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Islam and Modernity in Contemporary Central Asia: Religious Faith versus Way of Life

A Story of Four Radical Disruptions

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The Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Group

A plethora of state- and nation-building programmes are being developed in present-day Asia, where governments have to consider the regionality of old ethno-cultural identities. While the cohesive power of traditions must be put into use within a particular nation, that same power challenges its national boundaries. To soften this contradiction, economic and/or political regionalism, in contrast to isolationism and globalism, becomes a solution, suggesting new and exciting routes to modernity. In studies conducted by the Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Group at Stockholm University, sociolinguistic and culture-relativistic perspectives are applied with the support of epistemological considerations from the field of political science.

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Editorial Note

The author has written extensively on the history, defence and security policies of Eurasia. Research for this report was conducted at the former Forum for Central Asian Studies, and an early draft was used as teaching material in Central Asian Studies at Stockholm University. The views presented in this article are those of the author alone and do not represent those of the Swedish government or any other group.

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Introduction: What Makes Central Asian Islam Central Asian?

In March 2005, an Afghan deputy minister of the interior (who out of mercy will remain unnamed) was touring Europe. At one stop, he suddenly found himself faced with a question that obviously took him by surprise. How long, an innocent but assuredly well-meaning European asked, had Afghanistan been an Islamic country? The minister, flustered, only managed to reply that as far as he knew, Afghanistan had been an Islamic country ever since the seventh century.

The minister's reply revealed that to him, Islam and accordingly the history of Afghanistan as well began with the prophet Muhammad (c. 570-632), who founded the new religion in the Arabian peninsula.

In actual fact, the Arab conquest armies reached the core territory of present Afghanistan as late as in 795 and gained a firm hold of the region only in 870 - about a century after they had managed to establish Islam as the main religion of the territories of present Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.[1]

The minister's reply illustrates the attitude to Islam of many, perhaps most Muslims. Islam is the final, permanent, indeed immutable blue-print for what God wants from Mankind. Whatever happened before Islam is irrelevant. Islam does not change, although some men to their own eternal damnation fail to understand this. What was true in the seventh century remains true today and will also be true tomorrow. Like the notion of Western liberal democracy, as Francis Fukuyama once fancied it,[2] Islam is the end of history - because nothing better will ever come around, regardless of how many millennia pass by. It is the end of the line in human development, or so at least its ideology is understood by many of its adherents.

Many, perhaps most theologians would agree with this attitude. Whether himself a believer or not, the theologian tends to see Islam as an essentially unchanging belief system. It can be analysed, and perhaps, such an analysis might one day reveal the Will of God - which, unlike the beliefs of mere mortals, which mutate from time to time, for obvious reasons does not change (God is infallible, right?). This, although for quite different reasons, is also the position taken by many, again perhaps most sociologists. Islam is here and now. It can be studied through field work and analysed until it, far too often, can be made to fit any one of the currently favoured theories of their far from immutable discipline.[3]

The historian tends to walk another path. Taking into account Johann Gottfried Herder's emphasis on "time, place, and national character," he usually leaves God, who if he exists at all indeed lacks all these characteristics, out of the story and concentrates on, well, time, place, and national character. When it comes to Central Asian Islam, he thus, among numerous other questions, wants to know, what makes Central Asian Islam Central Asian? In what way is Central Asian Islam different from other forms of Islam, and how did these changes occur? When, and how, did Central Asian Islam become what it is today, and what was it like in earlier centuries? And the most improbable question of them all, can the past offer any clues to what the future will look like? Because one thing is certain; unless the end of the

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[1] B. A. Litvinsky; A. H. Jalilov; and A. I. Kolesnikov, "The Arab Conquest", B. A. Litvinsky (ed), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia 3: The Crossroads of Civilization, AD 250 to 750* (Paris: UNESCO, 1996), 449-72, on 470

[2] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

[3] More often than not, these theories would seem to be based on political preferences. At roughly the same time as a prominent Harvard professor noted that "American and other Western sociologists as a group have been more supportive of 'liberal' or 'left' egalitarian politics than those in any other field in academe" and that in the United States, sociologists "have documented almost *ad nauseam* the extent to which American reality and the American creed of an egalitarian society are at odds," his Soviet counterparts noted that sociology had "become a mighty weapon of social prognostication, planning and management." Seymour Martin Lipset and Richard B. Dobson, "Social Stratification and Sociology in the Soviet Union," *Survey* 19: 3 (Summer 1973), 114-85, on 114; Melvin Croan, "Sociology: For Whom?" *Survey* 19: 3 (Summer 1973), 216-17, on 216.

world occurs and we all, somewhat improbably, end up in the same paradise, religious faith is bound to change, as it always did in the past.

First, one need to realise that there is no Central Asian Islam as such. This any Islamic theologian could tell us. Most Central Asian Muslims follow Sunni Islam, but there are also limited numbers of Shias and Ismailis. However, this statement is far more a statement of fact than an issue within theology. Islam in Central Asia, even Sunni Islam, simply does not constitute a uniform religious, social, or political force. While all eponymous or titular Central Asian ethnic groups, that is, the nations that states were named after, eventually embraced Islam, the religion did not penetrate the traditional cultures and social systems of these groups to an equal extent. While the sedentary groups generally embraced Islam fully, and often acquired a reputation for Islamic scholarship as well as occasional bouts of fanaticism, most nomadic and pastoral groups typically assimilated Islam in a rather perfunctory manner. Those Muslims who had embraced Islam early on followed Islamic law, *shariah*, which traditionally regulated all aspects of private and public life. Many other Muslims, however, especially those of nomadic origin (or, for that matter, those in the North Caucasus), instead emphasised their customary law, *adat*.[4]

These different degrees of Islamicisation remain visible today. The Tajiks are generally regarded as most Islamic, followed by the Uzbeks. The Kyrgyz, Kazaks, and Turkmens, in roughly descending order, are regarded as comparatively less Islamic in their attitudes.[5] The difference between sedentary and nomadic groups with regard to Islam can also be discerned among the non-titular ethnic groups. So are, for instance, the sedentary Uighurs regarded as far more Islamic than their formerly nomadic neighbours. In other words, there was no unified Muslim society in Central Asia. Each region, and each ethnic group, displayed its own characteristics. Those who base their understanding of history on theology are all too ready to paint an idealistic picture of a unified Muslim society and a common national consciousness, supposed to have existed in the past. These notions are very far from the observable facts. An attitude of too much respect for one's chosen subject precludes a thorough analysis of it. Theologians please take note.[6]

So much for theology as compared to reality. An assessment of the history of Central Asian Islam indeed, as will be shown, offers the following conclusions, which might shock more than one believer in the immutability of religion.

1. Islam became preeminent in southern Central Asia by the end of the eighth century, and it did so through military conquest, the first radical disruption in the region engendered by Islam. It took more than a thousand years for the religion to achieve even a remotely similar status in northern Central Asia.
2. Islam during this time suffered two internal radical disruptions, both of which came to change the very essence of the religion as it was understood and practiced in Central Asia: first the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century, then the Marxist conquest in the twentieth century.
3. Meanwhile, and of far less obvious but nonetheless of vital importance to Central Asia and the world, a fourth radical disruption was taking place. This, the nineteenth-century introduction of Islamic modernism, did not bear fruit until the last decades of the twentieth century, but when it did, it did so in the guise of Islamic extemism and returned Central Asia to the centre-stage of international politics.
4. Central Asian Islam is currently undergoing a globalising trend caused by this fourth radical disruption, a trend the magnitude of which has not been seen in the region since the eighth century. Central Asia is undergoing re-Islamicisation. The percentage of the Central Asian population that believes, on a personal level, in the Islamic faith is again growing, after a hiatus caused by the Marxist conquest.
5. At the same time, available data suggest that the percentage of the Central Asian population that currently believes in, and not merely follows the traditions of, the Islamic faith in fact is smaller than it ever was since the eighth century, ranging from less than twenty per cent among the descendants

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[4] Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967), 20.

[5] Alexei Malashenko, "Islam in Central Asia," Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds), *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), 49-66, on 51. See also Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev* (London: Hurst & Co., 2000), 691, 697-8.

[6] Consider the words of one prominent professor of comparative religion: "We believe...that people who deny the reality of God (whether or not they recognize Him by that term) preclude themselves from adequately understanding the history of religion." Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 7.

of nomads such as Kazaks and Kyrgyz to a share only slightly higher among the descendants of settled peoples such as Uzbeks. In the eighth century, Islam suffered from competition from other religions; now Islam suffers from competition from what might be referred to as quite another type of globalisation: secular as opposed to Islamic modernity. For the majority of Central Asians, Islam has become a way of life rather than a religious faith.

No historian would seriously dispute that the Mongol and Marxist conquests were radical disruptions in the development of Islam in Central Asia. For the Central Asians, one can just as easily argue that the Arab conquest of the eighth century was the first radical disruption of Islam in their region. A few merchants and other adherents to the new religion had, after all, already appeared in the region on an individual basis, while the conquest brought wholesale Islamicisation. One can likewise argue that the current globalising trend in Islam seen in Central Asia is indeed caused by the fourth radical disruption, the introduction of Islamic modernism. Each disruption has significantly altered the nature of Islam, as perceived in Central Asia and as experienced by the peoples there. Yet, while each disruption brought radical changes, earlier Islamic traditions were not, in most cases, eradicated. Thus, contemporary Central Asian Islam is the composite product of innovations from each successive, radical disruption. The Islam of today is very different from what Islam used to be, and the religion will no doubt display yet other characteristics in centuries to come. If, that is, Islam survives in a recognisable form, which seems very likely indeed.

Methodology: The Historiographical Tradition

Building on a long historical tradition from Herodotus (*c.* 484-425 BC) and Thucydides (*c.* 460-400 BC), a historian familiar with Central Asia can employ the time-honoured working principle that inquiry proceeds from the known to the unknown; from existing works in one's own field, in contiguous historical fields, and in allied disciplines to research into what has not yet entered the pages of historical treatises. Source material comes in the form of information transmitted from those living through the events as well as accounts, written (literary or official), verbal, or material, that form the end products of an occurrence. From these traces (the "facts" of history), the actual occurrences can be derived as critical deductions from the facts. The historian can then conclude his investigation by writing down his conclusions on causal and chronological - sequential - relationships. Any occurrence is located in time. To fully comprehend it, one must place the occurrence in the sequence of events, in its context. Such acts do not emerge in a vacuum; elements of continuity will always link the occurrence to what went before. The aim will then be to determine the particular time and place of the phenomenon, or to trace and explain some particular series of related occurrences.[7] The historian should also keep in mind that the historical discourse, the context as seen by one particular historian, is not necessarily consistent with that of another historian, the reader of history, or indeed his subjects. Conclusions should indeed be regarded as interpretations.[8] Following Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), one must view human actions from a standpoint which takes proper account of "*Teils nach Lage und Bedürfnis des Orts, Teils nach Umständen und Gelegenheiten der Zeit, Teils nach dem angebornen oder sich erzeugenden Charakter der Völker"* (the situation and needs of the place, the circumstances and occasions of the time, and the inborn or engendered character of the nations), or in short, *(n)ur Zeiten, nur Örter und National-Charaktere* (only time, place, and national character). By this Herder meant the cultural milieu and the inevitable limits imposed by historical situation and circumstance.[9] This should not be confused with mentalism, according to which "all there is to study is how actors believe things are or say things are" and "actors'

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[7] See, e.g., Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 6, 26-8; Geoffrey Stern, *The Structure of International Society: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Pinter, 1995), 45.

[8] See, e.g., Mandelbaum, *Anatomy,* 28-30.

[9] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschkeit* 12: 6 (1784-91). For a modern edition, see Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschkeit* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2002), 465. See also Herder 13: 7, in the Carl Hanser edition on 521, on "*National- Zeit- und Ortsumstände"* (national, temporal, and spatial circumstances). Herder also, incidentally, implied the rejection of the practice of judging past events from contemporary moral or cultural standpoints, an abuse of history which remains common among idealists to this day. See, e.g., Herder 12: 6, in the Carl Hanser edition on 469-70, where he points out "*wie hinfällig alles Menschenwerk, ja wie drückend auch die beste Einrichtung in wenigen Geschlechtern werde"* (how fleeting all human structures are, nay how oppressive even the best institution becomes in the course of a few generations).

environments exist only in their beliefs or in their texts."[10] Herder's view, moreover, is, after all, the largely unrecognised predecessor of the useful modern analytical strategy in multi-disciplinary research known as discourse analysis. The fundamental precept of discourse analysis is that a discourse is a socially construed system of interpretation, that is, a particular way to refer to and understand the world or a part of the world. Discourse is here understood as a context, a particular way of perceiving, constructing, and representing the world.[11]

For the historian, this may be sufficient. After all, the historian is concerned with the particular, rather than with establishing explanatory generalisations; in the words of Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915), his aims are idiographic rather than nomothetic, that is, they are devoted to the study of the individual and unique rather than the general, repetitive, and regular.[12] It thus follows that a classical historiographical approach can only explain - in this particular case - what type of disruption took place and how it occurred. It fails to explain, except in the most general of terms, what the phenomenon will lead to in the near future, or what will be the long-term influences on the region under study. The descriptive historiographical tradition cannot, for obvious reasons, deal with what has not yet happened. For this, one will have to go beyond purely descriptive history. Yet, classical historiography is not opposed to attempts to deepen the understanding of historical events beyond the purely descriptive. This approach is also often the one encouraged in modern historical research, in which theoretical applications and concepts are used to help the historian to order and clarify, and to distinguish between essential and particular features of history. Concepts can also simplify historical problems, or at least the historian's view of them. Current historiography often gives greater weight to structures than previously was the case, and is inter- or even multi-disciplinary in approaches and attitudes.

The First Disruption: The Arab Conquest, the Introduction of Islam to Central Asia, and the Rise of the Ulama

The Arab Conquest

As is well known, the seventh-century Arabs, inspired by their new faith (and the lure of loot) conquered vast territories in the name of the new religion, eventually reaching from Spain and North Africa in the west to Sind (present Pakistan) in the east. Much of the south of modern Central Asia, or more specifically, the territory that roughly corresponded to the old Persian province of Soghdiana on the right bank of the Oxus (now Amu Darya), which was known to the Greeks as Transoxania and accordingly became known to the Arabs as Ma wara al-nahr, "that which is beyond the river," also fell under Arab rule. This, however, was not an instantaneous process, nor a process welcomed by all who eventually converted to Islam. The chronology is revealing.[13]

First to fall, on the eastern front, was the Sassanian Empire of Persia, by then exhausted from decades of warfare. The first Arab campaign within Sassanian territory took place in 633. The Arab conquest armies only approached the limits of modern Central Asia in 650-651, during the first Arab offensive against Seistan (former Drangiana and present southeastern Iran). The year 651 also saw the murder of the Sassanian Shah, Yazdagird III (r. 632-651), the event which is regarded as having finally brought an end to the Sassanian Empire. Yazdagird, who had fled before the Arab invaders to Khurasan (an old Sassanian province and the one nearest to Transoxania; under the Arab conquerors eventually with centres in Mashhad, Herat, and Balkh, thus consisting of roughly present northeastern Iran and western Afghanistan), died in Merv in present Turkmenistan. It was no coincidence that he had taken refuge there; Merv was the key Sassanian military stronghold on the frontier with Transoxania, which by then was politically divided and dominated by Soghdian nobles and merchants, the latter growing wealthy from the trade along the Silk Roads. With Yazdagird dead, there was little to stop the Arab invaders. By 654,

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[10] Kjell Goldmann, "International Relations: An Overview," Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds), *A New Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 401-27, on 417.

[11] See, e.g., Marianne Winther Jørgensen; and Louise Phillips, *Diskursanalys som teori och metod* ("Discourse analysis as theory and method;" Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000), 7; Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

[12] Wilhelm Windelband, "Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft," *Präludien* 2: *Aufsätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 5th edn 1915), 136-60, on 145.

