Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States

Edited by
Michael Kemper, **Raoul Motika**
and **Stefan Reichmuth**

Central Asian Studies

Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States

This book provides a comparative history of Islamic education in the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet countries. Case studies on Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan and on two regions of the Russian Federation, Tatarstan and Daghestan, highlight the importance which Muslim communities in all parts of the Soviet Union attached to their formal and informal institutions of Islamic instruction. New light is shed on the continuity of pre-revolutionary educational traditions – including Jadidist ethics and teaching methods – throughout the New Economic Policy period (1921–1928), on Muslim efforts to maintain their religious schools under Stalinist repression, and on the complete institutional breakdown of the Islamic educational sector by the late 1930s. A second focus of the book is on the remarkable boom of Islamic education in the post-Soviet republics after 1991. Contrary to general assumptions on the overwhelming influence of foreign missionary activities on this revival, this study stresses the primary role of the Soviet Islamic institutions which were developed during and after the Second World War, and of the persisting regional and even international networks of Islamic teachers and muftis. Throughout the book, special attention is paid to the specific regional traditions of Islamic learning and to the teachers' affiliations with Islamic legal schools and Sufi brotherhoods. The book thus testifies to the astounding dynamics of Islamic education under rapidly changing and oftentimes extremely harsh political conditions.

Michael Kemper is Professor of Eastern European Studies and Eastern European History at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Raoul Motika is Professor of Turcology at the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Stefan Reichmuth is Professor of Oriental and Islamic Studies at the Ruhr-University, Bochum, Germany.

Central Asian Studies Series

Mongolia Today
Science, culture, environment and development
Edited by Dendevin Badarch and Raymond A. Zilinskas

Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire
Daniel Brower

Church of the East
A concise history
Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler

Pre-tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia
Communal commitment and political order in change
Paul Georg Geiss

Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia
Bukhara and Khiva, 1865–1924
Seymour Becker

Russian Culture in Uzbekistan
One language in the middle of nowhere
David MacFadyen

Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia
Maria Elisabeth Louw

Kazakhstan
Ethnicity, language and power
Bhavna Dave

Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus
Post-Soviet disorder
Edited by Moshe Gammer

Humanitarian Aid in Post-Soviet Countries
An anthropological perspective
Laëtitia Atlani-Duault

Muslim-Christian Relations in Central Asia
A. Christian van Gorder

The Northwest Caucasus
Past, present, future
Walter Richmond

Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy
Positive neutrality and the consolidation of the Turkmen regime
Luca Anceschi

Conflict Transformation in Central Asia
Irrigation disputes in the Ferghana Valley
Christine Bichsel

Socialist Revolutions in Asia
The social history of Mongolia in the 20th century
Irina Y. Morozova

Post-Conflict Tajikistan
The politics of peacebuilding and the emergence of a legitimate order
John Heathershaw

The Politics of Transition in Central Asia and the Caucasus
Enduring legacies and emerging challenges
Edited by Amanda E. Wooden and Christoph H. Stefes

Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States
Edited by Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika and Stefan Reichmuth

Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States

Edited by Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika and Stefan Reichmuth

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2010
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009.

To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-02792-2 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN10: 0–415–36815–4 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0–203–02792–2 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978–0–415–36815–5 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978–0–203–02792–9 (ebk)

Contents

Contributors

Elçin Əsgərov: Deputy Chief of the State Committee for Work with Religious Associations, Baku, Azerbaijan.

Vladimir Bobrovnikov: Ph.D. in history; senior research fellow at the Institute for Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow.

Alexander Bogomolov: Ph.D. in Oriental philology (Arabic linguistics); president of the Association of Middle East Studies (Ukraine); senior fellow, head of the Modern Orient Department, Ahatanhel Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev.

Oleg Bubenok: Ph.D. and habilitation (*doktor nauk*) in history; senior research fellow at the Ahatanhel Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev.

Sergiy Danylov: M.A. geography, deputy director, Association of Middle East Studies (Ukraine), fellow at the Ahatanhel Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev.

Tim Epkenhans: Ph.D. in Iranian Studies, Director of the OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kirghizstan.

Uygun Gafurov: researcher at the Tashkent Islamic University under the Cabinet of Ministers, Uzbekistan.

Altay Göyüşov: Ph.D. in history, professor at the Department for the History of the Turkic Speaking Peoples and the Caucasus, Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan; currently Visiting Professor at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, University of California, Los Angeles.

Asilbek K. Izbairov: Researcher at the Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies, Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Michael Kemper: Ph.D. in Oriental and Islamic Studies, professor for Eastern European History and Eastern European Studies, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Ilnur R. Minnullin: Ph.D. history, Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan/Russian Federation.

Raoul Motika: Ph.D. in Islamic Studies, professor for Turcology, Asien-Afrika-Institut, University of Hamburg, Germany.

Rafik Mukhametshin: Ph.D. history, Professor, Rector of the Islamic University of the Russian Federation, Kazan, Tatarstan/Russian Federation.

Ashirbek Muminov: Ph.D. in Oriental Studies, Professor; Deputy Director of the Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies, Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Amir R. Navruzov: Ph.D. history, Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, Makhachkala, Dagestan/Russian Federation.

Aitzhan Sh. Nurmanova: Researcher at the Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies, Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Daniil Radivilov: Ph.D. history, senior fellow, deputy director, Ahatanhel Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev.

Rinat Shigabdinov: Senior Researcher at the Institute for History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Stefan Reichmuth: Ph.D. in Arabic Studies, professor for Oriental and Islamic Studies, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany.

Shamil Sh. Shikhaliev: Ph.D. history, Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, Makhachkala, Dagestan/Russian Federation.

Dilyara M. Usmanova: Ph.D. history, Professor at the History Department, Kazan State University, Tatarstan / Russian Federation; currently at the Humboldt University, Berlin.

Introduction

Michael Kemper, Raoul Motika and Stefan Reichmuth

The present volume provides detailed empirical studies on the development of Islamic education in the Soviet Union and its successor states. It aims at an overview of the development of Islamic learning in six regions or republics of the former Soviet Union with a predominant or at least significant Muslim population over most of the twentieth century. These are Tatarstan in the Central Volga region, Ukraine (with a special focus on the Crimean peninsula), Daghestan and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, as well as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia. Research for this project was conducted by regional teams of three to four researchers in each part of the former Soviet Union. In addition, Tim Epkenhans contributed a study on Islamic education in Tajikistan with a focus on the recent years. The omission not only of other Muslim areas of the Caucasus, but also of Bashkortostan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, certainly limits the comparative value of our overviews. However, the regions selected comprise the major centres of Islamic learning in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. In addition, a volume on Islamic education in further regions of the former USSR is to appear soon.[1]

Most of our collaborative surveys start with a section on the 1920s and 1930s. The years up to 1928 were mainly characterized by continuity with the Imperial period, and after the revolutionary turmoil and the Civil War many areas even saw a certain recovery of Islamic education. Subsequently, much space is devoted to the Bolshevik repression of Islam starting around 1928, and the peaks of terror in the 1930s. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, a compromise between the state and Islam was worked out in 1943; this led to the reconstitution of the Muftiate in Ufa and to the establishment of new Muftiates in other republics of the USSR, as well as to the opening of two state-controlled *madrasas* in Central Asia. The next sections discuss the Khrushchev period, which witnessed a renewal of anti-Islamic propaganda and repression, as well as the Brezhnev era, when this was scaled down and limited to state surveillance and control without further concessions to Islamic education. From the 1960s, the sources allow us to study the survival of Islam and Islamic education in private ("underground") circles. Gorbachev's perestroika and especially the first years of independence after 1991 saw a revival of Islam, with the establishment of numerous private Islamic schools and even universities. On the one hand, this period is characterized by the attempt to revive pre-revolutionary

traditions; on the other hand, it witnessed a new influx of ideas and Islamic movements from abroad. Both developments, however, were deeply impacted by the framework of former Soviet practices and traditions. The last parts of our overviews describe the ensuing attempt of the new states to regain control over the Islamic sector, and, in many cases, to support interpretations of Islam that confront "fundamentalism" and "extremism". For this period we list and annotate the Islamic schools and their curricula that existed until around 2003, when the research for most contributions was completed, as well as Islamic media and other elements of the new Islamic public sphere.

Our aims are thus primarily documentary in nature, and we are aware of the many problems of such an enterprise. First, our periodization does not evolve from within the field of Islamic learning itself but follows the general political development in the Soviet Union and its successor states; in this sense, it regrettably resembles our still-"dynastic" periodization of Islamic culture in most parts of the Muslim World. At the present time this is almost inevitable, especially in the case of the Soviet Union where the state interfered in religious affairs on an unprecedented level.

Second, we are aware of the limitations of our sources. New source groups became available after the end of the Soviet Union, but their discovery and evaluation is still in process. Our discussions of the Soviet period are, for the most part, based on material from Soviet archives (and unfortunately, not all important Soviet archives are accessible yet for research). In fact a huge part of the work done here comprises the identification and analysis of Soviet laws, decrees and administrative reports, similar to what Yaacov Ro'i analysed in his work on the Soviet central religious administrations for the period after the Second World War.[2] Here, we run the risk of simply repeating the official or semi-official Soviet discourse on Islam and Islamic education, including its concepts and terminology.[3]

To avoid these pitfalls we tried not to adopt the perspective of the centre but to look at developments on the ground. Our contributions deal, for the most part, with the fate of mosque schools (*maktabs*) and Islamic seminaries (*madrasas*) and their teachers, with Spiritual Directorates and their *muftis* and *qadis*, with Sufi convents (*khanaqahs*) and their *shaykhs* and *murids*, as well as with Islamic literature and newspapers and their authors and publishers. In dealing with these various contexts, our contributions discuss the conditions for teaching the Qur'an and Islamic ethics, law and theology, as well as Sufism, within the walls of specific private, communal and state institutions. We also focus on the changing historical conditions for the collection of funds and the establishment of pious endowments (*waqfs*) to maintain these establishments. In each context we try to identify individual teachers and activists and their agendas. In addition, we are interested in the kinds of agency which local administrations and institutions enjoyed. However, in most cases our evidence comes from sources that are ideologically biased, and probably often ill-informed. For most periods of Soviet history, it is hard to verify official accounts for the simple reason that there are few independent sources. From among our contributors, especially the Ukrainian, Daghestani and Uzbekistani, research teams used oral history, and carried out research in private archives and libraries.

