see for example: V.O.; and Sultan-Zade.

colonial interests of imperialist states. Muslim religious organizations were depicted as agents of the old native feudal aristocracies or of the new native bourgeoisies that had come to prominence under the colonial regimes. Soviet historians argued that the introduction of colonial power brought with it class tensions between a proletariat and the bourgeoisie -- even though, in the absence of colonialism, those classes would not yet have come into existence. To hold their class positions, the native bourgeoisies and their spokesmen, the religious authorities, sold out their national interests to the interests of the colonial interlopers.[58]

Attacks Against Islam in Daily Life

An early focus of Bolshevik interest was the Muslim family. In virtually every society, the family serves as the repository of traditional values. The Muslim families, patriarchal in character -- with polygamy, veiled women, harems, and the marriage of young girls -- were viewed by the Bolsheviks as remnants of the dark ages. It is not surprising that the Bolsheviks would regard the role of woman in Islam as an inviting target for attack. Other aspects of Islam, readily observable in daily life, are its major holidays, and its rites of passage.

Muslim Women. The Soviets directed an important and early part of their anti-Islamic literature to the status of women in the Muslim family and social structure. In part, the Soviet interest in the role of women was dictated by long-term strategic considerations. By gaining the support of the long-suffering, underprivileged, but numerous and strategically well-placed women, the

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58 See for example the work of: Zoeva; Kamov; Frantsevich; and Klimovich, "Musul'manskii Vostok. Also see "Islam (v Epokhu Kapitalizma)," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed.

Bolsheviks hoped to gain a foothold in male-dominated Muslim society. Women played the role of a "surrogate proletariat."[59]

But that was not the whole story. Anti-Islamic propaganda directed toward the role of women was a cleverly placed, far-reaching, insidious attack against the very fabric of Islam, a point recognized earlier by the Orthodox missionaries. By redefining the role of woman, endowing her with civil rights protected by a secular political system, the Soviets could undermine the *Shari'ah* and the *adat* (customary law).[60] Also, to question the sacred institutions governing the minutiae of daily life was tantamount to questioning the authorities who maintain those institutions -- the local religious, tribal, and communal elites.[61] It was not enough for the Soviets simply to legislate change in the secular arena. The Soviets recognized that an improved education was necessary in order to achieve a rapid breakthrough in the emancipation of Muslim women. It was important to convince women of the negative role of Islam in their life. This task was placed in the hands of anti-Islamic propagandists.

The propaganda dealing with the role of women in Islam was not launched from a scholarly perspective. There was little, if any, analysis of the *Qur'an*, the *Shari'ah*, or other formal repositories of Islamic theology, law, or customs. Nor would scholarly propaganda have been particularly effective.[62] After all, Muslim women were not generally well-educated, nor were they well-schooled in Islamic theology. Propagandists concentrated upon some of the most visible

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59 For an analysis of Soviet goals and strategies with regard to women see the work of Massell.

60 Kobetskii, "K 10-Letiiu," 74.

61 See Dimanshtein. Also see Massell, 156-60.

62 For instruction on how to conduct anti-religious work among Muslim women see G. Ibragimov, "Antireligioznaia."

Islamic practices in the lives of women. In dramatic public displays in Central Asia, propagandists organized group unveiling of Muslim women. The dropping of the veil was to symbolize the passing of religion.

Written propaganda was designed to be of a rather pedestrian character. It consisted essentially of a catalogue of examples of women's inferiority in Muslim societies.[63] The purpose of such literature was two-sided. First, it was intended to make women aware of their oppressed status -- an awareness that needed to be cultivated. Second, it was intended to make women understand that their inferior position resulted from a male-oriented set of religious beliefs. Of course, Soviet propagandists mounted a variety of arguments. But attention here is focused on those arguments that related to Islam, either directly or by virtue of the propagandists' imagination.

Soviet anti-Islamic propagandists claimed that Islam had legalized, consolidated and sanctified the serfdom of woman and the mastery of man. It had condemned women to arbitrary rule and humiliation. The propagandists pointed out that the strongest defenders of the inferior status of women were religious fanatics. They asserted that women's inferior status as a consequence of Islamic teaching was obvious in all aspects of life: in the legal realm, in social participation, in spiritual life, in economic activities, in education, as well as in family life.

In the legal realm, for example, propagandists pointed out that the *Shari'ah* courts regarded women as second-rate witnesses.[64] In validity and strength, their testimony as witnesses was explicitly equal to only one-half that of the testimony of a man. If a woman's case were to stand any chance at all, for every

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63 For a detailed analysis of Soviet activists' perceptions of Muslim women's inferior status see Massell, 96-120.

64 Nukhrat, 21.

male witness two women were required. Propagandists pointed out that women's inheritance rights and their right to divorce were limited in favor of men.[65]

The social participation of women was virtually nonexistent. Public meetings were off limits, as were most meetings where men were present. The Muslim religion and local customs stood squarely against activities of women outside the home, regarding some activities as outright sin.[66]

It was difficult for a woman to get an education. The propagandists acknowledged that the *Shari'ah* did not prohibit a woman's education. However, the *Shari'ah's* prescriptions concerning women's seclusion cut drastically into their freedom of movement. Furthermore, according to traditional Muslim attitudes and customs, a woman had neither the mind nor the need for knowledge.[67] The agitation of clerics and religious fanatics against Soviet schools for girls were generally cited as proof of such attitudes.[68]

Soviet propagandists brought the theme of sexual discrimination into the spiritual realm. Such a theme had, of course, been prominent in the writings of Orthodox missionaries. The mosque was primarily for men. Women were segregated, if permitted in the mosque at all. Women were not required to fast, pray, or perform other religious obligations as often as required from men. They could not lead a community in prayer. Such leniency did not reflect consideration of their weaker sex, argued the propagandists. Rather, they were considered religiously impure, at least at times of menstruation and childbearing. The propagandists also argued that Islam considered women to be creatures with

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65 Zaturanskaia, 72; and Gidulianov, "Brak," 19.

66 Liubimova, 56; Prishchepchik, 63; and Nukhrat, 20-1.

67 Nukhrat, 31-2.

68 Among others see: Adam; Shur; F. Popov, 14; and Gafurov, "Usilim," 27.

only a partial soul.[69] Even the Muslim paradise was segregated, and its "pleasures" were reserved only for men.[70]

In a variation on this theme, one of the complaints of anti-Islamic propagandists in the 1930s was that clerics were admitting women into the mosques and, in general, allowing them increased participation in religious ceremonies.[71] The propagandists accused the clerics of modernizing in an effort to retain their influence over women.

Notwithstanding the alleged mistreatment of women by Islamic religious institutions and practices, Muslim women were assiduous visitors to holy places. This anomaly was explained by propagandists as resulting from the women's superstition and lack of education. Beyond that, it was to be viewed as a further reflection of their spiritual exploitation by religious figures.[72]

But what anti-religious propagandists emphasized most frequently and insistently was the "enslaved" position of women within the family. The propagandists insisted that the life of Muslim women was one of deepest tragedy. And it was the *Qur'an* that was responsible for that life. Propagandists pointed out that the *Qur'an* states that women are but fields to be plowed by their owners.[73] As a consequence, a woman is a man's accessory, a voiceless slave, a beast of burden, and a tool of man's lust.

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69 Nukhrat, 24.

70 Brullova-Shaskol'skaia, 302.

71 See for example: Ageev, 35; "Islam (v SSSR)," by N. Smirnov, *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed; Ardi; and Khadzhibeili, 44.

72 "Kak Stroit' Lektsiiu," 51-2.

73 Salim, "Musul'manskaia Religiia i Zhenshchina," *Bezbozhnik* (newspaper), 10, 1928, 6, cited by Massell, 120. Also see Gafurov, "Usilim," 26; and "Zamechatel'nye," 2.

The women's family world, as depicted by anti-Islamic propagandists, was violent and arbitrary. A woman was cloistered and veiled from early adolescence, as ordered by Muhammad himself because of his jealous temper.[74] She could be beaten as savagely and as often as a father, husband, or male-guardian deemed appropriate, because the *Qur'anic* law explicitly allowed a woman's physical punishment.[75] With religious sanction, she could be killed outright for illegitimate loss of virginity, for adultery, and for undermining the family's honor.[76]

The rites and customs surrounding marriage and divorce were favorite subjects of anti-religious propagandists. Some of those customs had nothing to do with Islam. But because they were practiced in a Muslim society, the propagandists regarded such customs as sanctified by Islam. At the very least they were not opposed by religious authorities. The custom of marriage-by-abduction is a case in point. It was a custom practiced by some nomads and mountain people. Propagandists depicted it as an Islamic practice in which a girl is stolen just like a head of cattle, and then raped.[77]

Marriages of girls prior to the canonically authorized age were widely publicized, and said to be permitted by clerics in return for bribes. Propagandists claimed that the example was set by Muhammad himself.[78] Anti-Islamic propaganda abounded with stories of little girls being sold to old men, including clerics, generally into polygamous households. Similarly, they were

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74 Puretskii, 119. Also see L.K., 34.

75 Zaturanskaia, 72; and "Zamechatel'nye," 2.

76 Nakhrat, 23; Dobrianskii; Polkanov; and Klimovich, "Religioznye Perezhitki."

77 See for example: Nukhrat, 27-8; Brullova-Shaskol'skaia, 302-3; and Perovskii, 10.

78 Puretskii, 120.

said to be sold or forcibly delivered to the harems of emirs and khans, often through clerical intermediaries.[79]

The marriage itself was described as an undisguised business transaction in which the bride-to-be had no part in decision-making.[80] The father would decide whom and when the daughter would marry. Because a woman must marry a man she had never seen, according to the propagandists, there could be no question of friendship or love. The father's choice of a husband depended on the importance of the groom's kin-group, and on the amount of money and goods (the *kalym* or bride-price) bid for the bride. Accordingly, a girl was viewed by the propagandists as being bought and sold like a commodity, of being an object of speculation. Such a practice, they insisted, was prescribed by the *Qur'an*.[81]

Religious law allowed the marriage of a Muslim woman only to a Muslim. But a Muslim man could marry a Christian or a Jew.[82] A wife had to be monogamous. In contrast, her husband was entitled to four wives at a time. Furthermore, he could manipulate the law to have ten wives or more, because the Prophet had set the example.[83] Beyond that, the law authorized a man to have temporary wives.[84] Upon being introduced into a polygamous family, a girl was likely to encounter vicious competition and persecution by older wives.

Propagandists pointed to discrimination against the Muslim woman in divorce. If the woman wanted a divorce, religious law and social pressure made

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79 Mal'tsev, "Tak Bylo."

80 Gidulianov, "Brak," 18; id., "Sobstvennost'," 24-5; Michurina, 81; Nukhrat, 22; Puretskii, 116-7; Chernysheva, "Bez Voli"; and Perovskii.

81 See for example: F. Popov, 13; and Gafurov, "Usilim," 26.

82 Zaturanskaia, 72.

83 Puretskii, 118-9; and Gafurov, "Usilim," 26.

84 Gudilianov, "Brak," 22.

it almost impossible. She was forced to go to court where she stood little chance of obtaining a divorce if the husband objected. In contrast, if the husband wanted a divorce, the law made it very easy. He could obtain it on a moment's whim, by proclaiming it aloud three times.[85] Propagandists claimed that a man could divorce his wife if she bore no children, especially if she failed to bear a son; if she were not sufficiently obedient; if she were too weak to work; or if she were no longer attractive.[86] Furthermore, by Islamic law children belonged to the father.[87]

The struggle for the emancipation of women was an aspect of the class struggle. The mobilization of the masses among women was necessary for the building of socialism.[88] The activists' view, which they wanted to force upon Muslim women, was that Islam and Islamized customary laws, prescriptions, practices, and rituals had exercised a profoundly circumscribing influence on their lives. The propagandists believed that women were attached to Islam by their illiteracy, ignorance, superstition, as well as their generalized inferiority in cultural and judicial roles. To the Muslim woman, they constantly compared the life and achievements of the allegedly liberated Soviet woman, the beneficiary of numerous socialist achievements, a woman freed from the weight of religious discrimination and prejudices, full of vigor and looking into the socialist future with purpose.

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85 Gudilianov, "Brak," 18; Puretskii, 117-8; and Zaturanskaia, 72.

86 Michurina, 81; and Nukhrat, 30-1.

87 Gudilianov, "Brak," 18.

88 See *Pravda Vostoka*, 31 October 1928, cited by Monteil, 35; and Salim, "Budem."

Religious Rites and Practices. In line with the emphasis upon practical atheism, attention was given to attacks against visible and explicit manifestations of religious beliefs. Recall that the Communists themselves were attempting to create a set of rituals to replace those of traditional religion. As it turned out, however, the new Communist rituals did not cause the religious rituals to wither away. Rather, in some instances the new rituals were simply added to the life of the Muslims. For example, it would be common for a *mullah* to be invited to a Red Wedding; or, there might be a Red Wedding followed by an Islamic wedding.[89] At Red Funerals, speeches by the local Party comrades might be preceded or followed by the reading of prayers by the *mullah*; or, the *mullah* might simply wait for the body at the Muslim cemetery in order to see that the burial was in accordance with Islamic practices.[90] Those Islamic rituals associated with rites of passage were especially tenacious. Virtually without exception, Muslim men continued to be circumcised.[91] The Communist holidays such as May Day were celebrated much like any other Muslim holidays. They were celebrated by visits to holy places, listening to stories by the *mullahs* about the life of the Prophet, and by the reading of prayers.

Principal Islamic rituals subjected to Soviet propaganda besides those associated with the rites of passage included the *Ramadan* (fasting), the *Hajj* (and pilgrimages to other holy places), religious holy days (such as *Kurban-bairam* or

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89 Logvinovich, 17; and Kasymov, *Ocherki po Religioznomu*, 48.

90 Gafurov, "Religioznye," 31; and Kasymov, *Ocherki po Religioznomu*, 48.

91 Logvinovich, 16; Shavaldin; Tikhomirov; Iaroslavskii, "Ob Ocherednykh," 23; and Kogan, 28.

the *Ashura*), along with other common acts such as the obligatory prayers and alms-giving.[92]

Because their propaganda was targeted toward the popular masses, the propagandists relied upon a limited number of rather simple, predictable and unsophisticated arguments (frequently used earlier by Russian missionaries). In addition, it was common in the early-1930s to denounce the religious practices as being of a "reactionary character" (not used by the missionaries!). It was argued that the practices consisted of forcing the masses to move through a sequence of carefully prescribed actions. Consequently, the practices were merely tools by which the ruling elite was assisted in holding its grip.[93]

A second common approach to undermining the religious rituals, already used by the Orthodox missionaries, was to unmask their pre-Islamic origins. In this vein, Soviet propagandists asserted that the fasting of the month of *Ramadan*, with its rituals and prescriptions, was an unexpurgated transposition into Islam of the period of fast observed by pre-Islamic Arabs.[94] They alleged that the *Hajj*, or pilgrimages to other holy places, and the celebrations of *Uraza-bairam*, *Kurban-bairam* and *Ashura* were survivals of polytheistic practices of pre-Islamic

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92 *Uraza-bairam* celebrates the end of the fasting of the month of *Ramadan*, and *Kurban-bairam* commemorates the sacrifice of Ismail by his father Abraham. The *Shi'ah* holy day of *Ashura* (sometimes called *Shakhsei-Vakhsei* in the Russian literature) commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet. It is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Muharram.

93 See for example: Tolin; and Klimovich, "Protiv Kurban-Bairama."

94 See for example: Klimovich, "Proiskhozhdenie Ramazana," 45; and Shokhor, 4. Others believed it to be borrowed from Christianity see Gidulianov, "Sobstvennost'," 22.

Arabs.[95] The many saints honored by Muslim masses were described as barely disguised Zoroastrian, Shamanist, or Buddhist deities.[96]

At other times, the Soviet propagandists chided the Muslims for following meaningless practices. The *Ramadan*, they claimed, is an exterior act without deep spiritual meaning, it is a "ridiculous and silly pantomime."[97] To support this assertion, they pointed to the fact that at night all "pleasures" are permitted, including sexual relations with women.[98] Similarly, the most important part of the *namaz* (prayer), the propagandists claimed, is a strict observance of postural details.[99] Although there were other arguments used from time to time, the most common ones included the notion that this or that rite is physically unhealthy, that it is a disruption of productivity, and that it encourages religious fanaticism and submission to the authority of the religious leadership.[100] In these arguments, the Soviets were simply repeating arguments used earlier by the Russian missionaries.

A substantial share of popular Soviet propaganda was directed against the Muslim practice of visiting holy places, and leaving donations at the sites. The practice was ridiculed as superstition, a vestige from the Dark Ages.[101] These holy sites often held out the hope of healing to those who made the pilgrimage

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95 See for example the series of articles by Klimovich: "Khadzhzh," 84; "Uraza," 61; "Kurban-Bairam," 54; and "Proiskhozhdenie Shakhsei-Vakhsei," 39. Almost word for word Klimovich advanced the same arguments in all four articles. It is as if he had just changed the name of one holy day for another.

96 See for example "Kak Stroit' Lektsiiu," 48.

97 Shokhor, 21.

98 Gidulianov, "Sobstvennost'," 22; Puretskii, 112; and Shokhor, 10.

99 Puretskii, 111-2.

100 For a review of such arguments see for example M.K..

101 See for example Orlovets, "Tselebnaia."

and left a donation. The propagandists denounced the *mullahs* who maintained the sites, charging that they were crooks, frauds, parasites, and capitalists. The propagandists contended that the *mullahs* simply invented the miracles in order to take advantage of the naive believers.[102] After 1928, holy places were also denounced as cradles of anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary activities.[103] Another argument used against the holy places, also to be found in the missionary literature, was to point out that the holy character of the sites often preceded the emergence of Islam. In many instances the holy places were of Shamanistic, Buddhist, or Zoroastrian origin.

The propaganda campaigns employing themes against Islamic practices and rituals were among the most enduring. They had begun in the 1920s and continued throughout the Stalin era. After the death of Stalin, in the late-1950s, this same theme was stepped up and was dramatically accelerated in the 1980s.

The Foundations of Islam

At least three anti-Islamic themes were developed by Soviet scholars in response to Lenin's appeals to intellectuals to examine the materialist origins of religion. One set of writings undertook to explain the origin of Islam within a Marxist framework. A second set revolved around an exploration of the character of Muhammad, the central figure of Islam. A third set of writings clustered around the *Qur'an*, the principal source of Islamic religious authority.

Materialist Origin of Islam. The methods of attack discussed above sought to identify negative features of Islamic institutions, holding them up to the

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102 L. Solov'ev; S.B., "Sledy Allakha"; Dubinskaia; and Mikhailov, 8.

103 See for example: G. Platonov; Aleksandrov; and Klimovich, "Tam Gde Byli," 6.

ordinary Muslims so that they could see Islam in its true light. Another approach to removing the influence of religion from the present was to strip it of its spiritual authority. Engels had made this point, arguing that it was essential to provide a secular account of the emergence of religion.[104] The most important and interesting contribution of Soviet Islamists of the 1920s and 1930s consisted of explaining the rise and history of Islam in Marxist-Leninist terms. There was an older generation of scholars -- including Bartol'd, Krachkovskii, Gordlevskii, Krymskii, and Semenov -- who worked both during the Russian and Soviet periods. These scholars had virtually ignored Marxist-Leninist theories of the origin of religion, and remained outside the newly-developing body of explanation. The task of explaining the secular emergence of Islam in socio-economic terms and, thus, its class character, was assumed by a younger generation of Soviet historians.[105]

Eager students of Marxism, the early Soviet Islamists searched for economic explanations of the rise of Islam. Islam was an aspect of the superstructure corresponding to the specific socio-economic formation of the populations of the Hejaz in the seventh century, and in particular of the cities of Mecca and Medina. The development of the theories of these young Marxist historians did not proceed without difficulties. As we shall see, competing theories emerged. In part, differences among theories reflected differences among historians in their understanding of the socio-economic structure of the Hejaz. In turn, these differing understandings produced alternative analytical approaches to the analysis of the Hejaz.

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104 Cited by Thrower, 425.

105 See the surveys of early Soviet scholarship on Islam by N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 175-202; and "Piat'desiat," 410-3.

One early analytical approach involved accounting for the origin and rise of Islam on the basis of the theories of M.N. Pokrovskii relating to the historical significance of "merchant capitalism," originally used by him to explain the rise of Moscovy.[106] In one form or another, historians using this approach argued that the motive force of the nascent religion was supplied by the merchant bourgeoisie of Mecca and Medina.[107] Islam was the ideological by-product of the socio-economic formation (merchant capitalism) dominating the Arabs from the seventh to the twelfth century. Hence, Islam can be viewed as arising in response to the demands of trade in the international trading centers of Mecca and Medina.

Perhaps taking their cue from the correspondence cited above between Marx and Engels, historians pointed out that, prior to Muhammad, international trade routes through the Hejaz were constantly disrupted by nomadic Arab tribes seeking booty. To resist these disruptions, petty traders promoted the idea of a union of all Arabs of the Hejaz. Muhammad, a trader, was successful in exploiting his teachings about one God as a means of gaining influence over the Arab masses. He was able to use his God figure as a basis for unifying Arab tribes; at the same time, it was clear that the underlying purpose for the unification was that it served the interests of organized trade.[108]

Historians subscribing to the merchant theory supported their thesis by an analysis of the *Qur'an*. They insisted that the *Qur'an* carried a strong merchant

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106 M.N. Pokrovskii viewed merchant capitalism as a significant factor in Russian history, in particular in the rise of Moscovy and the formation of the Russian Empire. Pokrovskii's views of Russian history began to be challenged in the early 1930s. In 1934 and again in 1936 they were officially condemned as non-Marxist by the Central Committee.

107 The theory of Islam as the product of merchant capitalism was first articulated by M.A. Reisner in "Koran i Ego Sotsial'naia Ideologiia," *Krasnaia Nov'*, 1926, V. VII and IX, and reproduced in his book, *Ideologiia*, 131-67.