[13] This section is, unless noted otherwise, based on Litvinsky *et al*., "Arab Conquest," 449-72; W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (np: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 4th edn 1977), 180-227, 520-22; and (for a general survey only) Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 39-41, 63-4, 67.

Khurasan too was conquered.[14] Even so, the first invasion of Transoxania only began two decades later, in 673, after the first intra-Muslim civil war (656-661) and under the Umayyad caliphs. In this year, the Arab governor of Khurasan, Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad, crossed the Amu Darya with a raiding force. He eventually reached the outskirts of Bukhara, where the Arab invaders were paid a ransom to return home. In 676, the Arabs repeated their raid on Bukhara, again receiving a ransom, and also moved against Samarkand, where they were repulsed by the defenders. The Arabs next raided Khorezm, Khojand, and Samarkand in 680. Despite these raids, and many others followed in the next quarter of a century, again often with the Arabs receiving a ransom to return home, the Arabs did not remain over winter in Transoxania before 681.[15]

This period of warfare, however, was mere raiding for booty. The invaders never attempted to grab territory. The task of conquering Transoxania began only in 705, after Qutaiba ibn Muslim (r. 705-715) was appointed Arab governor of Khurasan. Qutaiba took advantage of the internal dissensions among the Soghdians. Already in 705, one Transoxanian ruler called in Qutaiba and his troops against local rivals in what essentially was a mercenary role. In 706, Qutaiba undertook a campaign in the area of Bukhara. In 707 and 708, he again attacked Bukhara but failed to conquer the city, which only fell to him in 709. The Arab hold over the city was tenuous, however, and the first mosque was built there only in 713. In 712 the Arab commander set out against Samarkand. The Soghdians were defeated in a pitched battle, and the city of Samarkand fell in the subsequent siege, a story told with dramatic flair by the later historian Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923). In 713 and 714, Qutaiba led two major campaigns against Shash (near present Tashkent) and Farghana, before he was killed the following year, still in Farghana, in an attempt to challenge the authority of the new caliph, Sulayman (r. 715-717).[16]

When mere raiding gave way to conquest, the Arab nobility began a process of colonisation. This policy was widely pursued by the Arabs, particularly under Qutaiba, who strove to consolidate his victories by settling Arabs among the conquered peoples of Transoxania. He also ordered the educated class and all literature of Khorezm, and presumably the rest of Transoxania, to be destroyed so as to ensure continued Arab and Muslim domination. The scientist Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (973-1048), himself a native of Khorezm, wrote:[17]

> And by all means Qutaiba dispersed and destroyed all who knew the writings of Khorezm, who preserved the traditions of the country, all learned men who were among them, so that everything became covered in darkness and now we do not know for certain anymore, what of their history was known in times when Islam came to them.

In so far as the Muslims of today are concerned, for instance the already mentioned Afghan minister, it would seem that Qutaiba succeeded in his attempt to eradicate the history of what had existed before Islam. In addition, Qutaiba bin Muslim conducted large-scale propaganda campaigns on behalf of Islam through the Arab settlers. Such propaganda campaigns had not been a conspicuous feature of the earliest Arab conquests, which rather had aimed to make the Arab warrior class into the ruling stratum of the conquered territories. Their interest had then been chiefly to collect taxes from the subject peoples and tribute from the vassal rulers. However, from the time of Caliph Umar II (r. 717-720), who desired the conversion of all conquered peoples to Islam and their acceptance as equals of the Arabs, propagation of Islam and the large-scale conversion of new believers became important goals. The antagonisms of Arabs and non-Arabs, it was believed, would be replaced by a universal Muslim unity, a community of Muslims. This change of thinking was a radical departure for the Arab conquest elite. Sedentarised Arabs, that is, those who did not make up the armies of conquest, and non-Arab converts began to push for Islamic rather than Arab identifications. Early on, Islam had been commonly called *al-din al-arab* ("the Arab religion"). Henceforth, one could be a Muslim without being an Arab.

When an area was subjugated by force of arms as happened in Transoxania, part of the population was put to death or enslaved, while the rest were forced to pay heavy taxes, or emigrate. The only way to escape such a fate was to convert to Islam. In the early period, conversion to Islam tended to mean recruitment into the conquering army rather than a deep-held acceptance of the new religion. As time went by, conversion became an increasingly popular means of escaping the Arab oppression. The reasons were several:

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[14] See, e.g., Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 1993), 275-6, 279.

[15] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 520.

[16] On Qutaiba, see Barthold, *Turkestan,* 184-6.

[17] Edgar Knobloch, *Monuments of Central Asia: A Guide to the Archaeology, Art and Architecture of Turkestan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 79; Frye, *Heritage of Persia,* 280.

1. Some nobles were attracted to Islam as a means of avoiding the *jizya* (poll-tax) and/or *kharaj* (land-tax) which disregarded their high birth and made ordinary tax-payers out of them.[18]
2. Professional soldiers who took up the new religion hoped to become rich on the spoils of war.
3. For enslaved prisoners of war, conversion to Islam meant an opportunity to regain their freedom.
4. The pursuit of patronage encouraged anybody directly dependent on the rulers for his livelihood, for instance scribes, to accept the norms and values of his patrons.

To attract the conquered peoples to Islam, the Arabs from the time of Umar II offered certain privileges to converts as well as applied methods of coercion to those who had not yet converted. Most important was the provision that those who accepted Islam were exempted from payment of the *jizya*. Islam thus quickly became the favoured religion of in particular the Soghdian merchant communities of the Transoxanian cities. This, however, did not mean that popular discontent aimed at the Arab conquerors subsided.

The Reaction: The Soghdian Revolts

The discontent aimed at the Arab conquerors gave rise to the large-scale Soghdian revolt, or rather series of revolts, from 720 onwards. These devastated both the region and what the Arabs had not yet destroyed of the Soghdian civilisation. In the early stages of the revolt, the Soghdians, with the aid of nomadic Turks, destroyed the Samarkand garrison and expelled the Arabs from the town. Later, realising that their military strength was insufficient, many Soghdians left their homeland and moved to regions which offered greater protection from their enemies. Large numbers preferred to migrate to Tang China rather than to face Arab rule at home. The Arab governor dealt with the revolt harshly. Among other measures, he reportedly killed over three thousand farmers in the Khojand region in an attempt to root out the revolt there.

The Arabs remembered that the tax privileges for converts had temporarily pacified the population of the conquered areas. In 728, in an attempt to reduce popular discontent and consolidate Arab power in Transoxania, the governor of Khurasan, Ashras ibn Abdullah al-Sulami (r. 727-729), thus decreed that anyone accepting Islam would be exempt from the *jizya*. So many people responded by becoming 'Muslims' that there was hardly anyone left to pay the tax. In the words of al-Tabari, "all the people had become Arabs." But when mass conversions began and tax receipts declined, the governor of Khurasan in the same year revoked his decision and decreed that only converts who accepted circumcision, fulfilled the ordinances of Islam, and were sufficiently acquainted with the Koran to read a *sura* would be exempted from payment of the *jizya*.

Even so, the base for taxation remained small, and according to al-Tabari, who may not be impartial in his explanation of the discontent with Arab rule and quite likely exaggerated the level of conversion to Islam, the governor in exasperation ordered all those formerly liable to taxation again to pay the tax. The Arab governor's revocation of the tax privileges led to another major revolt that extended to almost the whole of Transoxania.[19] Bukhara became the centre of the broad popular rising of 728, attracting men from throughout Transoxania. The Soghdians also gained the support of the Turks, led by their *kaghan* (ruler). The Arabs were, for a while, practically driven out of Transoxania. They only managed to recapture Bukhara in the summer of 729, after several months of hard fighting.

The revolt was not yet over, however. The struggle against the Arabs intensified in the years 736-737. The Arabs only succeeded in consolidating their position under Nasr ibn Sayyar (r. 738-748), the new governor of Khurasan. Nasr ibn Sayyar had taken part in the campaigns of Qutaiba, knew Transoxania well, and attempted to normalise relations with the local population through a policy of winning hearts and minds. He introduced a fixed procedure for the levying of taxes and attempted to establish close relations with the local elite, including those in revolt and those who had once embraced Islam but then reverted to their original faith. Among other means, he married the daughter of a local noble.[20] Another notable event under Sayyar's years as governor of Khurasan was that it was only then, in c. 741, that the Arabic language and writing system became the language of official records in Khurasan and presumably also the parts of Transoxania under Arab control. Elsewhere in Persia, this change had been enforced already in 696. Until this change, records had been kept in Greek, Syriac, or Pahlavi. It was also decreed that only Muslims would be employed as chancellery scribes.[21]

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[18] There was not yet a clear distinction between *kharaj* (in later times "land-tax") and *jizya* (in later times "poll-tax"). See, e.g., Barthold, *Turkestan,* 188 n.2 with references.

[19] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 189-90.

[20] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 192-3.

[21] Frye, *Heritage of Persia,* 276-7.

While revolts raged in Transoxania, there was also general discontent in Khurasan, especially around Merv. There the descendants of the initial wave of Arab conquerors, who since had taken up agriculture and settled in villages, had found themselves not only burdened with taxes like any other farmers but also, which was worse, were treated like any other subject population. There was also religious fervour of the millennarian kind. As Umayyad rule collapsed, this heady mixture of grievances and expectations was skilfully exploited by another line of Arab rulers, the Abbasids, who from 747 began to move against the Umayyads and other contenders for caliphal power. In 750, one Abbasid leader, a freedman of Persian origin named Abu Muslim (d. 755) who was also a popular religious teacher, occupied Damascus, the seat of the Caliphate. A new Arab dynasty, the Abbasids, rose to power. In 755, they assessed Abu Muslim's popularity as being in excess of their own. Since he also had many supporters, this made him a potential rival for the throne. In consequence, the Abbasids had Abu Muslim murdered. This, however, alienated the latter's numerous supporters in Transoxania, where millennarian sects were already emerging.[22]

Even so, the Abbasids followed Umar II's policy of embracing all Muslims, not only Arabs, as their supporters and accepted the universal equality of Muslims.[23] Yet the change in ruling dynasty in the Arab world did not bring in an era of peace in Central Asia. Already in 750, a revolt erupted in Bukhara, directed not only against the Abbasids but also against the local nobles who had sided with them. Clearly the grievances of the Central Asians had not yet subsided. A similar uprising took place in Samarkand. The two revolts were put down brutally. There was also a war against Tang China, in which the Arabs in 751 managed to defeat a Chinese army in the battle at the Talas river, slightly north of present Tashkent, when the Turkic nomad allies of the Chinese suddenly changed sides. Yet the battle did not give rise to further Arab expansion to the east. It did, however, signify a halt to the Tang Chinese expansion in Inner Asia. Whether the lost battle also was the reason for the halt in Tang expansion, which many have claimed, is quite another matter. Only a few years later, the Tang empire was embroiled in civil war, the devastating An Lushan revolt (755-763) which almost crippled Tang power.

Other revolts, and larger ones than previously, broke out in the territory of Transoxania in 776. This time, the insurgency was headed by a genuine popular leader who was also an Arab born in Central Asia. This was Hashim ibn Hakim, better known as al-Muqanna, "the veiled one" (so called because he showed himself only with his face hidden under a green silk veil or a mask of gold), who was born in Balkh but early on moved to one of the villages of Merv. He had been one of Abu Muslim's military commanders, and his movement can in some aspects be regarded as a continuation of the one led by Abu Muslim.[24] The role Abu Muslim played in the Abbasid assumption of power had indeed made him a precursor of the messiah in popular imagination. This, paradoxically, inspired several revolts against the Abbasids, led by leaders of millennarian sects in Khurasan and Transoxania. Al-Muqanna's was merely the most important of these revolts. From 759 or soon thereafter, he from his base in Merv reportedly preached that he was God incarnate, that the spirit of God had passed from Muhammad to the Caliph Ali to Abu Muslim to him, and that he would die and return to rule the world as imam, which was a concept lifted from Shia Islam. Some said that he also advocated the communal sharing of money and women.[25] The religious faith preached by al-Muqanna was unorthodox, but presumably not quite as unorthodox as later Muslim writers made it out to be, being no doubt eager to explain the revolt as a religious abberation rather than a backlash against Arab conquerors and the tenets of orthodox Islam (which, as noted, early on indeed was referred to as *al-din al-arab,* "the Arab religion") alike. In fact, al-Muqanna and the popular support he gained among the rural population of Transoxania, whence he ultimately moved, marked that, for the first time, Islam and the Arabs had established themselves in Central Asia and grown roots there. Al-Muqanna's revolt in 776, a hundred years after the first Arab invasions, was the first revolt under an Arab leader born in Central Asia. The 776 revolt thus marks the first time when Islamic culture really had gained roots and a popular following in the region.

Al-Muqanna's followers, like those of Abu Muslim before him, were known as *al-Mubayyida* in Arabic and *Sapid-jamagan* in Persian ("those in white clothes"), since they were distinguished by their white clothes and banners, in opposition to the Abbasids the colour of whom was black. For a while, they enjoyed considerable popular support. However, al-Muqanna's revolt was crushed in 780. All of al-Muqanna's men who were found alive were put to death, while al-Muqanna himself, not wanting to surrender to his enemies, committed suicide. Arabic rule - and Muslim orthodoxy - reasserted itself

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[22] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 196-7.

[23] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 79.

[24] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 196-200.

[25] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 78-9; Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 65-6. See also Frye, *Heritage of Persia,* 281-3.

(although al-Muqanna's sect continued to exist a least into the twelfth century[26]). Yet, uprisings continued in Transoxania until the last major revolt which broke out in 806 - and was put down by the Caliphate only in 810.[27]

By then Islam had also begun to reach the territory that presently constitutes Afghanistan. The conversion of Afghanistan shows many similarities with the one in Transoxania. The Arab conquest reached present Afghanistan only after it had consolidated the pre-eminence of Islam and Arab rule in Transoxania. The Muslims successfully invaded Zabul in 795, after which they went on to Kabul. In the subsequent eastern campaign, under Caliph al-Mamun (r. 813-833), the indigenous ruler of Kabul was captured. He then took the wise decision to convert to Islam. The Arabs succeeded in gaining a firm hold of the region only in 870 when they conquered Balkh, Kabul, and Ghazna (and had by most evidence then already conquered Herat) - about a century after they had managed to establish Islam as the key religion of Transoxania. As in Transoxania, the establishment of the new religion and Muslim culture took almost a century from the first conquest.[28]

The Indigenisation of Islam

The numerous revolts show that the nature of the Arab conquest of Transoxania was harsh. The Arab conquest, like most other conquests, resulted in many deaths and destroyed urban life. As a result of military action and fierce battles, the irrigation systems, which were left unattended, fell into ruin and became blocked. The Arab invaders did not only introduce Islam, they also forcibly replaced the existing beliefs and cults with the new faith as the official religion of Transoxania. But the change in cult was not all. The new religion brought new taxes. The population had to pay the *kharaj*, the *jizya*, and other taxes to the Arabs. They also had to carry out various types of forced labour. The conquest period was not a happy one for most indigenous inhabitants of Transoxania.

At the same time, and again like most other ventures of empire-building, the Arab conquest led to new possibilities for trade and commerce. The conquest brought large parts of the East into close contact with each other, enabling them to develop, or at least re-develop, deep economic and cultural exchanges along the lines of what had been possible in the Hellenistic period inaugurated by Alexander the Great through his invasion of Persia in 334 BC.