Regrettably, the Muslim *émigré* literature, which might indeed shed new light on the survival of Islamic education in the Soviet regions, has hardly been explored yet.

As to the more recent periods, we have been able to enrich the official or semi-official sources with information of other provenance. The discussions of the post-Soviet period especially are based on a wide variety of sources, including Islamic publications, interviews, and field observations. In view of the source problems it should also be noted that most contributors to this book are not historians of Soviet history but professionals from the field of Islamic studies who have considerable experience in the study of pre-revolutionary Muslim history in their respective regions. It is therefore hoped that their understanding of Soviet policy and its effects is not hampered by naïveté regarding Soviet perspectives and stereotypes.

This book also differs from previous studies because of its focus in subject matter, which is not Islam in general but, more specifically, Islamic education in its manifold expressions over time and in different settings. The transmission of Islamic knowledge has always been essential for the reproduction of an Islamic identity and for the general survival of Muslim communities. Compared to state schools, Islamic educational institutions have always had the appeal of a supposedly stricter moral code, which is perceived to be safeguarded by a close student–teacher relationship. In times of social upheaval, be it under Stalin or under Gorbachev, this was an important factor in attracting pupils to Islamic schools, and for parents to support these establishments.

However, it is almost impossible to study the history of Islamic education without at the same time discussing the more general developments within the Muslim communities and in the Soviet Union. Several contributions offer detailed information on the specific Islamic traditions of the respective societies. Our collection therefore also includes, for example, a discussion of Muharram processions in Soviet Azerbaijan. These processions have nothing to do with education in the strict sense but turned into an important marker of Muslim identity in the 1920s and 1930s, and became a main target of Soviet anti-Islamic policy in that period. Similarly, one of our contributions contains a detailed study of Sufi brotherhoods in post-Soviet Daghestan, where *tariqas* are still dominating the Islamic establishment in general, including the new institutions of Islamic higher education.

The individual contributions to this volume are regional studies in a very strict sense. While they do not aim at providing a comparative analysis of different republics, they nevertheless offer abundant material for comparison between localities within an individual region. The research project included round-table conferences in Baku and Bochum as well as several workshops in Almaty, Bochum and Baku. At these occasions the working groups presented their preliminary results, explored methodologies and comparative perspectives, and discussed recent Western literature on Islam in the Soviet Union. Needless to say, our regional studies are still embedded in the particular national or regional literatures, and inevitably, also in the regional research traditions.

Traditional Islamic education in the Russian Empire and the early Soviet Union

Tsarism was strongly linked to the Orthodox Church. However, attempts to Christianize the Muslims of the Russian Empire by coercion ended in failure, and ceased in the late eighteenth century. Under Catherine the Great (1762–1796) the Russian state began to officially protect the autonomy of Islamic communal institutions, provided they remained under administrative control. This was mainly achieved by the establishment of a Spiritual Directorate, the Muftiate in Ufa, which was in charge of examining and appointing all mullahs and supervising all mosque communities in Russia and Siberia. The foundation of the Muftiate can be seen as an attempt to create a church-like structure for Islam in the Empire, and in official language it became common to designate the local mullahs as "clergy" (*dukhovenstvo*). However, these mullahs were not on the state's payroll but depended on donations from their respective communities whose influential members continued to decide whom to propose to the Mufti for appointment as local imam. The teaching of Islam, including the personnel and curricula of *maktabs* and *madrasas* in the communities, remained completely outside the competences of the Mufti who had only a minimal staff at his disposal. In addition, the Mufti was often challenged by other Islamic scholars (*ulama*) who coveted his position and intrigued against him with the authorities, and by "unlicensed" mullahs who chose not to apply for an *ukaz* (licence) and thus remained completely beyond his control.[4] Consequently, over most of the nineteenth century and later, the authority of the Russian Muftiate in the communities was severely limited. In addition, the vast Muslim borderlands of the Empire were, by and large, outside the Mufti's purview, and the Muftiate was directly subordinated to the regional (*guberniia*) administration in Ufa.

In the shadow of the relatively tolerant Imperial religious policy on Islam, the Central Volga Tatars witnessed a considerable expansion of institutions of Islamic learning, as well as a blossoming of Islamic literature, with new trends in local and regional historiography (mainly in Turkic) as well as in legal and theological studies (in Arabic).[5] Since the first years of the nineteenth century, the spread of Islamic literature was increasingly facilitated by Tatar publishing houses in Kazan, Orenburg and Ufa, which traded their publications in huge numbers to Muslims all over the Russian Empire. Tatar mullahs were offering Islamic education in settlements on the Kazakh Steppe, mainly along the trade routes and in the new Russian garrison towns,[6] while in the Southern centres of present-day Kazakhstan it was the local holy lineages of Qojas who provided education at their Sufi shrines.[7] A significant expansion of Islamic education since the eighteenth century, and an unprecedented boom of Islamic manuscript production (mainly in the Arabic language), is also witnessed for Daghestan, whose integration into the Russian Empire was completed only after the final subjugation of Shamil's *jihad* movement in 1859. Here the support for Islamic education came from local communities and networks of scholars outside any state institution.[8] In Transoxania, by contrast, Islamic education and literature, including historiography (in Turkic and in Persian), was mainly sponsored by the dynasties of the three Khanates.[9] Networks of scholars and

their students connected these regions with each other, especially the Volga-Urals and the learned centres of Transoxania; and it becomes clear that the Muslims of Russia participated in a general expansion process of Islamic education that covered many areas of Northern Eurasia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[10]

After the revolutionary turmoil, the Bolsheviks re-established Russian control over all these regions, and in part they also took over the Imperial policy on Islam. The Soviets, however, cut the traditional links between the Russian state and Christianity, especially in the field of education; and this certainly had an appeal to the Muslims of the former Empire. The new Soviet state regarded itself as the ultimate project of modernization and emancipation for citizens of all nationalities and religions alike. However, the Soviet Union claimed to be entirely oriented towards the interest of the working class, and religions were regarded as tools in the hands of the former ruling classes for the exploitation of the masses. For the Orthodox Church, persecution began early and had disastrous consequences. Yet in the case of Islam the situation at first was not yet clear. Several factors can be held accountable for the fact that the new government initially refrained from an all-out attack on Islam. To begin with, in the early years of their rule the Bolsheviks regarded Muslims, above all, as victims of previous Tsarist colonialism and oppression, and tried to win them over to their side. Second, the central party apparatus lacked factual knowledge about Islam and its social and religious institutions, and therefore also a concept of how to deal with Islam in the Soviet Union; and third, in their first years the Communists undoubtedly found other problems more pressing than the "Islamic question". To be sure, a huge machinery of anti-Islamic propaganda was set in motion already by the mid-1920s. However, this should not conceal the fact that over most of the 1920s the Soviet policy on Islamic educational institutions was guided by a cautious approach (which resembled the late Tsarist policy in Central Asia in its renunciation of direct interference with Islamic educational institutions).[11] It was assumed that under the conditions of successful Socialist construction and propaganda, Islam would simply wither away.

It is also worth pointing out that Islamic education was not an easy target for state suppression. At least in Russia, Islamic communities did not depend on landed estates, and most mosques did not contain any valuables that could be easily confiscated. Muslim schools were less formalized and more flexible than Christian parish schools and seminaries, and, as mentioned above, they did not depend on a central ecclesiastic authority. Islamic education thus benefited above all from its decentralized structure and from its communal foundation. It took the new government a long time to develop a secular state school system in Muslim areas to replace the Tsarist system of education (which the Bolsheviks themselves had liquidated) and to compete with the still-powerful Islamic system of education. The Soviets lacked funding and local personnel for their schools and, more importantly, had no elaborate concept for a new educational system that would at the same time be attractive for Muslims and in line with the Bolsheviks' ideology. Also, the local administrations often shied away from closing Islamic schools by decree for fear of popular discontent. For all these reasons, until around 1927–1928 mullahs and

Islamic teachers were not subject to the same degree of repression as Orthodox priests, who were indiscriminately labeled as counterrevolutionaries and also stripped of their political rights.

For these same reasons, and in spite of all economic problems and famines after the atrocious Civil War, the 1920s saw a certain recovery of Islamic education in many areas of the former Russian Empire, with the number of Islamic schools in some regions even rising beyond pre-revolutionary levels. To be sure, the Russian Muftiate in Ufa, which the Soviets had equally inherited from the Tsarist regime, came more and more under political pressure and lost its already-limited political agency, for example in the field of charitable activities and famine relief. In Uzbekistan, by contrast, where a first attempt at the nationalization of pious endowments had failed, the Soviets even experimented, between 1923 and 1926, with a new Islamic administration for the supervision of *waqfs* and the Islamic schools that depended on them.[12]

In general, the relative economic relaxation and intellectual pluralism of the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1923–1928) left Muslim communal life largely intact, and provided communities with the means to support their educational institutions. New mosques and Islamic schools are documented, for instance, in our contributions on Tatarstan, Ukraine/Crimea, and Kazakhstan. In Transoxania (Uzbekistan), the old-established system of Islamic education had not even been seriously interrupted by the wars and revolutions of 1914–1921.