108 M.A. Reisner, 131-3.

flavor in its textual presentations. "By its sober rationalism, dry economy, constant measuring and weighing, as well as by its individualistic character ..." the *Qur'an* "... strikingly reflects the interests ... of trade and even of militant capitalism. Basic class interests seeking satisfaction in that book of new laws are obviously, and at time quite coarsely, expressing the interests of petty and large-scale bourgeoisie."[109] Even the idea of the Divine in the *Qur'an* was viewed as an anthropomorphic vision of "a thrifty merchant, ... an apotheosis of merchant-trader, ... a deified, all-powerful merchant established in heaven."[110] These views carried considerable influence among Soviet historians, who were attracted by its "economism" and its seemingly Marxist orientation.[111] The theory was sufficiently well-accepted to be found in teaching manuals for hands-on propagandists.[112]

In a variation on that theme, other historians tried to give the "merchant capitalist" arguments an appearance of class struggle by contending that Islam was born out of a struggle for political and economic power between the petty bourgeoisie of Mecca and the rich hereditary aristocracy that controlled international trade.[113] This struggle for power took the form of an ideological combat between polytheism, the ideology of the rich trading aristocracy, and monotheism, the ideology of the rising petty bourgeoisie.[114]

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109 M.A. Reisner, 137.

110 M.A. Reisner, 139; and Nikolaev, 31.

111 See in particular: Klimovich, "K Voprosu"; Mochanov, 8-15; Beliaev, "Rol'Mekkanskogo"; N.A. Smirnov, *Islam*; Bolotnikov; and the Tatar historian Khakim.

112 See for example *V Pomoshch'*, 70. Also see N.A. Smirnov, "Proiskhozhdenie," 326 and 335.

113 Beliaev, "Rol'."

114 Klimovich, "Proiskhozhdenie Islama," 19.

The 1929 publication of Lenin's lecture "On the State" exerted a marked effect on research dealing with the rise of Islam, as well as on similar research relating to the rise of Christianity. As we have seen, earlier research of Soviet historians consisted largely of efforts to identify elements of emerging capitalism in ancient societies. By finding such elements, it was possible to insinuate a capitalist content into those societies. But Lenin's lecture offered the suggestion that ancient society ought to be analyzed in terms of their socio-economic and political structures.[115] As Pokrovskii's theory of the historical significance of merchant capitalism was progressively challenged as non-Marxist in the early 1930s, so too was the merchant theory of the rise of Islam.[116] Soviet historians began to search for opportunities to explain history in terms of the Marxian sequence of movements from pre-feudal societies to feudalism to capitalism to communism. This shift in historiography was reflected in the study of Islam. The emergence of Islam was viewed as an aspect of an evolution toward feudalism. The thesis that Islam had arisen in connection with a feudal revolution had in fact been articulated early on, but had paled in the face of the theory that Islam was the ideology of merchant capitalism.[117]

One theory emerging from the new approach asserted that Islam arose as a result of deep socio-economic changes that set into motion concomitant changes on the socio-political front. The loose tribal structure was shifting toward a centralized feudalism. At the same time, the superstructure of ideas and fantasy was undergoing a parallel change. Decentralized and informal religious cults

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115 Thrower, 426-7.

116 See for example: Naumov; and Klimovich, "Marks," 76-9. By 1932 the mercantile theory was described as "unfounded" in the courses for anti-religious propagandists. See *Antireligioznyi*, 45.

117 Rozhkov, 386-400; see also Filipov.

were coalescing toward a single conception. That conception turned out to be Islam.[118]

Another theory that featured Islam as arising out of feudalism, began with the thesis that the driving force behind Islam was the impoverished Arab peasantry. Islam was born in the trading center of Mecca, and its early adherents were chiefly among the urban poor. But Muhammad was driven out of Mecca and took refuge in Medina, the center of an agricultural area. It was in Medina that Islam found its economic and ideological base. However, in Muhammad's time agriculture was experiencing difficulties, thereby fostering growing poverty among the Medina peasantry. Medina was losing its agricultural land -- its economic base -- to Bedouin nomads, whose leadership centered in Mecca. The occasion had thereby been created for an alliance between the Muslim Meccan poor and the Medina peasantry. This alliance was the turning point for the Islamic movement, and the beginning of the victorious march of Islam.[119]

Historians who supported the proposition that the Arab peasantry was the driving force behind Islam, argued that "monotheism was the natural ideology of the peasantry of that region ... who, because they were afraid of only one thing, the lack of water, idolized only one God."[120] By its extreme simplicity, the brevity of its rituals, and its vision of life after death, Islam was designed for the hard-laboring peasants. Furthermore, these historians pointed out that the poor and the peasant were favored, at the expense of the bedouin, by the position of

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118 Klimovich, "Marks," 59-63.

119 Tomara, "Proiskhozhdenie," 29 and 32.

120 Tomara, "Istoki," 73 and 75.

Islam on inheritance, usury, and taxation, as well as by the agrarian policies of the first *khalifs* .[121]

Following Engels' observations, another explanation seeking to break with the merchant theory emphasized a purely bedouin origin of Islam. According to this view, the God of Muhammad was not different in his essence from other tribal gods.[122] In fact, early Islam was not an ideology but simply a political movement in which a tribal God served as a rallying call.[123] Poor bedouins of central Arabia, impoverished by a pastoral recession, united in a movement of protest against the rich bedouin-traders of Mecca. The poor bedouins had been attracted to the ranting of Muhammad against the rich bedouins. Not until later did Islam become a full-fledged ideology.[124] In yet another version of bedouin theory, Islam was the syncretism resulting from the confrontation of two cultures.[125] One was the primitive, monotheist bedouin culture; the other was a progressive, polytheistic merchant urban culture.

With the Cultural Revolution and its emphasis on the class war, the preceding theories came under criticism because they had failed to give adequate attention to the class character of Islam. A criticism leveled by the history profession upon the proponents of the merchant, peasant, or bedouin theories was that the defenders of those theories idealized early Islam and thus failed to

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121 Tomara, "Proiskhozhdenie," 32 and 47.

122 Asfendiarov, "Islam," 12; and id., *Prichiny*, 30.

123 Asfendiarov, "Islam," 12.

124 Asfendiarov, "Islam," 15-6.

125 That thesis was articulated by Ditiakin in two articles: "Marks," 85-6 and 92; and "Osnovnye," 68-72.

understand its class character.[126] Indeed, advocates of those theories had tended to view early Islam as a progressive or democratic movement; it had arisen from protests of the masses. Muhammad had been viewed as a revolutionary defender of the poor and the underdog, and as an opponent to the rich and the powerful.[127] Not until later, under the *Khalifate*, had Islam fallen into the hands of powerful tribes, rich merchants, and traders.[128]

The view that early Christianity and early Islam were progressive phenomena had been shared by many Western and pre-Revolutionary scholars. In the case of Christianity that view had been expressed by Engels and had been prominent among early Soviet historians.[129] In the case of Islam it had been the view of the great Russian orientalist V. Bartol'd.[130] The work of Bartol'd had provided Soviet historians with their basic knowledge of Islam as a religion. Influenced by Barthold's views, a number of Soviet Islamists subscribed to the view that Islam began as a democratic movement. Some, generally Muslim historians, went farther, describing early Islam as the first manifestation of communism.[131] Such views were held and heralded by Muslim national Communists.[132] However, as a consequence of political considerations

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126 See critics of those theories in: Ditiakin, "Beduinskaia"; Tolstov, "Ocherki," 28-9; and Klimovich, "Marks," 68-70. Also see *Antireligioznyi*, 45.

127 See the articles by Tomara: "Islam i Zemel'naia," 82; "Proiskhozhdenie," 31-2; and "Islam i Kommunizm," 103-4. Also see Asfendiarov, "Islam," 14.

128 Tomara, "Proiskhozhdenie," 32; and id., "Islam i Kommunizm," 104-5.

129 See for example Ursynovich. Also see the review of the Soviet literature on early Christianity in Thrower, 425-41.

130 See for example Bartol'd, "Epokha," 521.

131 See for example: Zhuze; and Navshirvanov.

132 See Sultan Galiev's enumeration of the positive features of Islam, "Metody," 43-5. See a similar treatment of Islam in U. Aliev.

(described in Chapter III), by the early 1930s Muslim national Communists were being physically eliminated.[133] Historians who had described early Islam in favorable terms were accused of sympathy for the views of the counter-revolutionary Muslim national Communists.[134] The view fell out of favor.

Within the terms of reference of later Soviet historiographers, an improved theory was put forward by Soviet Islamists. This theory was based on ethnographic material studied in the light of Marxism-Leninism.[135] This new theory was improved in the sense that its Marxist origins were clear and it possessed sufficient explanatory power to incorporate a number of separate theories outlined above.

According to this theory, the socio-economic formation of the Hejazian cities in the sixth century resembled those of the ancient city-republics of Greece, Rome, or Carthage.[136] On the eve of Islam, however, the ancient city-republic structure of the Hejaz was decaying. A recession of international trade, resulting from the collapse of the Roman Empire, had sharpened the class struggle within the towns. At the same time, the agrarian and nomadic communities were undergoing a process of class differentiation with the emergence of a feudal aristocracy.[137] In such conditions of class struggle, a socio-religious movement arose which eventually became Islam.

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133 Sultan Galiev was arrested a second time in 1928 with all his family. They were all executed shortly thereafter.

134 The accusation was levelled by: Tolstov, "Ocherki," 29; and Klimovich, "Marks," 72-4.

135 See the rather positive criticism of that "ethnographic" theory in N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki*, 196-9.

136 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 49 and 53; and id., "Sotsial'nye," 53.

137 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 50-3.

Those ethnographers pointed out that Islam had not developed uniformly. At different times and at different places, it was the ideology of various layers of the population. In some regions Islam had developed as the ideology of the town plebes against the town aristocracy. In other regions, it had developed as the ideology of artisan-traders and peasants against the feudal lords. In the Arab provinces of Byzantium, it even had been the ideology of merchants and feudal lords against the government of Byzantium.[138]

For a while, Islam was successful in binding together all the various social elements. The Bedouin tribes drawn into the movement provided the armed forces. Eventually, the bedouin tribal aristocracy together with the slave-owning trading aristocracy secured the direction of the movement, dominating it during the Umayyad *Khalifate*. Islam did not mature as a religious ideology until the time of the Abbasid feudal revolution. From then on, it became the ideology of "Asiatic feudalism."[139]

The "officially approved" Marxist interpretation of the rise and history of Islam was the result of the collective work of historians. Its "officially approved" status was signified by its publication, under the title "Islam," in the first edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* in 1935.[140] According to this version, Islam arose at the time of a deep crisis in the Arab society of the seventh century, a crisis provoked by the decomposition of socio-economic clanic and tribal relations and by their replacement with the first elements of a class society, the feudal society. The ruling oligarchy of one powerful tribe, the Quraysh tribe, dominated Mecca and its trade. It was in the commercial interest of that

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138 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 58-9.

139 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 77-8.

140 "Islam," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed. The article was written by E. Beliaev, L. Klimovich, and N. Smirnov.

oligarchy to promote the political unification and centralization of contiguous Arabian tribes. These tribes had already come under the economic domination of the Quraysh. With the collapse of decentralized tribalism, there was a parallel weakening of the moral, ethical, and religious ideas associated with specific tribes. Consequently, the Quraysh-led economic and political unification was reflected in a centralization of tribal gods under Allah, the god of the Quraysh. The rigorous monotheism of Islam, according to which all is created by Allah and all must submit to his unlimited will, is nothing more than the reflection of the centralizing policies of the Quraysh of Mecca.[141]

As an aside, it is of interest to trace the coopting of Islam by the Quraysh oligarchy. Initially, Islam was embraced by the petty traders of Mecca, not the ruling oligarchy. But the organization of the early Islamic community played into the hands of the Quraysh rulers. Membership in the Muslim community was based on faith, not tribal affiliation. It was in the interest of the Quraysh oligarchy to embrace any idea or movement that minimized the importance of tribal distinctions, because tribal distinctions were an impediment to effective political unification and centralized control. Thus, Islam could be viewed as merely the instrument through which the Quraysh oligarchy had expanded its dominance, and the means by which the ruling classes had maintained, for centuries, their control and oppression over the masses.[142]

The publication of "Islam" in the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1935 ended the search for an appropriate explanation of the rise of Islam. By that time, Stalin's revolution from above was coming to an end. There was an end to experimentation, including intellectual experimentation, along with a striving for

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141 "Islam (v Epokhu Feodalizma)," by E. Beliaev, *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed.

142 "Islam (v Epokhu Feodalizma)," by E. Baliaev.

stability and a yearning for the comfort that comes from political correctness. The search for a fully satisfactory explanation of the rise of Islam was not renewed until after Stalin's death. Although the Marxist interpretation of the rise of Islam contained in the first edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* was not considered entirely satisfactory by later historians, it was, even so, hailed by them as the first politically correct Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the history of Islam.[143] Variations brought to that first version in the subsequent editions of the encyclopedia in 1953 and 1972 were not substantial.

The Personality of the Prophet. Soviet historians were led to believe that Lenin was of the opinion that Jesus was a mythical personality. Their conclusions regarding Lenin's thinking were inferred from the fact that Lenin had levelled substantial criticism of many opinions of the German Arthur Drews, but had not criticized Drews' assertion that Jesus was a mythical character.[144] Based on this assessment of Lenin's beliefs, which dominated Soviet analyses of the personality of Christ well into the post-Stalin era, a substantial literature was spawned on the mythical character of Jesus.[145] In that same vein, historians of Islam developed a similar literature regarding Muhammad.

The personality of the Prophet was an important aspect of the discussion of the rise of Islam in the early 1930s. The proponents of the idea that Muhammad was a mythical figure asserted that the accounts of Muhammad's life and activities in major Arab sources -- such as Ibn-Ishaq, Ibn-Hisham, Vakidi, Ibn-Sa'd, and al-Tabari -- were suspect because they were not written by contemporaries of the

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143 N.A. Smirnov, *Ocherki,* 240.

144 A. Drews, *Die Christusmythe*, Belin, 1909. Lenin criticized Drews' work in an essay entitled "On Militant Materialism," *Collected Works*, V. 33, 231, cited by Thrower, 426.

145 On the discussion concerning the authenticity of Christ in the 1930s see Thrower, 425-7.

rise of Islam. Instead, based on hearsay, they were written several centuries after its rise. Beyond that, it was argued that the *Qur'an* itself could not provide biographic evidence relating to the existence of Muhammad.[146] It is well known that the content of the *Qur'an* had been maintained orally during the early years of Islam and was not put into writing until after the death of the Prophet. This fact was used by Soviet historians to cast doubt on knowledge of Muhammad. Substantial myth had emerged, they argued, during the intervening time between the early years of Islam and the writing of the *Qur'an*. Hence, they asserted that the underlying reality relating to Muhammad's personality became hopelessly obscured. Myth had turned into reality.[147]

In analyzing the "mythical" material surrounding Muhammad, Soviet ethnographers found strong parallels to the shamanistic legends of the ancient Arabs, and to the idolized shamans of some northern people such as Iakut, Buriat, and Altai.[148] Further supporting the shamanist-Islam connections, they pointed out that shamanist traits can also be found in the practices of Islam. In particular, they pointed to the celebration of *Kurban-bairam*, which they asserted was nothing else than a shamanist cattle-breeding celebration.[149] Similarly, the mythical personality of Ali -- Muhammad's son-in-law and fourth *Khalif* of the Islamic community -- originated from an Asiatic totemic-solar deity. The legend of Ali, together with the legend of Fatimah, Muhammad's daughter and Ali's wife, and the legend of Hasan and Husayn, Fatimah and Ali's sons, represented

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146 Klimovich, "Sushchestvoval," 194-200; and Tolstov, "Ocherki," 59-64.

147 Klimovich, "Sushchestvoval," 198 and 203; and Tolstov, "Ocherki," 64. Also see "Koran," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed.

148 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 66-7; and Vinnikov, 136-8. According to Vinninkov, the account of Muhammad's call lay in primitive shamanism which was prevalent in all ancient culture.

149 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 66-8.

variations on agrarian myths. Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, the first three *Khalifs*, were viewed as having their roots in Arab nomads' legends.[150] Soviet ethnographers argued that the legend of Muhammad came to its full fruition during the Abbasid *Khalifate* in the eighth century. The political purpose of the legend, they argued, was to create a basis for the coalescence of various social and ethnic groups within the expanded *khalifate* -- including merchants, nomads, peasants and feudal aristocracy. The legends relating to Muhammad pulled together threads from the these diverse groups.[151]

The *Qur'an:* Its Veracity and Its Class Character. Issues relating to the existence of Muhammad or to the veracity of descriptive material relating to his life and personality led Soviet Islamists to analyze the genesis of the *Qur'an*. Soviet Islamists claimed that a sociological analysis of the *Qur'an*, and an analysis of its literary style, demonstrated that only portions of the *Qur'an* belonged to the period of Muhammad's supposed lifetime. They claimed that different sections of the *Qur'an* belonged to different periods of the history of the Arabs -- running from primitive tribal society to the full development of feudalism in the *khalifate*.[152]

Other characteristics of the *Qur'an* could have been drawn by Soviet propagandists from the missionary literature. For example, we read in Soviet literature that the organization of the *Qur'an* is chaotic, that it is illogical, full of contradictions and nonsenses.[153] We also read that the *Qur'an* is only a

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150 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 69-77.

151 Tolstov, "Ocherki," 78.

152 "Koran," *Bol'shaia Sovetskai Entsiklopediia*, 1st ed.; and Puretskii, 106.

153 Puretskii, 107.

conglomerate of pre-existing religious beliefs adapted to a specific Arab milieu.[154] We are told that its moral code is that of the social-moral norms of the Arabs at the time of its writing.[155] These arguments were also made by the Orthodox missionaries.

Both the Orthodox missionaries and the Soviets concluded that the idea of God contained in the *Qur'an* was flawed. For the missionaries the idea of God in the *Qur'an* was that of an anthropomorphic vision of an oriental despot. For the Soviet propagandists it was an anthropomorphic vision of a merchant-trader, of an oriental feudal despot, or a reincarnation of a tribal or agrarian deity.

Interestingly, Soviet scholars of the 1920s and 1930s did not address the religious content of the *Qur'an*. The very limited number of studies dealing specifically with the *Qur'an* concentrated on highlighting its class character. According to Soviet Islamists of the early 1930s, with the development of a class society (feudalism) in the *khalifate*, Islam became the state religion. The *Qur'an*, as the main monument of Islam, acquired primary importance as an instrument of deception and oppression of the masses.[156] Indeed, argued Soviet historians, the *Qur'an's* imagery of the last judgement, of the torments of hell and pleasures of heaven, were powerful instruments to impress submission upon uneducated minds.[157] Soviet propagandists emphasized that the *Qur'an* teaches submission to existing order which comes from God. The *Qur'an* sanctions inequality,

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154 Mochanov, 26; Puretskii, 107-8; and G. Ibragimov, *Proiskhozhdenie*, 69.

155 Puretskii, 109-10.

156 See for example Nikolaev, 39-41.

157 Mochanov, 27-8; and Klimovich, "Klassovaia," 21-3.

injustice, and oppression, which together with its teaching of predestination constitute an effective brake upon the development of the class struggle.[158]

The scholarly writings of the Soviet historians dealing with the materialist origins of Islam, and raising questions about the authenticity of the Prophet and the divine origins of the *Qur'an* are viewed in this study as constituting a body of propaganda. But the major contributions of this literature occurred later, as it made its way into the work of the hands-on anti-Islamic propagandists.

Conclusions

Propaganda during the Stalin era accompanied direct measures to destroy religion. Because those measures were focused on the observable aspects of Islam, so too was the propaganda directed against those same features. The class war was the dominant intellectual feature of the myriad of social changes accompanying the movement from pre-revolutionary Russia to the post-revolutionary Soviet Union. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the class war formed the dominant framework within which anti-religious, including anti-Islamic, propaganda was presented. The period generated numerous sets of themes and arguments, some of which lasted through the remainder of the Soviet period. The most durable themes and arguments were those that were generally supportive of the long-term Marxist goal to create Soviet Man, focusing on efforts to change the mind set of the masses..Even though religion continued to be understood as a class ideology, the propaganda themes that disappeared were those that used the class war to attack such observable aspects of Islam as the mosques and clerics.

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158 Mochanov, 30-1; and Klimovich, "Klassovaia," 21.

Aside from the practical propaganda accompanying direct measures to liquidate religion, the period generated a scholarly propaganda literature. In their struggle for a Marxist interpretation of the emergence of Islam, the Soviet intellectuals experimented with sets of ideas that bloomed for a period, especially during the Cultural Revolution, then died, never to return again. The spirit of experimentation and rather free discussion that had characterized those years -- a type of free-thinking Marxism -- also died. The study of religion became cast into a rigid doctrinaire mold, from which it did not emerge.

There had not yet developed a strong body of positive propaganda to extoll the virtues of scientific atheism. Nor had the propaganda apparatus been integrated fully into the State and Party structures. Those features of the anti-religious campaigns were not to emerge until after the death of Stalin.

Chapter VI: Anti-Islamic Propaganda in the Post-Stalin Era

Soviet anti-Islamic propaganda after the death of Stalin was conducted from within the framework of so-called "scientific atheism." Atheism was not invented by the Soviets, but they were the principal political force with a stake in its development. Reinforced by a series of post-Stalin Party decrees (discussed in Chapters III and IV), scientific atheism had become a firmly based, broadly elaborated body of thought by the decade of the 1960s.

By virtue of the growth of science, traditional religious thought has been subjected to a steady stream of difficult questions. Marxism-Leninism, because of its materialist orientation, insinuated itself onto the side of science, or some sciences. Traditional religious thought has always had difficulty in dealing, once-and-for-all, with the central religious issue, proving the existence of God. Hence, Soviet scientific atheism identified and exploited weaknesses in traditional explanations of God's existence, and attempted to present substantive refutations. These exploitations and refutations constituted the core of scientific atheism. But the bulk of scientific atheism dealt with other concerns. In particular, it concentrated on explaining why religious belief was widespread. Atheism moved into areas of psychology, sociology, history, and ethnography, formulating specific bodies of thought relating to belief in God and the role of religious belief and experience.[1]

This chapter discusses the anti-Islamic themes and arguments emerging from scientific atheism in the post-Stalin era. Part of the propaganda literature is at an advanced scholarly level, and would not find its way directly into the work of the hands-on propagandists. Even so, such work is an important pre-requisite

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1 For a detailed analysis of Soviet scientific atheistic literature see the work of Thrower.

to the work of popular propagandists. Once laid out correctly and given the imprimatur of the Party, the work of the theoretician could form the foundation upon which popular propaganda could be built. It was not until *Glasnost'* was well underway that scholarly research began to emerge from the propaganda mold. Although the themes during the post-Stalin era are substantially identical to those used by propagandists during the 1920s and 1930s, the arguments were directed toward a changed audience. By the post-Stalin era, the education of the Soviet population, including the Muslims, had improved markedly. It was possible, even necessary, for the arguments to become more sophisticated and subtle than had been the case earlier. During the Stalin era the hands-on propaganda was prepared by a different set of writers from those engaged in scholarly anti-religious work. In contrast, during the post-Stalin era the hands-on propaganda and the scholarly work were the responsibility of essentially the same researchers.