The key feature of the variant of Islamic civilisation - and thus religious faith - introduced and enforced by the Arab conquerors was not what might be called the caliphal version, the variant of Islam expounded at the caliphal courts. It was rather the one developed by and centred upon the authority of the *ulama*, the new religious elite, separate from and autonomous of the Caliphate. While the caliphs created a strong state apparatus and acquired the grandeur of a head of state, they did not inherit the prophethood of Muhammad. The Koran thus stood apart from the authority of the caliph and indeed surpassed his religious authority. Those who could read the Koran thus acquired the power to formulate, for themselves or for the caliph as the situation required, the beliefs and practices deemed lawful by the religiously inclined. While the caliph and the ulama that was dependent on his largesse did exactly this in the capital, Baghdad in the case of the Abbasids, it was the provincial ulama who gradually assumed religious control of the garrison towns of the newly conquered provinces of the Muslim world. The inhabitants of these garrison towns consisted of both Arabs and non-Arabs, and as the wars of conquests ended, they became increasingly dominated by a middle class of merchants and craftsmen. For their religious needs, these men relied on religious teachers, scholars, and interpreters of Islamic law who, whether they were of Arab or non-Arab descent, had assimilated themselves into the tribal, religious, and scholarly traditions of the by then fully urbanised Arab conquest elite. It was this new religious elite which in most parts of the newly-conquered Caliphate, and especially so in Central Asia, became the custodians of the Koran and the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. The new elite developed into a stratum of Muslim clergy and intellectuals which rapidly grew in numbers and achieved a place of prominence in society. Among key members of this elite was the *faqih* (pl. *fuqaha*, Islamic lawyer) and *alim* (pl. *ulama*, Islamic theologian). The Islam adopted in the merchant cities of Central Asia thus became a predominantly urban faith and way of life based on the teachings and frequently legalistic arguments of religious experts. It only reached the countryside when there was a need for moral instruction or religious guidance, or one may assume far more commonly, a need for experts in Muslim law. Islam had become a religion for the literati, and the urban, provincial ones at that.[29]

Perhaps for this very lack of central control, the Abbasids confirmed a number of local dynasties as hereditary governors under the authority of the caliphs. In Transoxania, the one chosen was an illustrious

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[26] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 199.

[27] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 200-201.

[28] Litvinsky, "Arab Conquest," 449-72. See also Barthold, *Turkestan,* 522.

[29] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 98-99.

and, more importantly, Islamicised ruling family, in later periods known as the Samanids after the ancestral home of Saman in the vicinity of Balkh (or possibly Samarkand[30]). The Samanids were regarded as descendants of a Sassanid general named Bahram Chubin, who had fled to the Turks in 591. Under Caliph al-Mamun (r. 813-833), the Samanid family was empowered as a local dynasty under Abbasid authority. Through his governor of Khurasan, Ghassan ibn Abbad (r. 819-821), the Caliph had members of the Samanid family appointed governors of Samarkand, Farghana, Shash (Tashkent), and Herat. Their rule, except in Herat which was not yet ripe for Arab overlordship, soon became hereditary.[31]

The Samanids, as might be expected, eventually made themselves independent of the Abbasid Caliphate. This did not mean that the Samanids rejected the caliph's spiritual authority as ruler of the Islamic world. When the independent Samanid state (864-999) was established, with Bukhara as its capital, Islam became its state religion. In time, the Samanids gained control over eastern Persia and present Afghanistan in addition to Transoxania. The Samanids ruled these territories - Khurasan, Seistan, and present Afghanistan - through vassals or slave governors.

The Samanids encouraged Islamicisation and the building of a great number of mosques and *madrasahs* (Islamic seminaries). In matters relating to the cult, they relied on the ulama, who henceforth became prominent in Central Asian Islamic society.

Yet the Samanids did not establish the authority of the ulama, the religious authority of whom preceded the ruling dynasty. What later would seem to be the real achievement of the Samanids was that under their rule, whatever remained of the old Persian and Soghdian cultures came to merge with the Muslim one. Henceforth, the resulting Persian Islamic culture, under the Samanids centred on their capital Bukhara, would be a prerequisite for later developments in Muslim as well as secular culture in what can from this period onwards be termed the Eastern Islamic world. It was also, for this reason not surprisingly, under the Samanids that the modern Persian language, written with Arabic letters, emerged. However, militarily the Samanids soon grew dependent on an almost feudal military system, based on soldier-slaves of Turkic nomad origin who had converted to Islam. The soldier-slave became known as *ghulam* (pl. *ghilman*). The apparatus of state indeed came to be divided into what later came to be called the Turkic divan and the Persian divan, that is, the military command and the civilian administration. In time, the Turkic military commanders assumed full secular control of the Samanid state, causing a change in ruling dynasty, but culturally and religiously, this brought only minor changes. The ulama accepted the need for a military ruling class, which could protect the trade routes, agricultural villages, and their own existence. The ulama was quite willing to depend on the state, as long as the state gave them its protection and ensured their elite position. In return for this, the ulama preached the legitimacy of the established rulers, facilitated taxation, and supplied cadres for the state administration as well as appropriate religious rulings, in the interest of the ruler, on issues that the ruler wished to decide and have propagated to the general population.[32]

The close and increasingly symbiotic relationship between rulers and ulama did not lead to religious stagnation, however. It was also under the Samanids that Islam began to spread among the nomads of the steppes north of Transoxania. This was not through any ulama- or government-sponsored missionary effort, for such did not exist under the Samanids. Nor was it often because of Muslim traders in the region, because such men generally did not engage in religious propaganda - although it for obvious reasons was an advantage for a non-Muslim to convert if he chiefly traded with cities in which Islam was the dominant faith.[33] Yet Islam from the late eighth to the early tenth century slowly began to spread outside the urban centres through Sufi mystics, a new phenomenon that chiefly emerged under the Samanids (and

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[30] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 209 n.2, referring to Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179-1229). Other places of origin have also been suggested. See, e.g., Shamsiddin S. Kamoliddin, "K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii Bakhrama Chubina," *Transoxiana* 10 (July 2005; www.transoxiana.org). Some conclusions advocated by this work would seem somewhat less credible.

[31] Barthold, *Turkestan,* 209-10; Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 74; Soucek, *History,* 70-71.

[32] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 236.

[33] See, e.g., V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia 1: A Short History of Turkestan; History of the Semirechyé* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956), 19. Recent writers tend to over-emphasise the role of Muslim traders in the propagation of Islam. For an example, see Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 96-7, 105. The trade in itself was important, not the missionary role allegedly played by Muslim traders - which was limited, despite the pious stories of much later Muslim historians. Muslim merchants chiefly dominated the trade in already Islamicised areas. There have probably been few, if any, periods in history during which successful merchants chose a marketing strategy that consisted of an active refusal to accommodate the culture and values of their customers.

will be described further below). From the tenth century, Sufism, at first practiced by individual mystics and ascetics, began to mature into a number of social movements. Indeed, the Sufi shaykhs (from Arabic *shaykh*, "elder"), being more tolerant of already existing religious beliefs, were considerably more successful in rural areas and on the steppes than in the sedentary areas, which remained dominated by the ulama.[34] Beginning with al-Muqanna, Islam had become part of the indigenous make-up of the Central Asian cities. Under the Sufi masters, Islam also began to become part of the indigenous religious traditions of the country and on the steppes. And in both these cases, the variants of Islam that grew predominant were the products of local conditions in Central Asia. Islam was no longer an alien implant; it had grown roots in the region.

The Second Disruption: The Mongol Conquest and the Rise of the Sufi Orders

Sufism

The Mongol conquest of the thirteenth century reshaped Central Asian civilisation. Bukhara, one of the centres of the Islamic world, fell victim to war and its mosques and madrasahs were mostly destroyed. The ulama lost the preeminent position this class had enjoyed since the Samanid state. The Mongol conquerors, at least in the early years, did not favour one religion over another and allowed religious freedom. For a time, Buddhism and Christianity regained lost ground. The Mongol conquerors saw little of value in Islamic law, because they had their own.

This changed in the fourteenth century. The Mongols in the southern and western parts of Central Asia, who were always few in numbers, gradually assimilated with the majority population and adopted Islam. The powerful ruler of the Golden Horde, Ghiyath ad-Din Muhammad Uzbek (Özbeg) Khan (r. 1312-1341), who was descended from Chinggis Khan through his son, Juchi, and grandson, Batu, embraced the Muslim faith and had his followers do likewise. Other Mongol rulers did the same, adopted Islam, and became its protectors. In this manner, Islam again became the state religion. But the Islam that re-emerged under the Mongols was not the same religion as had existed under the Samanids. Due to the disruption caused by the Mongol conquest, Islam ceased to be the religion almost exclusively practiced by the ruling elites and the people of the cities. Instead it re-emerged as the religion of the rural population, both sedentary and nomadic. It was no longer the ulama who played the leading role, although they certainly remained in the surviving cities, but the heads of Sufi brotherhoods, variously known under titles such as *shaykh* (elder), *ishan* or *ishon* (the honorific of a Sufi shaykh, originally the Persian plural meaning "they"), or various Persian and Turkic approximations of these titles such as *pir* (elder), *khwaja* or *khoja* (reputed descendant of the early Arab conquerors), *ustad* ("master"), *murshid* (spiritual guide and master), *ata* ("father"), *baba* ("grandfather"), and *wali* (Arabic for *wali Allah*, "he who is close to God") or *awliya* (plural of *wali*, in Turkic often used as a singular, meaning holy man or saint, especially one who is already dead). Islam survived and indeed assimilated the Mongol conquerors, but in doing so, it transformed itself into a form more acceptable to the new rulers and their men. Islam turned into a popular religion characterised by Sufi symbols and rituals. Among them were holy places (*mazar,* "place of visitation," often the tomb of a saint; derived from the Arabic verb *zara*, "to visit;" also known as *ziyarat*, after the word for local pilgrimage, *ziyarah*, or, especially in Kyrgyzstan, *gumbez*, or, in the Caucasus, *pir*). Another was the practice to glorify God with repetition of certain brief, prescribed phrases, namely, the first part of the Muslim declaration of faith or one or another of God's names (a custom known as *zikr* or *dhikr; dhikr* was Arabic for "remembrance" (of God), and this Arabic term passed into Persian and Turkic as *zikr*). Sufism was also characterised by the dervishes or Sufi masters, a group of religious very unlike the official, institutionalised ulama of the Samanid state.

One could perhaps argue that Islam transformed itself into a form more acceptable to steppe nomads with a background rooted in animist or shamanic thought and some forms of Buddhism. On the other hand, it would seem yet more likely that it was exactly these very sub-strata of religious faith, which after all had existed for many centuries among the belief systems of the Central Asian population and preceded the Islam of the Arab conquerors, that now, after a lapse following the violent Arab conquest, re-emerged among the rural and nomadic population, re-asserted themselves, and eventually assumed control over the religion still referred to as Islam. This would at least explain why Sufism would always be more popular among Central Asians, including those of sedentary origin, than in the more God-fearing states of the Arabian peninsula.

Sufism was not new to Central Asian Islam. Even under the Samanids, while religious scholars and theologians had aimed to determine the rules which God imposed on mankind and everyday life, there had been mystics and ascetics who instead attempted to acquire an immediate and intensely personal experience of the presence of God. There was a miraculous and magical aspect to Sufism. A Sufi adept

[34] Barthold, *Four Studies* 1, 19-21; Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 168.

was, due to his presumed great moral and spiritual quality, regarded as a saint, but he was also a healer, a worker of miracles, and a magician. He was, to the Muslim, what the shaman was to the nomad. Like their shamanic predecessors, the early Sufi adepts performed their religious tasks in the role of individuals, not as part of a hierarchy of clergy. However, from the late eighth to the early tenth century, Sufism gradually grew into a religious movement. It developed the rudiments of a social organisation.[35] From the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, that is, the period before the Mongol conquest, Sufism changed further in character and acquired the trappings of coherent, formally organised religious movements. In the ninth and tenth centuries, a Sufi novice was merely someone who took lessons from a Sufi master. By the eleventh century, the Sufi novice was a disciple who owed total obedience to his master, who was regarded as not only a teacher but a repository of God's blessing and a source of *karamat* (also known, in particular in Afghanistan, as *barakat*, Arabic for "blessing"), a concept akin to both miracle and blessing bestowed by God. The simple license to teach awarded to students of former times were replaced by formal initiation rites and ceremonial religious services under the master's authority.[36]

Yet, it took the destruction of the dominance of the urban ulama at the hands of the Mongols to give Sufism the opportunity to emerge as a mature religious and social force for the general population.

The rise of Sufism did not mean that the ulama lost their position as local literati and, quite often, bureaucrats and servants of the state. The ulama continued or in time resumed their position as local, urban elites. They also provided the administrative personnel for in particular the later of the successive Mongol and Timurid governments.[37] But as it had been the provincial ulama, not those at the caliphal court, who had been the key interpreters of Islam in previous centuries, it henceforth was the heads of the Sufi orders who came to dominate religious thought in Central Asia.

The rise of Sufism did not mean that Central Asia turned into a provincial and peripheral territory of the Muslim world. Under Turko-Mongol rulers such as Timur Lenk (1336-1405) and his successors, the Timurids, the region again became one of the key centres of Islam. Mosques, madrasahs, and in particular mausoleums were built. In fact, the religion flourished, and so did many sciences, such as astronomy.

The Sufi Orders

The Sufis from sometime presumably in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries began to organise into formal orders, or brotherhoods. Each Sufi brotherhood, or "path" (to God; Arabic *tariqah,* pl. *turuq*), consisted of a master and his disciples. The master had a personal relationship with each disciple (*murid).*[38]

The possibly first Sufi order was formed already as early as in the ninth century by the mystic and theologian Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Karram (806-869), a native of Seistan. It became known, after its founder, as the Karramiyyah. This sect became influential in Khurasan, spread to Merv and thence throughout Transoxania, including to Farghana and Samarkand, as well as to the territory of present Afghanistan. Karram advocated a God-fearing way of life based on mortification of the flesh and pious devotion to God's will. He also taught a theological doctrine emphasising an anthropomorphic view of God. The Karramiyyah thus combined theological tenets and Sufi practices. This Sufi order practiced extreme asceticism and also made an effort to convert many remaining Zoroastrians and Christians. Since they in most cases came from the lower classes, these became the base of Karram's followers. The movement built *khanaqahs*, hospices for itinerant Sufis, as centres of missionary activity.[39]

The four arguably most notable Sufi brotherhoods were all formed much later, however. These four, and there were others as well, were the Kubrawiyya, the Yasawiyya, the Qadiriyya, and - most important - the Naqshbandiyya. These four orders spread throughout the Islamic world. Not only were all four active in Central Asia, all except the Qadiriyya, which originated in Baghdad (and in Central Asia ultimately was largely absorbed by other orders), were also founded there. All, except the somewhat later Naqshbandiyya, emerged as fully-fledged orders in the thirteenth or early fourteenth century, growing rapidly under Mongol rule. Yet, they were all founded based on the worship of the tombs of Sufi masters who had lived in the decades immediately prior to the Mongol conquest. The tombs of their founders in time developed into holy places, major objects of veneration and places of pilgrimage, while the role these men had played as mystics were eclipsed by what might best be interpreted as the role of Muslim

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[35] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 109-115.

[36] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 169.

[37] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 278-9.

[38] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 169. On the Sufi orders, see also, e.g., Thierry Zarcone, "The Sufi Orders in Northern Central Asia," Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib (eds), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia 5: Development in Contrast-From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 771-80, with references.