Beyond the field of Islamic education, early Soviet rule could also mean new social upward mobility for Muslims in politics and economy, as well as the end of their political discrimination and their social and religious isolation; in fact, the Bolshevik policy of "affirmative action" for non-Russian nationalities after 1924 even meant some kind of positive discrimination for Muslims.[13] In this period, the preservation of a specific Muslim political and cultural (though not religious) identity was an important issue for the Muslim Communists. Some of these "Muslim National Communists" rose into leading party and state positions in several of the newly founded republics, most importantly in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan (with Nariman Narimanov [d. 1925] as their figurehead) and the Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan (with, above all others, Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev [d. 1940]). For these Muslim activists, the Russian Socialist revolution was only a prelude to an upcoming world-wide anti-colonial revolution which would lead to a complete liberation of the colonized Muslim peoples both within the former Russian Empire and in the colonies of other European powers. For a long time, the party leadership did not suppress these movements completely; when Stalin finally decided to eliminate the Muslim National Communists, he did so less by direct interference than by supporting infighting within the regional party sections.[14]

The fate of Islamic reformism (Jadidism) under the Soviets

Another element of continuity between the late Imperial and the early Soviet periods is the continuing expansion of Islamic reformism (Jadidism) in the first half of the 1920s. Since the 1880s, the *usul-i jadid* movement developed on the basis of the

general blossoming of Islamic education and Islamic printing in many parts of the Empire, but also in response to the growing influence of Russian and European culture and education. Crimean and Volga Tatar teachers introduced a new "phonetic" reading method in their *maktabs*, according to which the children learned to read by pronouncing the syllables of a word; this was more efficient than the traditional way of having the beginners learn how to read by spelling all letters separately by their Arabic names. Soon the Jadid movement also opted for the integration of "European" sciences (like mathematics, geography, and history) into the *maktab* and *madrasa* curricula, and adopted a "modern" teaching process by introducing the formats of school lessons and school years, as well as Russian-style school furniture. The Jadids' aim was to produce educated Muslims able to face the new challenges in a rapidly developing and modernizing Russian Empire.

Jadid schools, however, competed not only with Russian and Russian-Tatar schools for Muslims, many of which were run by Orthodox missionaries, but above all with Islamic *maktabs* and *madrasas* that still adhered to the traditional teaching methods and the classical Islamic curriculum. The latter were still more widespread and supported by the Muslim communities. The interpretation of Islam in school was intrinsically linked to the question not only of spiritual but also of social leadership in those communities.[15] The conservatives feared the introduction of "unlawful innovations" (Arab.: *bid'a*) into the educational process, and regarded the old-established schooling system as a guarantor for a good moral education and safe social integration of the Muslim youth. The impact and success of the Jadid school reform movement on the eve of the 1917 Revolution should therefore not be overestimated; from the regions discussed in this volume, it seems that only on the Crimean peninsula Jadid schools dominated the scene. Nevertheless, the Jadids certainly had a huge impact on Muslim societies. On the one hand, their transnational networks of teachers and sponsors, as well as their publications in the Turkic language, transcended regional boundaries. Even in Daghestan, in spite of the strong Arabic orientation of this country's Islamic culture, Jadid schools were opened by Turkic-speaking Kumyk scholars. On the other hand, the Jadids laid the groundwork for an awakening of Muslim national sentiment among Tatars, Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks, and other peoples.[16]

During the early 1920s, the general radicalization within the political spectrum drove many Jadid reformers into the camp of the Bolsheviks. In our volume this is described in great detail for Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and the Crimea, where Jadids hoped to introduce reformed Islamic schools with the help of the Soviets. As long as the Bolsheviks lacked other cadres on the ground, they were willing to support the Jadids against the traditionalists. With this temporal coalition, the Bolsheviks clearly intended to split the Muslim "clergy", just as they had managed to create a "Renovationist" movement within the Orthodox Church.[17]

A closer look at the 1920s shows how much this period was characterized not only by a continuation of pre-revolutionary conservatism but also by innovations and experiments. For instance, it seems that women obtained a new status in the field of Islamic education, be it as students, teachers or even as prayer leaders (as documented here for Azerbaijan), and the Tatar female activist and writer Mukhlisa

Bubi (executed in 1936) was elected to the office of qadi of the Ufa Spiritual Directorate. Another striking feature of early Soviet Islam is the perpetual organization of councils on the level of each Muslim mosque community, where in turn candidates were elected for conferences (Russ: *s"ezdy*) on district, republican and even all-Russian levels; this process, which in Tatarstan lasted until 1926, can be regarded as a democratization of the whole system of Islamic organization (or, with its pyramid of councils, as its true "Sovietization"). The institutions of Islamic education benefited from their basis in the local communities, while the Soviet educational system could only survive with massive support from above. Soviet schools were even forced to accept former mullahs as teachers, just as it took them a long time to replace the old, religiously inspired primers with new textbooks. It is also worth mentioning that during the 1920s the contacts between Muslim elites and Islamic centres abroad had not yet collapsed; this held especially true for the Volga and Crimean Tatars as well as for Daghestanis, who maintained individual educational links with Istanbul and the Arab world. The Shi'is of the South Caucasus continued to frequent the centres of religious learning in Iraq and Iran, while Baku hosted a huge number of Iranian mullahs and even some Iranian schools.

As our Tatar contribution shows, by 1927/1928 Soviet observers in Tatarstan realized that their policy of encouraging the split within the Islamic "clergy" along the lines of "traditionalists" and "reformists" was not successful, and it was decided to use other means. By the end of the 1920s, the Bolsheviks had built up a Soviet national and atheist school system in most Muslim regions, and were able to replace the Jadids with new local Communist elites whose ties to Islamic culture and religion were much weaker. Finally, by the late 1930s, most of the leading Jadids were repressed or executed (ironically, often together with Soviet functionaries of the first generation). Yet, the attempts at a reform of Islamic education were abandoned only for the time being; as we shall see later, a reformist trend re-entered the scene with the opening of the new Soviet Central Asian *madrasas* in the mid-1940s.

From propaganda to repression

The Communist Party issued contradictory signals for the struggle against religion, and against Islam in particular. For instance, while the 12th Party Congress in 1923 still called for the uncompromising fight against religion, the next congress in 1924 adopted a more cautious policy towards the believers whose feelings were not to be hurt by arbitrary measures. Wavering was a constant feature of the Soviet policy on Islam throughout the 1920s. Anti-Islamic propaganda, however, continued throughout the whole period. The "Union of the Militant Godless" (*Soiuz voinstvuiushchikh bezbozhnikov*, SVB), created in Moscow as a "voluntary association" in 1924, quickly spread all over the Soviet Union, with a membership that, at times, surpassed even that of the Communist Party. As Daniel Peris has shown, the SVB claimed to aim at overcoming religion not through indiscriminate use of force, but through scientific explanation and convincing propaganda against "religious prejudices". In this respect the SVB distinguished itself not only from the random and brutal antireligious "hooliganism" of the Communist Youth Organization (*Komsomol*), but also

from the uncoordinated "administrative" closure of mosques and schools by local organs.[18] As Peris' study is based on the evidence of an Orthodox region in Central Russia, the SVB's impact on Muslim societies still remains to be analysed. The material of our studies shows that the organization played an important role in the fight against Islamic feasts and rituals, and for their replacement by new Soviet customs. The cases of Daghestan, Azerbaijan, and partly of Tatarstan indicate that Muslims, and sometimes even mullahs, were forced to join the *Bezbozhniki*. Essential for the work of the SVB among the Muslim population were its mass publications, like *Fän häm din* ("Science and Religion", later renamed *Sughïshqan Allasïz* ["The Militant Godless"]) in Tatar and similar journals in Azeri, Uzbek, and other languages.

A serious blow to Islamic education was the imposed change in 1927/28, from the Arabic script for Turkic and other languages of the USSR's Muslim peoples to Latin-based alphabets.[19] Certainly, parts of the Muslim elites supported the change of alphabet as an important step in the general modernization and Europeanization project. Yet its main function was to break the dominant position of religion in the field of culture and education. The old Arabic alphabet, even after some reforms and adaptations to the local languages, was denounced by the Soviets as the script of the Qur'an. The switch to the Latin alphabet was followed by another enforced change to Cyrillic in 1937–1940, again with national adaptations. This measure was not only a second devaluation of the cultural heritage of the USSR's Muslim peoples, it also prevented Soviet Muslims from easy communication with their coreligionists in the Republic of Turkey, which had adopted the Latin alphabet in 1928. In line with Stalin's support for Great Russian leadership in the USSR, it was assumed that the Cyrillic alphabets would draw the Muslims closer to what was meant to be the dominant Russian proletarian culture. The impact of this double break on the transmission of Islamic knowledge was tremendous. The younger generations were no longer able to read religious books, for religious literature was rarely transliterated into the new alphabets, and the production of new religious works almost came to a standstill.