Themes and Arguments

Following up on the efforts of historians of the 1930s, the search for a satisfactory Marxist interpretation of the rise of Islam was renewed. There was also a revival of efforts to show the class character of Islam. Propagandists again concerned themselves with showing that Islam was inconsistent with science; by this time the propagandists were in a position to point proudly to major achievements in the Soviet Union. As in the Stalin era, propagandists attacked Islam's religious credentials. The final topic considered in this chapter deals with Soviet concerns about Islam as a divisive force, especially relating to nationalism.

Marxist Interpretation of the Emergence of Islam

If it is anything, Marxism is a philosophy of history. Hence, it is not surprising that religion's historical explanation would continue to be a prominent part of Soviet criticism of religion. Efforts had been made during the Stalin era to explain the history of Islam within a Marxist context. However, Soviet intellectuals of the 1960s were unsatisfied. Explanation set forth during the Stalin era had treated Islam and other religions separately. Little if any attempt had been made to provide a single explanation of the emergence of religion.

Marxist-Leninist intellectual thought in the 1960s moved toward a consistent explanation of the origin and development of religion in general. In the light of what Marx and Lenin had said of the essence and function of religion, we would have expected Soviet scholars to attempt to show how, across world cultures, certain historical forms of material relations have given rise to and have been reflected in certain historical forms of religion. In the post-Stalin era Soviet historians attempted to do just that.[2]

One Marxist explanation of the emergence of religion and its evolution from primitive forms to the principal world religions -- Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, ran parallel to the Marxist explanation of the emergence of the capitalist nation-state.[3] After all, each of these developments was but a movement along the evolution of the consciousness of man; each is an aspect of man's increasing differentiation of the world. Just as society stratified itself -- e.g., from a pre-class society to a fully differentiated aristocracy -- so too there was a reflected stratification in the supernatural world. Pre-class society found

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2 See for example: Tokarev, *Religiia*; Semenov; and Zhukov. Also see the detailed analysis of the Soviet studies of the history of religion in Thrower, 215-88.

3 Semenov.

its supernatural reflection in nascent polytheism -- i.e., several supernatural powers of approximately equal standing. As pre-class society evolved into a fully developed class structure, but characterized by decentralized government, polytheism found added sustenance. Within such a material, political and social setting "the gods acquire the characteristics of terrible sovereigns, ruling over both people and the world." In contrast, as class society evolved toward the centralized nation-state; its supernatural counterpart evolved into monotheism, with its single high god and a panoply of lesser figures.[4]

With the development of the nation state, there were profound changes in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Similarly, as religion moved toward monotheism there were marked changes in the relationship between the god figure(s) and the worshiper. By and large, within polytheism the chief aim of ritual was to pacify the gods, often with items of common value to the god figure(s) and the worshiper. In contrast, monotheism is characterized by an increased separation between the religious subjects and the ruling high god, and an increased separation between the natural world and the supernatural world.[5]

In analyzing the emergence of the principal world religions, the vehicle of the dialectic carried the evolution of the various religions from one crisis to another. In the initial crisis, the religion in question was a cohesive force of the underclass. With the successful movement of the underclass to successive positions of leadership, the successful religion made appropriate adaptations to the emerging environment. Within the context of this Darwinian-like dialectic, adaptability is a distinctive characteristic of those religions moving to the class of

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4 Semenov, 53.

5 Semenov, 53.

world religions. Once established, a chief role of religion is to legitimize the established order.

But Soviet philosophers and historians were unable to make a fully satisfactory use of dialectical materialism in explaining religion. While they found themselves able to speak sensibly about a few relationships between specific material conditions and corresponding religious forms, they were hard-pressed to argue that these few examples constituted sufficient evidence to validate their theories. Too often they found that religious views persisted in the face of changed material conditions. Indeed, some of the strongest religious sects have persevered for centuries within an economic and social climate quite alien to that within which they emerged.

Notwithstanding these ambiguities, for historians of the 1950s and 1960s the rise and history of Islam was a rough application of the dialectical explanation of the rise of religion in general. Similar to the explanations historians had offered in the 1930s, they argued that the rise of Islam was closely coupled with deep socio-economic changes taking place in northern Arabia at the beginning of the seventh century. The deep crisis with which the rise of Islam was associated was the shaping of a class society among the Arabs. Nascent as yet, the emerging class society was to culminate in the creation of an Arab state, the Khalifate.

Soviet historians disagreed as to the nature of the class society that was shaping up in the Hejaz and that pre-conditioned the rise of Islam. Two schools of thought gained acceptance in Soviet scholarship of the 1950s and 1960s, schools of thought that owed much to the theories of the pre-war Islamologists.[6] One school of thought explained the emergence of Islam as an aspect of a protest

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6 For an overview of how the subject was treated in Soviet historiography see: Nadiradze, "Voprosy Obshchestvenno"; and Stetskevich.

movement within a slave-owning society; a second school explained the emergence of Islam as a tool of a developing feudal ruling class.

According to the first school of thought, a disintegrating patriarchal system and the formation of a slave-owning economy had been the pre-conditions to the rise of Islam. Reflecting the contradictions of the Arab society within which it emerged -- prosperity and poverty, slavery and the growth of trade -- the new ideology arose as a movement of protest of the under-privileged against the slave-owning structure of powerful tribes.[7] The view of early Islam as a movement of protest had already been put forward early in the late 1920s. But its further elaboration in the 1950s-1960s built upon the emerging work of the theoreticians of the history of religion. The paradigm of these theoreticians was based on the view that Christianity, Buddhism and Islam became world religions because their original movements of protest were capable of appealing beyond national boundaries.[8] Proponents of this view insisted that it was not until after the great conquests of the Khalifate that Islam developed into the religion of the feudal ruling class.[9]

According to the second school of thought, a decay of the tribal society and the formation of early feudal relations had been the pre-conditions of the rise of Islam. Insisting that feudal relations were already dominant before the great conquests, these historians argued that Islam was the religion of a feudal elite

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7 Beliaev, *Araby*, 107-8; and Petrushevskii, 8-10.

8 Tokarev, *Religiia*, 445, 470, and 512. Tokarev elaborated on this point in "Problemy," 83.

9 The main advocates of that theory were: Iakubovskii, 179; Beliaev, *Araby,* 94-5; and Petrushevskii, 5-7 and 24. Also see the collective work *Istoriia Irana*, 84.

from its very beginning.[10] According to this view, Islam was not a spontaneous movement, nor was it a movement of the underclass. Rather, it was the result of intentional activity on the part of the ruling social elite.[11] This elite was interested in uniting its forces with a view toward territorial expansion and international trade. In its differentiation of the tribe into social classes and in its emphasis upon the role of the class struggle, this post-Stalin interpretation of the emergence of Islam differed from the interpretation presented in the 1930s and included in the first edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*. However, some similarities were continued. For example, both interpretations asserted that the proclamation of monotheism, by uniting localized cults under one authority, was one way of overcoming the resistance of small fragmented tribal groups. Imposed from above, the propagation of the faith by the force of arms was an important characteristic of Islam.

One variant of this theme was to highlight the argument that Islam is an alien religion. Soviet anti-Islamic propagandists were able to point out that Islam had been brought to Central Asia by the Arabs and imposed by force. Because Islam's religious writings are in Arabic, it remained intellectually incomprehensible to its popular adherents. Consequently, its spread had been superficial.[12] By viewing Islam in this fashion, it was seen as being quite different from the other two world religions, Christianity and Buddhism. These, emerging as protest movements which transcended national boundaries, had been spread by popular consent.

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10 This view had been stated tentatively and without much elaboration by Pigulevskaia, 402-3; and more forcefully by N.A. Smirnov, 181 and *passim*. The view finds expression in the work of: Nadiradze, "K Voprosu o Rabstve," 139 and *passim*; and Lundin, 95.

11 Mavliutov, 12; Zhukov, 22; and *Vsemirnaia*, 104.

12 Mavliutov, 23-4; and Mullaev, 23-4.

Although there was no general agreement as to the specifics of the socio-economic crises associated with the rise of Islam, there was agreement among Soviet Islamists that the rise of Islam reflected a deep crisis connected with the disintegration of the decentralized tribal system. The biting edge of the new Islamic preaching was directed against this dying order, against its morality and against the ideas embodied in paganism.[13] In addition, there was agreement about the role of Islam once established. Its role was to legitimize the established social order. Soviet Islamists claimed that Islam was particularly well adapted to the formalized relations characteristic of feudalism. By uniting temporal and spiritual authorities under one supreme ruler, the *khalif*, Islam provided the strong centralized power necessary to keep the unsatisfied and unfortunate masses under control. Moreover, in suppressing the masses, Islam was used in much cruder ways than Christianity.[14]

Neither of these explanations of the rise of Islam left much room for the potential contribution of a central personality such as Muhammad. As had been the case among historians of the 1930s, a common theme of Soviet historians of the 1950s and 1960s, and even 1970s, related to the shortcomings of Muhammad. His existence was either denied absolutely or seriously doubted, or his personal characteristics were vilified.[15] Beyond that, it was argued that Islam was the product of an era, not of a central religious figure.

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13 See for example: Petrushevskii, 7 and 10; Beliaev, *Araby*, 104; Mavliutov, 11-2; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 20-1; Patrushev, 4; Borisov, 10-1 and 29; *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 87-8; and "Islam," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 2nd ed. (not signed), and 3rd ed. by M.A. Batunskii.

14 See for example Zhukov, 24.

15 See for example: Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 18-24; Beliaev, "Sushchestvoval"; and id., *Araby*, 85-6; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 37-9; Mavliutov, 15-6; Frolova; and Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 17-26.

An area to which Soviet scholars turned their attention in the post-1954 period was the history of divisions within Islam, a phenomenon generally ignored during the early decades following the revolution.[16] Islamists explored the development of *Shi'ism*, and, more generally, the history of the evolution of Islamic sectarianism.[17] In contrast, beginning in the 1930s substantial attention had been paid to sectarian differences within Christianity. Why there would be propaganda value in the historical analysis of divisions within Christianity is readily understandable. First, the study of Russian sectarianism had provided early Marxist scholars with examples of social movements within the class struggle. Some sects possessed communal characteristics with which Marxists could readily identify.[18] Second, continuing Russian sectarianism constituted real, observable, potentially exploitable, cleavages within the community of Christians. It is also easy to understand why there would be little demand from propagandists for research that would assist them in exploiting sectarian divisions within Islam. After all, Muslims with whom they were dealing had essentially no contact with sects outside the *ummah*; and differences among Muslims within the *ummah* -- e.g., between *Sunnis* and *Shi'ahs,* or different schools of thought within *Sunniism* and *Shi'ism* -- did not constitute meaningful divisions.[19]

It appears likely that the post-Stalin movement of Islamic scholarship into the study of Islamic sectarianism was merely a reasonable pursuit of their own

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16 Some exception to this generalization was provided by research relating to the Bahais, the most outwardly evident movement of struggle against established Islam. See M.S. Ivanov, 74.

17 Among "Islamic" sects Soviet historians included: Kharijis, Qarmatians, Mu'tazilis, Isma'ilis, Druzes, Alauis, and Bahais.

18 Stites, *Revolutionary*, 121-2. For an analysis of the rich literature of the 1920s and 1930s concerning Russian sectarianism see Thrower, 430-8.

19 For rare attacks on "Islamic" sects in the 1930s see: Salim, "Babizm"; Arsharuni, "Babizm"; and Klimovich, "Ismailism."

developing interests. Such interests may have been stimulated by the fact that the Soviet Union was pursuing interests in the Middle East, where quasi-Islamic sects were prominent.

The history of sectarianism within Islam, as understood by Soviet historians, was but a further application of the dialectic used to explain the emergence of Islam itself. Namely, specific sects emerged as an aspect of revolt against the established *status-quo*, and reflected some kind of crisis of the socio-economic base. Sects were organs of expression of a struggle, generally by peasants, against exploitation under the feudal social structure.[20] The history of the development of *Shi'ism* was explained in similar terms. *Shi'ism* arose in the first century of Islam as an aspect of a struggle for power in the *Khalifate*. By the fifteenth century it had become the ideological banner of feudal lords in their struggle with central authorities. The fact that *Shi'ism* at that time was persecuted drew to it many peasants and lower class town people, who enrolled under its flag.[21] After *Shi'ism* was adopted as a state religion in Iran in the sixteenth century, however, it become reconciled with the established order and actively supported it.

In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s interest in the historical rise of Islam appears to have decreased in Soviet scholarship. If broached, such material was used as an introduction to a different substantive topic. Moreover, the explanations were more-or-less fixed in their major features, with essentially no new ideas introduced. In part the lack of apparent interest may be due to the fact that Soviet historians were severely limited in their access to source material

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20 See for example: Beliaev, *Musul'manskoe*, 4 and *passim*; Mavliutov, 70; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 137 and *passim*; Petrushevskii, 234-5; and Stroeva.

21 See for example: Miklukho-Maklaia, 224-5; and Petrushevskii, 202, 303, and *passim*. Also see Kadyrova.

relating to early Islam. A translation with commentary on the *Qur'an*, a work initiated and largely produced by I.Iu. Krachkovsky, appeared in the Soviet Union in 1963.[22] Soviet scholars admit that prior to Krachkovsky's edition, the old pre-revolutionary translation and commentaries on the *Qur'an* by G.S. Sablukov, an Arabist but also an Orthodox missionary, had served the needs of the academic profession.[23] But there was no translation or commentary on the *Hadith*, or of basic Islamic sources such as Ibn-Ishaq, Ibn-Hisham, Ibn-Sa'ad, al-Balaziri and many others. Judging by references provided by Soviet scholars, access to such sources was limited. Access to foreign scholarship, Muslim or western, was difficult.

Not until the 1980s did Soviet historians again register interest in the historical evolution of Islam. The renewed interest was associated with the resurgence of Islam both within the Soviet Union and abroad. In order to evaluate the results of education in scientific atheism with a view toward improving the overall education effort, beginning in the late-1960s ethnographers, sociologists, historians, and hands-on-propagandists conducted a series of surveys of religiosity across the republics of the Soviet Union.[24] By the early 1980s, results of studies conducted by Soviet scholars had shown that an interest in religion was growing among diverse sections of the Soviet population. Whereas the Marxist explanation of religion had led the Soviets to believe that

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22 *Koran: Perevod Krachkovskogo.*

23 Sablukov, *Koran;* and id., commentary on the *Qur'an, Svedeniia o Korane*. Soviet scholars acknowledged that Sablukov's translation and commentary served the needs of the academic profession until Krachkovskii's translation in 1963. See for example: Stetskevich, 128; and Griaznevich, "Koran," 80.

24 The list of surveys is very long. Below is a sample of surveys of religiosity in the various Muslim republics: Baltanov; Iabbarov; Makatov, *Islam;* Pivovarov, *Na Etapakh*; Sarsenbaev, *Obychai; Religioznye Perezhitki;* Bazarbaev, *Opyt Sotsiologicheskogo; Problemy Ateisticheskogo;* and Baialieva.

secularization would have resolved the religious problem, the studies demonstrated that religion continued to play an important part in the lives of many Soviet citizens. As an aspect of intellectual developments leading to *Glasnost'*, historians had begun to question their Marxist explanatory framework.

To explain the rise and subsequent tenacity of Islam a number of Soviet Islamists began to call for a broadened analysis. They believed that it was necessary to go beyond the socio-economic and political conditions into the realm of motivating factors forming the tissue of human concerns -- such as human hopes, fears, anxieties, religious ideas, and so forth.[25] It is precisely upon such factors that western historians have been laying stress in seeking to account for the rise of and adherence to Islam or, for that matter, any other religion.

Islam as a Class Ideology

According to its theoreticians, one of the basic aims of scientific atheism was to identify the functions served by religion in a class society. Whatever Marx's interpretation of religion and of its role in society, Soviet anti-religious specialists had viewed religion within one context only, as the ideology of the ruling class. Consequently, according to the accepted analysis of scientific atheism, religion was nothing but a tool serving the interests of that ruling class.

In the analysis and propaganda generated in the 1920s and 1930s, Islamic clerics were identified as the specific tools of the ruling class. For the most part the analysis was made on the basis of the identification of the services rendered by the clerics. No real attempt had been made to analyze the sources of Islamic teaching -- the *Qur'an*, the *Hadith*, and many dimensions of the *Shari'ah* -- to

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25 See for example the interesting article by Griaznevich, "Problemy," 5-18. Also note the change in tone and ideas in the dictionary *Islam: Slovar*, in particular the essay on Islam at the beginning of the dictionary, 6-22. The dictionary is the collective work by well-known scholars.

expose Islam on ideological grounds. However, in the mid-1950s the direction of inquiry shifted toward a subject matter more in line with the interests of its increasingly sophisticated audience. The shift toward the underlying sources of Islamic thought and practices was an aspect of the overall movement of propaganda toward ideology. In any event, by then the registered clerics had become part of the Soviet establishment and had been incorporated into the *nomenklatura*. Hence, they were no longer available as objects of direct attack.

The studies of the *Qur'an* and other sources were particularly numerous in the 1960s and early-1970s. As it turns out, it is something of an overstatement to use such words as "analysis" and "studies" in characterizing the work of Islamists in this area. In fact, the chief results of the investigations were a collection of a limited number of suspicious quotations,[26] along with *ex-cathedra* pronouncements, indictments, and findings. From within the context of modern Islamic studies these results appear to be simplistic and naive. In any event, the results of these studies were presented in all levels of the print media -- from the scholarly journals, apparently directed toward other religious specialists, to the popular press, apparently to be read by the masses.

Anti-Islamic propagandists condemned Islam for diverting man's attention from this life. The central message of the *Qur'an*, according to Soviet specialists, is that man is tied to God in both this life and after death. Life on earth is an illusion, merely a preparation for life after death. The chief hope of man is that he will achieve paradise. In pursuit of this hope, everything man does on earth is to be directed toward pleasing God. Indeed, even in this life man is well-advised to please God; on his own man is a feeble creature without independent will. As

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26 Many of the numbers of *Qur'anic* verses given by Soviet writers do not correspond to those found in the Muslim-accepted English version, *The Meaning,* translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

man looks toward God, he must have unquestioned faith; he must submit to God in all things. Thus, the Soviet specialists were particularly concerned with the eschatological features of Islam, the cutting edge of decision between paradise and hell. As with other religions, it is within this area that the social and political inferences can be drawn. Simply put they are this: If you do not obey God (the ruling class), you will go to hell.[27] In addition, it diverts people, both emotionally and intellectually, from those activities that would better their lot in a social and political sense.[28]

In their analysis of the *Qur'an*, anti-Islamic specialists were most frequently drawn to four quotes. The first verse given below, in which the italicized portion was the part to which the Soviets confined their attention, was used as a basis for arguing that the *Qur'an* is an ideological document of the ruling class.[29]

> *Oh ye who believe!*
> *Obey God, and obey the Apostle,*
> *And those charged*
> *With authority among you.*
> If ye differ in anything
> Among yourselves, refer it
> To God and His Apostle,
> If ye do believe in God
> And the Last Day;
> That is best, and most suitable

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27 See for example: Klimovich, *Koran,* 30; id., *Islam* (1965), 79-80; Patrushev, 11-2; Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 7; Mullaev, 30; Mavliutov, 37-42; and Izimbetov, 67. Also see: Ishmukhametov, *Islam;* Baltanov and Gil'fanov; and Shaidullina.

28 In particular see: Klimovich, *Koran*, 27; and Mullaev, 30.

29 See for example: M. Abdullaev, 33; Klimovich, *Islam*, 80; id., "Islam i Sovremennost'," V. 9, 16; Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 4, 52; Mullaev, 9 and 28-29; and *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 104.

For final determination.(S. IV. 59)[30]

The argument that the *Qur'an* is an ideological document for the ruling class has a historical basis. As indicated in the preceding section, it justified the dominance of the centralized feudal system of the *Khalifate*. In analyzing the verse shown above, the Soviet anti-Islamic specialists called attention to the fact that God, Allah, was placed in the center of the spiritual world, suggesting that it was only natural that there be a central ruler in the temporal world. Also, by mentioning "... those charged with authority among you... " so closely juxtaposed to a reference to God, it could be inferred that the ruling classes were representatives of God and, accordingly, should be obeyed.

Further justification of the ruling class was given by the following verse:

Is it they who would portion out
The Mercy of the Lord?
It is We Who portion out
Between them their livelihood
In the life of this world:
And We raise some of them
Above others in ranks,
So that some may command
Work from others.
But the Mercy of thy Lord
Is better than the (wealth)
Which they amass.(S. XLIII. 32)

Clearly, the leadership structure is determined by God. At the same time, God portions out among men their respective economic roles -- i.e., God determines the productive relations. It is also clear that the ruling class has the God-given right to command work from others. Hence, the *Qur'an* sanctions

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30 The English translation of the *Qur'anic* verses is from *The Meaning*.

inequality and, hence, injustice.[31] Soviet specialists generally left out the redeeming character of the verse, that the mercy of the Lord is better than mere wealth. The Soviet propagandists provided further fortification of their arguments that the *Qur'an* sanctioned inequality and injustice by citations directed toward justifications of slavery and of woman's inferior role,[32] or by analyzing aspects of the Muslim law dealing with property, the tax system, and commercial regulations.[33]

Another verse used to show that the *Qur'an* sanctions income inequality and injustice was the following:

> *God has bestowed His gifts*
> *of sustenance more freely on some*
> *Of you than on others; those*
> *More favored are not going*
> *To throw back their gifts*
> *To those whom their right hands*
> *possess, so as to be equal*
> *In that respect. Will they then*
> *Deny the favors of God?* (S. XVI. 71)

Aside from showing the spiritual basis of inequality, the above-cited verse was used to show the *Qur'anic* basis of private property.[34] Coupled with the verse presented below, we are led to understand that income inequality is used as

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31 M. Abdullaev, 33; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 80; id., "Islam i Sovremennost'," V.9, 16; Mullaev, 28-9; Mavliutov, 52; Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 59; "*Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 104; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 67-8.