[39] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 165, 168, 175.

saint, intercessor with God - despite the fact that Islamic theological literature and Islamic law regularly condemn the veneration of holy men. The veneration, indeed cult of saints indeed became a characteristic of Central Asian Islam. The cult of saints was chiefly performed at holy places. Another key aspect of worship was the *zikr*, which often distinguished the various Sufi orders from one another. The saints, who formed a heterogeneous group that included both authentic ghazis (*ghazi,* pl. *ghuzat,* "warrior for the faith") and historical and mythical Sufi shaykhs, with a few popular pre-Islamic, often Zoroastrian or Buddhist, deities in Islamic garb thrown in for good measure, were believed to perform *karamat*, a concept as noted akin to both miracle and blessing bestowed by God.[40]

The Qadiriyya, being the one Sufi order active in the region not of Central Asian origin, was founded or at least inspired by the Sufi master, Pir Baba Sayyid Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (or al-Ghailani) of Baghdad (1077-1166). The Qadiriyya practices collective prayer in the form of the loud *zikr* (*zikr-e jahri*), usually as vocal litanies performed in unison by groups of dervishes. The order first appeared in Central Asia in the form of Arab merchants. Such men made a brisk trade throughout Central Asia, and even reached the Volga Bulgars. They were presumably less adept at organising Sufi brotherhoods, so most Qadiriyya there and in Central Asia were eventually absorbed by the Naqshbandiyya, as indeed were most other Sufi orders operating in the region. However, the Qadiriyya became established in India in the sixteenth century, from which it eventually also reached the Pashtun tribes of present Afghanistan. There, unlike in the rest of Central Asia, the Qadiriyya retained its influence into the presence.[41]

The Naqshbandiyya was founded in Bukhara in the fourteenth century by (or was at least attributed to) Khwaja Muhammad ibn Bahauddin Naqshband (1318-1389), born to a Tajik family in a village close to Bukhara in which he also spent the greater part of his life. He taught that a dervish can combine an outer ordinary, public life with the inner, devout life hitherto generally associated with the ascetic recluse. For this reason, he taught the practice of the silent *zikr* (*zikr-e khafi*), in which an individual does not need any participation from the outside world. The silent *zikr* can thus be practiced under any circumstances. This enabled the Sufi to hide his belief, if necessary, by the avoidance of any external display of Sufism. It also enabled the successive Naqshbandi dervishes to form dynasties of wealthy and powerful merchants, landowners, and even, at times, rulers, such as in the Altishahr ("six cities") region of present Xinjiang where they in the eighteenth century ruled in their own right.[42]

The earlier history of the order was almost as impressive. From Bukhara, the order rapidly spread to Herat, where it acquired prominence, and Samarkand. From the sixteenth century, the order began to surpass the other orders due to the support it received from the Shaybanid rulers in Bukhara. The Naqshbandiyya soon grew into the most important of the Sufi orders, spreading throughout the Islamic world. The order penetrated into the Tatar and Bashkir areas of the Middle Volga region around Kazan already in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, absorbing the Qadiriyya and Yasawiyya already there in the process. The order simultaneously also spread into present Xinjiang, where it built on and gradually replaced the Yasawiyya, making Kashghar an important centre in the sixteenth century. From Kashghar, the order spearheaded the conversion of the territory that encompasses present Kyrgyzstan in the eighteenth century. The order moved into the Turkmen steppe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where it eventually absorbed the Yasawiyya, which until then had been dominant in this region. It also penetrated northern Afghanistan. In the late eighteenth century, the order reached Daghestan in the Caucasus by way of Shirvan and Kurdistan, and then continued to penetrate the Chechen clans and the rest of the North Caucasus. In the nineteenth century, the order also replaced the Kubrawiyya in Khorezm.[43] From present northern Afghanistan, the order expanded throughout the country, reaching Pashtun and non-Pashtun tribes alike. The Afghan branch of the order ultimately came to be controlled by the Mujadiddi clan, Sufis from India. During the eighteenth century, the order had come under the influence of the thought of a much earlier Indian Islamic leader and a key Naqshbandi renewer (*mujaddid*, see below), Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624). This led to a doctrinal revolution which turned the Naqshbandiyya into the champion of Islamic law. In Central Asia, including Afghanistan, the Naqshbandiyya thus in many ways took the place of and assimilated the ulama and assumed control over most formal religious teaching. Its shaykhs, to some extent leaving the path of the mystic, became the key interpreters of Islamic law and theology.[44]

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[40] See, e.g., Soucek, *History,* 37-8.

[41] Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1985), 9, 11; Dilip Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Paladin, 1988), 261; Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 203.

[42] See, e.g., Soucek, *History,* 137-9, 160.

[43] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 7-8.

[44] Zarcone, "Sufi Orders," 771, 777-9.

Not all Sufis were part of the established brotherhoods. Some were counted as members of the Qalandariyya. Itinerant dervishes known as Qalandars existed in Central Asia in early times, at least by the sixteenth or seventeenth century. However, the itinerant order bearing this name was founded by Shaykh Baba Haji Safa (d. 1740/1741) of Samarkand. Unlike the regular Sufi orders, these practiced no standard *zikr*. Many Qalandariyya were irreverent of Islamic law. They also commonly had a popular following, being unmarried and with no fixed abode, begging for a living. For their popularity no less than their irreverence for Islamic law, they were regularly denounced by the Naqshbandiyya.[45]

Central Asia was historically both a central region of Islam and a borderland that faced infidels on almost every front. The region accordingly became one of the most active areas of Sufi expansion and missionary work. The important Sufi brotherhoods founded there were instrumental in first opposing, then converting the Mongol rulers to Islam in the fourteenth century. The Sufi brotherhoods continued to play leading roles in the region, especially early on seemingly representing the popular side of Islam as opposed to the official hierarchy of the Muslim clergy, the ulama. The Sufi orders played a major role in protecting Islam from the infidels, and in expanding Islam to the infidels through missionary work. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Sufi brotherhoods, in particular the Naqshbandiyya, led the ultimately failed *jihad* (holy war) in the opposition against the Buddhist Oirat Mongols and the Manchu rulers of China. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Sufi brotherhoods developed differently in different regions. In the emirate of Bukhara and the khanates of Kokand (Khoqand) and Khiva, where there was no immediate need for holy war against non-Muslims, the Sufi brotherhoods turned themselves into loyal components of the ruling establishment, in the process becoming increasingly prosperous, conservative, and stagnant. In the Tatar regions of the Middle Volga (present Tatarstan), where the Muslims lived under Russian rule, the Sufi brotherhoods turned themselves into the modernist and liberal Jadid reform movement (more on which below) and assumed a leading role in intellectual life. However, in the North Caucasus, the Turkmen steppes, and parts of the Ferghana valley, where resistance against Russian conquest was strongest, the Sufi brotherhoods gained a leading role within the military resistance movements and thereby remained popular rather than elitist movements. From the 1872 uprising of the Chirchiq valley to the defence of Gök-Tepe in 1879 and 1881, and in the 1898 Andijon revolt, the insurgents were led by members of the Naqshbandiyya.[46]

In Muslim East Turkestan, present Xinjiang, as well, the Naqshbandiyya came to assimilate and assume the position of the ulama. There the order went even further, gaining control of secular as well as religious power. That the order went this far is beyond doubt; however, the real extent of the order's secular power remains less clear. Pious Islamic hagiographies paint a picture that is often at variance with the non-Muslim sources, such as the Manchu ones, which have laid the foundation for much of present historiography of Xinjiang. This presents a problem for the historian. While the non-Muslim sources give the impression of being more reliable and factual, they for obvious reasons do not cover all developments in the region. The writings of pious Muslim historians can fill in the gaps but must be read with due care.[47]

Islam became the dominant faith in East Turkestan under Mongol rule. As noted, Islam spread among the Turkic-speaking population there chiefly due to the missionary activities of the Sufi orders, and in particular the Naqshbandiyya. A branch of the Naqshbandiyya known as the Makhdumzada, named after the Sufi master best known as Makhdum-e Azam (Maulana Khwajagi Ahmad Kashani Dahbidi, 1461-1543) who himself probably never visited East Turkestan although local tradition claims that he did,[48] by the end of the sixteenth century became prominent in the Tarim basin, the Altishahr, in what some would call the the Moghulistan or Yarkand khanate.

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[45] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 11-12; Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1985), 61; Zarcone, "Sufi Orders," 771, 777-9.

[46] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 3-4, 31-2; Edward Allworth (ed), *Central Asia: 130 Years of Russian Dominance, A Historical Overview* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1994), 142-3, 167-9.

[47] This section is, unless noted otherwise, based on Ma Dazheng, "The Tarim Basin," Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib (eds), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia 5: Development in Contrast-From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 181-208.

[48] René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 500; citing Maurice Courant, *L'Asie Centrale aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Empire kalmouk ou empire mantchou?* (Lyon: A. Rey, 1912), 50.

Inter-Muslim rivalry soon emerged. The Sufi master's eldest son, Muhammad Amin (better known as Ishan-e Kalan; d. 1597/1598), and his fourth son, Ishaq Wali (d. 1579 or c. 1605[49]), fought over the leadership of the order. This in time resulted in the emergence of two different Sufi groups: the Aqtaghlik (White Mountain) based in Kashghar under the descendants of Muhammad Amin and the Qarataghlik (Black Mountain) based in Yarkand under Ishaq Wali. Ishaq Wali's followers also became known as the Ishaqiyya after their leader. Already at the close of the sixteenth century, the Qarataghlik had gained considerable influence as well as the active support of Muhammad Khan, the Chinggisid secular ruler of the Yarkand khanate. The order also entrenched its influence in Yarkand, the capital. However, in the 1620s the Aqtaghlik did likewise. The Qarataghlik did not take kindly to this intrusion into what they regarded as their domain, so eventually they assassinated the head of the rival branch. The latter's son Hidayatullah or, as he was later known, Afaq Khoja or Hazrat Apaq or Hazrat Afaq (d. 1694), thereupon assumed control of his father's branch of the Makhdumzada, which henceforth in addition to its old name the Aqtaghlik (some even used the name Aqkhanlar - "White Khans"[50]) became known as the Afaqiyya after its new leader. The rivalry between the two brotherhoods, already of long standing, henceforth intensified. A series of wars between the two Sufi branches followed.

Afaq Khoja by then clearly also strove for secular rule. He legitimised his position further by alliances with local notables of the influential Dughlat clan and a marriage to a Chinggisid princess, the Khanim Padshah, daughter of Abdul Rashid Khan (who much later, in 1680-1682, came to rule Yarkand), thus producing offspring who could claim *sayyid* (Arabic, "lord, master;" indicating a reputed descendant of the prophet Muhammad) ancestry on the father's side and Chinggisid ancestry on the mother's. This system of marriage alliances was the deliberate policy of Afaq Khoja, who once indeed advised a companion to "marry, like me, from the great and noble persons of this country."[51] He also aimed to spread his personal influence through his Sufi networks. Afaq Khoja thus introduced the Naqshbandiyya into northern Tibet and spread the order among the Chinese Muslims (Hui, Dungan) of Qinghai and Gansu.[52]

In 1667, the Aqtaghlik assisted a son of the ruling khan to oust his father, which led to the Aqtaghlik party gaining the upper hand. However, the new khan was murdered. Under his successor, the Qarataghliq in turn overthrew the Aqtaghliq. In about 1678, Afaq Khoja was driven out of Kashghar. He fled to Kashmir and later to Tibet. Under the guidance of the Dalai Lama, he sought help from the Oirat Mongol ruler Galdan (r. 1671-1697), who no doubt found Afaq Khoja and his followers useful. In 1680, Galdan invaded and subjugated the Yarkand khanate. The Oirat also crushed the military power of the Qarataghlik, which had supported the ruling khan, and restored order among the feuding Sufi branches. However, Galdan did not trust Afaq Khoja to rule so he appointed yet another Chinggisid, Afaq Khoja's father-in-law Abdul Rashid Khan II (r. 1680-1682), ruler in Yarkand. The latter and Afaq Khoja did not get along despite their old marital alliance, so in the early 1680s Afaq Khoja was again driven into exile.[53]

The Oirat intervention did not put an end to the rivalry between the two Sufi branches, however, which continued until the mid-nineteenth century when both branches eventually disintegrated.

In 1694, the followers of Afaq Khoja revolted. At first they had some success. Afaq Khoja's son Yahya Khoja (d. 1696) assumed the throne. However, already by 1696 Afaq Khoja and his son had both been killed in local revolts, and the last Chinggisid khan was put on the throne - which he lost already in the same year. Oirat troops again had to intervene.[54]

This was not, however, the end of the khojas of the Tarim basin. The power of the Oirats was waning due to their many wars with the Manchus who ruled China. Afaq Khoja's dream of secular as well as spiritual power was in time realised. From 1736 to 1756, Yarkand was in fact ruled by an Afaqi, Khoja Jahan Arshi (1685-1759). But with the Oirats gone, there was nobody left to protect Yarkand from the Manchus. In 1759, the Tarim basin fell under Manchu rule. Khoja Jahan Arshi and his brother

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[49] Most East Turkestani khojas according to the hagiographies lived surprisingly long lives, in the manner expected of true saints.

[50] Isenbike Togan, "Islam in a Changing Society: The Khojas of Eastern Turkistan," Jo-Ann Gross (ed), *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 134-48, on 145 n.15.

[51] Togan, "Islam in a Changing Society," 140, 145 n.16. Quotation from p.145 n.16.

[52] Zarcone, "Sufi Orders," 773-4.

[53] Togan, "Islam in a Changing Society," 140; Ma, "Tarim Basin," 184-5, 191, 192. At present, many Uighurs express utter hate for Afaq Khoja and indeed profess to spit on his tomb, since he allied himself to the infidel Oirats and in religious matters claimed to be a prophet.

[54] Ma, "Tarim Basin," 192-3.

Burhanuddin Khoja fought the Manchus but were defeated. Both fled to Badakhshan, where they were put to death by another Muslim ruler.[55]

Descendents of the khojas survived elsewhere, in particular in Kokand. There they nursed their claims to secular as well spiritual rule in the Tarim basin. Some also engaged in the occasional raid across the mountain passes into the Manchu empire, using their Naqshbandiyya networks as a means to gain followers and popular allegiance against the Manchus in the same way as the Naqshbandiyya assumed leadership in the revolts against the Russians in Tsarist Central Asia.[56] The last khoja claimant to the throne was Buzurg Khan Tura. The early 1860s had seen a violent Muslim revolt against Manchu rule in East Turkestan, beginning in the east and then rapidly spreading westwards until it engulfed all of East Turkestan. Buzurg Khan Tura thus dispatched his military commander, an experienced soldier and adventurer who claimed direct descent from Timur Lenk named Yaqub Beg (1820-1877), to drive out the Manchus and reclaim his throne. Yaqub Beg led a small force to Kashghar in January 1865. Within two years, he took control of Kashghar and Yarkand, pushed aside his patron, and made Kashghar his capital, declaring himself ruler of Kashgharia.[57] That was the end of the khojas in East Turkestan.[58] As for Yaqub Beg, he was defeated by the Manchus in 1877, after which he died in Kashghar.[59]

The Delayed Disruption: The Russian Conquest, Jadidism, and the Introduction of Islamic Modernism

The Russian Conquest of Central Asia

The Russian conquest of Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century resulted in yet another, although somewhat unexpected, disruption. However, this needed another century to come to fruition and even then, its consequences were not apparent until decades later.

In Russian historiography, the period when the Slavic principalities were subjugated to the Turko-Mongolian Golden Horde is usually described as when Russia was under the "Tatar yoke." The Russian attitude to this period was long characterised by a desire to recover territories regarded as having been lost to the Mongols. The ideology to take back lost Russian lands came in very handy when Russia, from 1552 onwards, began to conquer the sundry Tatar khanates to the east. In this year, Ivan IV (1530-1584, r. 1533-1584) initiated a series of conquests aimed at the remnants of the Golden Horde. In 1552, he conquered the neighbouring khanate of Kazan. By 1556 he had also conquered Astrakhan. In 1582, the conquest of the khanate of Sibir began, although this process was not concluded until 1598.[60]

The wish to recover lost territories went hand in glove with the wish, at least among some Russians, to convert the godless nomads in the east into good Christians. So for the first two centuries of Russian eastward expansion, the natives who remained alive after they had been conquered were, if at all possible, also forcibly converted. Many Tatars had by then already converted once, to Islam. They had also in most cases, often centuries ago, abandoned their nomadic life-style, After the conquest, many also accepted Russification and Christianisation. Those who did not, the majority, generally had to move east to make way for Russian colonists. This, paradoxically, marked the first real attempts at Islamicisation of the nomads on the Kazak steppes, the ancestors of the present Kazaks. The nomads had not yet experienced close contact with Islam. But as the Muslim Tatars had to move east, some Tatars commenced missionary activities. Islamicisation thus began to take place, but the shift in religion was carried out through peaceful means instead of the brutal ones previously employed in the region, by Arab and Russian conquerors alike.