In this context it is worth remembering that until the 1920s and 1930s in most Muslim regions of the USSR, the preferred language for theological and legal scholarship was classical Arabic; the Daghestanis even used Arabic as their main idiom of inter-ethnic communication and literature. The Soviet campaigns against the use of Arabic resulted in the extermination of those religious genres that were traditionally expressed in Arabic. These works had been transmitted mostly in manuscript form; now they ceased to be copied, and many books were burnt by Communist activists, or even ceremoniously buried by their owners. In view of the danger of losing this great religious and cultural heritage, some last Arabists took great pains to preserve what was left of the former splendour of Islamic literature, and collected the biographies of Islamic scholars and educators.[20]

Especially in the years 1926–1928, party functionaries began to speak of the persisting Muslim educational efforts as an "Islamic movement" that supposedly constituted a threat to the still-developing Soviet educational system (documented here for Tatarstan, Azerbaijan, the Crimea, and Kazakhstan; in Tajikistan, the still ongoing Basmachi resistance was discredited as a reactionary religious

movement). This perception reflected not only the increasing radicalization of the Soviet public sphere in the late NEP period but also the growing protest of Muslim communities against the various Soviet measures. To search for evidence of direct party orders to liquidate all mosques, or all religious schools, in a given region or in the whole of the Soviet Union would be in vain. Rather, the Soviet repression of Islamic education worked "the administrational way": beginning around 1926, the registration (and re-registration) process for mosques and schools and their personnel was made extremely difficult and even dangerous for the applying communities. Existing institutions whose licence ran out could be closed down "legally". Furthermore, the minimum age for attendance of Islamic schooling was raised so that children were explicitly excluded from religious education.

In addition, Islamic education was liquidated in the course of political campaigns that supposedly had other targets. Local administrators as well as Komsomol activists used all kinds of pretexts to shut down Islamic institutions, many of which were demolished or turned into clubs, cinemas, or storehouses. Our survey on Azerbaijan documents show how in 1928 elections to the local Soviets were used as a pretext for seizing mosques on a massive scale, and turning them into polling stations. However, local activism made the Soviet policy very incoherent. In many instances public pressure forced the higher authorities to intervene, and a certain number of mosques, schools and properties even had to be returned to the communities (as seen in the case of Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan).

The most brutal and decisive measure against Muslim communities, however, was the enforced Collectivization that began in 1928/1929. The organization of peasants in collective farms (*kolkhoz*es) dramatically uprooted life in the countryside, where the majority of the Muslim populations was located. After *waqf* confiscations as well as land and water reforms had already undermined the economic basis of Islamic schools in the preceding years (as documented here in some detail for Daghestan and Uzbekistan), Collectivization delivered the final blow to Islamic educational institutions everywhere. It did so not only by liquidating the remnants of pious foundations, but also by confiscating the property of merchants, landowners and supposedly wealthy peasants ("*kulaks*") who were the traditional sponsors of Islamic schools in their communities. Countless Islamic teachers and mullahs were deported or killed during Collectivization, and it became impossible to establish or maintain mosque congregations or schools. Public opposition, for instance in the form of uprisings in the Caucasus and Central Asia, was brutally put down. Yet, in spite of all these measures, throughout the 1930s the Soviet sources (for instance, from Daghestan and Azerbaijan) continued to report on the existence of hundreds of mosques, whose imams presumably still worked as *maktab* teachers as well.

Persecution reached another peak during the Great Terror of 1937/38, which resulted in the outright elimination of huge parts of the national elites (including large segments of the Soviet-educated secular intelligentsia). Vague and largely indiscriminate accusations of "Pan-Turkism" or "Pan-Islamism" served to denounce Muslim scholars and intellectuals. Especially the surveys on Daghestan, Tatarstan, and Uzbekistan identify a multitude of prominent Islamic scholars and Sufis who lost their lives in those years of terror.

In 1941, even in a thoroughly Muslim country like Daghestan there were no officially acknowledged Muslim educational institutions left. In other regions (like Ukraine) this state had already been achieved in the early 1930s. The Spiritual Board in Ufa simply ceased to function after the demise of its last Mufti, Rizaetdin Fakhretdinov, in 1936. In the North Caucasus, also during the 1940s, several hundred mullahs were arrested, and many of them killed, and by 1945 there was no legally working mosque left in Daghestan.

Post-war period

The outbreak of the Second World War led to a certain change of policy. Both the Orthodox Church and Islam became useful instruments for soliciting popular support for the war effort. The most visible result of this policy change was the establishment of new Muslim Spiritual Directorates, namely the Muftiates in Tashkent (for Central Asia and Kazakhstan), Buinaksk (for the North Caucasus; later moved to Makhachkala) and Baku (the Spiritual Directorate for the Muslims of the Transcaucasus, with a *Shaykh ul-Islam* for the Shi'is and a Sunni deputy for the Sunni populations), as well as a resurrection of the Spiritual Board in Ufa (for Muslims of Russia and Siberia). The Muftiates, however, were limited in their authority by the Commission for the Affairs of Cults, a government body set up in Moscow to control the religious communities in the regions, and to receive and check petitions for the opening of new prayer houses.[21] This relaxation of state persecution led to a slow and very modest rise in the number of "legal" mosques in the republics. Despite the pronounced secular and atheist base of the USSR, the new religious administrations were treated as official state structures; and all regional variants notwithstanding, the centralized religious policy continued to create similar conditions for Muslims in various parts of the Soviet Union. The new formation of Muslim Directorates can be seen as a return to Russian Imperial practices, and even as their expansion. For educational purposes, the regime permitted the establishment of two official Soviet institutions of higher Islamic learning, the Mir-i 'Arab Madrasa in Bukhara (opened in 1943) and the Baraq-Khan Madrasa in Tashkent (1956). These two Uzbek *madrasas* served as the only official gateway for Muslims from all over the Soviet Union to pursue the career of a mullah or scholar, and it is at these two schools that many imams (and also some of the Soviet and post-Soviet muftis) from all parts of Central Asia, Russia, and the Caucasus met. Of course the muftis were state-appointed, not elected by their congregations.

With Uzbekistan as the new centre of Islamic learning in the Soviet Union, it is worth having a closer look at the Uzbek scholars. Between 1943 and 1989, the Muftiate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Tashkent was in the hands of the famous Babakhanov "dynasty" of *muftis*. The elder Babakhan had studied with Shami-Damulla (d. 1932), a scholar of Syrian descent whom the Soviets brought from China to Tashkent. Claiming to harmonize Islam with Communism, Shami-Damulla maintained Salafist positions against the predominant Hanafi school in Uzbekistan, and especially against the Hanafis' concessions to local customs and Sufi practices. His position against "popular Islam" obviously played into the

hands of the Soviet officials who used similar "rationalist" arguments for their allegations against Islamic "superstitions". For Shami-Damulla, the only legitimate sources of Islam were the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet, not the "man-made" and centuries-old Hanafi scholarly tradition of legal commentaries and glosses; thus his "fundamentalist" circle became known as the Ahl al-Hadith ("People of the Prophetic Tradition").[22] The influence of Shami-Damulla's Salafism can be detected in many of the official *fatwas* of the Babakhanov muftis, which were directed against what is usually called "popular Islam".[23]

Besides the Ahl al-Hadith, Uzbekistan hosted a number of other influential scholars who taught in clandestine *hujras* ("cells"), that is, in private. Some of them defended the traditional Hanafi school, while others attempted to re-open the gates of *ijtihad*; and several rejected the traditional Islamic schools of law completely. Some of these tensions within the *hujra* milieu reflect generational conflicts between professors and their students (like the case of Muhammadjan Hindustani [d. 1989] and his disciples discussed here). In Western Sovietological literature, all Muslim scholars who did not work for the government were usually referred to as representatives of an "underground" or "parallel" Islam. With increasing access to local information this terminology becomes questionable, given the obvious influence of the "un-official" Ahl al-Hadith on the Uzbek Muftiate. The fluidity between "official" and "parallel" Islam can also be illustrated by the example of several students of *hujra* professors who made careers in the Directorates or, as in the case of Isma'il-Khan Sattiev (d. 1976), in one of the Soviet *madrasas*.

Under the conditions of Khrushchev's "Thaw", most survivors of the huge *gulag* system were released, among them many imams. Also, the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus that Stalin had deported to Central Asia and Siberia (Chechens, Ingushs, Balkars, and others) gradually returned home, often against severe bureaucratic obstacles.[24] Khrushchev's relentless activism and his vision of a Communist society without religion initiated a new wave of antireligious rhetoric. With the replacement of the Union of the Militant Godless by the "Knowledge Society" (*Obshchestvo Znanie*), anti-Islamic propaganda was given a more scientific appeal. The number of mosques in the Soviet Union was again brought down (supposedly from 411 to 314 between 1948 and 1970),[25] mainly by administrative closures and further legal restrictions. The Baraq-Khan Madrasa in Tashkent (which was in charge of the higher classes of imam education) was closed down in 1961, and not replaced for ten years.

The long and comparatively unspectacular reign of Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982) is one of the least studied with regard to the development of Islamic affairs. Adeeb Khalid argues in his recent book on Islam in Central Asia that although the official public sphere was strongly de-Islamized, Islam was still important as a cultural marker that set Central Asians apart from Russians and others; therefore expressions of Islam were, to a certain degree, accepted as part of the cultural national heritage in many republics.[26] This is certainly true for the official national public sphere; however, it might still be useful to ask whether Islam continued to be, just as in pre-Soviet times, the prime cultural identity for traditional Muslim communities in Central Asia, and an alternative to Soviet identity. In our volume,

the Brezhnev era is covered in most detail by the survey on Daghestan. This period of "Stagnation" brought a kind of stability into the relationship between Islam and the state organs, but at the price of significant inner contradictions: central administrative surveillance and registration processes were constantly refined but, it seems, became less effective on the ground. While political mass repression was avoided, individuals performing the functions of imam were persecuted, not as ideological enemies but as "parasites" who refused to perform productive Socialist labour; yet, in this category they found themselves lumped together with political dissidents in the Soviet Union, which demonstrates that manifestations of Islam were still a political issue for the authorities. At the same time, hundreds of Muslim communities maintained prayer places without applying for an official permission. In the North Caucasus, some collective farms (many of which had been established in the 1930s on historical *waqf* land) even set arable land aside for the maintenance of prayer facilities and for Islamic feasts. While many local authorities preferred to close their eyes in view of these unofficial practices, from time to time the central state cracked down on "illegal" mosque communities, as documented here for Azerbaijan in as late as 1981.