32 See for example: Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 287-9 and *passim;* Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 6; Sarymsakov, 79-81; M.V. Vagabov, *Islam,* 13-5 and *passim;* Akliev, "Chto Takoe Shariat?" 55-6; *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 104; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 137-9.

33 See for example the studies of: Mullaev; and Kerimov, *Shariat.*

34 M. Abdullaev, 34-5; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 80; id., "Islam i Sovremennost'," V. 9, 16; Mavliutov, 52-3; Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 58-9 and 73; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 67-8.

a testing device.[35] God tests some by providing riches; others he tests by oppressing them. Man is not to concern himself with whether he is being tested by excessive riches, or by poverty. Each of these material situations arises by the will of God. Hence, the believer should not rebel against the existing order. He should accept it.

> *Nor strain thine eyes in longing*
> *For the things We have given*
> *For enjoyment to parties*
> *Of them, the splendors*
> *Of the life of this world,*
> *Through which We test them:*
> But the provision of thy Lord
> Is better and more enduring.(S. XX. 131)

Through quotes such as those illustrated above, the Soviet anti-Islamic specialists portrayed Islam as a class ideology. The upshot of these and other quotes was to show that the *Qur'an* provides the ideological basis for the existing class structure. The *Qur'an* orders all Muslims to be brothers. Such an order, if accepted, would mean that the rich and poor would be cooperative rather than recognizing their class differences.[36] The Muslim believer is told that only faith can make man happy; he is warned not to look for happiness in this world. Such views, coupled with predestination, another aspect of Islamic ideology to receive substantial attention of Soviet Islamic specialists, would, if unchallenged, place an ideological brake on the class struggle.[37] In some sense, Islamic notions of predestination became intellectually pitted against Marxist ideas of historical

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35 In particular see Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 4, 52.

36 Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 70; and Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 4, 52.

37 See for example: Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 89-90; Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 4, 49; and Mavliutov, 53-4.

inevitability. But while predestination constitutes an excuse for the Muslims to accept the *status quo*, the Marxist concept of historical determinism served as a rallying cry for the masses to jump on the winning bandwagon.

It is of interest to note that these, and other similar, quotes were to be found in both propaganda directed toward the Muslim believers, and in the high-level scholarly presentations directed toward anti-religious specialists and lower-level activists. This point is not of interest merely because the subject matter is identical; indeed, it would be expected that the propagandists would use the work of the academics. However, one would expect that the analysis of the academics would be conducted on one level of abstraction and that the writings of the propagandists would be presented at quite another. But that was not the case. Both the Islamic academics and the propagandists used essentially the same words. One might speculate that such uniformity reflected the efforts of the writers to avoid inadvertent deviation from positions approved by the Party.

The theme that Islam was the ideology of the ruling classes had great propaganda value immediately after the Revolution, and during the decades preceding World War II, decades that were still impregnated with revolutionary fervor. If a theme were evaluated in terms of its ability to find resonance within its target audience, the durability of the idea that Islam was the ideology of the ruling classes is virtually incomprehensible. After all, by the 1980s the pre-revolutionary class structure had been absent for more than seventy years. However, because the Soviet system was, in fact, sustained on the basis of the Marxian ideology, and because the class struggle was a major element of that ideology, the durability of that theme was assured.

Islam Not Consistent with Science

One means of undermining religion is to show that some of its explicit teachings are wrong. To the extent that such a showing can be made, it fortifies a presumption that there are other, perhaps more serious, errors. Beyond that, within the intellectual framework of believers themselves there is agreement that divine truth can contain no error. Hence, if error is shown, it follows that the source of the truth cannot be divine. Based on such considerations, scientific atheism and Soviet anti-Islamic propagandists directed their attention toward the identification of error within Islam.

It is of interest to recall that the Russian Orthodox missionaries had already taken the Muslims to task because Islamic teachings were inconsistent with science. But to the missionaries science meant reason. Islamic dogma was viewed by the Orthodox missionaries as primitive and irrational. To the Marxists, however, science meant something else. In part, science referred to the scientific method, and to that collection of learnings and technology that had become the common property of the world at large; and, in part, science referred to the Marxist doctrine embodied in scientific atheism.

Before going further, it should be pointed out that for Soviet scholars the realm of inquiry relating to the nature of religion was essentially closed. Specialists operated with the understanding that the Party was in possession of truth.[38] The only means of knowing truth consisted of the scientific method articulated within the framework of dialectical materialism To the extent that there was any need to explore the dialectical framework, that work took place at a philosophical level. The treatment of religion within the framework of the dialectic was not directed specifically at Islam, but dealt with religion in

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38 Thrower, 208.

general.[39] Much of the literature dealing with the incompatibility of Islam with science was directed toward a general audience and was to be found in popular journals such as *Nauka i Religiia* (Science and Religion).

A substantial literature emerged around the argument that the religious picture of the world has disintegrated in the face of natural science and the empirical method. Thus, for example, we know that the earth is round, not flat as stated in the *Qur'an* ; we know that the world is several billions years old; and we know that it was not created in six days. Propagandists ridiculed Islamic notions that the earth is an immobile surface situated in the center of the universe and organized in two parts, the earth and the sky; that the sky consists of seven floors, or layers, suspended above the earth, one on top of the other, and held there by God; that the sky is inhabited by the souls of the dead, by angels, and by Allah; that the sun was created to heat the earth; that the moon was created in order to help us maintain a calendar and to lighten the roads at night; and that the chief role of the stars is to decorate the sky. The *Qur'an* teaches that man was created by God, and that everything else had been created by God for the benefit of man. These accounts were juxtaposed with Darwinian explanations of evolution. In short, questions were raised about the religious stories of creation and, looking to the future, of final judgment. Following such ridicule, the propagandists would then call forth Soviet advances in astronomy or astrophysics, thereby setting the record straight.[40]

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39 In the philosophical realm see among others: "Nauchnoe i Religioznoe"; Kessidi; Klor; Inov and Pereturin; Pantskhava; Cherniak; *Nauka i Teologiia*; and *Fundamentals*.

40 For such treatment of the *Qur'anic* stories of creation see: Gadzhiev, 132-8; Klimovich, *Koran*, 14-25; id., *Islam* (1965), 60-74; id., "Islam i Sovremennost," V. 8, 51-5; M. Abdullaev, 32-3; Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 2; Mavliutov, 47-8; *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 91-109; Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 46-55; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 57-66. Also see: Kuliev, *Antinauchnaia*; Muslimov and Churkin; and Shaniiazova.

Propagandists pointed out that unusual events could be explained as natural phenomena, rather than as expressions of God's will. For example, the shaking of the earth would be identified as an earthquake; darkness during daylight hours would be identified as an eclipse; the spouting of smoke and fire by the earth would be identified as a volcano; and a blazing light moving through the sky would be identified as a comet.[41] In a positive vein, anti-religious propagandists would then move on to extoll Soviet advances in the natural sciences.

Soviet medicine played an important role in anti-Islamic propaganda directed toward showing that Islam is inconsistent with science. The typical propaganda involved describing a situation in which an unofficial Muslim cleric practiced faith healing on a patient who could have been saved by a Soviet doctor.[42] Thus, Soviet advances in medicine could be highlighted. Another typical argument consisted in providing information concerning the health risks incurred by practicing certain religious customs and rites such as circumcision, the fasting of the month of *Ramadan*, or pilgrimage to holy places.[43]

On a somewhat different front, anti-Islamic specialists attacked official clerics who maintained that there is no real contradiction between science and religion. The clerics asserted that natural science is the sphere of empirical reason and experiment, while theology is the sphere of reason guided by faith. They argued that science deals with experimental aspects of knowledge, while faith deals with internal cognition. Indeed, going full circle in logic, the clerics

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41 See for example: Abdullaev and Vagabov, 171-2; Ismailov; and Klimovich, *Znanie*.

42 See among others: Khairullaev; *Protiv Religioznogo,* 74-81; and "Uspekhi."

43 See for example Akliev, "Uraza" (fasting), 72; Karaev, "Sunnet" (circumcision), 64; *Protiv Religioznogo*, 77; Mezhidov, 30-1; Ovezov, 92 and 98; Petrash, *Sviatye*, 95; and as late as 1987 Kurbanov and Kurbanov, 37.

insisted that science and natural science are forms of God's revelation.[44] The anti-Islamic propagandists argued that the clerics were simply trying to regain their constituency; that they were giving up peripheral aspects of their dogma as a means of preserving their position. The clerics were charged with mystical obscurantism and with attempting simply to cover up their intellectual bankruptcy.[45] With a view toward administering the intellectual *coup de grace*, the scientific atheists asserted that religious explanations of the emergence of the universe did not permit the dialectical unfolding of matter.[46] Most simply put, because religious explanations were inconsistent with dialectical materialism, they were wrong. The attempts of Muslim clerics to reconcile science with religion only confused the masses, preventing them from grasping fully the material essence of life.[47]

In one of their most inventive and curious charges, anti-Islamic specialists ventured to argue that major Islamic thinkers were, in fact, "closet" atheists. The propagandists attempted to show that even the most powerful Islamic thinkers of the Middle Ages had come to recognize that religion and science were incompatible, and had struggled to free contemporary philosophy and science from the dictates of dogmatic Islamic theology. However, during the period when Islam was all-powerful, these Islamic scientists, and other thinkers, were obliged to camouflage their findings within theologically acceptable terms. Such

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44 Gadzhiev, 141-2; Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 115-6 and 121-3; Petrash and Khamitova, 327-9; Artykov, 22; Radzhapov; Alieva, 60-1; and "Modernizatsiia Ideologii," 106-7.

45 Gadzhiev, 141; Artykov, 20-1; Radzhapov, 132-3 and 137; and Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 7, 114, and *passim*.

46 Alieva, 61.

47 Gadzhiev, 143.

charges were made regarding Avicenna (Ibn-Sina), Averroes (Ibn-Rushd'), al-Kindi, al-Biruni, Uluqbeg, Umar Khayyam, Ali Shir-Navoi (a *Sufi Naqshbandi*), Makhtum-Kuli (another *Naqshbandi shaykh)*, and many others.[48]

Islam Not a Legitimate Religion

The scientific atheists were very much interested in proving that Islam was created by man and, consequently, was not of divine origin. Why it was that the scientific atheists were so preoccupied with making such a showing -- not only in the popular media but also in their scholarly publications -- is surprising in view of their confidence in the superiority of their own doctrinal position. The Soviet propagandists used two approaches to attack the religious legitimacy of Islam. One approach consisted of questioning the authenticity of its doctrinal basis. The second approach was to attack the popular beliefs and practices of Muslim believers.

Islam Not of Divine Origin. In arguing that Islam was not of divine origin the scientific atheists were virtually at one with the earlier positions of the Russian Orthodox missionaries. While the Orthodox missionaries were advocates of the principle of divine origin and the Soviet anti-religious specialists were not, their anti-Islamic arguments were remarkably similar. Each denied the revealed nature of Islam, with particular emphasis on the *Qur'an*, its holy book. As had been the case with the Russian Orthodox missionaries, Soviet propagandists emphasized the human characteristics of the *Qur'an;* they raised questions relating

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48 Articles describing Islamic thinkers as 'closet' atheists were numerous in popular journals. See for example: Klimovich, "Islam i Sovremennost'," V. 12; "Velikii Gumanist"; Mendelevich; Urazaev; Akiniiazov; and as late as 1987 Zaitsev.

to the source of Islamic precepts; and, they pointed out that the precepts were not constant, rather that they had varied over time and across geography.

In emphasizing the human characteristics of the Holy Book, the specialists in scientific atheism, as had the Russian missionaries, spent a great deal of energy in describing its chaotic organization, and the absence of chronological and logical order.[49] The various styles of the *Qur'an* were regarded as evidence both of its collective authorship and of the different historical periods in which it had been written.[50] Soviets linguists argued that the literary achievement of the *Qur'an*, although it was excellent, was not better than that of the outstanding Arab poetry of that time.[51] Such an argument contradicted the Muslim view that the *Qur'an's* literary excellence is an evidence of its revealed nature. Soviet scholars insisted that the fact that the *Qur'an* was written in Arabic was itself evidence that it was not a gift from God. Why would an Omnipotent, Omnipresent God have concerned Himself with, and have sent His last Prophet to, such inconsequential places as Mecca and Medina if He were laying the basis for a universal religion?[52] Questions such as these were raised by serious Soviet scholars.

Further evidence of the *Qur'an's* human authorship was provided by the fact that, contrary to what the *Qur'an* itself stated, its teaching was inconsistent. Soviet Islamists asserted that they had identified more than 200 contradictions

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49 See for example: M. Abdullaev, 32; Klimovich, *Koran*, 10; Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 37; Izimbetov, 64; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 38 and *passim*.

50 Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 47; Mavliutov, 45-7; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 23-4.

51 Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 9-10.

52 Mavliutov, 48; and Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 8-9.

within the *Qur'an,* a number similar to that advanced by the missionaries.[53] Examples of *Qur'anic* inconsistencies provided by the propagandists were also choice examples of the missionaries. A favorite example of both the Soviets and the missionaries claimed that the *Qur'anic* dogma of predestination contradicted the *Qur'anic* teaching of man's responsibility for his acts. In another favorite example of internal inconsistency, both propagandists and missionaries pointed out that although the *Qur'an* teaches that other religions -- Judaism and Christianity -- were God's creation, at the same time it teaches hatred of those same religions.[54]

One further approach to arguing that Islam was the product of man's imagination and not of revelation was to trace the source of Islamic precepts to other systems of beliefs prominent in the Arabian peninsula of the seventh century. Similar to the approach of the Russian Orthodox missionaries, to make their point Soviet Islamists compared excerpts from the *Qur'an* with excerpts from the Bible.[55] But in an unconscious foray into Russian chauvinism, or in a continuation of their predisposition towards European thought, the Russian anti-Islamic specialists betrayed a preference for Christianity that was uncharacteristic of Marxists, arguing that the Islamic originators were unable to appreciate the high level of intellectual development represented by Christianity.[56] Necessarily limited by their primitive framework of knowledge, the Muslims mixed Christian

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53 See for example: M. Abdullaev, 32; Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 52 and *passim*; Mavliutov, 54-7; and *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 92-5.

54 Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 52; Mavliutov, 54-5; and *Ocherki Nauchnogo*, 94-5.

55 See in particular: Sarymsakov, 45-6; Saidbaev, "Chemu," V. 9, 27; and Avksent'ev and Mavliutov, 56, 60, and *passim.*

56 Semenov, 59 and 61. Except for Semenov, the argument was rarely as bluntly put but it was pervasive in the work of most Russian anti-Islamic propagandists.

and Judaic concepts with their own primitive beliefs. In short, Islam did not bring a new system of beliefs into the world.

Moving away from the idea that Islam is locked in time to the seventh century and locked in space to the Arab world, Soviet Islamists argued that the fact that Islam has varied through time and across geography, depending upon the conditions within which man has found himself, is evidence that it is a man made religion. The argument emerged from general Marxist views of the relationship between the superstructure and the productive forces. Turning specifically to the twentieth century, Soviet Islamists argued that the enormous changes in social relations and the increased tempo of scientific and technical progress had led Muslim clerics, not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the Muslim world, to rethink Islamic teaching of social doctrine, moral values, and theological-dogmatic precepts.

Scientific atheists pointed to changes in social doctrine as an example of Islamic deviation. According to ancient Islamic teaching, power was sent by God. Consequently, no power was to be opposed, not even an evil power. But within the twentieth century Soviet State the Muslim clerics were teaching that oppression and exploitation must be opposed and that the freedom of man must be defended. In pre-revolutionary Russia the clerics had found that the *Qur'an* advocated private property; but in the Soviet Union the clerics advocated public ownership. Beyond that, the clerics had managed to find a way to oppose class differences, inequality, and injustice. Although such modern views were laudable according to scientific atheists, they showed that Islamic teaching had emerged from its historical surroundings, not from unchanging principles.[57]

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57 For such arguments see: Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 36-43; id., "Evoliutsiia Sotsial'nykh," 38-9; and Ishmukhametov, *Sotsial'naia*, 187-90.

In their analysis of Islam in different countries throughout the world, Soviet Islamists found that the clerics invariably supported the existing socio-economic system, be it capitalist, socialist or otherwise.[58] The Islamists pointed out that throughout history and at every place the Muslim clerics managed to interpret the *Qur'an* in such a way as to support the existing order.

Soviet specialists of Islam found that Islamic moral values have changed over time. One of the most common examples of such change was found in Islamic teaching relating to the role of women. Prior to the Revolution, Islamic teaching and tradition considered the public interaction of women with men in virtually any type of setting as sinful. After the Revolution, however, men and women were to work together in building the socialist state. Taking their cue in chameleon-like fashion, Muslim clerics opened the doors of the mosques to women, encouraging them to participate fully in the religious life of the Muslim community.[59] The Muslim clerics made not-so-oblique concessions that there were some aspects of the *Shari'ah* -- e.g., polygamy and divorce -- that could be reconsidered.[60]

To the Soviet Islamists, probably the most convincing evidence that Islam is man-made was found in the metamorphosis of Islamic dogma. In the eyes of the Islamists, two aspects of dogma had been abandoned. One, the Muslim clerics were accused of acknowledging implicitly that the *Qur'an* is not the word of God. Two, the clerics were charged with abandoning Islam's traditional views on predestination. As a basis for the accusation that Muslim clerics had

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58 See in particular: Akhmedov, 8 and *passim;* and Kerimov, "Nekotorye."

59 Gadzhiev, 53-5; Dadabaeva, 53-4; Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 20, 91, and 95-106; and Ishmukhametov, *Sotsial'naia*, 195-8.

60 Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia*.(1973), 110 and 119; id., "Evoliutsiia Bogoslovsko," 22; and Artykov, 22-3.

acknowledged that the *Qur'an* is not the word of God, Soviet Islamists concentrated on the fact that Islamic theologians in recent time had found reinterpretation to be necessary in order to address specific situations.[61] It is surprising that anything noteworthy was found in the fact that authoritative sources were being reinterpreted in order to address new situations. After all, there had been continuing effort among the Soviets in their interpretation of Marx and Lenin. Apparently, however, the reinterpretation of the *Qur'an* was thought to be of a qualitatively different character.

God might have elected to have written the *Qur'an* in broad generalities -- *a la* Christian Bible. Had God done so His followers would have become accustomed to interpreting from the general to the specific. Although some Christian sects have made an effort to freeze their interpretations in time, by-and-large, Christians have become accustomed to the necessity of reinterpreting the *Bible* in light of changing circumstances. But because of the way it was written, the *Qur'an* presents unusual difficulties in interpretation. Even among Muslims there are substantial and continuing difficulties about issues related to interpretation of the *Qur'an*. Hence, the propagandists were exploiting an issue about which the Muslims were, and continue to be, sensitive. But among Muslims there is a view that God, through the Prophet, elected to address Himself directly to a specific society and to a specific social structure. He explicitly eschewed the option of making grandiose pronouncements set forth in broad generalities. As a consequence of this approach to writing eternal truth, God, through the Prophet, chose to cause His followers to interpret specific situations cast in seventh century Arabia and to extrapolate those findings to whatever situation might present

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61 Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 112-5 and *passim;* id., "Evoliutsiia Bogoslovsko," 21-2.

itself.[62] Among Muslim clerics attempting to make Islam relevant to the Soviet condition, this view of *Quar'anic* interpretation seemed to prevail.[63] In a related charge, Soviet Islamists pointed to a change in the stance of Muslim clerics about how and by whom the *Qur'an* is to be interpreted. During the Soviet period, Soviet Muslim clerics encouraged the faithful to read the *Qur'an* and to interpret it for themselves.[64]

The second aspect of changed dogma was the changed position about predestination in Islam. Although predestination is no longer an important issue within Islam, Soviet specialists of Islam seized upon it as a propaganda opportunity. They asserted that Muslim clerics in tsarist times taught doctrine intertwined with notions of predestination; during the tsarist period, predestination was a useful tool of exploitation. However, the Soviet Revolution resulted in the liberation of man from exploitation. Muslim clerics were accused of changing their teaching following the Revolution to the idea that man is responsible for his actions.[65] As a naive and amusing example, Soviet specialists pointed out that there had been a time when Muslims did not find it useful to plan for the future. All that happened was God's will. However, after the Revolution the Muslim clerics supported the five-year plan.[66] The Russian Orthodox missionaries had also criticized Islamic teaching relating to predestination. However, they criticized it because it constituted a denial of free will.

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62 See Rahman, 232.

63 This seems to be the position of Soviet Muslim clerics as seen through their preaching quoted by Soviet anti-Islamic propagandists. See for example Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 111-2.

64 Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 109-11.

65 Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 125-31; and id., "Evoliutsiia Bogoslovsko," 23-4.

66 Ashirov, *Evoliutsiia* (1973), 128-9.

Soviet propagandists raised yet another charge to accompany their accusation of Islamic shifts in dogma. They suggested that the clerics were adapting to new conditions as a means of holding onto their constituencies. According to Soviet anti-Islamic propagandists, such wavering was evidence of deep problems within Islam. The Soviet literature on the subject is extensive, suggesting that they regarded it as a matter about which Islam was seriously vulnerable.

At the same time, the Soviets may have been apprehensive that a modernized Islam would prove to be too powerful to be penetrated by their anti-Islamic propaganda. More than that, in the 1970s there was a growing recognition that Islam was serving as a rallying point for nationalism.[67] In part, the increased sensitivity of Soviet propagandists to the role of Islam in the growth of nationalism resulted from the surveys of religiosity conducted during the 1960s and 1970s. In some respects, the attitude of the Soviet anti-Islamic specialists resembled the views and perspective of the Russian Orthodox missionaries regarding the *Jadid* reformers of the nineteenth century. The *Jadid* movement was proving to be a popular, cohesive force among the Muslims. Accordingly, it was regarded as dangerous to the interests of the tsars. While the missionaries used the reformist movement as an occasion for propaganda purposes, arguing that it was contrary to the true fiber of Islam, their chief concern, as with the Soviet propagandists, was focused on the political front.