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[55] Ma, "Tarim Basin," 193, 201-2.

[56] Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia *c.* 1800," Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (eds), *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 10 P.1: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 35-106, on 88; Joseph Fletcher, "The Heyday of the Ch'ing Order in Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet," Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (eds), *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 10 P.1: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 351-408, on 361-4; John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 197-8.

[57] Michael Fredholm, *The Great Game in Inner Asia over Two Centuries* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Report 7, February 2004), 13 with references.

[58] Togan, "Islam in a Changing Society," 143.

[59] Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992), 387-8.

[60] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 416-17, 420-23; James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 26-35. See also Terence Armstrong (ed), *Yermak's Campaign in Siberia* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1975).

The Russian policy of conquest, Russification, and forced conversion lasted until the time of Empress Catherine II, also known as Catherine the Great (1729-1796). Although not adverse to conquests herself, she reversed existing policies with regard to the Tatars through a series of new laws in 1763, 1773, and 1776. The laws of 1763 and 1776 enabled the Tatars to trade and establish business companies. Many Tatars took advantage of the new situation. They found a ready market among the nomads of the Kazak steppes, with whom they also enjoyed some linguistic affinity. In another positive development for Russia's Tatars, the law of 1773 granted freedom of religious worship. The religious persecution of the Muslim Tatars ceased. They were granted equal rights with other Russian citizens and were again permitted to establish mosques, as well as to proselytise.[61]

The support to Islam and the missionary activities of the Tatars was not only the result of a benign interest in them by an enlightened monarch. These policies were also used by the Russians as a means to subdue the nomads. Russian colonisation efforts indeed intensified during the rule of Catherine. Military outposts were established on territory hitherto under the control of the nomads. Tatar missionaries were encouraged to spread Islam among them. By this means, the Russians realised, the steppe nomads would be civilised and thus easier to control.[62] The Tatars, increasingly Russified due to their Russian schools and their new contacts with Europe and Western culture, were regarded as the perfect agents to civilise, and thus pacify, the nomads. With even Russia itself being in the process of adaption to Western notions of modernity, it was hardly surprising that the Tatars too saw the benefits of what might be termed the Western modernism that now was introduced into Russian society. The indigenous religion of the nomads remained outside the control of any settled hierarchies and therefore remained unmanageable by the state structures. Islamicisation under the influence of Tatar missionaries was thus regarded as a useful step in the pacification of the nomads. The introduction of Islam, with its formal organisation and general obeisance to the rulers, made it easier to control ethnic and social groups as nebulous as the Kazak nomads. Even so, the reforms allowed the Tatars to flourish economically and religiously well into the mid-nineteenth century.

The Russian eastward expansion was facilitated by the fact that Russia as yet had few if any serious rivals in Inner Asia. The Manchus, who controlled China, had interests among the Mongols but not really in Siberia or Transoxania. The Western states were busy with each other. The Ottoman empire was concerned with the Balkans and the Arab world. Safavid Persia had, after the Shaybanid Uzbek conquest of Transoxania, no further ambitions in Central Asia. Neither had the Moghuls of India, Timur Lenk's descendants, who like the Safavids were unable to force the Shaybanid Uzbeks back onto the steppe whence they had come. Yet, Russian expansion into the vast Kazak steppe was slow and in many ways similar to the Russian expansion into Siberia in the seventeenth century. The Kazaks, a Turkic-speaking people known as such from the sixteenth century, among whom there were some luke-warm Muslims although most remained adherents of shamanism, inhabited most of the western Eurasian steppe, including what today is regarded as Russian territories such as Orenburg. In the east, they were often at war with the Oirat Mongols.

As the central Kazak steppe consisted of saline wasteland, the Kazaks lived primarily in the northwest, northeast, and south. The geographic situation early on resulted in a division into three tribal confederations: the Ulu Zhuz (Great Horde, literally Great Hundred) in the south, Orta Zhuz (Middle Horde) in the northeast, and Kichi Zhuz (Small Horde) in the northwest. In the early eighteenth century, these tribal confederations grew into what might be called nascent states. The Great Horde appears to have accepted Russian protection in 1723. The Small Horde did likewise in 1730, and the Middle Horde followed suit in 1740. While such assurances were freely given in times of need and mattered little, the territories of these hordes were incorporated into the Russian empire in 1848 (the Great Horde), 1824 (the Small Horde), and 1822 (the Middle Horde), respectively. A fourth tribal confederation, Bukey Zhuz (Inner Horde), was formed with Russian assistance in 1801, but its territory was taken over as well, already in 1845.[63]

Despite the efforts of Tatar merchants and missionaries, the Islamicisation of the steppe nomads did not proceed very fast. Nor did the nomads seriously begin to adopt Islamic customs until very late in the nineteenth century. As late as in the 1860s, it was noted that Islam still had not been absorbed into the "flesh and blood" of the steppe nomads, even though they were increasingly adopting Islamic customs, under the influence of Tatar ishans, khojas and other miscellaneous dervishes. Even so, in the words of the contemporary Kazak ethnographer and explorer Chokan Valikhanov (1835-1865), on the Kazak

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[61] Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1986), 42-3.

[62] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars,* 42.

[63] See, e.g., Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 2nd edn 1995), 10-13, 26-7, 31-72; Soucek, *History,* 197.

steppe "there are still many who do not know even the name of Muhammad, and in many places our shamans have still not lost significance."[64] Aristocratic Kazaks in Russian service such as Valikhanov can even be said to have made the transformation from a nominally Muslim, tribal society to a Western way of life without at first assimilating Islamic norms. Even so, Valikhanov warned that the influence of Tatar missionaries had reached alarming proportions and suggested their activities should be stopped.[65] Such regulations were eventually introduced, but not until in 1906.[66]

Having taken possession of the Kazak steppe, Russia began to look south, to Transoxania. By then, three Turkic dynasties were in control of this region: the Manghit in Bukhara (1785-1920), the Qungrat-dominated khanate of Khiva (1515-1919), and the Ming of the Kokand khanate (c. 1710- 1876). Around 1800, the ruler of Bukhara assumed the title of emir to distinguish him from the khans who were his rivals. However, none of these states was sufficiently powerful to withstand Russian conquest in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Russian conquest was again a gradual process, as had the conquest of Siberia and the Kazak steppe been earlier. It is often regarded to have begun with the occupation of Tashkent in 1865, which was undertaken (against given orders) by Major-General Mikhail Chernyayev (1828-1898). Tashkent was an important centre of trade, and the city's merchants generally favoured the Russian presence. The city was furthermore not directly ruled by any local khan, even though it was formally under the Kokand khanate. Tashkent accordingly turned into Russia's (and later the Soviet Union's) most important centre in Central Asia. It became the military and administrative headquarters as well as official residence for the governor generalship (*guberniya*) of Turkestan. As first governor-general was appointed General Konstantin von Kaufmann (1818-1882), a veteran from the wars in the Caucasus. Appointed to the post in 1867, he remained in charge until his death fifteen years later.[67]

The next victim of Russian expansion was the emirate of Bukhara, ruled by a despotic emir from the old city which also was known as "Holy Bukhara" (*Bukhara-e sharif).* The Emirate, which suffered from internal strife, fell in 1868. The Emir was persuaded to seek protection from his local enemies within the safe haven of the Russian army, and the Bukhara emirate became a state under Russian suzerainty. The Bukhara emirate remained formally independent as a Russian protectorate until the Red Army incorporated it into the Soviet Union in 1920.[68]

By the beginning of the 1870s, the turn had come to the Khiva khanate (old Khorezm). Russian forces had already in 1869 in great secrecy built a Caspian port and a fort in Krasnovodsk in present Turkmenistan. Khiva, which formerly had been protected from Russian armies by its inaccessible geographical position, fell in 1873 to Russian forces from Tashkent. Khiva, like Bukhara, became a Russian protectorate and in similarity to the latter remained so until the aftermath of the 1917 revolution. The Turkmen tribes, which had only nominally accepted Khivan overlordship, remained undefeated until after several years of intensive and bloody warfare, beginning in 1879. The Turkmen tribes surrendered in 1881-1884.[69]

Finally, there remained the khanate of Kokand, the territory of which also encompassed the densely populated Ferghana valley. The Kokand khanate as well proved vulnerable to Russian forces, now based in the already occupied Central Asian territories. In 1876, the khanate of Kokand was abolished and incorporated into the Russian empire.

Muslim Central Asia under Russian Rule

Having conquered Central Asia, Russia for geographical reasons treated it as two separate economic regions: northern Central Asia, or the Kazak steppe, and southern Central Asia, or Turkestan. Russian rule was in many ways beneficial, although the expropriation of nomad land for Russian peasants and other forms of colonialism did cause resentment. Trade grew rapidly, and the region's economy improved

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[64] Reef Altoma, "The Influence of Islam in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," Beatrice F. Manz (ed.), *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 164-81, on 166. Altoma cites Chokan Valikhanov, "O musul'manstve v stepi," *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* (Alma Ata: Kazakhskoye gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo, 1958), 187. Altoma concludes that this report was written in late 1863 or early 1864. Valikhanov's report was also reprinted in the first volume of his collected works, *Sobraniye sochineniy* (5 vols., Alma Ata, 1961-1968). On the religious beliefs of the Kazaks at this time, see Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 19-20, 103-4.

[65] Hamid Algar, "Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev: The Last Great Naqshbandi Shaykh of the Volga-Urals Region," Gross, *Muslims in Central Asia,* 112-33, on 124.

[66] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars,* 233 n.92.

[67] On the Russian conquest of the Central Asian states, see Allworth, *Central Asia,* 131-50.

[68] Fredholm, *Great Game,* 12 with references.

[69] Fredholm, *Great Game,* 12 with references.

under Russian protection. In particular Bukhara grew into an important centre for the trade between Russia, China, Iran, and India. The economic growth led to the formation of a new middle class in cities such as Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand. However, the economic developments also led to the emergence of a large population of urban poor, as well as rural poverty in particular on the Kazak steppe.

Russia did not seek to assimilate the newly conquered peoples. They were not Russian subjects, and as aliens (*inorodtsy*) they were exempt from military service. Legislation and administration on the local level remained in local hands. In Turkestan, Governor-General von Kaufmann advocated that Islam and Muslim society should be ignored, not attacked. There would be no state-sponsored attempts to convert the population, nor any deliberate Russification. The aim was to manage the population without interfering in its affairs, thus rendering the machinery of colonial administration lighter and less costly.

The Tsarist Russian rulers also did not attempt to interfere with Muslim religious organisations. In the cities, these were centred on the ulama, which in these regions by then, as noted, had become assimilated and taken over by the Naqshbandiyya. In Bukhara, the state-supported religious establishment retained its economic and social cohesion and importance. The ulama perpetuated its role through the highly organised education system, consisting of the institutions of *maktab* (elementary Koran school) and *madrasah* (Islamic seminary).[70] Education typically began in a *maktab*, the education of which ended at the age of fourteen. Some students then continued in a madrasah for another twelve or more years. A diligent student studied literary Turkic, Persian, and Arabic and the literature of the Islamic world. The graduate could expect to become a teacher, secretary, manager of a charitable institution, judge (*qadi*), or lawyer (*faqih*), or as a last resort, a member of the clergy.[71]

Madrasah supervisors and teachers belonged to the ulama and were appointed by the local rulers. This did not change when the region fell under Russian control. The ulama were henceforth merely appointed by the Russian rulers, who - in the style of previous Muslim sovereigns - continued to pay their salaries as a means to retain their loyalty to the ruling strata.[72] The change of ultimate ruler thus did not change either form or content of religious worship and educational activities. Although the school system was highly organised, the level of teaching remained low and the curricula, which was exclusively religious, mostly consisted of memorising the Koran and other holy texts. Education had stagnated already in the centuries before the Russian conquest due to the conservative policies of the ulama. The schools run along Islamic lines, and these were the only ones, only existed to transmit Islamic knowledge and what was regarded by the ulama as socially acceptable behaviour. No attempts were made to transmit any secular skills or indeed any understanding of the Islamic texts studied by the students. They were supposed to memorise and recite passages of the Koran in Arabic, but they in most cases never studied the Arabic language and could neither understand what they were memorising, nor read any unknown texts that did not form part of the study programme. Any knowledge of the meaning of the texts that they memorised was only imparted through the explanations by the teacher, who himself often was deficient in the Arabic of the Koran. To all practical effects, most students left school as illiterates.[73] A consequence of this was, of course, that most of those who performed religious rites in Central Asia in this period knew very little about Islam, except a few memorised but poorly understood prayers with which to impress the believers.[74] There is thus little cause to dismiss as tall tales the memoirs of all Western explorers who in the nineteenth century travelled through the region disguised and posing as Muslim clerics, when they claimed to have been taken at face value by villagers and mullahs alike.[75]

Among the rural population, however, Sufism retained its central role in Inner Asian Muslim worship. The state-appointed ulama, whether members of the Naqshbandiyya or not, were of secondary importance and had only limited jurisdiction in the rural areas. Judges (*qadis*) were appointed by the khans but the

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[70] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 785.

[71] Allworth, *Central Asia,* 351-4.

[72] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 785.

[73] See, e.g., Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[74] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 324.

[75] See, e.g., Hopkirk, *Great Game,* 38-51. Examples include Captain Charles Christie and Lieutenant Henry Pottinger who in 1810 both at times adopted the guise of itinerant mullahs. Neither had the necessary knowledge of Islam, but Christie managed to avoid exposure by posing as a Sunni Muslim when engaged in a theological discussion by a local Shia mullah. Pottinger also found his opinions of Islamic dogma eagerly sought for, but he too managed to avoid being caught out. At one point, when asked to lead a prayer, none of which he had properly memorised, he even managed to get through it without arousing suspicions by muttering a few mumbled sentences interspersed "rather distinctly" with such words as *Allah*, *rusol* (prophet), and *shukr* (thanks).

rural population's allegiance was given to the *ishans*, Sufi holy men. As noted, not all of them belonged to the organised orders. In fact, given the centralisation in the cities of the traditional Sufi orders, traditional rural Sufism was superseded by what some refer to as ishanism, with each ishan of repute becoming the founder of his own cult. Rural Sufis took care of the holy places and functioned as intermediaries with dead saints, but they also often led the tribes in war or rebellion, and served as teachers and practitioners of folk medicine. They also sold amulets and performed religious duties for a fee.[76]

When revolts occurred, the politically powerful Sufi brotherhoods almost invariably played a leading role. The Andijon revolt of 1898 was led by a Naqhsbandi, Muhammad Ali (Madali, also known as Dukchi Ishan). The resistance of the Tekke Turkmen tribe at Gök-Tepe in 1861 was led by another Naqshbandi shaykh, Kurban Murat.[77]

The popular support of Muslim holy men among the rural population in no ways meant that Islam as yet had succeeded in changing their life-style. Even where everybody claimed allegiance to Islam, there were pockets where large population groups as yet had not embraced the religion fully. Even as late as during the aforementioned Andijon revolt of 1898, its leader Muhammad Ali had to make considerable efforts to implant Islam among the peoples of the eastern areas of the Ferghana valley. Contemporary chronicles reported that the people there "had never constructed mosques" and had neighbours who "were poor Muslims."[78]

The Russian rulers encouraged sedentarisation and the centralisation of political power. They discouraged nomadism, in particular in the northern parts of the region where Russian colonists where sent to farm any fertile lands. The role of the rural Sufis as mediators thus began to wane, as the organised, urban religious leadership of the ulama regained its former importance and indeed increased its authority among the rural population as well. Inner Asia was not unique in this aspect; similar changes took place in Morocco and India.[79]

The Introduction of Islamic Modernism - and a New System of Militancy

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the Western powers had become militarily so vastly superior to the Islamic world that a few individual Islamic scholars initiated attempts to modernise Islam. In effect, they wanted to make the Islamic world more Western in its outlook with regard to such obvious means of progress as education, science, and political and military organisation, but they wanted to achieve this without losing the Islamic faith in the process.