As the authors of the Daghestani contribution convincingly argue, the expansion of unofficial Islam was not a political movement per se; rather, unofficial practice was the only way to maintain a minimum of Islamic ritual under the current Soviet conditions. Left without the hope of ever establishing their prayer houses officially, these "covert" Muslim communities became more and more closed to outsiders, and they also lacked contact among each other; "parallel Islam" was mostly maintained in isolation. Under these conditions the level of Islamic knowledge in the communities decreased significantly. To be sure, a new *madrasa* was opened in Tashkent in 1971 (and named after the famous *hadith* collector Imam al-Bukhari, thus clearly reflecting the continuing Salafist orientation of SADUM, the Muslim Spiritual Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan). In addition, the Soviet state tried to use Central Asian Muslims for propaganda and foreign-relations purposes, and a surprisingly high number of SADUM functionaries were allowed to study in the Arab world, as documented in an annex to our survey on Uzbekistan. Yet official Islamic education within the USSR was still minimal, and limited to a small circle. As SADUM and other Muftiates provided only a minimum of Islamic publications, like Qur'ans and Islamic calendars, other Islamic literature like prayer books still circulated in manuscript form (now often in Cyrillic), and many of the printed Islamic texts in use were still of pre-revolutionary times.

In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan private learned circles (*hujras*) around several pre-eminent scholars continued to exist throughout the 1950s to 1980s; they remained intact "through family ties and corruption", as Tim Epkenhans aptly remarks. Among these *'ulama'* we find traditionalist scholars of Islamic law who defended the Hanafi school as well as "fundamentalists" close to the above-mentioned Ahl al-Hadith, students of Arabic and Persian philology, next to Sufis and persons venerated as saints. Interestingly, *hujras* existed not only in remote villages but, above all, in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, which replaced the old cities of Bukhara and Samarkand as an informal Islamic centre. The *hujra* scholars

produced a considerable amount of Islamic treatises and polemical writings that were circulated in the form of manuscripts as well as tape recordings (from the 1970s onwards). Research on this underground literature, a kind of Islamic Samizdat, has begun only recently.[27]

In Daghestan, unofficial Islam was, and still is, strongly connected to the Sufi brotherhoods based in the mountain villages; they often combined Sufi education with the study of Arabic and the legal traditions of the Shafi'i school. In Azerbaijan, the liquidation of all other Islamic institutions led to the rising popularity of Sufi shrines (*pirs*) as the only place for worship and spiritual instruction still available. By comparison, young men and women from Tatarstan had the fewest chances to find a teacher of Islam, or to be admitted to the Mir-i 'Arab Madrasa; also, most of the surviving saintly families (*ishans*) in Tatar villages seem to have ceased their educational activities during the Brezhnev era.

Perestroika and independence

With some years of delay, the gradual liberalization of state religious policy under Gorbachev's "perestroika" led to a boom of Islam and Islamic education in many Muslim regions of the Soviet Union. In the late 1980s, especially in Daghestan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, practically all villages and neighborhood communities began to erect mosques and prayer halls. As the ban on private religious education was lifted, new Islamic schools were not only established by the state-sponsored Directorates, but also organized at mosques and in private homes. Stepping out of the shadow, the market for Islamic literature exploded. Inexpensive pre-revolutionary primers were re-published in large quantities, and Islamic missionary literature from abroad began to pour in everywhere. Nevertheless, this foreign literature still reflected the Soviet conditions, for it arrived mainly in the form of Russian translations which were accessible to the masses everywhere, clearly outnumbering new publications written by local authors and in the languages of the particular republics. Foreign literature was also spread by returnees from the *hajj*, which was re-opened for the Muslims of the USSR. In addition, members of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood renewed their contacts with their brethren and with diaspora communities in other countries, and some works of twentieth century Daghestani Sufis and scholars have recently been published in the Near East.

Faced with this renaissance from within and new competition from abroad, the Soviet Islamic administration fell apart in a fashion that mirrored the collapse of the USSR itself. The Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Tashkent turned into an Uzbek Muftiate in 1989, when the Kazakhstani "Qaziyat" elevated itself to the status of a Muftiate in its own right. In the North Caucasus many new semi-independent republics, like Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria, also established their own Islamic Directorates, and thus split from the Soviet North Caucasian Directorate in Daghestan. During the 1990s, the fragmentation went even further. In the multinational republic of Daghestan, the now-republican Directorate became dominated by Avar scholars (most of them adherents of the Naqshbandiyya *shaykh* Sa'id Afandi, b. 1937), and had to face competition by rival

institutions emerging among the Lak, Dargin, Lezgian, and Nogay populations of the country. In Russia, the old Soviet Muftiate for European Russia and Siberia in Ufa was challenged, not only by new national Directorates in the republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, but also by a new Russian Muftiate in Moscow and various others in regions like Nizhnii Novgorod. While this process began with a new grass root movement of Muslim conferences and assemblies that had a certain resemblance with the Muslim conference movement earlier in the century, most of the surviving Muftiates were subsequently incorporated into the administrative and governmental structures of the respective regions and republics. A certain departure from the Soviet model emerged in Tajikistan, where a new republican Muftiate was soon replaced by a large, and rather reactionary, Council of Scholars.

The new Directorates started to operate state-controlled *madrasas* (some of them, even in Shi'ite Azerbaijan, initially following the Soviet model of the Mir-i 'Arab Madrasa), a few of which were soon calling themselves Islamic Universities. In 1998, for instance, an Islamic University of the Russian Federation was opened in Kazan, which aspires to be the leading institution for Islamic education in the whole of the Russian Federation.

However, the new post-Soviet system of Islamic education lacked experience, teaching materials, and especially personnel. An interesting case is the Crimea, where the Crimean Directorate accepted help from the Turkish Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and other Turkish religious trusts and organizations, and adopted the model of Turkish *imam-hatip* lyceums for its *madrasas*. The Crimean Muftiate competes with the Spiritual Administration of Ukrainian Muslims in Kiev and other regional centres which, in turn, cooperate widely with Arab governments and NGOs, and thus follow, for example, Syrian or Lebanese models in their educational programmes. Similarly, the Kazakhstani Directorate mainly provides Islamic education in Almaty through a joint-venture with the Egyptian Ministry for Pious Endowments, while the Ahmet Yesevi University in Southern Kazakhstan is a Kazakh-Turkish joint venture.

An especially colorful picture emerged in multi-confessional Azerbaijan, where the local Shi'ite activists and believers first, and quite naturally, accepted various Iranian Ayatollahs as their spiritual, and sometimes even political, leaders. Their influence was soon counterbalanced by the growing impact of the teachings of Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani who lived in Iraq, by several official and private Sunnite Turkish organizations, as well as by Arab-sponsored Salafist ("Wahhabi") groups. Across these politicized "sectarian" lines some mosques still attract a mixed Sunni and Shi'i audience.

In general, the 1990s must be regarded as a period of trial and error, and many educational projects were, within a short time, aborted due to the competition between and internal struggles within organizations, lack of funds, and also for political reasons. In addition to the explicitly Islamic schools, all over the former Soviet Union new secular schools were opened by Turkish organizations close to the Fethullah Gülen movement. These schools follow the national curricula of the respective host republics, and their Islamic missionary work is mostly confined to informal circles in student dormitories.[28]

Missionary work under Soviet and post-Soviet conditions meant, above all, the attempt to lead ethnic Muslims back to the religion of their ancestors. The activities of the transnational Tablighi Jama'at, described recently by Till Mostowlansky in a case study from Kyrgyzstan, certainly fall into this category.[29] In many other cases, missionary work has been connected to the political goals of the national states and organizations that supported or conducted it. By influencing the future shape of Islam in the post-Soviet area, these states and missionary organizations also tried to bind the recipient republics to their institutions. In addition, missionary work is meant to strengthen specific interpretations of Islam vis-à-vis competitors from third countries, and generally to extend the political influence of the "donor" states and organizations in the international arena.[30] The success of Islamic missionary work in the former Soviet Union is testified by the growing role of Muslim converts (mostly of Russian and Ukranian ethnic background), which is documented in this volume for Daghestan as well as for Ukraine, where even a Union of Converted Muslims came into being.

After the "wild" boom of Islamic education in the late Soviet and early independence periods, the following decade is generally described in more moderate terms. A certain consolidation took place, and provisional institutions were becoming more firmly established, with decreasing dependence from abroad but increasing control by the state. Almost everywhere the republican governments made an effort to restrict the Islamic sector, and hundreds of *madrasas* were closed (as documented here in detail for Uzbekistan in 1998), thus eliminating many competitors to the official Directorates. The governments are now especially apprehensive of the intrusion of what is widely called "non-traditional" interpretations of Islam, and often subsumed under the random labels of "fundamentalism", "extremism", and "Wahhabism". However, the actual appeal and success of Islamic parties seem to be very limited. Even the civil war in Tajikistan was, in the first place, not a conflict between Islamists on the one hand and representatives of a secular system on the other, but basically a struggle between various regional coalitions. Tajikistan is today the only post-Soviet republic where Islamic parties are not generally outlawed; and as Tim Epkenhans argues, even illegal groups like Hizb al-Tahrir can be considered as part of the newly emerging 'bad' civil society.