Popular Beliefs and Practices Not of Divine Origin. A second chief approach to the analysis of Islam with a view toward showing that it is not a

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67 See for example: Bazarbaev, *Sekularizatsiia*, 29 and *passim;* E.G. Filimonov, 81; Abdullaev and Vagabov, 148-9; Ostroushko; and Saidbaev, "Islam, Istoriia," 41-3.

legitimate religion, was to concentrate on the popular beliefs and practices of ordinary Muslims. Responsive to Party calls for research from all branches of knowledge, ethnographers and others delved extensively into pre-Islamic religions and practices throughout the Muslim lands of the Soviet Union. As a consequence, a substantial literature emerged on the survival of pre-Islamic beliefs, customs, and rituals -- such as those included within shamanism, paganism, magic, demonology, and so forth. Although there was nothing sinister about tracing the survival of earlier practices, such studies could have great propaganda value, a point of emphasis by those involved in the research.[68]

According to Soviet ethnographers, there were clear survivals of pagan beliefs that continued to exert themselves in Islamic practices. A chief example of such surviving practices is provided by the veneration of saints within popular Islam, a matter to which Soviet specialists devoted much energy and attention. They argued that, over the centuries, pagan deities had been transformed into Muslim saints. Thus transformed, they made their way into the Cult of the Muslim Saints, one of the most important practices within popular Islam.

Soviet ethnographers pointed out that the saints generally retained their pre-Islamic functions. Thus, for example, there are various agrarian saints corresponding to important events relating to the land -- such as planting, harvest, and rain.[69] The Avars of Daghestan believe that pouring water on the tomb of a saint can assist in bringing rain. Even better, the tomb could be opened, water poured into the tomb, all accompanied by the reading of the

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68 In the distinguished publications of the Academy of Sciences, two scholars, Snesarev and Basilov, pointed to the propaganda value of such studies. Snesarev, 15; and Basilov, *Kul't*, 6-7 and 142-3.

69 Peshchereva, 129-30; Sukhareva, *Islam*, 35; Salamov, 157; Karaev, "Islam"; and Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom*, 151.

Qur'an.[70] For special wishes or other matters, gifts can be brought to the saint in an effort to induce favorable consideration. Or, in some instances, animal sacrifices may be appropriate. In similar fashion, there are Karachai, Balkar and Ossetian saints whose chief purpose is to protect hunters.[71] There are Central Asian saints whose purpose is to protect various trades, such as cattle or horse breeders in Kirgizia and Turkmenistan, or musicians in Turkmenistan.[72] Throughout the Muslim lands there are local saints assigned to the protection of particular villages. Some saints occupy themselves with the protection of women, and, in return, are venerated only by women.[73] Virtually all of these saints can be traced to pagan deities, according to Soviet anti-Islamic specialists.

In many instances, the rituals and legends that had been associated with various saints in pre-Islamic times continued essentially unchanged. In clanic and tribal regions of the Soviet Union, especially among the Turkmen, it turns out that saints had been the legendary founders of the tribes.[74] In those regions, according to Soviet specialists, ancestor worship was recast into into the Cult of the Saints.[75]

According to Soviet ethnographers, there are popular practices among Muslims that resemble the worship of spirits. The spirits may be associated with

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70 Nikol'skaia, 323; and Klimovich, *Islam* (1965), 267-8.

71 Kaloev, 83.

72 Amanaliev, 22; Basilov, *Kul't*, 62; Demidov, "Perezhitki," 148-9; and "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 90-1. Also see Sukhareva, "K Voprosu."

73 Sukhareva, *Islam*, 40-1; Snesarev, 239-43; and Murodov.

74 Amanaliev, 24; and "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 92. For more extensive information on the subject see the work of: Basilov, "O Proiskhozhdenii"; and Demidov, "Magtymy."

75 See for example: Basilov, "Nekotorye"; id., *Kul't*, 70 and *passim;* and Iampol'skii.

specific locations. Such locations might include a natural spring, the top of a mountain, a wooded area, or a bend in the road. Frequently, these locations -- endowed with special virtues -- are venerated as holy places.[76] Or, the spirits may not be associated with a specific location; rather, they may be simply an evil spirit, a good spirit, an angry spirit, or a happy spirit.[77] By certain practices, people may protect themselves against these spirits or, if appropriate, attempt to gain their favor. The practices may consist of the offering of specified prayers, or the wearing or display of amulets containing an inscription from the *Qur'an*.[78] These practices, referred to as the Cult of the Spirits, have been traced to demonology associated with ancient local religions.

The ancient local religions in Central Asia were of a shamanistic character. Soviet ethnographers argued that shamanistic practices had insinuated themselves into Islam. Legends about famous shamans had been recast into legends about Muslim saints. Thus, similar to their shamanistic counterparts, certain Muslim saints have the ability to travel large distances with great speed. Some saints have the power to revive the dead, to make barren women fertile, or to cure the sick.[79] Some Muslim saints are characterized by their ability to live with their head separated from their body, a practice attributed to especially gifted

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76 See for example: Rudenko, 317; Makatov, "Kul't," 171-3; Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom*, 150-1; Demidov, "Perezhitki," 135 and 138; and "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 92-3.

77 Amanaliev, 25-7; Snesarev, 26-9 and *passim*; Kereitov, 105-8; and "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 92-6.

78 Snesarev, 37; Kereitov, 107; Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom*, 149-50; and "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 95 and 101.

79 "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 97.

shamans.[80] *Sufi shaykhs* or *ishans*, regarded as holy men by Muslim believers, were described as having adopted shamanistic methods -- such as telling fortunes and faith healing.[81]

Soviet ethnographers argued that pre-Islamic practices had been incorporated into Muslim rituals relating to marriage and burial, and that pre-Islamic beliefs had exerted themselves in Muslim views regarding the soul of the dead. In order for Muslim women to avoid being cursed by the "evil eye" (being unable to bear children), the bride, the groom, and the parents go through a specific set of prayers from the *Qur'an*.[82] Throughout history and across many cultures there has been a practice of burying the dead with provisions they would need in their journey. But Islam has eschewed the practice. Even so, the practice has survived in many Muslim areas -- Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, and North Caucasus -- by taking a different form. Muslim tombstones are sometimes engraved with pictures of provisions and artifacts that other cultures enclose with the dead.[83] A related pre-Islamic practice, that of providing a feast for those attending the funeral, has survived without criticism. In families with strong tribal or clanic traditions, there is a practice of burying members in groups in order to facilitate their coming together after death.[84] The soul of the dead is given anthropomorphic character by several pre-Islamic practices. For example,

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80 Such legend is associated with Shah i-Zinda, a saint venerated in Samarkand. See: Sukhareva, *Islam*, 34; Snesarev, 208; and "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 97.

81 Sukhareva, "O Nekotorykh," 128-33; id., *Islam*, 49-50; Snesarev, 54 and 271; and Basilov, *Kul't*, 92.

82 "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 101. On the marriage-*zikr* among the Turkmen see Snesarev, 53-4.

83 "Doislamskie Verovaniia," 98-7; and Snesarev, 112-3 and 118.

84 "Doislamskie Veronaniia," 99.

it is common for the relatives of a recently departed believer to place a small pile of stones, symbolizing a hut, on the tomb of a Muslim saint.[85] The hope is that the soul of the dead can use this abode as a resting place. In some Soviet Muslim areas, mainly in Tatarstan, there is a practice of removing the body of the dead through the window of the house, rather than through the door, all accompanied by special prayers from the *Qur'an*.[86] The purpose of this practice is to confuse the soul, making it difficult for it to find its way back home.

As indicated, the Soviet anti-Islamic specialists were convinced that there was substantial propaganda value in the recitation of these and similar examples of pre-Islamic practices. By showing that the practices and beliefs embedded in the everyday religious life of the Muslim people were drawn from pre-Islamic sources of dubious character, anti-Islamic specialists sought to undermine Islam itself. They were able to make the case that Islam is nothing more than the survival of superstitions, or a collage of pre-existing forms. Such a showing drawn from popular practices supplemented their attacks on orthodox Islam.

Popular practices -- including religious marriages, religious burials in purely Muslim cemeteries, circumcision, pilgrimages to holy places, and religious holidays -- continued to be attacked in the post-Stalin era. As in the 1930s, the practices were denounced for a variety reasons. But because this subject was developed in Chapter V, it is not repeated here. The post-Stalin era witnessed little change in the nature of the arguments used against respective practices. However, there was a marked increase in the quantity of propaganda devoted to

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85 Snesarev, 111.

86 *Tatary*, 346-7.

the topic, especially after 1980 when it became clear that these practices were associated with the Islamic revival.[87]

Divisive Character of Islam

Soviet scientific atheists asserted that Islam is a divisive force, preventing the full realization of socialist society. There were essentially two bases for describing the divisive character of Islam. One basis, that discussed by Marx and Engels, focused on the Islamic predisposition to divide the world into two parts, Muslim and non-Muslim. Such a mind-set is divisive by its very nature. A second basis for discussing the divisive character of Islam focused on Islam as a rallying point for nationalism. In addition to the sharp division between Muslims and non-Muslims, there is a recognition of meaningful differences within the Muslim community, the *ummah*. Although all Muslims are equal, the *Qur'an* teaches that there are ethnic or tribal differences that can be maintained and celebrated. Muslim clerics were accused of taking advantage of such differences as a means of marketing their otherwise moribund religion.

Arguments such as these were directed toward those sections of the Muslim intelligentsia, especially young people, who had received a progressive education, but who might still be involved in one way or another with Islamic practices. It is possible to infer the target of the propaganda by the fact that the theme -- Islam is a divisive force in Soviet society -- was often accompanied by complaints from Soviet propagandists that some members of the intelligentsia, including Party

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87 For example see: Bairamsakhatov; *Novye Vremena;* Dzhabbarov; Kalilov; Nuraliev; Khakuashev; Urazmanova; Mirrakhimov; Zumakulov; and Sarsenbaev, *Sotsialisticheskie*. Also see the rapid succession of articles in *Pravda Vostoka*: "Dobrye Traditsii: Novye Obriady i Ritualy v Zhizn'," 14 March 1985; "Akh, Eta Svad'ba," 24 March 1985; "Traditsionnoe i Novoe v Sovremennoi Obriadnosti," 12 April 1985; "Utverzhdat' v Zhizni Sovetskikh Liudei Novye Obriady: Ritualy," 14 April 1985; and "V Makhalle Segodnia Prazdnik," 10 July 1985.

people, viewed the observance of certain religious rites and customs as innocuous national traditions.

Muslim Non-Muslim Dichotomy. Soviet scientific atheists did not need to strain to identify the most fundamentally divisive aspect of Islam. The argument that Islam divides the world into two parts had already been articulated by Marx and Engels, discussed by the Orthodox missionaries, and set forth by the anti-Islamic propagandists of the Stalin era. Islam is viewed by believers as a way of life. Such a concept is central to the teaching of the clerics. The main principles of that way of life are belief in Allah and His Prophet, and the concept of Muslim brotherhood, a type of supra-national or pan-Islamic consciousness. Absent from such a way of life is even the shadow of internationalism, according to scientific atheists.[88] By the very word of God, Muslims are enjoined to maintain an antagonistic posture or at least shy away from unbelievers. Numerous quotes from the *Qur'an* were provided by the propagandists to support their argument. For example,

> O ye who believe!
> Take not for friends
> And protectors those
> Who take your religion
> For a mockery or sport, --
> Whether among those
> Who received the Scripture
> Before you, or among those
> Who reject Faith; (S.V, 60.)

Or,

> O ye who believe!
> Take not

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88 Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, 92. Also see: Gadzhiev, 55-7; Faseev; Kuliev, "O Prichinakh," 107-8; and Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 62-71.

For protectors your fathers
And brothers if they love
Infidelity above Faith:
If any of you do so,
They do wrong. (S.IX, 23.)[89]

Furthermore, Islam, by the very will of God, fosters the view that it is superior to all other religions and to atheism, and that, by a logical extension, its adepts are superior. The following verse from the *Qur'an* was generally quoted by propagandists to illustrate their point.

It is He Who has sent
His Apostle with Guidance
And the Religion of Truth,
That he may proclaim it
Over all religion,
Even though the Pagans
May detest (it). (S.LXI, 9.)[90]

The preaching of Muslim clerics, be they official or unofficial, epitomizes the exclusiveness of Islam and fosters the distrust of unbelievers and followers of other religions, the propagandists emphasized. "Muslim brothers, you became the most righteous of all men. Is there a people that could compare to the followers of Islam? Is it possible to find a people that could stand above us, the people of the Beloved of both world, our Prophet?"[91] "We must be grateful to our ancestors, and remember them in our prayer. Had they not accepted Islam, God forbid, we today would be prisoner of false beliefs, we would be primitives." Or, "We must be thousand times grateful to our ancestors for they

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89 Quoted by Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii,* 34.

90 Quoted by N.M. Vagabov, 7-8.

91 Excerpt from the sermon of Charkhiakhmedov, *imam-khatib* of the mosque of Ufa, on 17 December 1974, cited by Ashirov, *Musul'manskaia*, 68; and id., "Nravstvennye," 50.

have accepted the best of all faith -- Islam."[92] "Islam is the truest and the latest, (sent by God) to last until the Day of Judgement. All the requisites of the highest morality are indicated in Islam."[93] As for the atheist, "he is a madman whose company must be avoided."[94] Such preaching, claimed the anti-Islamic propagandists, were not innocuous. They oriented the believers toward remaining closed within their religion, thereby militating against the drawing together of the various peoples of the Soviet Union.[95]

The religious exclusiveness of Islam, propagandists continued, is codified in its religious rites, law, and practices. The dietary laws, forbidding the consumption of pork and wine, serve to introduce difficulties into even the most simple social discourse between Muslims and non-Muslims. Circumcision and rituals associated with the rites of passages, birth, marriage and burial, are expressions of exclusiveness. But probably the most imposing barrier to the coming together of all peoples is the prohibition for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim man, although a Muslim man may marry from among the People of the Book.[96]

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92 Excerpts from: the sermon of Kh. Iarullin, *imam-khatib* of the mosque Marjaniyeh in Kazan, on 8 March 1968; and from the sermon of the *imam-khatib* of the mosque in Ufa on 26 August 1977, cited by Ashirov, *Musul'manskaia*, 66 and 35.

93 Excerpt from the sermon of the *imam-khatib* of the mosque of Semipalatinsk on 14 September 1977, cited by Ashirov, *Musul'manskaia*, 33.

94 Cited by M.A. Abdullaev, 34.

95 Ashirov, "Nravstvennye," 50-1.

96 Prohibitions of the *Shari'ah* relating to marriage, family matters, and dietary consumption are considered by Soviet anti-Islamic propagandists to be one of the main barriers to the *sblizhenie* process. For studies of the *Shari'ah's* prohibitions and their impact on the process of *sblizhenie* see Kerimov, *Shariat*, 106-40; and id., "Islam."

When Soviet propagandists accused Islam of imposing a biological barrier to the fusion (*sliianie*) of the people of the Soviet Union, they were generally careful to avoid specifics. Satisfactory statistical data concerning intermarriage between Muslims and non-Muslims are, therefore, very difficult to find. The data on mixed marriages generally lack two components. First, the data never provide information regarding religion. Even so, if the data were clear on ethnic backgrounds of the marriage partners it would be possible to make inferences regarding religion. Although the data do identify mixed marriages, they rarely indicate the ethnic breakdown of those marriages. They lump together all mixed marriages, making it impossible to differentiate between those marriages composed of ethnically akin groups -- such as between Russians and Ukrainians (both of whom are likely to be of Christian backgrounds) or between Turkic groups such as Uzbeks and Kazakhs (both of whom are likely to be of Muslim backgrounds) -- and those between religiously different groups, such as between Russians and Uzbeks. Second, the data do not indicate the ethnic breakdown by sex. While most Soviet Islamists of Islam admitted that the great majority of mixed marriages taking place in Muslim republics were between religiously akin groups, in those rare cases when Muslim/non-Muslim marriages took place it was almost always between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim woman.[97] Such a marriage pattern was attributed in part to the *Shari'ah*, which prohibits the marriage of Muslim women to non-Muslim men.

A rare illustration of the potential impact of the *Shari'ah* on the marriage patterns within Muslim areas is provided by data on marriages in the

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97 See for example a recent statistical study by the head of the Department of Demography of the Scientific Research Institute of the USSR State Statistical Committee on mixed marriages, A. Volkov, "Etnicheskie," V. 7, 16 and 20.

Autonomous Republic of Daghestan for the year 1973.[98] Considering all marriages differentiated by ethnic group of the Muslim women, the percent consisting of marriages to non-Muslim men were: Avar 0.17; Darghin 0.9; Lezgin 0.9; Kumyk 1.1; Lak 1.5; Tabassaran 0.2; Nogai 2.0; Agul, Tsakhur, and Rutul 0.0. Considering all marriages differentiated by ethnic group of the Muslim men, the percent marrying non-Muslim women were: Avar 2.7; Darghin 1.6; Lezghin 3.1; Kumyk 6.0; Lak 5.0; Tabassaran 3.5; Nogai 3.7; Agul, Tsakhur, and Rutul 0.0. Two inferences may be drawn from the data. First, there were very few marriages taking place between Muslims and non-Muslims. Second, marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men were markedly rarer than between Muslim men and non-Muslim women.

Although these data were supportive of the accusations of the Soviet propagandists, they were never presented in a way that supported those accusations. Instead, they were shown in a manner that suggested that the propaganda was succeeding. For example, as discussed above, marriage data were presented in a manner that permitted one to believe that there had been substantial intermarriage.

Even the Islamic code of morality serves to operate in a divisive fashion, according to propagandists. While propagandists acknowledged that there were laudable aspects to the Islamic code of morality -- including its call for respect of parents and older generations, its call for peace with neighbors, its condemnation of arrogance, brutality, and theft -- they complained of its limited application. Islam asserts that its moral code has been sent directly to them by God. Hence, the propagandists claimed, Muslims feel justified in limiting its application to the

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98 Gadzhieva and Iankova, table 5. Percents are calculated from raw data. The data covered all marriages in the Republic for the year 1973.

family of believers. In contrast, atheistic morality emerged from the practical experiences of the masses living within a classless society; hence, it extended to all.[99]

Islam Fosters Nationalism. A second argument highlighting the divisive character of Islam was that it served as a vehicle for maintaining the national character of the various peoples in the Muslim lands. It is important to note that this argument did not surface until the late 1960s. It is also important to recognize that its late arrival as a subject for Soviet propaganda did not reflect its recent discovery as an issue within Muslim lands. The subject had been addressed, albeit elliptically, by the Russian Orthodox missionaries. As discussed in Chapter II, the missionaries had recognized the connection between the Tatar identity and Islam. In any event, either because nationalism was a taboo issue and/or because Soviet scholars, especially sociologists, had not taken nationalism seriously as a factor associated with religious beliefs, the topic was not addressed. But a series of developments -- sociological surveys throughout the 1960s and 1970s, along with the unfolding of *mirasism* (the rediscovery of the past as discussed in Chapter III) -- forced the subject into the open.[100] By the late 1970s the argument had become the dominant theme in anti-Islamic propaganda.

When the nationalism issue had first surfaced in the anti-Islamic literature, the scientific atheists had charged that only the most backward rural elements of

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99 Ashirov, *Musul'manskaia*, 70. Also see: Ashirov's more extensive study concerning the incompatibility of Islamic and Communist norms of morality in *Nravstvennye*, 37-55; Petrash, "Islam"; B.Kh. Tsavkilov; Bairamsakhatov and Mavliutov, 95-6 and *passim;* and B.A. Tsavlikov.

100 Among the earliest studies making the connection between Islam and nationalism see for example: Avksent'ev, *Islam i Byt*, 40; id., *O Preodolenii*, 7; Madzhidov, 110; Kadyrov, 59; Dorzhenov; Esbergenov, 206; Bokov, 32-3; Bazarbaev, "Nekotorye Rezul'taty," 93 and 99; Kuliev, "O Prichinakh," 109; M.V. Vagabov, "Perezhitki Islama," 126-7; and Khalmukhamedov, 58.

the population were confused about Islam and national tradition. For a long time, most propagandists maintained such a position. Not until the 1980s did the propagandists concede that the population at large, including urban workers, intellectuals of all fields, the political elite, and people of all ages, considered Islam to be an integral part of their national patrimony.

In mounting the argument that Islam fostered nationalism, Soviet propagandists, historians, and political scientists were forced to smooth over a problem within their own doctrine. The concept of nation should have withered away with the advancement of socialism in the wake of the 1917 Revolution. Indeed, the concept of nation did, in fact, effectively disappear from print. However, the sociological surveys forced the Soviet historians to come to grips with this unwanted detritus from bourgeois times.

Preserving doctrinal consistency, the political scientists created a distinction between the concept of nation as the term is popularly understood in the west and the concept of a so-called socialist nation.[101] They conceded that, in the turmoil following the Revolution, the Party decided to consolidate various groups along ethnic lines, forming socialist nations. A socialist nation is characterized by the absence of class exploitation and private property; hence, there is an absence of those layers of society seeking to preserve religion. Within a socialist nation, the leading force is the working class, the most irreligious class of society. Its *avant garde* is the Communist Party, whose ideology is dialectical materialism. In short, the leadership within the socialist nation is uncomfortable with religious beliefs. The socialist nation is characterized by a new set of social relations,

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101 See Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, 20-1.

leading to a new type of spiritual configuration having nothing in common with religion.[102]

The Soviet political scientists argued that the Muslim clerics -- the official clerics and even more the *Sufis* -- sought to identify themselves with these newly-created nations. Seizing upon the understandable interest of people in their historical past, the Muslim clerics attempted to reinvigorate an otherwise declining interest in religion by linking their teachings about Islam to the national patrimony.[103] The clerics "... present Islam as the guardian of national morals, and of national cultural values."[104] "They speculate upon the religious feelings of the Turkmens (or Tajiks, or Kirghiz ...), especially the young people, who are unable to distinguish the national from the religious."[105] "By every possible means they try to consolidate the ties (between national and religious survivals) to give a religious coloring to nationalism and a national meaning to religious feelings."[106] They "propagate among the believers, especially the younger generation, the idea that ... the observance of religious rites and customs are the very symbol of nationalism and the guarantor ... of national survival."[107] The list of such accusations is remarkably long and the accusations are remarkably unvaried. They sum up as a charge that the clerics confused their followers into believing that they were attesting to their national identity by observing the

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102 Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, 21.

103 Ashirov, *Islam i Natsii*, 46 and *passim;* and Khalmukhamedov.

104 Pivovarov, "Sotsiologicheskie," 317-8.

105 Ostroushkov.

106 Makatov, *Ateisty*, 32.

107 Klimovich, "Bor'ba Ortodoksov," 85.

Islamic rituals. That is, the Soviet specialists charged that the clerics attempted to fuse the concept of Muslim with that of Uzbek or, alternatively, Tajik, Turkmen, and so forth. According to the Soviet anti-Islamic specialists, however, nothing could be further from the truth.