They were not without tools for the job. Islam had a tradition of what might be termed modernism, although renewal (*tajdid*) might be a better term, and Islamic scholars had for centuries worked out systems for how to deal with changing circumstances. The question in the mind of these renewers was, had the circumstances, in the form of technology, science, and so on, really changed, or was it the Muslim community (*ummah*) which had changed over time?

For centuries, two key concepts in the Islamic vocabulary of modernism have been *tajdid* ("renewal") and *islah* ("reform"). The two common English expressions used to translate these Arabic terms would indeed, especially to the secular, Western mind, suggest modernisation and transformation as in innovative change, a form of progress. Not so in an Islamic context. There is no concept of progress in *islah* and *tajdid*. How could humanity possibly progress and yet retain righteousness when the perfect model had already been revealed by God? In Islamic discourse, *tajdid* and *islah* have always involved a call for a return to the fundamental rules of Islam as presented in the Koran and Sunnah (custom or norm of conduct, the normative custom of the Prophet or the early Islamic community). The term *islah* carries a strong sense of moral righteousness. This is no mere reform in order to increase efficiency; *islah* is an effort to increase the righteousness of the people, a *re*-form of Muslim society. He who works for *islah*, the *muslih*, is no mere efficiency expert, he is engaged in the work of God and aims for no less than a return of society to its proper norms, the ones revealed by God.[80]

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[76] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 785-6; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 386.

[77] Alexandre Bennigsen and Fanny E. Bryan, "Islam in Central Asia," Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 10 (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 367-77, on 375; Allworth, *Central Asia,* 167-9.

[78] Bakhtiar Babadzhanov [Babajanov], "Islam in Uzbekistan: From the Struggle for 'Religious Purity' to Political Activism," Boris Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 299-330, on 301.

[79] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 786.

[80] John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," John L. Esposito (ed), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 32-47, on 32-34.

The term *tajdid* carries similar suggestions of faithfulness to God's revelation. The prophet Muhammad reportedly said, "God will send to this *ummah* (the Muslim community) at the head of each century those who will renew its faith for it." This renewal - *tajdid* - will be carried out by a man referred to as a *mujaddid* ("renewer"). His function is not to create anything new, far from it. Islamic thought assumes that over time, the Muslim community will inexorably leave the path of righteous behaviour as prescribed by the Koran and Sunnah. This deviation from righteousness can only be rectified by *tajdid*, and only a *mujaddid* can renew the authentic Islamic faith and turn the Muslim community back on the path of permitted behaviour. Renewal thus serves the one and only purpose of fulfilling God's will - by turning society back and restore it to what it was, and always should be.[81]

The purpose of the *mujaddid* or *muslih* is thus not to perfect, or add to, the model given by God; it is merely to implement an already existing ideal, or blueprint, for human righteousness. The work of a *mujaddid* or *muslih* is recognised by three characteristics: (1) insistence upon an uncompromisingly literal reading and strict application of the guiding sources of Islamic teaching, the Koran and Sunnah; (2) assertion of the right to independent analysis (*ijtihad*) of the Koran and Sunnah rather than having to rely on the opinions of preceeding generations of ulama; and (3) reaffirmation of the Koranic experience as authentic and unique.[82]

The term *ijtihad* (often translated into English as the use of individual reasoning when ruling on a point of Islamic law, that is, the interpretation of the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition) is yet another concept that to the secular, Western mind suggests innovative progress, independent thought, indeed the idea of a free thinker. Again, not so in an Islamic context. The three characteristics of the work of a *mujaddid* or *muslih* naturally limits the permissible sources of thought to only one, and a fixed and narrowly defined one at that. The one and only blueprint was already given, in God's revelation. All practices, rules, ideas, and thoughts, accumulated over the centuries, from any other sources (Islamic or non-Islamic) within the Islamic experience was forbidden and would have to be purged. A true *mujaddid* insists on a literal reading of the Koran; he will avoid symbolic or esoteric interpretations.

The purpose of *ijtihad* was therefore to eliminate inadmissible innovations by previous generations of ulama. This included the four common legal schools of Islam, the following of one of which (known as *taqlid*) is considered mandatory by most Muslims. Although most ulama indeed regard the door of *ijtihad* to have closed after the formulation of the four legal schools, the *mujtahid* (rightful practitioner of *ijtihad*) refuses to be bound by earlier views and rulings and former interpreters of Islam. The *mujtahid* indeed sees a need to undermine their authority so that Islam can be restored to what he believes it was, and always should be. The process can perhaps be most closely likened to when an art specialist in a museum restores a forgotten painting by an Old Master by carefully removing all accretions, accumulated dirt as well as any visible, later painting by a lesser hand, that cover the master's canvas. The concept of *ijtihad* therefore is closer to preservationism or indeed restoration work than independent reasoning.

The Islamic renewers or modernists who appeared in the nineteenth century were in most cases men who had experienced Western culture as well as colonial rule. Its first and chief proponent, however, had a somewhat different background. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), so known because of his studies in Afghanistan's capital Kabul, developed what arguably would become the core of Islamic modernism. He learnt Western ways during his many travels. Following a pilgrimage to Mecca and a stay in India soon after the failed Indian Mutiny of 1857, which instilled strong anti-British feelings in him, al-Afghani returned to Afghanistan in 1861. Having taken part on the losing side in an internal Afghan power struggle, he was expelled from the country in 1869. Moving on first to Istanbul, where he also made himself not welcome, then Cairo, al-Afghani advocated resistance to the growing British and French influence in Egyptian affairs. In 1879, al-Afghani was again expelled, this time to India, where the British kept him under surveillance. In 1883, he arrived in Paris, and in 1886, Teheran. Next year, he moved on to Russian Central Asia. He visited St. Petersburg, then again toured Europe, then again turned up in Teheran, where he in 1891 was arrested and expelled to Turkey. This did not mark an end to his travels, or his involvement in politics, both of which continued until al-Afghani died in 1897. In the very year before his death, he was involved in the activities that led to the assassination of the Shah of Persia.[83]

Al-Afghani saw clearly the weakness of the Islamic world of this time. To remedy this weakness, he advocated internal reform and external defence. Both were needed, but he emphasised the latter. Al-Afghani seems to have been the first to juxtapose the concepts "Islam" and "the West" (as distinct from

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[81] Voll, "Renewal and Reform," 33.

[82] Voll, "Renewal and Reform," 34, 35.

[83] Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism,* 49-52; Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, 47-51. Al-Afghani claimed to have born to a Sunni family in Asadabad near Konar in eastern Afghanistan but was in fact born of Shia parents in Asadabad near Hamadan in western Iran. By claiming Sunni background, he could reach a wider audience.

any other body of infidels) as standing for parallel but mutually antagonistic historical phenomena.[84] He perceived a struggle between civilisations, of which the Islamic world was only one, and a weak one at that. His key message was that Muslims would have to make full use of modern technology and modern methods to defend themselves against the Western powers, or they were doomed to fall. If so, Muslims would lose their faith and ideals and indeed their entire *raison d'être* as God's chosen. But Western technology and methods were insufficient to triumph in the ensuing struggle. Having made himself an influential figure in all the then key Muslim regions, Ottoman Turkey, Egypt, Iran, India, and Central Asia, al-Afghani concluded that the pan-Islamic perspective was the only real safeguard of the Islamic world against the European powers. He argued that the Muslim world needed unity. Muslims would not be able to defend themselves successfully against the Western powers unless they could overcome their political divisions. For this reason, al-Afghani advocated pan-Islam, the unifying of all Muslim lands into one political power. This did not, of course, imply a rejection of Western political institutions and concepts or the use of modern scientific methods and technology. Such means of modernisation would indeed become necessary, as well, to enable the Muslim world to resist the military might of the Western powers.[85]

Al-Afghani advocated a kind of Islam currently often referred to as Salafism, that is, the forced return of Muslim society to the conditions of what he and others regarded as the golden age under the the prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs. The dynamism and militancy of this period was exactly what was needed to unite the Muslim world and resist the growing domination of the infidels. Yet, he also called on a revival of scientific thought and a reform of the educational system in imitation of the West. Being a key figure in the creation of pan-Islamic nationalism and modern Salafism, al-Afghani advocated the militant defence of the Muslim world against the West through the use of Western technology and military strength as well as the internalisation of Western secular modes of thought, all for better resisting the infidels. Yet Islam would have to remain pure, without any undue influences from Western ideologies.[86] He and the other Islamic modernists thus led a two-tracked movement. On the one hand, they wished to cleanse Islam from, in their view, old superstitions such as Sufism and the dated, scholastic legalism of earlier centuries. On the other hand, they also wanted to cleanse Muslim society from new heresies, including Western secularism which, in their view, some Muslims had mistaken for modernism. On the one hand, they wished to acquire the sources of Western military, political, and scientific strength; on the other, they wanted to rid Islam of all seeds of Western civilisation. In time, the emphasis came to be on the latter goal. The fact that these goals to a large extent were mutually exclusive was conveniently forgotten.[87]

Al-Afghani had a student and later associate named Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), an Egyptian Islamic scholar less militant than his teacher and associate. The latter saw the need for cultural and intellectual reform and defined the goal of Islamic modernism as being the "presentation of the basic tenets of Islam in terms that would be aceptable to a modern mind and would allow further reformation of it on the one hand and allow the pursuit of modern knowledge on the other."[88] Abduh saw less need than al-Afghani in rousing the Muslims to fight the European powers. He argued that Muslims must first concentrate on educational and religious reform, in the process assimilating those aspects of Western civilisation which were acceptable to Islam. He advocated Salafism but in a less militant form than his teacher.[89] The leading Central Asian theologian Muhammad Rustamov Hindustani (more on whom below), who himself was strongly influenced by Salafism, later ridiculed Abduh in a satire.[90]

Nonetheless, even Muhammad Abdu found a widespread audience among Muslims. The best known of his disciples became Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), born in Tripoli in present north Lebanon. He played a political role in Syria at the time of the dissolution of the Ottoman empire. His writings also served as the inspiration for yet another Egyptian, Hassan al-Banna (1904-1949), when he created the

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[84] Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, 49.

[85] John O. Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Modern Islamic World," Manz, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*, 62-81, on 68.

[86] Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism,* 52-3.

[87] In the years before Al-Qaida and the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, al-Afghani received quite a sympathetic hearing among modern Western scholars and journalists. A typical comment was that he, in their view, was an early symbol of the Third World in its protest against Western imperialism and colonialism. See, e.g., Carl Johan Gardell, "Islamisk fundamentalism," *Världspolitikens Dagsfrågor* 1, 2000, p.13.

[88] Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Modern Islamic World," 68.

[89] Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism,* 53-4.

[90] Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 307.

organisation known as the Muslim Brotherhood. By this time, the religious dimension of Salafism had been pushed to the fore by the proponents of Islamic modernism, they having then realised that it was only religious faith, not intellectual argumentation, that could rouse the Muslim masses against the military and political superiority of the West.[91]

The views of al-Afghani and other Islamic reformers reached the Muslims of Russia early. The need for reform and modernisation was there particularly advocated by the Tatars, who again due to their early exposure to Western education and ideas found themselves in the vanguard of modernism. In Russian Central Asia, the Russian conquerors had formed an alliance with the traditional elite, but at the same time, Russian rule had undermined the standing and power of this elite. Instead by the end of the nineteenth century a new native elite appeared from the recently emerged middle class. The new elite, frequently educated in the westernised Tatar educational establishments in Kazan, came under influences from Russia but from Turkey and Iran as well. They were thus much influenced by Islamic modernists and reformists from the rest of the Islamic world, such as the aforementioned Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammed Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Rida, and the reformer and poet Shaykh Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938).

The form of Islamic modernism that became most prominent in Russia was known as Jadidism (from *usul-e jadid*; "new method"). This movement emerged in Kazan among the Tatars and although it came to influence Central Asia as well, in many ways it remained a Tatar movement. At first a method to teach Turkic languages, Jadidism in time turned increasingly political. It became a force for modernism. The advocates of the movement, the Jadids, set out to reform the Muslim educational system. Later their zeal for reform spread to art, literature, architecture, and language issues - and eventually all forms of modernisation. The Jadid movement thus came to play an important role not only in education but also in the dissemination to the public of information on Russian - and Western - culture and politics and international developments.[92]

Jadidism

Jadid thought developed already in the two last decades of the nineteenth century among the Tatars of Kazan and Orenburg. Most Jadids (*jadidchilar*) appeared among the intelligentsia, the merchants, and the newly emerged middle class - the groups later on referred to as bourgeois by the Soviet Marxists. However, this designation would not reveal the full extent of their affiliations. Most nineteenth-century Tatar Jadids also belonged to the Naqshbandiyya.[93]

The perhaps most well-known Jadid was Ismail Bey Gasprinskiy (also known as Gaspirali or Gaspraly, 1851-1914), a Crimean Tatar. The story of how he reached Jadid thought is convoluted but shows that he, unlike some other Muslim reformists of the time, probably emphasised the importance of Western science and methods more than the reform of Islam, as envisaged by the non-Tatar modernists. In fact, as a young man he appears to have been much influenced by, and borrowed heavily from, the ideas that he encountered during his various travels. Born to a family in the Crimean lesser landed nobility, he was first educated at the military cadet school in Moscow, where he was affected by Slavophil ideas. After visiting France, where he was influenced by French liberalism, and Turkey, where he was inspired by the ideology of the Young Turks, he returned to the Crimea in 1877. There he became principal of a madrasah and later mayor of Baghchisaray, his home-town. In 1882, inspired by what he had experienced during his period of study and travel, he established the first of a series of new-style schools. In the following year, he also entered publishing. Due to his modernist and westernised outlook, he became an advocate of pan-Turkism.[94] The Jadid movement came to provide a synthesis of modern, Islamic, and Turkish elements as a way of renewing Muslim society. Gasprinskiy also advocated the empowering of women by the introduction of a doctrine of fairness, in which many traditional restrictions imposed on women, such as veiling and the practices of divorce and polygamy, would be excluded. Gasprinskiy seems to have realised that it was a serious waste not to allow half the Muslim population, the females, to take part in economic and social life and thus help to reverse economic stagnation and the consequent inability of the Islamic world to compete with the West. Gasprinskiy's school became the model and inspiration for numerous other Jadid schools throughout Russian Muslim society.[95]

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[91] Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism,* 54-60.

[92] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 791-3.

[93] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 38.

[94] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 43-5, 239-40 n.8.

[95] See, e.g., Edward J. Lazzerini, "Beyond Renewal: The Jadîd Response to Pressure for Change in the Modern Age," Gross, *Muslims in Central Asia,* 151-66, on 162-3; Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Modern Islamic World," 68-70.