"Fundamentalism" thus appears as a convenient tag attached to many different groups that do not acknowledge the state monopolies on Islamic interpretation and on the production of Islamic knowledge. As seen above, in Soviet times the state supported a moderate Salafist/Modernist Muftiate in Tashkent; now most of the new independent states prefer to defend traditionalist positions, for example in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and partly also in Tatarstan. Legal traditionalism and popular practices, as well as Naqshbandi Sufism (especially in Daghestan), are perceived as an almost patriotic bulwark against "imported fundamentalism" and political extremism. Ironically, this, in turn, amounts to the politicizing of a seemingly innocent "traditionalism".

In recent years, legislation everywhere has become more restrictive once more. In the context of the global "War against Terrorism", measures to restrict political Islam at times almost remind of Soviet practices against Islam in general. An

outstanding example is Uzbekistan, where the government has reintroduced a general ban on Islamic education "in private". Accordingly, *hujra*-type circles, which had kept scholarly education alive through most of the Soviet period, are again outside the law. Furthermore, like in Soviet times, Islamic education is not taught at state schools in many countries of Central Asia, whose governments have tried instead to meet public educational demands in this respect by introducing classes of "neutral" ethics at all school levels (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), and by maintaining a few state-controlled *madrasas*.

Islamic education and Oriental studies

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the fact that Islamic education is not only a matter of private and public religious education by Muslim activists; it is linked to the academic field of Oriental studies as well, and thus to secular universities and research institutions. After the Second World War, new research and teaching institutions of Oriental studies sprang up in the Soviet republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus, and were in need of qualified personnel. Several Muslim scholars, school teachers and experts on local Islamic history found work at these institutes, where they were usually employed in subordinate positions connected with language instruction and the maintenance of Islamic manuscript collections (as described in our surveys on Daghestan and Uzbekistan). Today, historians of Islam visiting the libraries of research institutions in those areas will benefit more from the unpublished catalogues and source studies produced by these co-opted Muslim scholars than from the uninspired Marxist publications of their former senior scholars and directors.

Today, the link between Islam and academia is most visible in the new Islamic universities in post-Soviet republics like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Tatarstan. These institutions of higher education are meant to produce mullahs and Islamic officials for the Directorates; however, the only available experts to teach subjects like, for instance, Islamic law and history in a scientific way are professors and junior researchers of the Oriental and Islamic studies departments at the state universities. Here we find an interesting convergence of secular and religious teaching on Islam. It can be assumed that part of the student body at the same time attends both secular and religious instruction on Islam; and it remains an open question as to what extent religious curricula at Islamic universities and secular subjects at state institutes influence each other when taught by the same instructors to similar audiences.

To sum up, the ways of Islamic education have always been diverse in the various (post-) Soviet regions: Shi'i and Sunni, traditionalist and Salafist, scholarly and Sufi, communal and state-based, private and public. Islamic traditions have always been in flux, shaped by outstanding scholars and teachers, and influenced by contacts with other traditions and with Muslims from abroad. Soviet state interference restricted and at times severely crippled the transmission of Islamic knowledge. However, the Soviet Union not only fought Islam, it also regulated its organization and, by doing so, shaped and perpetuated the various traditions. While

the general conditions have changed somewhat after 1991, we find that in the field of regulating Islam the new independent states are true heirs of the Soviet Union. In the picture that emerges today, the Soviet experience is still palpable in all regions and on all levels.

Expression of thanks

The editors would like to extend their sincere gratitude to Anke von Kügelgen (Bern) and Fikret Adanir (Bochum/Istanbul), who co-organized and supported the project from its very beginning, and who also supervised some of the research groups. The translation of the contributions from the Russian language was teamwork between Stefan Schaack, Daria Stepanova (both Bochum), and the editors. Valuable advice on current developments was given by Amieke Bouma (Alfred Mozer-Foundation, Amsterdam). For proofreading we benefited from the valuable help provided by Rita Hewlett (Canton, NY) and Tamara van Kessel (Amsterdam). Céline Morgan (Bern) and Tobias Völker (Hamburg) helped with the layout.

The three-year project was supported by the Volkswagen-Foundation's programme "Between Europe and the Orient: A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus". This generous support comprised means for the working groups (including several PhD students) in Azerbaijan, Daghestan, Germany, Kazakhstan, Switzerland, Tatarstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, as well as for the conferences and publications.

Notes

1 *Repression, Anpassung, Neuorientierung: Islamische Bildung im sowjetischen und post-sowjetischen Raum*, edited by Raoul Motika, Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, forthcoming).
2 Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev* (New York, 2000).
3 See Devin DeWeese, "Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: A Review Essay on Yaacov Ro'i's *Islam in the Soviet Union*", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 13 (2002), 298–330.
4 Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789–1889: Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin, 1998).
5 Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and "Bulghar" Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden, 1998).
6 Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780–1910* (Leiden, 2001); *Materials for the Islamic History of Semipalatinsk: Two Manuscripts by Ahmad-Walīal-Qazānī, and Qurbān-'AlīKhālidī*, edited by Allen J. Frank and Mirkasyim A. Usmanov (Berlin, 2001); *Qurbān-'Alī Khālidī, An Islamic Biographical Dictionary of the Eastern Kazakh Steppe: 1770–1912*, edited by Allen J. Frank and Mirkasyim A. Usmanov (Leiden, 2004).
7 Bruce G. Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan: Kazak Religion and Collective Memory* (London, 2001); Aširbek Muminov, "Veneration of Holy Sites in the Mid-Syrdar'ya Valley: Continuity and Transformation", in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* [henceforth *MCRCA*], vol. 1, edited by Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen, Dmitriy Yermakov (Berlin, 1996), pp. 355–367; idem, "Die Qožas: Arabische Genealogien in Kasachstan", in *MCRCA*, vol. 2, edited by Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, Allen J. Frank (Berlin, 1998), pp. 193–209.

8 Michael Kemper, *Herrschaft, Recht und Islam in Daghestan: Von den Khanaten und Gemeindebünden zum ǧihād-Staat* (Wiesbaden, 2005).
9 Anke von Kügelgen, *Die Legitimierung der mittelasiatischen Mangitendynastie in den Werken ihrer Historiker* (Würzburg, 2002).
10 For a definition of "Northern Eurasia" see, *Devout Societies vs. Impious States? Transmitting Islamic Learning in Russia, Central Asia and China, through the Twentieth Century* edited by Stéphane Dudoignon (Berlin, 2004), p. 7.
11 See Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), p. 244f; Komatsu Hisao, "Dār al-Islām under Russian Rule as Understood by Turkestani Muslim Intellectuals", in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Asia* edited by Uyama Tomohiko (Sapporo, 2007), pp. 3–21, here: p. 8.
12 See also Ashirbek Muminov, "Fundamentalist Challenges to Local Islamic Traditions in Soviet and Post-Soviet Central Asia", in Uyama Tomohiko (ed), *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia*, pp. 249–262, here: p. 253.
13 For this concept see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalisms in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY, 2001).
14 For Azerbaijan cf. Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus* (München, 2003).
15 Stéphane Dudoignon, "Qu'est-ce que la 'qadîmîya'? Éléments pour une sociologie du traditionalisme musulman, en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane (au tournant des XIXe et XXe siècles)", in *L'Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l'Oural, depuis le XVIIIe siècle* edited by Stéphane Dudoignon, Dämir Is'haqov, and Räfyq Möhämmätshin (Paris, 1997), pp. 207–225.
16 Edward J. Lazzerini, "Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism in Russia: 1878–1914", unpubl. Diss. (University of Seattle, Wash., 1973); Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley, 1998); Christian Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich: Nationsbildung und Nationalbewegung bei Tataren und Baschkiren, 1861–1917* (Stuttgart, 2000); Eva-Maria Auch, *Muslim – Untertan – Bürger. Identitätswandel in gesellschaftlichen Transformationsprozessen der muslimischen Ostprovinzen Südkaukasiens* (Ende 18. – Anfang 20. Jh.) (Wiesbaden, 2004).
17 For the Bolshevik religious policy see Arto Luukkanen, *The Party of Unbelief: The Religious Policy of the Bolshevik Party, 1917–1929* (Helsinki, 1994).
18 Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, NY, 1998).
19 Ingeborg Baldauf, *Schriftreform und Schriftwechsel bei den muslimischen Russland- und Sowjettürken (1850–1937)* (Budapest, 1993).
20 See, for instance, Nadhir al-Durgili's biographical collection: *Die Islamgelehrten Daghestans und ihre arabischen Werke. Naḏīr ad-Durgilīs (st. 1935) Nuzhat al-aḏhān fī tarāǧim 'ulamā' Dāġistān*, edited (and German translation and commentaries) by Michael Kemper and Amri R. Šixsaidov (Berlin, 2004).
21 A similar administration on republican level had already been in place in Daghestan from 1931 to 1938.
22 Not to be confused with the South Asian *Ahl-i Hadith* movement.
23 For these fatwas see Bakhtiiar Babadzhanov, "O fetvakh SADUM protiv 'nemusul'-manskikh obychaev", *Islam na postsovetskom prostranstve – vzgliad iznutri*, edited by Aleksei Malashenko and Marta Brill Olkott (Moscow, 2001), pp. 170–184.
24 The Crimean Tatars would have to wait for their repatriation until the late 1980s and 1990s.
25 Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, p. 66.
26 Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, 2007), pp. 83ff.
27 For Uzbekistan see Allen J. Frank and Jahangir Manatov, *Uzbek Islamic Debates: Texts, Translations, and Commentaries* (Springfield, Va., 2006), including cassette recordings

of sermons; and B.M. Babadzhanov, A.K. Muminov, A. fon Kiugel'gen, *Disputy musul'manskikh religioznykh avtoritetov v Tsentral'noi Azii v XX veke* (Almaty, 2007), including some Soviet-period scholarly writings. For Kazakhstan, see Allen J. Frank, *Popular Islamic Literature in Kazakhstan: An Annotated Bibliography* (Springfield, Va., 2007).