Political scientists and historians argued that the true national character of these ethnic groups, has little, if anything, to do with Islam.[108] They pointed out that Islam is a foreign religion, imposed and maintained by force. As such, it could not be a part of the true national patrimony.[109] This is particularly true, the propagandists insisted, in those areas of the North Caucasus -- Chechnia, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia -- where Islam had not been introduced until the nineteenth century. While it is true, they said, that Islam spread a veneer over certain pre-Islamic rites emerging from the land -- the permutations of pre-Islamic practices discussed above -- this veneer did not form a genuine bond with the national past of these peoples.

The political scientists' attacks were a broadside against both official and unofficial clerics. However, the political scientists came to view the *Sufi* orders as the most dynamic and aggressive defenders and propagators of the misidentification of Islam with nationality.[110]

The sociological surveys of the 1960s and 1970s had revealed that Islam was particularly strong in regions where the *Sufi* orders had been historically vigorous. Thus, for example, *Sufi* orders had been historically prominent in the Chechen-Ingush Republic and Turkmenistan, and the sociological surveys

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108 Mazakhin.

109 See among others: Kaikatsishvili and Kontselidze; Mavliutov, 23-4; and Mullaev, 23-4.

110 For a study of the *Sufi* orders in the USSR see Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Le Soufi,* in particular 158-63.

revealed that they continued to be active in those areas.[111] According to the surveys, Islamic religiosity was high in the Chechen-Ingush Republic and Turkmenistan notwithstanding the absence of official mosques and registered clerics. Political scientists accused the *Sufi* propagandists of promoting an uninhibited nationalist message. Going further, the *Sufis* were charged with even greater crimes. Not limiting themselves to religious objectives, the *Sufis* were charged with engaging in political activities, teaching that a negative attitude toward the faith of their ancestors constituted treason. The *Sufi* message was distinguished by its anti-communist and anti-Russian character.[112] It was alleged that the *Sufis* preached that a believer should obey only those governments consisting of good Muslims, but he should not permit himself to be governed by non-believers -- and certainly not by atheists.[113] Political scientists and historians charged the *Sufis* with an interesting application of the misidentification of ethnicity with belief. They accused the *Sufis* of directing the Muslim hatred of their tsarist Russian conquerors towards their current Communist liberators.[114] The national patrimony celebrated by the *Sufis* served to glorify non-Marxist heroes, chiefly the *Sufis* who had fought the Russians.[115]

The anti-nationalism writings of the Soviet propagandists were not sustained throughout the remainder of the Soviet period. The only consistent

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111 For example see: Sukhareva, *Islam*, 51-8; Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom*, 76-102; Abdullaev and Vagabov; Iadaev and Pivovarov; Pivovarov, "Sotsiologicheskie"; Makatov, *Religioznye*; Tutaev; Mambetaliev, 35-43; Mamleev; Mustafimov; Demidov, *Sufizm*, 130-60; and Umarov.

112 Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom,* 100; Tutaev, 20; and E. Filimonov.

113 Aliskerov, 37

114 Avksent'ev, *Islam na Severnom*, 35.

115 In particular see Kurbanov and Kurbanov, 36-7.

arguments that persisted throughout the post-Stalin era and into the 1980s were those highlighting the divisive character of Islam. Arguments suggesting that Islam was unrelated to the true national patrimony of the various ethnic groups had been abandoned by the late 1970s. By the late 1980s, faced with the Iranian Revolution and the war in Afghanistan, the Soviets came to recognize that they faced a real danger, not only a delay in bringing their socialist revolution to fruition.

No longer were the Soviets working to build Soviet Man. Instead, the propaganda efforts of the 1980s returned to simple attacks similar to those mounted in the 1930s. The literature of denunciation in the 1980s was directed against the clerics, primarily the *Sufis*. Curiously, just as the Soviet literature had followed so many examples of the Russian Orthodox missionaries, their literature of *denouement* resembled that of the missionaries. By the end of the nineteenth century, when it had become clear to the Orthodox missionaries that they were losing, their writings too had turned to denunciations and warnings.

Conclusions

Anti-Islamic propaganda during the post-Stalin era was directed toward a more sophisticated and better educated public than during the 1920s and 1930s. Consequently, although the themes and arguments remained substantially unchanged from those that characterized the Stalin era, the presentations were less crude, more elaborate, perhaps more sophisticated. Moreover, the distinction between scholarly work and popular propaganda literature -- as exemplified by the popular journal *Nauka i Religiia* -- becomes blurred during the post-Stalin era. This is not a surprising outcome in view of the fact that the researchers doing scholarly work also had responsibility for preparing the literature for hands-on propaganda. Some themes and arguments that were

prominent during the Stalin era also continued in the post-Stalin era. In particular, the propaganda denouncing holidays, rites of passage, and other aspects of the Muslim way of life, continued throughout the post-Stalin era, even accelerating during the 1980s.

Aside from the Khrushchev period, policies involving the direct elimination of the religious establishment were abandoned. Hence, the propaganda supporting such direct efforts was substantially absent. This is not to suggest that the propagandists no longer resorted to direct confrontation. In fact, throughout much of the post-Stalin era there was a continuing attack against unofficial, or parallel, Islam. The principal brunt of these attacks were the *Sufi* brotherhoods. Much of the propaganda directed against the *Sufis* resembled the attacks against the clerics mounted during the 1920s and 1930s. But by the end of the Khrushchev period, the *Sufis* alone had remained as enemies of the people. After all, by then the official clerics had been incorporated into the *nomenklatura*.

Chapter VII: Conclusions

In the introductory chapter, the study was motivated along two lines. First, anti-Islamic propaganda was viewed as an aspect of Marxist efforts to create Soviet Man. It is accurate to admit that thinking and research during the course of the study was dominated by that perspective. Second, however, it was suggested that anti-Islamic propaganda during the Soviet period could be viewed as an aspect of colonialism. As it turns out, remarks of a conclusive character are shaped by the perspective from which the study is viewed.

At this writing, it has become reasonably clear that Islam remains strong within the Muslim lands of the former Soviet Union. Does the strength of Islam within these areas reflect the failure of anti-Islamic propaganda? Does it reflect the spiritual impotence of Soviet Man? Such conclusions are unduly specific within the context of a broadened body of evidence. That broadened evidence reminds us that Islam has experienced a resurgence throughout much of the Muslim world. Hence, it may be more plausible to view the Soviet experience as an aspect of the persistent rejection of the oppressors by the oppressed. Viewed within that context, the present study can be regarded as one case study among many.

The study did not encompass the specific responses of the Muslim population to the Soviet propaganda. Even so, we are persuaded that there was not passive acceptance. Certainly there was an extensive dialogue between the anti-Islamic propagandists and the Muslim intellectuals during the pre-Revolutionary period (e.g., the *Jadid* movement). Beyond that, we know that those oppressed in other colonized areas of the world did not accept their fate with passivity. There is no reason to believe that experience within the Muslim lands of the Soviet Union would have been different.

This study has confirmed some of the views expressed at the outset regarding the potential value of the study of propaganda as an aspect of historical analysis. Even though propaganda is likely to present a distorted image of its own subject matter, the propaganda themes and arguments reflect the picture that one gets from other, more general, sources. Accordingly, the study of propaganda can provide a supplement to and a verification of other forms of historical analysis.

This final chapter moves in seven-league steps through the history just traversed, tracing chronologically the propaganda changes during the Soviet period, then summarizing the major findings relating to changing themes and arguments, and, finally, suggesting directions for future research.

Propaganda and Historical Developments

At the outset it was suggested that propaganda shifts would parallel, or reflect, the changing exigencies facing the state. As it turns out, major shifts in propaganda themes and arguments provided the basis for the organization of the study into the Stalin era and the remainder of the Soviet period. Such propaganda shifts also permitted a further within-period delineation. In fact, however, it is unclear whether the propaganda shifts were in response to changing concerns of the state, to varying demands of the target audience, or to changing interests of the propagandists themselves.

The post-revolutionary period began with the outright destruction of the religious establishment during the Civil War. The Bolsheviks closed mosques and physically eliminated the clerics; in support, there was practically no propaganda effort. Following the Civil War and its anti-Islamic excesses, the Bolsheviks elected to suspend active and direct attacks. This period of relative moderation corresponded with the NEP. Although some propaganda developed during the

period, it concentrated on ridiculing the Muslim clerics. Later, as an aspect of Stalin's Revolution From Above, anti-Islamic propaganda became an integral part of the Cultural Revolution. Attacks against the Muslim clerics shifted from mere ridicule to scholarly demonstrations that the clerics were class enemies. With World War II, however, Stalin achieved a *detente* with the religious establishments of all faiths.

Following the death of Stalin, Khrushchev marked his return to Leninism with a renewed determination to liquidate all religion, including Islam. Within this setting, one in which the Soviet Union had reached its zenith both in terms of economic and military power and as the role model for world Communism, anti-Islamic propaganda became part of a gigantic centralized propaganda mechanism. By this time, scientific atheism had developed into a full-fledged, well-staffed intellectual discipline. As a consequence, anti-Islamic thought, which had heretofore surfaced from a variety of intellectual currents, became an outgrowth of a consistent, well thought-out, body of Marxist-Leninist theory.

No longer was anti-Islamic propaganda concerned with an observable Islamic establishment. The bulk of that establishment, the mosques and working clerics, had been effectively eliminated; the part of the establishment that remained, the Official Spiritual Boards (*Muftiats*), had been appointed by the Soviet authorities. The official clerics were so much a part of the establishment that Brezhnev was able to use them as ambassadors in the conservative Muslim world. The Soviet state was comfortably in power. From this point forward, anti-Islamic propaganda could be directed towards laying the underpinnings for Soviet man. Its role was to shape the myriad of beliefs, presuppositions, attitudes, prejudices, values, and mind-sets that make instinctive the reactions of a modern member of Soviet-style socialist society.

But the concerns of the Soviet state were profoundly changed during the 1980s. Nationalist sentiments around the periphery of the Soviet Union, always just below the surface, began to assert themselves. Although there had been growing evidence of Islamic revival in the late 1970s, it was not until the Iranian Revolution and the Afghan War that the propagandists began to link this Islamic revival with nationalism. Reflecting these new concerns, anti-Islamic propaganda shifted towards efforts to highlight the divisive character of Islam.

Changing Themes and Arguments

In view of the role of the class struggle in Marxist theory, it is unremarkable that it forms a major theme in anti-religious, including anti-Islamic, propaganda. Although the class struggle theme persisted throughout the Soviet period, there was an important shift in the way the theme was applied. In the Stalin era, the religious establishment received the brunt of the anti-Islamic attack. During this period, the class character of the religious establishment, the clerics, provided cursory justification for attack. Notwithstanding the generalized Marxist view that all religion is a tool of the ruling class, there was essentially no change regarding the class character of Islam. However, the class struggle theme was revisited in the post-Stalin era as a subject for scholarly investigation. During this period, emphasis was placed on the class character of Islam, with essentially no propaganda directed against the clerics.

The shift in the treatment of the class character of Islam is but one example of many changes that occurred in anti-Islamic writings. There were a number of individual themes -- e.g., the materialist origin of Islam, the personality of the Prophet, and the validity and class character of the *Qur'an* -- that were begun in the 1920s and 1930s, were continued and developed further during the post-Stalin era, but were effectively swallowed-up by more generic themes. To a major

extent, these changes reflect the evolution of scientific atheism, propaganda, and the propaganda apparatus over the course of the Soviet period. Prior to the Great Purges, there was an element of spontaneity in the anti-Islamic literature. The intellectual die had not yet been cast. It was possible, even necessary, during this period to mount an attack against, for example, the materialist origin of Islam, without having that attack firmly rooted within received Marxist doctrine. But in the post-Stalin era, each theme was placed within a broadened perspective. They were placed within an overall effort to explain within Marxist-Leninist thought the emergence and subsequent development of religion in general. In addition, there was an abundance of historical and ethnographical studies tracing the origin of Islamic beliefs and practices to a pre-Islamic past. As a consequence of these studies, Soviet propagandists were able to develop more fully the theme that Islam was not a legitimate religion.

One propaganda theme, which accelerated sharply in the late-1970s, had remained essentially unchanged throughout the preceding sixty years of the Soviet period. Attacks against Islam in daily life had begun in the 1930s and continued throughout the remainder of Soviet history, even though attacks on the treatment of women were toned down until the 1980s. Popular practices -- such as religious marriages, religious burials in purely Muslim cemeteries, circumcision, pilgrimages to holy places, and religious holidays -- were attacked during the late-1930s, and continued to be attacked throughout the Soviet period. But in the 1980s, as it became clear that these popular practices were the domain of the *Sufis*, regarded by the Soviets as chief carriers of nationalism, the pace of attack accelerated. Interestingly, there was little change in the nature of the arguments used against the practices; rather, the apparent increase in Soviet concern was reflected wholly by the marked increase in the quantity of propaganda devoted to the topic.

Only one new theme emerged prominently in the post-Stalin era. That theme, developed during the late-1970s and 1980s in response to nascent nationalism, related to the divisive character of Islam. We should remind ourselves, however, that this concern was not new to the Soviets. The Bolsheviks had acted against this potential problem early on by dividing the Muslim lands and by liquidating Muslim national communists. The apparent success of these early strategies may have lulled the Soviets into a false sense of security. In any event, the anti-nationalist propaganda theme was dormant until the very end of the Soviet period.

In reviewing the propaganda literature produced during the Soviet period, one is struck repeatedly by its similarity to the literature of the Russian Orthodox missionaries. The literatures were similar both in terms of their content and, at times, in terms of the audiences to which they were directed. The literature of the missionary period was addressed to a largely Russian-educated public, and consisted chiefly of an analysis of religious texts, such as the *Qur'an* or the *Shari'ah*. In contrast, the anti-Islamic literature during the Stalin period was addressed toward the broad masses, and, therefore, a largely uneducated public. This literature contained essentially no analysis of religious texts However, during the post-Stalin era the anti-Islamic literature was substantially targeted toward in intellectual elite, an audience similar to that targeted by the missionaries. Perhaps as a consequence, the literature returned increasingly to an analysis of religious texts. If this interpretation of causation is accurate, developments such as these deviate from an underlying presumption of this study. We have suggested that shifts in themes and arguments reflect shifts in concerns of the state. Rather, at least to some extent, the shifts in messages during the Soviet period reflected changes in the target audience, not changes in the concerns of the state.

Directions for Future Research

Future research can productively be undertaken in at least three directions. The first direction for future research is to assess the impact of the Soviet propaganda effort on the Muslim population. As in the rest of the colonized world, we know that the reaction of Muslims to anti-Islamic literature and campaigns was not passive. Accordingly, it would be of interest to identify and characterize these responses during the Soviet period. As a backdrop to this investigation it would be useful to review the responses of the Muslim scholars to the writings and activities of the Russian Orthodox missionaries. We know that there is just such a literature. We also know that there is a similar literature of reaction in the 1920s, prior to the Cultural Revolution. In the late 1970s there was also a not-so-"veiled" dialogue conducted within the Party-run newspapers of the Muslim republics. In response to articles criticizing various religious activities, the newspapers published letters to the Editor and other articles, presumably unsolicited, in support of those activities. Additional research in this vein would help in resolving problems related to distinctions between cause and effect.

Second, it would be of interest to determine the extent to which there were differences in anti-Islamic propaganda themes and arguments across different parts of the Soviet Muslim world. Within that context, it would be important to attempt to understand why such differences emerged. Underlying the present study is the presumption that shifts in propaganda through time reflect changes in the state's perceptions of threats and concerns. Is there reason to believe that Soviet concerns were sufficiently fine-tuned to be sensitive to differences across the Muslim republics? Directly related to an investigation of the variance in themes and arguments across different Muslim republics are questions relating to

the propaganda apparatus itself and to the role of the Communist Party. What was the role of the Party in defining and insuring orthodoxy in propaganda themes and arguments? Who in the Party was responsible? What institutions served to insure that emerging propaganda did not deviate from the Party line? To what extent was the propaganda apparatus in some republics better developed than in others? What are the explanations for such differences?

A third direction for future research is to broaden the analysis within and beyond the print media. We know that anti-Islamic themes were to be found in novels, plays, and poetry. But a thorough investigation of these areas, available in printed form, was beyond the scope of this study. It is known that radio, television, and movies were part of the propaganda apparatus. We have no way of knowing whether, or the extent to which, accounts of such propaganda have been preserved. Even so, the subject area deserves exploration.

APPENDIX

The following is a summary of articles appearing in *Bezbozhnik*, in chronological order. The choice of *Bezbozhnik* for the analysis of anti-Islamic themes and arguments at a popular level reflects several considerations. It is the specialized anti-religious journal that survived the longest, from 1925 to 1941. It was targeted to a broad public. It was published by the Society of Militant Godless, which also published anti-religious journals in Turkic languages at the same intellectual level (not available in the west). It is reasonable to assume, however, that the themes and arguments against Islam printed in Turkic journals are the same as those printed in *Bezbozhnik.*

The periodicity of *Bezbozhnik* was: 1925 (1-6: August-March) and (1-3: October-December), 1926-1932 (twice a month), 1933-1940 (monthly), and 1941 (6 numbers: January-June). At this writing, several volumes for 1937 and 1940 were missing.

Even a casual inspection of this bibliography reveals the dominant anti-religious themes discussed above. It is quite clear that the largest number of articles was devoted to criticisms of clerics. Probably the next three most important themes, in about equal proportions dealt with the exploitation of Muslim women, religious rites, or science versus religion. The geographic distribution of subject matter covered essentially all Muslim areas, but the largest number related to the North Caucasus.

Although we know very little about the background of the writers, it is probable that many or most were members of the Society of Militant Godless. The writers were chiefly journalists, probably emerging from the *meshchane*. There were only a few well-known intellectuals. Judging from their names they were mostly Russians, some clearly Jewish, some Armenian, and some Muslims. However, some obviously wrote under pseudonyms.

The propaganda assumed many forms: poems, cartoons, pictures, riddles, news reports, historical articles, literary criticism, tales, memoirs, and so forth. The articles were lacking in sophistication. They consisted of brutal, rude, and even stupid language and themes. One point emerges clearly. The writers had little regard for the Muslim population and its clerics.

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1926

DOBRIANSKII, V.N., "Khadzh: Palomnichestvo Musul'man v Mekku," *Bezbozhnik*, 1926, V. 9, pp. 10-11. Report. Attack on religious rites. The *Hajj,* one of the five "pillars of Islam," is described as expensive and unhealthy.

GVOZDEV, I., "Sheiku Krai a Gassanu Rai," *Bezbozhnik*, 1926, V. 11, p. 3. Poem. Attack on Clerics. Rich clerics rob the poor from the fruits of their labor by promising them rewards in heaven.

DOBRIANSKII, V., "Persidskoe Dukhovenstvo i Ego Rol' v Konstitutsionnom Dvizhenii 1906-1908g.," *Bezbozhnik*, 1926, V. 11, pp. 4-5. (Persia). Historical article. Attack on clerics. Muslim clerics initially sided with the Constitutional movement in Persia. Under the cover of the Constitutional slogan they wanted to restore antiquated forms of religious and economic exploitation of the masses. Clerics were the first to betray the movement for material advantages.

GORODETSKII, S., "Pro Samykh Glupykh i Samykh Zhadnykh," *Bezbozhnik*, 1926, V. 11, pp. 6-8. Tale. Attack on clerics. Clerics are ridiculed for their stupidity and greediness.

ROSTOVTSEV, A., "Religioznoe Izuverstvo v Persii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1926, V. 11, p. 11. (Persia). Report. Attack on religious customs. Denounces religious fanaticism using the example of the *Ashura*. For *Shi'ah* Muslims the *Ashura* involves self-flagellation on the anniversary of the death of *Imam* Husayn.

VEL'TMAN, S.L., "Antireligioznyi Moment v Khudozhestvennoi Literare Vostoka," *Bezbozhnik*, 1926, V. 11, p. 16. Literary criticism. The article

identifies anti-religious themes in mystic literature, suggesting that novelists and poets could and should use anti-religious themes.[1]

1927

CHERNYSHEVA, A., "Bez Voli Allakha," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 3, pp. 2-5. (Chechnia). Tale. Attack on customs (*adats*) and on clerics. Article attacks the *kalym* (bride-price), the marriage of young girls, the forced marriage, polygamy, the abduction of the bride. Calls for the liberation of women. Attack on clerics suggesting that they are sexist. Barbarian customs are displayed in contrast to Soviet progress. In this article the propagandist confuses the way of life with religious rituals.

CHERNYSHEVA, A., "Protiv Khrista i Magometa," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 4, pp. 8-9. (Ajaristan). Historical article. Attack on clerics. Muslim and Orthodox clerics dealt in white slavery, supplying women for the rich harems of Turkey, Persia, and Egypt.

PEROVSKII, N., "Chelovek Ili Tovar," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 5, pp. 10-12. (North Caucasus). Report. Attack on customs and on clerics. Article attacks the *kalym*, the marriage of young girls, forced marriages, polygamy, the abduction of brides. Article attacks clerics, suggesting that they seek only their material self-interest. For example, in exchange for bribes they sanctioned barbarian customs. The article argues that Soviet law is changing the life of women enslaved by the *Shari'ah*.

NAZAROVA, S., "Krov' Za Krov'," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 5, pp. 14-15. (Daghestan). Memoir. Attack on customs. The article describes the waste associated with the custom of blood feud. This custom has nothing to do with Islam, but the author claims that it is sanctified by Islam.

MAL'TSEV, V., "Nov'," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 10, pp. 7-9. (Tajikistan). Tale. Soviet achievements are extolled -- here kerosene lamps. Soviets foster the possibility of progress, thereby freeing man from the religious past.

MAL'TSEV, V., "Shaitan-arba" (Devil's Wheel), *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 12, p. 13. (Tajikistan). Tale. Soviet achievements -- here the railroad -- foster the possibility of progress, thereby freeing man from the religious past.

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1 Vel'tman-Pavlovich was the only professional orientalist among the early Bolsheviks.

KOR. No. 111, "U Podnozhiia El'brusa," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 13, p. 10. (Karachai oblast). Report. Soviet achievements -- schools, hospitals, cooperatives -- are extolled, fostering the possibility of progress, thereby freeing man from the religious past.

CHERNYSHEVA, A., "Bereket-Beresi," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 15, pp. 11-12. (Karachai oblast). Memoir. Attack on clerics. An untrustworthy cleric runs away with the money entrusted to him by poor mountaineers. Clerics stole, robbed and exploited people until the coming of Soviet power.