Even so, it took almost two decades before a Jadid school opened in Central Asia, and when this happened, it predictably took place in Tashkent, the much westernised capital of Russian Central Asia. The first local Jadid school opened there in 1901. The first Jadid school in the somewhat more traditional Samarkand opened in 1903. In conservative Bukhara, attempts were made to open the first Jadid school in 1901, but those failed and a Jadid school was successfully opened only around 1909 (in 1908 according to some). The Central Asian Jadids only appeared in greater strength in the decade after Japan had defeated Russia in the war of 1904-1905. Jadid ideas spread yet further following the Russian Revolution of 1905.[96]

These military and political events fomented great turmoil in Russian society. The Russo-Japanese War was the first real war in decades actually lost against an Asian power, and Russians were duly shocked and surprised - perhaps as much by Japan's success in rapid modernisation as by the loss itself. The 1905 revolution with its general strikes and popular unrest led to a growing interest in politics, among Russians of all backgrounds, including Muslims. But by then, the first political Muslim groups in Russia had already appeared. The first had formed in 1904, as could be expected among the Tatars at Kazan. Their activities culminated in the First Muslim Congress, held at Nizhniy Novgorod in August 1905. One of the key personalities involved was was the aforementioned Ismail Bey Gasprinskiy. It resulted in the creation of a Muslim Union (Ittifaq al-Muslimin) to work for the civic rights and political aspirations of all Muslims of Russia. Although a party of the same name, often referred to as the Muslim Union Party although it retained the name Ittifaq al-Muslimin, was created, it merely marked the first (and, as history would show, only) attempt to unify all Muslims of the Russian empire.[97] To unite all Russian Muslims, not to mention all Muslims everywhere, was in fact discovered to be impossible - even though many Muslim reformists proposed exactly this. Indeed, when in 1907 Gasprinskiy issued calls for an international Muslim conference, which he planned to stage in Cairo, Egypt, the congress despite serious attempts never took place. Even so, Gasprinskiy made a name for himself and for the Russian Jadids throughout the modernist strata of the Muslim world.[98]

The key political demand of the Jadids was not independence, nor an Islamic state. As late as on 1 May 1917, when an all-Russian Muslim Congress was held at Moscow, the Muslim reformers demanded neither real political autonomy, nor independence. Such demands only came later, on the eve of the Russian October Revolution later in the year. Instead their demands were formulated around the two key issues of equal civic rights vis-à-vis the non-Muslim Russians, including an end to rural colonisation and the introduction of a representative administration for the Muslim regions, and religious independence for the ulama and the Islamic religious authority, including a mufti elected, not nominated from above. However, the delegates in their resolutions also aimed to reconcile Islam and socialism, and they borrowed their programme of reform from the Russian socialists. They even, although not unanimously since some members of the clergy opposed it, carried a resolution that declared the equlity of the political rights of men and women, prohibited polygamy, and prohibited the principle of *purdah* ("curtain"), that is, segregation and seclusion of women. A majority of the delegates also voted for a federalist solution to the question of the relationship between the Muslims and the state, thus shattering the idea of Islamic unity, which hitherto had been proposed by many Muslim modernists. The Congress thus also put an end to both pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism as viable political goals for the Muslims of the Russian empire.[99]

Interlude - Disruption Delayed

The paradox of the early twentieth-century Russian Muslim national movement was that while it gained support at all levels of Muslim society, its proponents never managed to achieve unity or form a common front of all Muslim peoples of the Russian empire. There were several reasons for this, ranging from cultural differences and traditions of rivalry to purely geographical issues. The Muslim regions in Russia were frequently isolated from each other by areas of Russian settlement, or in Transcaucasia, by Christian Ossetians, Georgians, and Armenians. The unity of the Muslim world on the basis of religion alone was thus merely an utopian ideal. Pan-Islamic nationalism, so to speak, having failed, many of the Muslim nationalist leaders began to espouse socialist ideals, believing the revolutionary currents then sweeping through the Russian intelligentsia, regardless of its ethnic background, to be capable of advancing their cause. However, Russian Muslim society contained few or, in Central Asia, hardly any members who could be described as belonging to the proletariat, so it was in particular from the young Muslim intelligentsia that the first Muslim socialists or near-socialists emerged. The peasantry was passive,

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[96] Edward Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964), 32; Allworth, *Central Asia*, 363, 365, 370, 410.

[97] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 43-5.

[98] Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Modern Islamic World," 68-70.

[99] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 69, 78-9.

unorganised, uninterested in social change, and remained dominated by the clergy, which remained extremely conservative in its outlook. The clergy, enjoying the support of the Tsarist officials, saw no benefits in risking the status quo by encouraging any forms of modernism or indulging any reform activities.[100]

For this reason, Jadidism as well as subsequent Muslim nationalism and socialism never really achieved a leading role among the Central Asian Muslims. The introduction of Jadidism, and as part of this, what can only be described as Muslim nationalism, thus never managed to secure a leading role in the religious, social, or political lives of most Central Asian Muslims. Jadidism, like pan-Turkic or indeed pan-Islamic nationalism, remained the disruption in Central Asian Islam that never truly happened. At least this is what the average proponent of Jadidism would have believed in his life-time. However, Islamic modernism in the form of Jadidism did bear fruit, but it only did so at the end of the twentieth century, and then in the form of Islamic extremism.

Because while Jadidism in itself, with its proponents, became embroiled in and ultimately destroyed by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing Russian Civil War of 1918-1920, the seeds that the movement had planted remained. The first implication of these survivals was that Jadidism became a justification for communism. In the early years following the Civil War, many Central Asians indeed regarded the representatives of the new Soviet power as little more than the successors of the Jadid reformers. Many Jadids had embraced communism, and their emphasis on the modernisation of Islam in some ways even laid the groundwork for the far more sweeping modernisation of society that the Soviet rulers imposed. The purges of pre-revolutionary Muslim leaders only began in earnest from 1928. By 1939, the pre-revolutionary generation of Muslim intellectuals of aristocratic, bourgeois, or clerical background that had known Jadidism and in the end espoused communism had been eliminated.[101] Thus died the last proponents of Jadidism. Henceforth, Soviet Muslim leaders emerged from the new Soviet middle class of intellectuals, bureaucrats, and technocrats, mostly of peasant (or at least outside Central Asia, proletarian) origin but invariably a result of Communist Party training, that would characterise Soviet society.

The second implication of the work of the Jadids was that it prepared the ground for Islamic extremism. The lofty, often peace-abiding ideas of many Tatar Jadid modernists thus, paradoxically but not, as noted in the section of *ijtihad* and *islah*, surprisingly, came to result in the general call to arms and *jihad* that emerged among Muslims in Central Asia and elsewhere in the last decades of the twentieth century. Jadidism had entered Central Asia on a quest for modern education and equal civic rights; a century later its seeds sprouted as extremism, terrorism, and suicide bombers in the name of God.

The explanation for this is simple, albeit unpalatable to those who believe in ideals rather than facts. Muslim modernists, even relatively moderate ones like Abduh and Gasprinskiy, in addition to advocating the use of modern science to enhance the position of the Muslim world, regarded themselves as reformers, *muslihs*. It was not enough, they argued, to define modernity as the acceptance of modern science. They also advocated the "purifying" of Muslim society from the superstitions of popular religion and the "dead hand" of erroneous clerical tradition. Thus they did not understand modernity in the same way as in the Western world, but rather connected it to the need to inspire a rebirth of Islamic society, but this time as Islam should be according to God's revelation instead of how it merely had become. Characteristic for these beliefs was Gasprinskiy's emphasis on the twin needs to reduce the influence of Sufism and to replace the traditional schools of Islam with a purified form of Islam, as it had originally been in the view of him and other modernist-reformers.[102] These views put the Muslim modernists, including the Jadids, squarely in the Salafi camp. Sufism was opposed as mere superstitions which had nothing to do with Islam. The traditional Islamic legal schools, including the Hanafite school dominant in Central Asia, were regarded as inadmissible innovations that should be removed from pure Islam.

When, decades later, Central Asia had been incorporated into the Soviet Union and traditional Islam largely, at least on paper, replaced with a form of state-supporting establishment Islam centred on a few remaining ulama, the majority of Soviet Islamic leaders would continue to follow and indeed insist on these tenets. Since the highest-ranking Soviet Muslims indeed studied at the Islamic centres in the Arab world, where they among other subjects read the works of Abduh and al-Afghani,[103] official Soviet Islam in a very real sense represented the originally nineteenth-century form of Islamic modernism that in the second half of the twentieth century, through further radicalisation, transformed itself into Islamism or, more aptly put, Islamic extremism.

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[100] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 48-51.

[101] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 158-61, 165.

[102] See, e.g., Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Modern Islamic World," 71.

[103] Voll, "Central Asia as a Part of the Modern Islamic World," 71.

The Third Disruption: The Marxist Conquest and the Introduction of Secular Modernism

The Russian Revolution and Central Asian Islam under Soviet Rule

On the eve of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Central Asian Islam had not kept up with the times. Jadidism had not had a serious impact and remained a preoccupation among westernised intellectuals. The prevailing trend in the three states of Bukhara, Kokand, and Khiva was traditionalism. The Jadids referred to the representatives of traditionalism, in their view the contending school of thought on modernisation, as Qadimists (*qadimchilar*, "traditionalists" or "followers of the old," from Turkic and Uzbek (and ultimately Arabic) *qadim*, "antiquity, distant past"). Religious education, which by and large was the only form of education (apart from on-the-job training to learn a trade, of course), as noted, mostly consisted of memorising the Koran and other holy texts. The religious class controlled most aspects of social life. Innovations of any kind were discouraged, since they were seen not only as dangerous but also as unnecessary. The institution of ulama - in the form of the Naqshbandiyya - had reasserted itself, although independent Sufi shaykhs and ishans retained a very strong influence, in particular in rural areas.

In once great Islamic centres such as Bukhara, the power of the ulama was enhanced by their organisation, which included privileged groups such as the sayyids (Arabic, "lord, master"), the reputed descendants of the prophet Muhammad, the mirs, or presumed descendants of the first three caliphs, and the khwajas or khojas, reputed descendants of the early Arab conquerors. These various groups formed aristocratic lineages that were accorded both secular and, more importantly, religious prestige and popular veneration due to their perceived inherent holiness.[104]

When the Russian Revolution of 1917 destroyed Tsarist rule, Central Asia had neither ambitions nor any real means to champion independence. In a series of ruthless and often bloody conquests and reconquests, Tsarist Russian rule was exchanged for Soviet Marxist rule. However, unlike Tsarist Russia, the new Soviet leaders espoused atheism, favoured secular modernism, and discouraged all religious manifestations, including those of Islam.

These policies were not in evidence at once. Immediately following the Russian Revolution, the early Bolsheviks in Central Asia maintained an initially fairly liberal policy towards religious customs. A Bolshevik victory was at this early stage far from assured, and the revolutionaries needed allies. Socialism was, it should be remembered, by then also quite fashionable among the intelligentsia. There were thus also attempts by the Muslim leaders of the region to combine the socialist slogans with the precepts of Islamic jurisprudence. Some even sought to create a theory of Islamic socialism that, they believed, would increase the acceptability of the religion to the new rulers. Such attempts were made, for instance, in the journal *Al-Islah* ("Reform"), established in 1915.[105] It was among their spiritual descendants, the next generation of Central Asian Islamic modernists, that Soviet Islam found its official leaders. Such men were Islamic modernists who refuted neither Islamic dogma nor Islamic law, but simply kept silent about and ignored those Islamic precepts that they found unsuitable for modern life. In a similar way, they would interpret the others in a contemporary spirit. They thus managed to balance their perceived need to maintain the fundamentals of Islam with the more immediate need to uphold the goals and slogans of the Soviet state.[106]

While the Soviet rulers soon began to discourage religious thought of all kinds, including Islam, they never actually prohibited religious observances. They did insist, however, on the regulation of religious activities. Both clergy and religious societies could apply for registration, and many - but not the majority - received formal permission to operate. There still remained a need to regulate religion so as to ensure that the state remained in control. This was no new development in Muslim lands, since few if any Muslim rulers, ever, had allowed religious groups to usurp state power, unless the rulers were powerless to prevent it. State control over Islam had existed in the Russian empire as well. In Tsarist Russia, the religious aspects of Islam had been regulated by autonomous bodies for the management of Muslim affairs. The Orenburg Mahommedan Spiritual Assembly, headed by a mufti, a traditional title for an Islamic scholar who provides legal interpretations on how a Muslim should apply the requirements of his religion, and with responsibility for all the country's Muslims except those in the recently conquered Crimea, was in 1788 established in Ufa by Catherine the Great. The Crimean Muslims received a separate administration in 1794, headed by another mufti. Two further, parallel administrations were in 1872 instituted in Tbilisi following conquests in the Caucasus, one for the Shia, headed by a shaykh ul-Islam, and one for the Sunni Muslims, headed by a mufti. In 1897, the mufti in Ufa requested authority over the

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[104] See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 428.

[105] Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 303, 323 nn.10, 12.

[106] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 133.

Muslims of Turkestan, but Governor-General von Kaufmann rejected the proposal. However, the Tbilisi administrations were eventually moved to Baku and then shut down, as was the one in the Crimea. The Ufa muftiate was in 1917 renamed the Central Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Inner Russia and Siberia (TsDUM). It survived the October Revolution and continued to function under Soviet rule. The early Soviet leaders established a few other Muslim spiritual administrations as well, but they were short-lived.[107] In fact, the Soviet rulers organised Islam in a manner very similar to the one under the Tsars.[108] In 1943, a spiritual directorate of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakstan (SADUM, *Sredneaziatskoye dukhovnoye upravleniye musul'man*) was formed in Tashkent.[109] In 1944, this was followed by two others, in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Buynaksk, Daghestan.[110]

In its final form, official or establishment Islam, as sanctioned by the Soviet state, was thus directed by four Muslim Spiritual Directorates:[111]

- The Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakstan (Russian abbreviation: SADUM), at Tashkent in Uzbekistan, to serve Sunni Muslims in Central Asia and Kazakstan and also to function as the international centre of Soviet Islam; with Uzbek as working language.
- The Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of European Russia and Siberia (Russian abbreviation: DUMES), at Ufa in Bashkiriya, to serve Sunni Muslims in European Russia and Siberia; with Kazan Tatar as working language (until 1948, as noted, called the Central Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Inner Russia and Siberia, TsDUM).
- The Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Northern Caucasus (Russian abbreviation: DUMSK) and Daghestan, first at Buynaksk, then from 1974 at Makhachkala in Daghestan, to serve the Sunni Muslims of North Caucasus and Daghestan; with Arabic as working language.
- The Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Transcaucasia (Russian abbreviation: DUMZ), at Baku in Azerbaijan, to serve the Shia of the entire Soviet Union and the Sunni of Transcaucasia; with Azeri as working language.

Each Spiritual Directorate was administered by an executive committee, presided over by a mufti (for the Sunni directorates) or a shaykh ul-Islam (for the Shia directorate, the vice-president of which was a Sunni). The Spiritual Directorates were regulated by the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, established in May 1944 and in turn attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR. The Council dealt with all religious issues in the Soviet Union, except those of the Russian Orthodox Church, which were under the management of another council. However, in December 1965 the two councils were merged into a single Council for Religious Affairs.[112] Although officially part of the government apparatus, both the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults and its successor, the Council for Religious Affairs, reported to and received instructions from the Central Committee of the Communist Party.[113] The purpose of the spiritual directorates was at one and the same time to exercise control over the activities of the registered Muslim clergy, to mobilise them in the struggle against the far more common, but unregulated, unregistered clergy, and to channel the activities of the executive organs of the registered religious societies to both these ends.[114]

The directorates issued *fatwas*, or religious rulings, on a wide range of issues of concern to their believers. Generally speaking, these fatwas served to minimise the impact by Islamic customs on Soviet social and economic life. Among other rulings, the directorates at one time or another decreed that

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[107] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 785; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 100-102, 105 n.24.

[108] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 101-21.

[109] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 171-2; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 84; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 104. A preliminary decision to establish this organisation (SADUM) was made in 1941, although the decision was reportedly only finally ratified after the Yalta Conference in 1945, during which the Allies apparently raised the issue of the status of religion in the Soviet Union. Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 324 n.14.

[110] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 105.