28 Bekim Agai, *Zwischen Netzwerk und Diskurs: das Bildungsnetzwerk des Fethullah Gülen (geb. 1938): Die flexible Umsetzung modernen islamischen Gedankenguts* (Schenefeld, 2004); Bayram Balci, *Missionnaires de l'islam en Asie centrale: Les écoles turques de Fethullah Gülen* (Paris, 2003).

29 Till Mostowlansky, *Islam und Kirgisen on Tour: Die Rezeption "nomadischer Religion" und ihre Wirkung* (Wiesbaden, 2007).

30 Raoul Motika, "Religiöser Bildungsexport aus der Türkei nach Aserbaidschan und Tatarstan", *Repression, Anpassung, Neuorientierung: Islamische Bildung im sowjetischen und post-sowjetischen Raum*, edited by Raoul Motika, Michael Kemper, and Anke von Kügelgen (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, forthcoming).

1 Islamic education in Soviet and post-Soviet Tatarstan

Dilyara Usmanova, Ilnur Minnullin and Rafik Mukhametshin (Kazan)

Islam and religious education in the 1920–1930s

Islam and the Islamic religious elite in the first decade of Soviet rule

During the first decade of Soviet rule, the organizational structure of religion remained very much unchanged. The Islamic *mahallas* (communities, congregations) with their individual directorates (sg. *mutawalliyat*) were combined into regional *muhtasibats*. Communities and *muhtasibats* were administered by the Spiritual Directorate in Ufa (since 1923: *Tsentral'noe dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man*, TsDUM).[1] The Directorate was headed by a *mufti* with several *qadis* as his assistants. Subordinate structures of the TsDUM were the Council of *'ulama'* (*Sovet ulemov*) and the *Muhtasibat* Directorate. The Spiritual Directorate united approximately 13,000 *mahallas* in the whole of the Union. During the 1930s, in Tatarstan alone, the TsDUM was in charge of 26 *muhtasibats* which included more than 2,000 *mahallas* and more than 4,000 representatives of the Islamic clergy. In the Russian context, the term "Islamic clergy" (Russ. *dukhovenstvo*) usually refers to *mullas/imams* (leaders of the congregation in prayer), *imam-khatibs* (those leading the Friday sermon), *mu'adhdhins* (muezzins, those who call for prayer), but also to Islamic scholars (*'ulama'*, sg. *'alim*) and experts of Islamic law (*faqih, qadi*). It were the imams and *'ulama'* who used to provide Islamic education in their communities; their schools were called *maktabs* (primarily referring to Qur'an courses in the mosques) and *madrasas* (seminaries for higher students, who were called *shakirds*). Before the revolution, it was not possible to draw a clear line between scholars and representatives of Sufi Islam, for many imams of the cities and towns (and even some *muftis*) were traditionally linked to Sufi brotherhoods, especially to the Naqshbandiyya mujaddidiyya and, since the late nineteenth century, to the Naqshbandiyya khalidiyya.[2] In addition, there were various Sufi centres in the villages of the Volga-Ural region, the spiritual heads of which were called *ishan*s. In their rural lodges (*khanaqas*), the Sufis provided not only mystical but also ethical education to their followers.

In 1917, the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the Russian Empire probably approved of the end of Monarchy and agreed with the newly established "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". Political changes raised their hopes that this might

lead to a change in the traditional religious policy and bring an end to the official discrimination against Muslims. The Soviet government wanted to ensure that Islamic organizations were loyal to the revolutionary restructuring. Particularly in the regions with large Muslim populations, a special approach towards Islam had to be formulated. The *Appeal to all Working Class Muslims in Russia and the East* (December 1917) reflected the Bolsheviks' strategy to draw the Muslims into their camp. In this appeal, the Communists declared that the Soviet state would guarantee the freedom of Islamic faith as well as the existence of its ethnic and cultural institutions. Subsequently, the RSFSR (the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) Council of the People's Commissars (*Sovet narodnykh komissarov*, SNK) passed a number of symbolic laws which determined that the famous Qur'an of Osman (kept in Petrograd/St. Petersburg), the Karavan-Saray of Orenburg, and the Suiumbika Tower in Kazan were to be returned to the Tatar Muslim community.

The Bolsheviks' pointed loyalty towards Islam, however, contradicted their atheistic attitude. Religion had to be removed from public life as well as from the Soviet citizen's world view. The implementation of communist religious policy made it necessary to elaborate appropriate legal frameworks. In December 1917, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (*Vserossiiskii tsentral'nyi ispol'nitel'nyi komitet*, VTsIK) and the RSFSR SNK passed the decrees *On divorce* and *On civil marriage*. As far as marriage and family matters were concerned, religion lost its traditional role, and church weddings as well as weddings conducted by an *imam* became a private affair without legal force.

On 23 January 1918, the RSFSR SNK adopted the decree *On the separation of church and state and of school and church*. Religious organizations were banned from participation in state affairs, and religious oaths, rituals and ceremonies were excluded from state institutions. This alone may not have affected the rights of Muslims very much. Other measures, however, expelled religion from public life. The communists now launched an attack on all those social spheres within the Islamic *umma* which had been granted autonomous rights before the revolution. Soviet executive bodies were put in charge of the civil registry offices, properties of religious organizations were nationalized,[3] and the organizations themselves were deprived of their legal status. As a result, the role of religion in public life became weaker and the clergy's influence diminished. The legal separation of school and church was a terrible blow to the Islamic communities. Yet, when the Soviets attempted to implement this decree it became clear how complicated the relationships between state and religion had been.[4]

During the civil war (1918–1921) several representatives of both the Russian Orthodox clergy and the Islamic religious elite took part in the struggle against Communist rule. Other religious functionaries demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with the Bolsheviks. Whereas the Soviets had liquidated almost all national (for instance, cultural and financial) structures already in spring 1918, they maintained the official religious administration (at that time the Spiritual Directorate for Turkic-Tatar Muslims in Central Russia and Siberia, *Dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man tiurko-tatar vnutrennoi Rossii i Sibirii*) on the condition that

the Islamic clerics would not interfere with state affairs and guarantee their absolute loyalty to the Soviet regime.

In situations when it became necessary to ensure the support of the religious institutions, the authorities decided to leave them more room for activities. When the Ural and Central Volga region, for example, were struck by the enormous famine of 1921–1922, the Spiritual Islamic Directorate was allowed to set up a special commission, which organized support for the starving population.

The government's initially flexible relationship towards the religious elites made the implementation of wide parts of the aforementioned laws possible. The relationship towards Islam was appropriately moderate. In contrast to state actions against the Christian clergy, e.g. the closing of monasteries and the confiscation of enormous church properties, Soviet authorities hardly touched the Muslim possessions. There are no documents mentioning an "Islamic question" until 1922, neither in the files of the Tatar oblast' Committee of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks (*Rossiiskaia kommunisticheskaia partiia bol'shevikov*, RKP[B]) nor in records of the local department of the Political State Administration (*Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie*, GPU).

However, the relationship between Islam and Communism was heatedly debated in party circles. The Volga Tatar Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev (1892–1939), deputy and the president of the Muslim Committee (*Muskom*) at the People's Commissariat for National Affairs (*Narkomnats*) held the view that the decree should not generally be applied to the Muslim populations. He was convinced that Communist and Islamic ideologies have much in common, and that the Islamic views of the socio-economic and political systems were not in contradiction to Marxist conceptions. Sultan-Galiev wrote that "more than in any other religion does this religion [i.e. Islam] contain civil and political elements, while in other religions it is the spiritual and ethical that prevails."[5] He pointed out that the Islamic ideology was characterized by positive elements such as the necessity of obtaining education, the obligation to work, the possibility of civil marriages and restrictions on the private ownership of land, water, and forests – elements that have their analogies in Communism.

Without arguing against antireligious propaganda in principle, Sultan-Galiev opted for its moderate implementation, and held that for each group of Muslim people different methods should be applied. In August 1918 the Central Muslim Commissariat which he headed suggested that the decree on the separation of state and church not be applied to the Muslim population; however the leading committee (Kollegiia) of the Narkomnats disapproved of this idea.[6]

In a meeting of the Narkomnats leading committee in January 1923 Sultan-Galiev pointed out that the Soviet policy with regard to religious education was carried out differently in the various regions; while in some places the teaching of Islam was prohibited even in private homes, in other regions it was allowed even in Soviet schools. As he said, "there are places where there are no secular state-run schools for the lack of funding, and where the community promises to cover the budget of such schools if the teaching of religion was allowed."[7] He suggested taking into account the specific conditions of the regions and proposed that religious education

should be allowed where it was inevitable. However, his efforts to criticize the national and religious policy of the centre led to his dismissal from all duties and his first arrest in 1923.[8]

In general, the years 1922–1925 signalled a period of serious transitions; tactical policies were given up and replaced by a policy of pressure on Islam in the Central Russian regions. After the end of the civil war, the Soviet government had stabilized and was in a position to turn to domestic problems. In particular, this meant driving all religious organizations out of public life. Any activities of Islamic and Orthodox clerics convinced the government that the time had come to finally put the religious elites under total state control.

In autumn 1922, almost every account on religious affairs rendered by the Tatar Department of the GPU was focusing on activities of the *mullas* and *'ulama'*. The Islamic clergy was reported to be involved in so-called "conspiracies". The Tatar oblast' Committee recorded that there was a high demand for religious (Islamic) education at schools, and observed that people began to establish religious schools. To counteract these activities, the party mobilized its instructors and Communist youth activists to intervene and to do away with any form of religious instruction at schools. On 10 October 1922, the oblast' Committee stipulated that it was illegal to use secular schools for religious educational purposes.