MAL'TSEV, K., "V Gorakh Tadzhikistana," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 15, pp. 13-14. (Tajikistan). Memoir. Soviet schools versus obscurantist *Qur'anic* school. Attack on clerics who opposed Soviet schools.

SALIM, "Dukhovenstvo Persii Deistvuet," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 16, pp. 2-3. (Persia). Report. Attack on clerics. The powerful clerics of Persia are reactionary and conservative. Not satisfied with the constitution of 1907, they agitate the masses against the government.

CHERNYSHEVA, A., "Bezbozhnyi Gorod," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 21, p. 15. (Karachai oblast). Report. Soviet political, economic and cultural achievements empty the mosques and destroy religious customs such as the marriage of young girls. Newly built towns are free from religion, but they have theaters, movies-theaters, post-offices and radios.

CHERNYSHEVA, A., "El'brus Svidetel' Istorii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 22, pp. 12-13. (Karachai oblast). Historical article. Attack on clerics. Clerics are counter-revolutionaries. In the Karachai country, Muslim clerics preached against the Red Army during the Civil War. In 1920, under their lead, a religious rebellion engulfed the Karachai country. Since the end of the Civil War, *mullahs* are losing their grip over the population.[2]

MAL'TSEV, "Religiia v Tadzhikistane," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 22, pp. 14-15. (Tajikistan). Report. Attack on clerics and the Basmachis. Clerics and *beys* exploited the poor peasants of Tajikistan. They agitated in favor of the Basmachis who pillaged, robbed and burned villages. When the Tajik peasants understood that the Soviets wanted only their well-being, they helped to defeat the Basmachis. Since the victory over the Basmachis, Soviet power has brought hope

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2 It is interesting to note that the author discusses a heretofore unknown rebellion in 1920 in the Karachai country. It may suggest that the religious uprising in 1920 in the North Caucasus was more extensive that had been previously thought.

for the future. They opened a school for the poor, not for the rich as it had been previously.

"Poezd v Kavkazskie Gory," *Bezbozhnik*, 1927, V. 24, p. 14. (North Caucasus). Report. Soviet achievements -- here the railroad -- are undermining faith in the *Qur'an* and the clerics.

1928

OZERSKII, A., "V Strane Chernogo Zolota," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 1, pp. 5-6. (Azerbaijan). Tale/report combined. Attack on clerics. Clerics exploited the naivete of people to live a parasitic life. Soviet achievements -- the industrialization of Baku -- are undermining the belief of people in the *Qur'an* and the *mullahs*.

OZERSKII, A., "Dagestan," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 2, pp. 9-10. (Daghestan). Report. Soviet idealized future is contrasted with the dreary past. In the industrialized future there is no place left for the *Shari'ah* nor Islam.

POLKANOV,I., "Zhertva," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 2, pp. 11-12. Report. Attack on customs alleged to be sanctified by the *Qur'an* including: the veiling, the *kalym*, polygamy, the forced marriage, and the marriage of young girls. According to the report, an old husband killed his young bride because she was not a virgin.

MAL'TSEV, "Tak bylo," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 4, pp. 12-13. (Bukhara). Historical tale. Attack on clerics. In the past, clerics helped the *beys* to oppress the poor. Also, clerics were providers of young girls for the pleasure of the rich.

KARLOV, L., "Na Prazdnike Smychki v Tatarii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 4, pp. 14-15. (Tatarstan). Report. The first all-Tatar congress of women workers and peasants. Liberated women swear never to return to old ways.

APUSHKIN, I., "Zakon Gor," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 10, pp. 1-3. (Probably the North Caucasus). Tale. Attack on customs. Attacked are the *kalym* and the forced marriage. If a girl runs away with her lover, she is forcibly brought back by her relatives. The lover is killed. Such "customs" are said to be sanctified by fanatic clerics. The way of life of Muslims is contrasted to that of the "*giaours*" (here the Soviets) which is said to mean freedom.

RAVICH, N., "V Strane Chudes," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 10, pp. 4-5. (Afghanistan). Report. Socialist progress is loosening the grip of religion in

Afghanistan. Under the king Amanullah, Afghanistan entered into a friendly relationship with the Soviet regime.

KARACHAILY, I., "Pod Prikrytiem Religii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 10, p. 10. (North Caucasus). Tale. Attack on the levirat custom. In the tale a woman is forced to marry a young boy, brother of her dead husband.

LEBEDEV, L., "Za To Chto Sniala Parandzhu," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 11, p. 16. (Uzbekistan). Report. A woman activist is murdered by her own family because she corrupted other women and disrupted the work of the clerics.

BAZAROV, V., "Vekhi," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V, 12, pp. 10-11. (Uzbekistan). Report. Attack on customs. Attacked are the veiling and the "cloistering" of women. The article emphasizes improvements in women's life brought by Soviet power.

ADAM, "Vchera Takikh Zhenshchin Pobili By Kamniami Vo Imia Allakh," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 15, p. 15. (Cherkess oblast). Report. Attack on religious rites, clerics, and on *Qur'anic* schools. Women refuse to observe the fasting of *Ramadan*. Clerics agitated against Soviet schools and especially against education for women. *Qur'anic* schools are described as nests of obscurantism and are contrasted to Soviet schools.

GORODETSKII, S., "Allakh Vse Mozhet," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 18, pp. 6-7. Tale. Attack on clerics. Greedy *mullahs* take advantage of the naivete of poor people in order to fleece them in the name of Allah.

SALIM, "Sovetskie Negry," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 18, p. 16. (Abkhazia). Historico-ethnographic article. Short article on Muslim negroes in Abkhazia, descendants of former slaves brought by Turks. They are listed as Abkhazians in the census, speak Abkhazian, have Abkhazian names, but preserve some African beliefs.

OZERSKII, A., "Storona Bashkirskaia," *Bezbozhnik*, 1928, V. 19, pp. 6-7. (Bashkiria). Report. Attack on clerics. The article contrasts Soviet successes to the poverty and oppression of the past. It raises questions concerning the continued strength of Islam in Bashkiria. At the writing there continued to be a large number of clerics under the control of the mufti of Ufa, Fakhretdinov. In 1928, there were 3,527 open mosques with 9,500 *mullahs*, and 40 thousand "religious activists" (maybe *Sufis*). In other words, there was one mosque for 360 inhabitants, one *mullah* for 137 inhabitants, and one religious activist for 40 inhabitants. According to the author, Fakhretdinov is a modernist and is apparently loyal to the regime but he is hiding his ideas and conducts a holy war

against Leninism.[3] The article also mentions that two sons of Fakhretdinov are atheist communists, working for socially useful organizations.

1929

SALIM, "Bor'ba v Afganistane," *Bezbozhnik*, 1929, V. 1, p. 3. (Afghanistan). Report. Attack on clerics. The article deals with the 1929 uprising of the Shinwari tribe (Pashtun) against King Amanullah, friend of the Soviet Union. The uprising is said to have been stirred up by reactionary, anti-socialist, conservative clerics, and to have been sponsored by the British imperialists.[4]

SHUR, IA., "Na Bor'bu Za Osvobozhdenie Zhenshchiny Vostochnitsy," *Bezbozhnik*, 1929, V. 4, p. 3. Report. Attack on clerics. Conservative, anti-Soviet clerics strive to undermine Soviet reforms. In the case at hand they agitate against Soviet education for girls.

BONCH-BRUEVICH, V., "Rol' Magometanskogo Dukhovenstva v Ubiistve A.S. Griboedova," *Bezbozhnik*, 1929, V. 4, p. 8. (Persia). Historical article. Attack on clerics. Written by a well known Bolshevik, the article is a patriotic defense of the 19th century Russian ambassador to Persia assassinated by order of "fanatic" clerics.

SALIM, "Babizm i Bekhaizm," *Bezbozhnik*, 1929, V. 5, pp. 12-14. Historical/ethnographical article. Unfriendly account of the Bahai communities in the Soviet Union. The Bahais are criticized for their pacifism, their obnoxious "Tolstoyan" character, their rejection of the class-struggle, and their religious propagandizing, in particular among Muslim masses. The Bahais of the Soviet Union are said to be manipulated by the Bahais of the United States.[5]

BOL'SHOI, P., "Tatarskaia Basnia o Sotvorenii Mira," *Bezbozhnik*, 1929, V. 9, p. 14. (Crimea). Tale. A not too crude and rather nice variant on the accepted Adam and Eve theme, as told by children. The site of paradise is Baghchesaray in the Crimea. Eve is made of a dog's tail. God's apple was forbidden, not

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3 Rizaeddin Fakhreddin was killed in prison in 1936.

4 The same Shinvari tribe resisting the Soviets in the 1980s was said to be sponsored by the Pakistani, the Chinese, or the Americans.

5 The Bahai sect, a sect that stemmed from Islam, is not recognized by the Muslim community as part of Islam. In the early years of the Soviet regime, Bahais were generally viewed as revolutionaries. This article is one of the first attacks upon them.

because it held the secret of life but because it was the most expensive fruit, five kopecks.

OZERSKII, A., "Gandzha -- Bezbozhnyi Gorod," *Bezbozhnik*, 1929, V. 9, pp. 16-17. (Azerbaijan). Report. Soviet industrial achievements are killing religion. The industrial new Gandja is free from religion. Instead of mosques it has clubs, movie-theaters, red-corners, radio, etc..

1930

GREKOV, A., "Zeinab," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 3, pp. 18-19. Tale. Attack on religious rites and clerics. The article calls for the liberation of women from observance of barbarian religious practices. In the case at hand, the article promotes resistance to the fasting of the month of *Ramadan*. Attack on conservative clerics who agitate for the continuous observance of such rites.

"Tam Gde Zhili Tsari," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 4, pp. 16-17. (Crimea). Historical article/report. Under the old regime, clerics teamed up with the bourgeoisie to enslave the masses spiritually. They built mosques but not schools or hospitals. Since the revolution, Soviet achievements are emptying the mosques.

SALIM, "Sed'maia Soiuznaia Sovetskaia Tadzhikskaia Respublika," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 5, pp. 6-7. (Tajikistan). Report. The article contrasts Soviet cultural and economic progress to the pre-Revolutionary obscurantism. However, concerns are voiced about the strong influence exercised by the conservative Ismaili religious leaders (*pirs*) in Badakhshan, who hinder progress.

KREMEN', M., "Shagaia Po Kavkazu," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 5, pp. 14- 15. (Daghestan). Report. Attack on clerics. In this article, for the first time, clerics are presented as counter-revolutionaries, and enemies of the people. Clerics are accused of sabotaging collectivization and refusing to comply with Soviet administrative reforms. In particular, they refuse to recognize civil marriages. The article also describes the work of Society of Militant Godless: efforts of Society to attract women, creation of an anti-religious museum in Makhach-Kala, development of anti-religious press, pamphlets, posters, etc.. On the demands of workers, mosques are being closed by the Society. Of interest in the article are data relating to mosques and clerics. In Daghestan, for a population of one million, there are 2 thousand mosques, 2 thousand *mullahs*, several thousand *mutalims*, and 3 thousand *Sufis* who struggle against Soviet power.

SOLOV'EV, L., "Ishany," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 9, pp. 8-9. (Ferghana valley near Kokand). Tale. Attack on clerics. Article makes fun of *Sufis*. *Sufis* are

depicted as crooks, frauds, parasites, and capitalists. They invent miracles to take advantage of naive people.

DOBRIANSKII, V., "U Azerbaidzhanskikh Kurdov," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 9, pp. 12-13. (Kurds of Azerbaijan). Ethnographic report. Attack on Kurdish clerics and such customs as: *aqsaqalism* (reliance on the council of the elders), polygamy, *kalym*, pilgrimage to holy places, and various superstitious practices. The article describes the assassination of a woman ordered by the council of elders (including her relatives) because after her marriage she was found not to be a virgin. Islam is half heathen among the Kurds, and their clerics are as much sorcerers as servants of the cult. Islam and its clerics are, therefore, a social evil.

SALIM, "Kirgizy i Islam," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 10, pp. 10-11. (Kirgizia). Historical/ethnographic article. Attack on clerics and customs. Islam among the Kirghiz is accused of compromising with pre-Islamic beliefs. The class character of Islam is revealed by the commonality of interest between the Kirghiz *manaps* (aristocracy) and the clerics. In the first years of the Soviet regime, under the agitation of clerics and *manaps*, Islam went through a period of expansion. The article presents data on the construction of mosques built near Issyk-Kul between 1917 and 1926: in 1917, 2 mosques; 1918, 6; 1919, 9; 1920, 10; 1921, 7; 1922, 13; 1923, 28; 1924, 34; 1925, 14; 1926, 9. From 1927 on, with the elimination of the *manaps*, Islam is said to be losing strength. Attack on customs such as: polygamy, *kalym*, and the marriage of young girls.

PLATONOV, G., "O Shamkhorskom Chude," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 10, p. 19. (Azerbaijan). Report. Attack on holy places and clerics. The article concerns the founding of a holy place (tomb of a saint whose name is not specified) in the village of Bittili, district of Shamkhor, okrug of Gandja. It is a place were peasants came for healing. The article attacks not only the superstitious aspect of the pilgrimage but also its anti-socialist aspect. Clerics and other enemies of the Soviet regime organize pilgrimages to the holy place in the spring in order to sabotage the work of *kolkhoz*.[6]

ORLOVETS, P., "Tselebnaia Griaz' Allakha," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 12, pp. 14-16. (Crimea). Tale. Attack on holy places and clerics. The article is an attack on the superstitious belief in holy places (here a holy place in Cairo), and upon the crooked clerics who attend them. A believer goes to Cairo to buy and bring back some healing dirt from a holy place, later to sell it to other fools. Instead, he falls ill and is cured by a doctor, not the healing dirt. As a result he becomes an atheist.

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6 On the particular events surrounding the holy place of Bittili see Khadzhibeili, 43-4.

PASLAVLEV, M., "Padaiushchie minarety," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 15/16, pp. 10-11. (Uzbekistan). Report. In the cities, Islam is dying out under the impact of modernization. The article compares 1930 with the pre-1924 period when people were wasting their time in useless prayers. After 1924, clerics lost their *raison d'etre*.[7] Women are emancipated, *Qur'anic* schools were closed, justice was in the hands of the Soviets, and medicine in the hands of doctors. Mosques are being closed or transformed into movie theaters, power stations, hotels, garages, museums, clubs, schools, libraries, and so forth. Like rats, clerics take refuge in the backward countryside.

KLIMOVICH, L., "Khadzh i Biudzhet Khidzhaso-Nedzhskogo Gosudarstva," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 15-16, p. 21. (Arabia). Report. Attack on religious rites. The *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) is a tool of exploitation of the masses in the hands of capitalists and pro-British imperialists. In 1929, the *Hajj* brought 1.3 million pounds stolen from the masses to the king of Saudi Arabia.

SALIM, "Budem Borot'sia s Chadroi," *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, V. 22, pp. 3-4. (Central Asia). Methodological article. Attack on customs and clerics. The author ties the fight for the emancipation of women (symbolized by the struggle against the veil) with the fight against counter-revolutionary clerics. The emancipation of women, their economic and social mobilization, will undermine the role of the clerics and eventually bring the disappearance of Islam. Clerics, who understand the danger, try to stop the process of emancipation by organizing the assassination of activist women. The article mentions the errors made in the early phase of the campaign against the veil, and calls for a long educational work among women.

1931

B.G., "Molitvy Protiv Krizisa," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 4, p. 8. (Persia). Report. Attack on clerics. The author dwells on the stupidity of clerics who believe and preach that the economic crisis in Persia can be stopped by prayers. Clerics are an opiate for the people.

ARDI, IU., "Cherkeshenka, Osvobozhdaiushchaiasia ot Tsepei Religii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 4, p. 9. (Adyghe A.R.). Report. Attack on clerics. The article describes the socialist progress in the Adyghe A.R., its alphabatization and its economic successes. However, the clerics, together with their allies the "white" bandits, continue their counter-revolutionary agitation of the population.

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7 The nationalization of the *waqfs* began in 1924.

The authors quote the case of the reopening of a village mosque, where women have been admitted for the first time. Clerics are also infiltrating the *kolkhoz*. The author complains about the virtual absence of anti-religious work in the villages. Komsomol, Soviet and Party organizations are totally uninterested in anti-religious work and even display a tolerant attitude toward religion. The author calls for a change of attitude toward the clerics, who are enemies.

"Poslednii Imam," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 6, pp. 14-15. (Daghestan). Historical article. Attack on *Muridism*. The article is a review of the 1920 religious uprising in Daghestan, and a violent attack against Najmuddin Gotsinski and Uzun Hajji, the leaders of the movement. Najmuddin Gotsinski and Uzun Hajji are described as fanatics, capitalists, and counter-revolutionaries.[8] The famous saying of Uzun Hajji, "I am weaving a rope to hang engineers, students and in general all those who write from left to right," is quoted. However, the article concludes that the poor masses of Daghestan defeated those reactionaries. Therefore, Islam and *Muridism* are counter-revolutionary.

LUKOVSKII, N., "Svin'i Byvaiut Raznye," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 6, pp. 16-17. Tale. Attack on clerics and religious customs. Clerics are untrustworthy. The crude story denounces a greedy fat village *mullah* who used to eat pork secretly. The liberated people kicked the *mullah* out, closed the mosque, and started to eat pork.

ORLOVETS, P., "Svin'ia," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 7, pp. 9-10. (Kabarda). Tale. Attack on clerics and religious customs. Clerics are untrustworthy, they eat pork secretly.

"Budni Kishlaka," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 11/12, pp. 12-13. (Uzbekistan). Tale. Attack on clerics, religious schools and superstitions. Soviet education is better than religious education. With the new alphabet in Soviet schools, even simple villagers can learn to read. Clerics had declared the sanctity of the Arab alphabet so that they alone would be able to read and, therefore, better cheat the people. In the same article, clerics are accused of playing upon the superstition of people to practice healing through prayers. Under the guise of special healing "prayers" or ablutions, they satisfied their sexual drive (here by force) with naive women.

"Religii Byvshikh Ugnetennykh Natsii Samoderzhavnoi Rossii Sluzhili Tsarizmu," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 16, p. 12. Historical article. Clerics of the Muslim Society of Orenburg (Ufa) were agents of the Tsarist regime. They preached obedience to the Tsarist authority; they acted as police informers; and they served the

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8 Najmudin Gotsinski was executed in 1925.

imperialistic interests of the state in its colonial expansion. Clerics are, and have always been, enemies of the people.

ARISTOV-ARSOV, V., "Diadzhal," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 20, pp. 14-15. Tale. Attack on clerics. Clerics oppose women's emancipation, in particular their participation in women's clubs.

KLIMOVICH, L., "Ateisticheskaia Propaganda na Tak Nazyvaemom Musul'manskom Vostoke," *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 22, pp. 16-17. (Persia, Palestine, India). Report. The article describes the rise of anti-religious organizations in Muslim countries abroad.

ASLANBEK SHAKH-GIREI, Title illegible, *Bezbozhnik*, 1931, V. 23, pp. 10-11. (Chechnia). Tale. Attack on clerics. The story is about an old, rich, fat, nasty and sexist *mullah*, who tries to steal the wife of his poorest parishioner.[9]

1932

ASLANBEK SHAKH-GIREI, "Zakiat," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 3, pp. 13-14. (Chechnia). Tale. Attack on clerics. The story is about a greedy and sexist *mullah* who collect the *zakat* (legal alms of 10% of the revenues for the poor), hides it in his garden, and then spends it on girls. He also tries to sabotage the establishment of a *kolkhoz*.

S.B., "Sledy Allakha," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 9, p. 14. (Daghestan) Tale. Attack on clerics and holy places. The article is designed to undermine the legitimacy of holy places by ridiculing their origins. A crooked *mullah* pretends that God has left a print of his foot in the mosque, and a pilgrimage is born. The article also ridicules the believers.

RAISKII, B., "Konkvistadory i Donoschiki: Iz Istorii Pravoslavnogo i Musul'manskogo Dukhovenstva v Epokhu Zavoevaniia Srednei Azii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 10, p. 5. (Central Asia). Historical article. Attack on clerics. The article denounces the local Orthodox and Muslim clerics in assisting the Tsarist administration. Muslim clerics (*ulama*), having realized that the foreign oppressors did not diminish but on the contrary increased their influence and revenues, supported them in all aspects, even denouncing those who agitated among the masses against the Russian conquerors. The author acknowledges that among the "non-official" clerics (*ishans*) there were some that were not friends of the Tsarist regime. For example the author brings up the Andijan rebellion.

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9 The story takes place in the district of Urus-Martan, a center of the *Sufi Qadiri* order.

However, he dismisses the ishans (*Sufis*) as striving to reestablish the despotic rule of the khans. Muslim clerics showed themselves as agents of the Tsarist administration when they joined the counter-revolutionary forces during the Civil War. Clerics are, and have always been, enemies of the people.

GAI, M., "Tam, Gde 70% Kolkhoznikov Bezbozhniki," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 13/14, pp. 15-16. (Tatarstan). Report. Soviet achievements are killing religion. Islam is dying out in the kolkhozes. In the village of Kazanbash, district of Arsk (north of Kazan), there is no mosque left. Nobody observes the fasting of *Ramadan*, nobody observe *Kurban-bairam*. Of some interest are data concerning the activities of the Society of Militant Godless. In Kazanbash there are 6 atheist circles, 42 atheist meetings had been organized (in 1932), 340 copies of *Bezbozhnik* had been distributed, 182 women are activists.

GOTCHIKHANOV, A., and S. VISAEV, "Ibragim i Mulla," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 13/14, pp. 16-17. (Chechnia). Report. Attack on clerics. The greedy *mullah* of the *aul* of Valerik struggles against the transformation of the village into a *kolkhoz*. He is sentenced to labor camp for sabotage.

"Voennyi Zaem' 1916 g.," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 15/16, p. 18. Historical article. Attack on clerics. (Only a section of the article is devoted to Muslim clerics.) In supporting their national governments in the War, Muslim clerics served the interest of their national bourgeoisie, and not the interest of the masses.

"Poslednii Imam Chechni," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 15/16, pp. 18-19. (Chechnia, aul of Makazhay). Report. Attack on *Sufis*. The article describes an uprising of *Qadiri murids* in Chechnia in 1931.[10] The information is interesting because the events described were otherwise unknown. The religious leader, Seyfuddin Saadaev, was also unknown. The uprising is said to be directed against the Communists and the Russians.

A.S., "Ikh Imena Izvestny: Epizod Iz Deiatel'nosti Missionerov v Afganistane," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 17/18, p. 11. (Afghanistan). Report. A conservative religious uprising by a Pashtun tribe in the valley of Kara-Gebak (near the Indian border) against a progressive government is said to have been organized by British missionaries.

AMOSOV, N., "Bor'ba Popov, Ravvinov, Mull i Sektanskikh Propovedni Protiv Pervoi Piatiletki," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 19-20, p. 6. Report. Attack on Clerics.

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10 The *Qadiri* are not named but the article mentions a *zikr* with dances as practiced by the *Qadiri* of the North Caucasus.

The article speaks of the anti- socialist clerical offensive against the five year plan. Clerics of all denominations are class enemies.

ALEKSANDROV, "Shakhimardan," *Bezbozhnik*, 1932, V. 19/20, pp. 18- 19. (Uzbekistan). Report. Attack on holy places and clerics. The holy place under attack in this article is Shahimardan in the Ferghana valley, one of the most holy centers in Cental Asia, where pilgrims used to come from Afghanistan and India. Shahimardan (*Shah-i Mardan* = King of Men) is the mythical tomb of *Khalif* Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. Shahimardan is described as the epitome of obscurantism, a *Basmachi* nest, and a center of counter-revolutionary activities by the clerics. In 1928, the Uzbek Bolshevik poet Hakim Zade Niyazi, who was organizing atheistic work, was assassinated in Shahimardan under the instigation of clerics. After the assassination of Niyazi, Soviet organizations closed the holy place supposedly in response to popular pressure. The tomb of Ali had been opened and no remains had been found.[11] A camp for pioneers had been built on the site of the holy place. The author concludes that Soviet achievements and women emancipation have destroyed popular superstitious beliefs.[12]

1933

TOLIN, N., "Vrednye Prazdniki," *Bezbozhnik*, 1933, V. 4, pp. 2-3. Think piece. Attack on religious holy days. Attacked are: Muslim *Kurban-bairam*, Christian Easter, and Jewish Passover. The Muslim *Kurban-bairam* -- the day of sacrifice, commemorating the sacrifice of Ismail by his father Abraham -- is said to be a survival of ancient times. Furthermore, science has long proved that Ismail and Abraham have never existed. Such holy days have always been tools in the hands of oppressors. By preaching submission to the existing order in exchange for the joys of paradise, they were an obstacle to the development of the class-struggle. The secular celebration of the 1st of May is replacing the religious holy days.

L'VOV, L., "Sobytiia v Kishlake," *Bezbozhnik*, 1933, V. 4, pp. 12- 13. (Tajikistan). Tale. Attack on clerics. Clerics are sabotaging work in the

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11 The very publicized exhumations of Orthodox saints had started in 1917.

12 Shakhimardan remains one of the most holy Muslim places in the Soviet Union. The *mazar* was reopened in the late 1930s and closed again in 1940. In 1940, the *mazar* was replaced by an anti-religious museum. Periodically Soviet propagandists continued to complain about Shahimardan. In 1961 Petrash insisted that it continued to be one of the most frequented holy place with hundreds of pilgrims. See Petrash, *Sviatye*, 44-5. In 1978 Saidbaev noted that pilgrimages to Shahimardan took place under the cover of tourism. See Saidbaev, *Islam i Obshchestvo*, 210. In 1979 Davlatbaev asserted that the *mazar* was very popular. See Davlatbaev, 41-2

kolkhozes. The story relates how clerics destroyed a project of silk-worms by bringing ants.

DOROFEEV, I., "Pamir," *Bezbozhnik*, 1933, V. 5, pp. 16-17. (Pamir). Report. The author contrasts the backwardness of the pre-1917 Pamir, cut off from the rest of the world, to Soviet achievements in the region. With Soviet achievements -- here road construction, electricity, radio, hospitals, schools, and movie-theaters -- Islam is vanishing. Attack on clerics. Clerics, who were strong supporters of the *Basmachis*, are opposing Soviet reforms.

ARISTOV, V., "Rasskaz o Saranche i Aeroplanakh," *Bezbozhnik*, 1933, V. 7, pp. 14-15. (Daghestan). Tale. Attack on clerics. The story tells of the conflict between Bolsheviks and *mullahs* at the time of collectivization. However, Soviet technology destroyed an invasion of locusts, and the population abandoned the *mullahs* and entered the *kolkhozes*.

1934

"Oktiabr'skaia Revoliutsiia i Musul'manskoe Dukhovenstvo," *Bezbozhnik*, 1934, V. 10, p. 3. Historical article. Attack on clerics. During the Civil War all religious organizations took sides against the Soviet government. Muslim and Orthodox religious authorities even called a truce and joined hands. The armies of Kolchak, Denikin, Semenov had numerous Muslim clerics. Clerics actively agitated among Muslim masses to fight with the whites. Clerics always have been counter-revolutionaries.

KHODYREV, P., "Karyizhelik," *Bezbozhnik*, 1934, V. 10, pp. 10-11. (Kazakhstan). Tale. Attack on customs, especially the authority of the elders. Young *Komsomol* members are shown in conflict with their obscurantist elders.

"Desiatiletie Razmezhevaniia Srednei Azii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1934, V. 12, pp. 4-5. (Central Asia). Report. The article contrasts pre-1917 Turkestan, dominated by obscurantist clerics and *khans*, with Soviet Central Asia marching toward progress and freedom from religion. Attack on clerics. Clerics are accused of sabotaging the *kolkhoz*.

KLIMOVICH, L., "Tam Gde Byli Ochagi Durmana," *Bezbozhnik*, 1934, V. 12, pp. 6-9. (Central Asia). Report. Attack on holy places and clerics. Holy places are nests of obscurantism and centers of counter-revolutionary activities of the clerics. However, they are being destroyed or converted into cradles for socialist culture and atheism. The following holy places are mentioned: Holy Spring "Qadiriia" near Tashkent became the Karl Marx hydro-electric station; *mazar* of Hoja Zakariia Warak (a *Sufi* saint) near the Zarafshan river in the Samarkand

region became the "1st of May" barrage; mausoleum of Chopan Ata (saint protector of cattle breeders among the nomads) a XVth century monument east of Samarkand had been replaced by a *kolkhoz*; mausoleum and mosque of Zengi Ata (surname of the *Yasawi shaykh* Aq Ishan) is closed; mausoleum of Shahimardan (see earlier article) is closed; *madrasah* of Sheikhantawr in Tashkent is transformed into a cinema; in the Registan of Samarkand the *madrasahs* of Ulug Beg and Shir Dor are transformed into anti-religious museums, the *madrasah* of Hoja Ahrar (a great *Naqshbandi* saint) has been converted to a depot. The author, however, complains that the anti-religious drive is not hard enough. More anti-religious museums should be organized in former mosques and *madrasahs* in Bukhara, Kokand, Ashkhbad, Stalinabad (Dushanbe), Ferghana.[13].

1935

"Skazki o Mulle Nasr-ed-Dine," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 2, pp.4-5. Tales. Short anti-clerical stories, copied from the famous Nasreddin Hoja character. The article has no particular message, except that clerics are untrustworthy as they enjoy playing tricks on people.

"Poslovitsy o Popakh i Mullakh," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 2, p. 12. Proverbs. Anti-clerical proverbs picturing *mullahs* as gluttonous, greedy, and idiots.

MASHCHENKO, V., "Sovetskii Azerbaidzhan," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 4, pp. 6-8. (Azerbaijan). Historical article/report. Attack on clerics, pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. Prior to the Revolution, the Tsarist regime, clerics and *beys* exploited the masses of Azerbaijan. The Musavat Party, its leader Rasul Zade, and their allies the clerics are criticized for their pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic stand and their bourgeois, anti-class struggle position. But, thanks to the wise Stalin and his companions Ordjonikidze, Kirov, Beria and Bagirov, the bourgeois enemy was crushed. Clerics are denounced for their continous opposition to Soviet power and reforms. The article also details the achievements of 15 years of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan: industrialization, collectivization, women's emancipation...

KLIMOVICH, L., "Islam v Tsarskom Azerbaidzhane," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 4, p. 8. (Azerbaijan). Historical article. Attack on clerics. Clerics always have been

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13 Some of the holy places discussed in this article remained places of pilgrimage throughout much of the Soviet period. For example in 1979 Gapurov, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of Turkmenistan, complained that local authorities were unable to stop pilgrimages to the mausoleum of Zengi Ata. See M.N. Gapurov, *Turkmenskaia Iskra*, 21 July 1979.

class enemies. They were loyal servants of the Tsars and the capitalists in their economic and cultural oppression of the national masses.

KLIMOVICH, L., "Musul'manskoe Dukhovenstvo v 1905 Godu," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 4, p. 12. Historical article. Attack on clerics. Clerics have always been class enemies. In the 1905 revolution, Muslim religious organizations came out in support of the Tsarist government and against the proletariat. Particular attacks are levelled against the *muftiat* of Ufa.

GASANOV, R.KH., "Iz Istorii Kontrrevoliutsii v Lenkorani," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 7, p. 19. (Azerbaijan). Historical article. A rather interesting article on the Revolution (1919-1920) in Lenkoran, in southern Azerbaijan on the Iranian border. The author describes Lenkoran as the center of *Shi'ah* counter-revolutionary activity in Azerbaijan. It also was the center of an anti-Soviet *Sunni* (probably *Sufi* led) movement, led by a certain Hajji Shaykh. To add a little color, Lenkoran was a Christian sectarian (Baptists, Molokans, Old believers) counter-revolutionary nest. Since the Bolsheviks' victory, however, religion had disappeared in Lenkoran. All mosques had been destroyed or transformed into garages or depots.

SHAVALDIN, "Varvarskie Obychai," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 8, p. 7. (Bashkiria). Survey. Attack on religious customs. Attacked is circumcision. Three villages have been investigated. The investigation shows that all male children are circumcised, including children of Party activists. In the year 1935 alone, 25 children from the village of Khaibat, 40 children from Apsel, and 100 children from Esaulovo, between the age of 1 and 15 have been circumcised. The article calls for the justice department to investigate and to bring to justice the perpetrators of that unhealthy custom.

"Pravda Pobedila," *Bezbozhnik*, 1935, V. 9, pp. 8-9. (Turkmenistan). Tale. Attack on clerics. The story is about how an anti-Soviet *mullah* tries to sabotage the construction of the canal of Kara-Kum.

1936

I., "S.M. Kirov o Religii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1936, V. 1, pp. 3-4. (Caucasus). Historical/think piece. The author analyzes Kirov's anti-religious activities in the Caucasus. The article is an occasion to attack the anti-Soviet reactionary clerics, particularly those of the North Caucasus, and bourgeois nationalist parties, such as the Musavat of Azerbaijan.

"Zamechatel'nye S"ezdy Zhenskoi Molodezhi," *Bezbozhnik*, 1936, V. 2, pp. 2-3. Report. The article report on women's congresses and on the need to continue

the fight for women's emancipation. The article is an attack on Islam viewed as the major obstacle to women's emancipation. The *Qur'an* had enslaved women in every detail of life. The author gives quotes from the *Qur'an* that show the inferior status of women. The article also attack customs, such as *kalym* and marriage of young girls. The author reports on the low participation of young Muslim women in the *Komsomol* organizations. For example, there are only 9% of natives in the *Komsomol* organization of Tajikistan. Such low participation is explained by the insufficiencies of the anti-religious propaganda, some Party activists considering it to be unnecessary.

SUMBATOV, G., "Ulybka Tanbiike," *Bezbozhnik*, 1936, V. 2, pp. 5-7. (North Caucasus, Karanogay steppe). Tale. Soviet medicine saves lives where prayers and reliance on Allah could not. A mid-wife saves the life of a Muslim woman in child-labor. The *mullah's* prayers were killing her. Islam is anti-hygienic.

1937 (Incomplete)

"Zhadnii Mulla," "Bog Pomog," and "Smert' Boga," *Bezbozhnik*, 1937, V. 10, pp. 12-13. Three tales. Two of the tales attack clerics for their greediness. The third tale relates that God himself sided with the oppressors against Lenin and Stalin, but was defeated.

1938

KLIMOVICH, L., "Protiv Kurban-Bairam," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 1, p. 9. Historical/report. Attack on religious holy days and clerics. Attacked is *Kurban-bairam*, said to be a survival of the pre- Islamic polytheistic practices of the Arabs. *Kurban-bairam* has always been an instrument of oppressors, be it the feudal ruling class of the *Khalifate*, the Tsarist government, or the White Army generals. Indeed, at the time of *Kurban-bairam* clerical preaching emphasized submission and obedience to the oppressors. During the Civil War *Kurban-bairam* was an occasion for counter-revolutionary propaganda. In the Soviet Union, clerics use it to agitate against industrialization, collectivization, and socialism. *Kurban-bairam* is said to be a good source of revenues for the clerics. The author also denounces Tarjemanov, the head of the Muslim board in Ufa, for having been a spy for the Japanese imperialists.

DUBINSKAIA, T., "V Ushchel'iakh Pamira," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 1, pp. 10-11. (Pamir). Tale. Attack on Ismaili clerics and the Aga- Khan. The story relates how Ismaili *ishans* try to rob naive peasants. They convince peasants that if they do not pay the *zakat* (legal alm) to the Aga-Khan an epidemic of plague

will fall upon them. The Aga-Khan is denounced as an agent of British imperialism.

"Nasr-ed-Din u Stalina," "Pro Mully i Osla," "O Isporchennoi Propovedi i Okrovavlennom Nose," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 2, pp. 10- 11. Three tales. The tales are attacks on greedy clerics and stupid believers.

KLIMOVICH, L., "Pod Piatoi Pokrovitelia," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 3, p. 8. (Libya). Report. Attack on clerics. Muslim clerics of Libya serve are agents of Mussolini.

GIL'IARDI, N., "Uigyn," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938,V. 3, pp. 14-16. Tale. Attack on clerics (*Sufis*). Clerics are sabotaging the work in the *kolkhoz* by organizing *zikrs* at the time grain is to be harvested. Furthermore, they try to get themselves or their *murids* elected to the *kolkhoz* councils.

KLIMOVICH, L., " Chto Takoe Musul'manstvo," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 4, pp. 6-8. Historical/report. Nasty attack on Islam, the *Qur'an*, and the clerics. Islamic teaching, its rites and customs (often borrowed from other religions) have always served the interests of the oppressors. The *Qur'an* teaches submission to the exploiters. It humiliates women, and sanctifies prostitution, corporal punishments, and polygamy. In the colonized world, Islam and its clerics serve the interests not only of the local exploiters, but also of the capitalists of western Europe. Furthermore, Muslim clerics help fascist propaganda in the Middle East. In Tsarist Russia, in return for material benefits, clerics served as agents and police informers of the government. In the Soviet Union today, they actively oppose all legislation of the Communist Party and the Soviet government. They organize anti-Soviet bands. They continue to oppose women's emancipation, to push for the observance of humiliating rituals, to mutilate youngsters with circumcision, to practice sorcery, healing and fortune telling.

"Skazka o Khadzhi Pil'ki i Pravovernykh Piligrimakh," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 4, pp. 8-9. Tale. Attack on pilgrimages. This article ridicules credulous pilgrims and cunning *hajjis*.

"Religiia: Vrag Naroda," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 5, p. 7. (Azerbaijan). Artistic critic. Attack on Islam, clerics, and religious customs. Islam regards art and artists, especially comedians, as detrimental and politically dangerous. Muslim clerics during Tsarist times tried to harm and abase artists. Women artists were a particular target of clerics. The author continues by explaining that clerics opposed the emancipation of women, that they were loyal servants of the Tsarist authorities in the exploitation of the masses, and that Islam is the epitome of cruelty as it forced the masses to engage in such barbarian customs as the *Ashura*.

"Dzhambul: Stareishii Narodnyi Pevets Kazakhstana," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 6, p. 7. (Kazakhstan). Literary article. The article honors the Kazakh poet Akyn Djambul. The article publishes an ode of Djambul: "Velikii Stalinskii Zakon." The poem glorifies Stalin's order, his achievements and his internationalism. Stalin's order is opposed to that of Islam and of Tsarist Russia.

"Abbat-Musul'manina," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 8/9, p. 6. Poem. The poem makes fun of the rite of circumcision and of polygamy.

FATYEV, R., "Istselenie Gadzhi-Aga," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 8/9, pp. 20-22. Play. Attack on clerics. Clerics are crooks, charlatans and parasites. The play relates how two clerics trick another cleric to rob him of his healing business.

GERSHENOVICH, R.S., "Chem Vredny Parandzha i Chachvan," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 12, p. 7. (Uzbekistan). Medical article. Attack on custom, the veiling. The article reviews some of the diseases caused by the wearing of the veil, diseases that affect mother and child. The author states that 30 to 35% of women in Tashkent are still veiled, and in some quarters half or two-thirds are. 25% of women between the age of 18 and 45 wear the veil, and 80% after the age of 45.

KLIMOVICH, L., "Religioznye Perezhitki v Karachae," *Bezbozhnik*, 1938, V. 12, p. 18. (Karachai oblast). Report. Attack on clerics, customs, and holy places. This vicious article describes how clerics, *shaykhs* and other fanatics helped in the martyrdom of women. For example, Muslim judges following the *Shari'ah* ordered the stoning of mother and child born out of wedlock. Clerics sanctified the "first night right," whereas a young women had to spend her wedding with the lord. *Shaykhs*, under the pretext of organizing women *murids*, took sexual advantage of them. The Tsarist government, according to the author, covered up such practices, so did the Whites and the bourgeois nationalists. Attacked also are the *kalym*, the abduction of the bride, and pilgrimages to holy places. The author concludes that religious survivals still remain and, therefore, that the fight for the emancipation of women must continue.

1939

MIRER, S., "Otravlennaia Sladost'," *Bezbozhnik*, 1939, V. 1, p. 16. Tale. Attack on clerics. Clerics play tricks on their followers, who play tricks on them.

MIRER, S., "O Tom, Kak Akhmet-Akhai Utolil Svoiiu Zhazhdu," *Bezbozhnik*, 1939, V. 3, p. 13. Tale. Attack on religious rites. Attacked is the fasting of

Ramadan. A thirsty Muslim breaks the fast by drinking, and God does not send the fire of hell upon him.

VLADIMIROV, M., "Title illegible," *Bezbozhnik*, 1939, V. 8, pp. 11- 12. (Chechen-Ingush A.R.) Report. This interesting article is an indirect attack on *Muridism* (*Sufism*). The author comments on the extent, strength and authority of the *taip* (clan) system in the villages of Chechnia-Ingushetia. The authority of the *taip* in the villages is maintained by the clan elders, the *murids* (*Sufis*), and other religious authorities. Children are taught from a tender age that the solidarity of the clan is supreme. The author describes how, on order of clan elders, assassinations are carried out. Religious practices are also maintained by the clan elders. Attacked also in this article is the custom of *kalym*. It is said to be so onerous that criminal acts, such as stealing (*kolkhoz* properties), are on the rise. The author concludes by advising the Society of Militant Godless to transfer their activity from the capital Groznyi to the villages.[14]

IOMUDSKAIA, D., "Trakhoma i Bor'ba s Nei v Turkmenii," *Bezbozhnik*, 1939, V. 8, pp. 15-17. (Turkmenistan). Medical article. Attack on clerics. The article on trachoma (an infectious eye disease) is an occasion for an attack on charlatan clerics who practice healing through prayers for good fees. The spread of the disease is said to have been facilitated by religious practices. For example, the disease was spread by pilgrims returning from trachoma infested Mecca. Believers who have been cured by Soviet doctors are abandoning religion.

1940 (Incomplete)

GAFUROV, B.,[15] "Aga-Khan," *Bezbozhnik*, 1940, V. 11/12, pp. 8-9. Historical/report. Attack on the Aga-Khan and the Isma'ilis. The present (1940) Aga-Khan, his father and grand-father are presented as agents of the British imperialists in Afghanistan and in India. At the time when anti-western feelings are growing in India, the Aga-Khan is agitating in support of the British and the

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14 The district mentioned in the article is Achkhoi-Martan, a center of the *Sufi Qadiri* order. This article is one of the first, even if indirect, connection made by a Soviet writer between the clan structure and the structure of the *Sufi* brotherhoods in the Chechen-Ingush Republic. Since then, Soviet specialists of *Sufism* have established that the *taip* was the basis of recruitment into the *Sufi* orders, and that the clan elders were generally the religious *Sufi* authorities. The clanic tribunals, indirectly mentioned in the article, ruled according to the *Shari'ah* and were very much alive. See for example: Bokov; Mamakaev, *Chechenskiii*; and Umarov.

15 After WW II, Bobojan Gafurov became a member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, chairman of the Institut Narodov Azii, member of the Cental Committee of the Tajik SSR, and, later, First Secretary of the Tajik CP.

imperialist war. He is also criticized for his drinking habit, his dissolute life, and for robbing his followers. The author mentions that a close advisor of the Aga-Khan came to the Soviet Pamir in 1923.

1941

Bezbozhnik, 1941, V. 2, cover. The cover picture represents a veiled woman with *mullahs*. The cover also includes a poem against the veiling of women, and mentions that not all women have yet discarded the veil.

MIKHAILOV, V., "Sviatye Mesta i Prokhodimtsy," *Bezbozhnik*, 1941, V. 4, pp. 8-9. (Tatarstan). Report. Attack on holy places and clerics (here *sufis*). Holy places are nests of obscurantism and superstition, where naive, uneducated people, especially women, are taken advantage by cunning preachers. They are also haphazards for the health. Preachers (probably *Sufis*) are described as adventurers, parasites, vagrants, tricksters, crooks, and charlatans, still to be found in many villages. The author gives a unique description of holy places in Tatarstan. For example, the main center of pilgrimage prior to 1917 was the ruins of the mosque of the ancient city of Bulgar, where tens of thousands of pilgrims came every year. Today, the author notes, several dozens of pilgrims still come every day, and more come on festivals such as *Kurban-bairam*. The holy place is attended by a woman who read prayers for the pilgrims. Other particularly venerated holy places include: the holy sources of the *mazar* of Saint Kasym, and a cemetery in the Bondug district. Furthermore, the author notes that most ancient cemeteries are places of pilgrimage, a fact already noted by the missionaries. The article ends with an appeal to close the holy places and to hunt down the charlatans who attended them.

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