Confrontations followed in quick succession. Whatever activities the Islamic clerics or the bourgeois Islamic representatives undertook, they provoked the immediate reaction of party functionaries and state officials. Some researchers hold the opinion that Moscow's drive to put all Islamic organizations under total state control was instigated by armed anti-Soviet rebellions of Muslims in Central Asia and the Caucasus as well by the government's traditional Islamophobia and anxiety about a possible political alliance of all Muslim peoples.[9]

In several meetings in early 1923, the Central Tatar-Bashkir Office at the Central Committee of the RKP(B) discussed possible reactions to the increasing "religious movement" in Tatariia and Bashkiriia. The highest political circles of Tatarstan were engaged in polemics on the question of how to break up the Islamic school network. There was no disagreement on the general necessity to control the clergy, but officials from the right and from the left wing of the party differed in their opinions on the appropriate methods to accomplish this control: while the left-wing representatives held that only a well-functioning net of secular schools could counteract the Islamic schools, the right-wing delegates were convinced that only a more repressive religion policy could bring a solution to the problem.

The policy on religion was made more severe in the whole of the country. In 1923, a series of legal acts was adopted which seriously restricted the possibilities of Muslims and Christians to express their faith in public. These legal acts included a decree of the Council of the People's Commissars (SNK RSFSR) which regulated the registration of societies, a circular issued by the People's Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD) which put the religious communities under supervision of the authorities of the interior and of justice, and an instruction jointly elaborated by the NKVD and the People's Commissariat of Justice (*Narodnyi komissariat iustitsii*,

NKIu) which stipulated and limited the income of religious employees. These and several other legal acts restricted the possibilities of religious education.

The Second All-Russian Muslim Congress of June 1923, consequently, was taking place under severe state control.[10] The event must have been of incredible importance to the officials as the politburo of the TsK RKP(B) had already discussed the Congress in May 1923, and the government had made great efforts towards elaborate and appropriate measures to control the meeting. Islamic officials set up special control commissions monitoring the representatives' activities and their tendencies to build factions.[11]

The government wanted to prevent Islamic congresses or other religious forums from becoming too popular and from developing into a legal arena for the clerics and the Muslim population, which might express the people's interests and promulgate decisions for all Muslims.

GPU accounts and reports from the Tatar oblast' Committee primarily focused on the constantly increasing number of Islamic religious schools between 1924–1926 as well as on assemblies of Islamic clerics and on the miserable results of the antireligious propaganda. It seems that until 1926, state and party officials adopted a policy of wait-and-see regarding the religious institutions. During that time, local authorities did not launch any initiative to tighten the policy on religion. They only continued to monitor the Islamic clergy's movements in a large number of reports and accounts.

Under these circumstances the Mufti of the TsDUM in Ufa, Rizaetdin Fakhretdinov, could visit Kazan in February 1925 without being subject to any official obstructions. The Office of the oblast' Committee discussed the upcoming visit of Fakhretdinov on one of its meetings and decided that there was no need to prevent the Mufti from meeting with local non-party intellectuals. Although the oblast' Committee was not going to take part in these meetings officially, Fakhretdinov was to have personal conversations with the head of the Tatar government Kh. Gabidullin as well as with Galimdzhan Ibragimov, a well-known writer and near friend of the *mufti*. They would address several issues concerning the difficult relationship between the authorities and Muslim intellectuals, the question of the caliphate, and religious issues in the East.[12] The SNK even invited Mufti Fakhretdinov and discussed with him current problems of the Muslims, as, for example, the activities of religious organizations, the legislation on religious worship, and the question of Islamic education.[13] Gabidullin promised to examine all violations of the laws on religious affairs. All the facts given in this context show the contradictory character of the official religious policy and that the authorities temporarily refrained from fighting the clergy openly.

Between the end of the Civil War and the year 1926, the clergy carried out its activities almost without hindrance, and regional and Union-wide Muslim assemblies addressed the government, and articulated courageous demands, like the opening of religious schools by religious employees. While the control on the clergy was tightened, the government was making concessions to the Muslim population, particularly regarding Islamic education. It can be argued that in this period, the government still studied its ideological opponent and elaborated strategies for the

upcoming struggle with the Islamic clergy. Party and government documentations are full of warnings against the "Islamic movement". The struggle against the clergy's propagandistic activities in the field of religious instruction was considered to be of major importance.

In an atmosphere of reinforced atheism and implanted godlessness, the *mullas* and scholars themselves tried to defend their position in Muslim society. Their activities especially addressed young people, many of whom had already broken with their fathers' religious faith. Religious schools were the basic instrument for integrating them into the Muslim community. Furthermore, the clergy took measures to attract more people to the mosques. Some of the Islamic representatives even used the mosques not only for ritual services, but also for meetings of the local youth clubs.

Working with women was another aspect of the clergy's public relations activities. A characteristic event was the foundation of a *mutawalliyat* for women at the Twelfth Mosque in Kazan. Gaiaz Iakupov, the *imam-khatib* of this mosque, became a famous spokesperson of this idea. In order to attract more women to his mosque, he invited them to gather together every week and delivered a sermon on relevant problems of domestic and family life, such as the relationship with the husband and the education of children.[14] The women's *mutawalliyat* wanted to enlighten and help other women and propagated the equality of men and women in the mosques. Imam M.S. Imankulov, too, practised the exchange of ideas with women. Similarly, the *muhtasib* of the Agryz-Elabuga *raion*, Ia. Adutov, was known among the clergy for his "pro-women" attitude. In the mosques of Agryz he assembled the women and requested them to come to the mosque regularly and to bring their children with them. He instructed them to fulfill the *uraza* (fasting) and to conduct other Islamic rituals. In addition, the *abïstays* (wives of *mullas*) used to have all-women assemblies in their homes. The government and party officials interpreted these meetings as a new form of Islamic propaganda and as a bad influence on the population.

Soviet historians (and even some post-Soviet researchers) interpreted these activities as "tactics of adaptation" and as an expression of a modernizing trend of Islam. The question of Islam and modernization was highly debated among historians of the 1920s and 1930s. N. Matorin (1929) subdivided the *mullas* into the so-called "representatives of the old mosques" (*staromechetniks*) and left-wing *mullas*. He held the opinion that the latter had adopted the tactic to accept Soviet rule and to construct a fusion of Islam and Marxism.[15] Matorin thus understood the aforementioned activities of Islamic clerics as the work of reform-orientated *mullas*. The notorious antireligious researcher and writer L.I. Klimovich (1929) regarded the *staromechetniks* as standing in opposition to the *novomechetniks* ("representatives of the new mosques"). The latter pursue the "adaptation of Islam to revolutionary Soviet circumstances".[16] According to Klimovich, the change of attitudes towards women and the activities which *mullas* undertook during election campaigns reflected their struggle against the fact that the Soviet citizen escaped more and more from the influence of religion. The attitude that the clergy can be divided into progressives and reactionaries was also maintained in later Soviet scholarship.[17]

Recent research has again raised the question of Islamic modernization in the 1920s, yet most historians no longer follow the bipolar subdivision of the Islamic clergy during the Soviet period. Since new sources have become accessible, it turned out that the activities of the so-called progressive clergy were more complex than previously assumed. What emerges is that the government had an active part in constructing this artificial division.[18]

During the preparation of the All-Russian Muslim Congress in 1923, GPU officials were already secretly instructed to interfere in its work and to set up a "group of renewal" (*obnovlencheskaia gruppa*). Before this, no local sources ever made a distinction between groups of reactionaries and progressives among the Tatar clerics. None of these sources of the 1920s provides any clear definition of the progressive and the reactionary wings or gives any exact information on their theoretical frameworks.

Instead, we find clichés like the assertion that the progressives work for their living on their own while the reactionary *mullas* exploit the Muslim workers. Documents in connection with the assemblies of *muhtasibs* do not provide any concrete material on the sections within the clergy either. In some sources, even the leaders of the TsDUM are classified as progressive, while in others they are depicted as reactionary. Instead of drawing any ideological boundaries, some documents of this period describe the separation within the clergy as a split between the young and the old. It appears that the young ("progressive") *mullas* were a new elite trying to seize power in the communities and *muhtasibats*. In the beginning, the government was supportive of them. However, their attitude towards the Islamic canons did not differ from the views of the old clergy. As far as educational, ritual, and mere religious affairs were concerned, there was no split within the clergy at all. Furthermore, none of these sources makes a distinction between Jadidis and Qadimis even in documents which discuss the activities of the Islamic clerics before the revolution.

However, by 1927–1928 documentations of state and party institutions no longer subdivided the Islamic clergy into various sections. From then on, all religious officials without exception were considered to represent one single reactionary class, which applied the same set of methods to influence young people, women and the lower representatives of the Soviet state machinery.

In this period, the number of religious schools in the *mahallas* was still increasing.[19] For this reason, the authorities felt compelled to reinforce their antireligious campaigns in early 1926. Besides, authorities were seriously concerned by the large number of regional assemblies of the Islamic clergy taking place in the run-up to the Third All-Russian Congress of the Islamic clergy in 1926. Several secret consultations on this issue were held in April. On 7 April 1926, the presidency of Tatar People's Commissariat of Education held a secret meeting with Tatar Communist activists. Among other things, the meeting proposed the following strategies: "1. The religious school system has to be broken up by means of opening [Islamic] schools in every neighbourhood, which will create rivalry among the clergy and charge the communities with high costs. 2. Demands for excellent pedagogic standards [at these schools] are to be refused categorically. 3. The method of lecturing