[111] See, e.g., Vladimir Kurojedov [Kuroyedov], *Religion och kyrka i Sovjet* (Moscow: Novosti, 1982), 33-5. Abbreviated Swedish-language edn of Vladimir Alekseyevich Kuroyedov, *Religiya i tserkov' v sovetskom obshchestve* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981).

[112] Kurojedov, *Religion och kyrka,* 41. Kuroyedov was in 1965 appointed chairman of the then newly established Council for Religious Affairs; Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 172; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 11-12.

[113] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 565.

[114] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 123.

sacrifices and *zakat*, obligatory alms in the form of a communal tax on Muslims and indeed one of the five pillars of Islam, were voluntary, and that absenteeism at work due to religious obligations was not permissible.[115] The Islamic modernists of the directorates did what they could to please both the believers and their Soviet masters, but it was inevitable that their efforts would not be enough. While the Soviet rulers regarded them as engaged in the strengthening of religion, which was anathema to the development of the new Soviet man, the believers regarded the compromises and concessions made by the directorates as nothing but servile obedience to their Soviet masters in Moscow. Knowing that the secular powers had the means to physically eliminate all traces of institutionalised religion, if they so wished, and that they in the past had been known to use them, the Islamic modernists of the spiritual directorates knew that they would have to tread warily. Yet their efforts should be recognised. Without their existence and flexibility in the maintenance of Islam, it is very doubtful whether the religion in fact would have survived Soviet rule to the extent that it did.[116]

In itself, the Soviet Islamic system was, with the obvious key difference that the state which supported the Islamic system in itself espoused atheism, not unlike that of the Abbasid caliphate or indeed most subsequent Muslim empires. Both states had structures with Islamic functions in the form of state-supported establishments of Islamic scholars and judges with some level of authority over the believers, yet in both states were these structures separate from a broader, parallel set of popular centres of Islam led by Islamic scholars and preachers. Some have described the Abbasid system as consisting of two distinct concepts of Islam, one imperial and one urban.[117] Such an interpretation is very close to the Soviet Islamic system, which also housed two concepts of Islam, one Soviet (establishment Islam) and one local (non-establishment Islam).

In the period between 1945 and 1971, there was only one official Islamic educational institution in the Soviet Union. This was the Mir-e Arab madrasah in Bukhara (originally founded in 1535, it was closed after the Russian Revolution but permitted to re-open in 1945 and did so in 1946.[118] Its course lasted for perhaps five (or more likely seven[119]) years, and the institution at any one time typically had between approximately fifty and a hundred students who were engaged in preparatory studies, from the Central Asian republics as well as the Tatar ASSR and Bashkir ASSR.[120] In 1945, permission was also given to open a secondary seminary in Tashkent. After a considerable delay, this opened in the building of the old Baraq Khan madrasah in 1956, but was almost immediately closed down again due to red tape.[121] This sixteenth-century madrasah, in the Old Town of Tashkent, also constituted the administrative buildings of SADUM and was known as the Islamic institute (*oliy mahad*).[122] In 1971, the institution re-opened as the Imam Ismail al-Bukhari madrasah in Tashkent, which henceforth typically had some thirty students engaged in advanced studies during a course of four years.[123]

The Muslim Spiritual Directorates from late 1954 onwards also sent a few students each year abroad to complete their studies in Islamic universities such as Al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt; Al-Qarawiyin in Fès, Morocco; in Al-Baidha, Libya; and in Syria.[124] The spiritual directorates were also responsible for organising the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), although the security services and other organs had a say in this as well. Pilgrimages had taken place in the period from 1922 to 1928, when the custom was forbidden (which did not prevent a handful from going by way of India; most probably never returned to the Soviet Union). The spiritual directorates organised pilgrimages for a few select Soviet Muslims in 1944, 1945, and after a brief hiatus because of outbreaks of cholera and war in the Middle East, in most years from 1953 onwards. Since only those vetted by the security organs could go, it was often the same people who went year after year.[125]

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[115] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 140-41.

[116] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 156, 180.

[117] Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 229.

[118] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 161; Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 325 n.27.

[119] Kurojedov, *Religion och kyrka,* 31. Kuroyedov, being chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, would have known.

[120] Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 325 n.27.

[121] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 161, 163.

[122] Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 325 n.27.

[123] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 173-4; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 84; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 163-4.

[124] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 84; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 164.

[125] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 171-4 with notes.

Mosque, Mazar, and Mahalla

As distinct from the formal organisation of Soviet establishment Islam, Islam in the Soviet Union as noted reached most believers through what might be referred to as another, quite different and most definitely popular as distinct from official organisation of the faith: non-establishment Islam. This, the organisation of Islam of arguably most importance to the average Central Asian Muslim, was informal and often even beyond the control of the official Islamic bodies. The popular form of worship that characterised non-establishment Islam was centred on three characteristics of Central Asian Islam that remain of importance to this day: the mosque, mazar (holy place), and *mahalla* (Arabic for quarter, neighbourhood, or region, in Central Asia the term for a neighbourhood association and in Soviet parlance known as a *mikrorayon*). Of these, the arguably most important for the perpetuation of Islamic norms was, for reasons that will be explained, the mahalla. While mosques and mazars came and went, the mahallas remained, preserving a link with the past into the present.

The mosque was, as elsewhere in the Islamic world, the place of worship. Some mosques and mazars had official permission to operate and can thus be said to have been part of establishment Islam. However, most did not receive, or apply for, permission. In the Soviet period, they comprised the vast majority of mosques. This was not seen as a problem, except by the state authorities, as a mosque was never really needed for believers to meet and pray. A mosque is only a building in which Islamic worship takes place; it is not holy per se. Any suitable building or room will do, and if one was closed down by the authorities, then the believers could always find or build another in its place. It was also very common to conduct Friday prayers in cemeteries, or that failing, in private homes.[126] Central Asia thus contained a loose network of mosques, which ranged from the great official mosques used for the Friday prayer, each known as a "cathedral mosque" (*sobornaya mechet'*), to the small, unofficial ones, which often were ordinary buildings or even mere rooms used for prayer.

Besides, the key institution for the perpetuation of Islam and in particular Islamic traditions was neither mosque nor mazar. Religious and civil authority are not divided in the Islamic world. In Islamic society, state organs - or for that matter social units - are at the same time religious organs, and vice versa. The purpose of any social unit is thus to maintain what is regarded as the proper Islamic norm in society. It is this characteristic that ensures the tenacity of Islam even in modern society. For each mosque, there is thus a corresponding "state" organisation that serves to regulate social activities and retain Islamic traditions among its members. In Central Asia, this authority was for practical reasons and age-old tradition structurally (as distinct from formally) invested in the village (*kishlak*, alternatively, in the Turkic-speaking Central Asian states only, *aul*) in rural areas and the mahalla in the cities and some rural communities. While the establishment of Soviet power in Central Asia destroyed the religious schools, the shariah courts, and the religious endowments that supported religious schools, mosques, and clergy, it did not change this fundamental organisational structure of society. Although Soviet rule replaced that of the traditional secular elite and the Soviet government became the owner of the land and the all-important water rights, the actual responsibility for farmland and irrigation systems at local level remained the concern of the villages and mahallas. Land, which had formerly been regarded as belonging to the khan, was now seen as belonging to the government. Yet even the new production units in the form of collective farms (*kolkhozy*) and state farms (*sovkhozy*) were formed along family, neighbourhood, or tribal lines, as in the past.[127]

However, the mahalla is not only a productive and territorial unit, but also a religious and organisational unit, in effect forming a parish (Uzbek *qavm*, meaning kinsman; from Arabic). Each mahalla would have its own corresponding mosque, which might be registered or not. The mahalla thus fulfilled an important part of religious worship as well. In this respect, the mahalla, being a self-perpetuating force of conservatism and social control, grew into the key system for social control in Central Asia. In Soviet times, it not only continued to flourish but also traditionally chose the members of the local soviet. The mahalla remained the center of effective local power also after the Soviet period in all but traditional nomadic societies and the most newly settled regions.[128]

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[126] See, e.g., Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 300.

[127] Sergei P. Poliakov, *Everyday Islam: Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 12, 16-17.

[128] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* xx-xxii, 12, 77. See also Marianne Kamp, "Between Women and the State: Mahalla Committees and Social Welfare in Uzbekistan," Pauline Jones Luong (ed), *The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 29-58; Timur Dadabayev, *Mahalla no jitsuzô: Chûô Ajia shakai no dentô to henyô* ("The reality of the mahalla: tradition and change in Central Asian society") (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 2006).

The mahalla organisation, with its self-perpetuating committee of elders, may be a key part of the explanation why Central Asia in fact saw no steady decline in mosque attendance in the Soviet period. Although it was older people who comprised the core of worshippers, this to a large extent was a matter of them having the time and convenience to do so. However, even when one generation of elders died, another took their place. Mosque attendance thus never declined, despite the core of its attendees always being elders.[129]

The period immediately before Soviet ascension to power had, in fact, seen the beginning of the breakdown of the urban mahalla structure, as early capitalism in the two first decades of the twentieth century destroyed traditional craft production. However, the introduction of Soviet rule stopped this process and indeed stabilised the social structure of the mahalla. The Soviet leaders, in need of all the support they could get and in any case partial towards collectivist forms of social organisation, recognised the mahalla and instituted its electoral commission (with the elders of the mahalla appointing the committee members, with women only rarely chosen) as a controlling body beneficial to Soviet rule and legalised its functions. When old streets were redeveloped, the population was typically resettled into new high-rise apartment buildings by mahalla, with people from the same mahalla being settled in adjacent apartments and buildings. The committee of the mahalla regulates the entire social and personal life of the inhabitants of its territory. It also shapes public opinion and polices the observation of what is regarded as acceptable norms, derived from shariah, adat, and local practices. Its most efficient punishment is social censure. The mahalla in particular keeps an eye on the behaviour of its women.[130]

The chief function of the mahalla was the perpetuation of Islamic norms and rules. Despite its attendant mosque, it was not much involved in the perpetuation of personal faith. But there were also, as noted, the remnants of popular folk religion, often connected to Sufism. The mazar was the holy place of Sufism, a shrine to which the believer performs a local pilgrimage, *ziyarah*. The Sufi practiced religious observances connected to the cult of Sufi saints at such holy places, which often were cemeteries and tombs associated with dead Sufi masters or some more or less mythical individual or pre-Islamic supernatural being co-opted by the Sufis. Holy places could also be physical objects such as trees, rocks, caves, springs, or bodies of water, often derived from shamanic or animist traditions. Every holy place had its shaykh, often a hereditary position, who conducted prayers and received gifts from pilgrims. A common belief was that the holy person, the saint, associated with the place primarily protected his own descendants, that is, the members of his own clan or tribe. Many saints thus received the title *ata* ("father") or *baba* ("grandfather") added to their personal name.[131] There were also female shrine custodians, and the majority of pilgrims, at least in the Soviet period, were indeed women and children.[132]

The religious observance of holy places is a practice with deep roots in Sufi Islam. Being the object of pilgrimages for those asking for the granting of a wish, seeking to be healed, or for achieving pregnancy, the holy places form important focal points for the Islamic faith. Each mazar has specific beneficial powers. Some are known to avert infertility, while others cure diseases of various kinds. Although some mazars are infinitely more famous than others (there is even a hierarchy of holy places, some of which are regarded as equal in power to Mecca), in Central Asia each village has some kind of mazar (most commonly the cemetery), in the same way that it also has some kind of mosque. All graves of the clergy, whether official or not, are regarded as sacred, as are the graves of officials of the emirates or khanates and those of Basmachi leaders (even the grave of Enver Pasha in present southern Tajikistan, forty kilometers from the village of Baljuana, has been declared holy, and any disrespect for a mazar, especially by non-Muslims, may provoke hostility).[133] Holy places were also established during the Soviet period in celebration of deceased religious leaders who were regarded as having been persecuted by the authorities or simply been sufficiently holy or popular to reach widespread fame. Other holy places were established for other reasons, such as when a geyser was discovered in southern Kazakstan in 1951 and likewise declared holy by the locals.[134] The tradition of conducting Friday prayers in a cemetery when there was no mosque has already been mentioned.

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[129] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 286.

[130] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 76-8.

[131] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 367.

[132] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 367, 369-70.

[133] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 40-41, 94-8, (for a list) 115-56; Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 99-102. On the grave of Enver Pasha, see *Turkish Daily News,* 5 October 1999 (www.turkishdailynews.com.tr).

[134] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 375, 376 n.406, 401.

Sufi influences also remained in a few regions in the form of ishanism. Osh in Kyrgyzstan was thus a traditional centre for the group of Sufis called the Long-Haired or Hairy Ishans. This movement came into being in the late 1920s as a radical and, some would say, independent or even debased branch of the Yasawiyya. The movement was shut down by the Soviet authorities in 1935 but was again active after the Second World War, forcing the government to jail its members in 1952. However, upon his release in 1955, the head of the group again resumed activities, at least until the group again was closed down in 1959. Ishanism also survived in Turkmenistan until at least the early 1950s and in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at least into the early 1970s.[135]

Soviet Islam: From Religious Faith to Secular Tradition and Way of Life

Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union were always to some extent uncomfortable with or even opposed to Islam, although Islamic practices as such were permitted. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was thus logical for the Russian and then Soviet powers to attempt to use establishment Islam, the ulama of which were partners to and stake-holders in the administration of state, as a means to combat Sufi Islam, which often remained unyielding and in any case due to its organised Sufi orders functioned as an alternative source of power to the state. The official ulama in particular wished to forbid the Sufi use of religious observances connected to the cult of Sufi saints at holy places.[136] Since each holy place represented a focal point for the Islamic faith, it could be regarded as a symbol that challenged the official Islamic authorities and thereby also the Russian, then Soviet authorities.

The Soviet authorities waged several campaigns against Islam, as well as all other religions. However, because their ideology stipulated, in no uncertain terms, that the eventual disappearance of religion was inevitable, the Soviet leaders never agreed on how to carry out this goal or even worked very hard for it. Early on, the Soviet attitude to Islam was, as noted, fairly liberal, although in the first decade of Soviet rule, a number of Islamic institutions were abolished, such as the religious schools, the shariah courts, and the religious endowments that supported religious schools, mosques, and clergy. None was needed or allowed under the new Soviet legislation. Then followed the persecutions and purges from 1928 to 1938 under Joseph Stalin (1879-1953; r. 1927-1953), which although in its heyday chiefly aimed at Communist Party members also targeted the pre-revolutionary Central Asian intelligentsia. In addition, the pilgrimage to Mecca was discontinued, mosques closed and clergy suppressed.

The situation changed during the Second World War, when Muslims were needed for the war effort, and Islam was used as one of their means of public mobilisation on the side of the Soviet state. In a radio broadcast to all Soviet Muslims, the Central Spiritual Directorate of Muslims (TsDUM) argued that the Nazis were killing innocent women and children and, yet more importantly, that Hitler had decided to exterminate Islam. All Muslims were thus called upon to defend the fatherland.[137] The League of the Militant Godless (*Bezbozhniki*), an anti-religious organisation set up in 1925, was closed down in 1941, and all atheist publications were stopped. The years 1943-1947 were even characterised by what appeared to be a legitimisation of religion. This, however, led to considerable religious revival, which caused the years 1947-1954 to be years of repression, even though the Soviet authorities did not go as far as during the 1920s and 1930s. A further period of liberalisation followed in 1955-1958, the time of de-stalinisation. However, renewed anti-religious campaigns followed in 1958-1964 under Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971, r. 1955-1964). The Soviet state attempted to introduce new civil rites to replace the traditional Islamic (and, for that matter, Christian) life-cycle rites of baptism, name-giving, circumcision, marriage, and burial. The new rites, finally decreed in February 1964, had some success in the long run but did not fully replace the traditional ones. This period was followed by a period of "normalisation" from 1965-1985, during which the Soviet leaders tolerated religion but did not wish to see it encouraged. Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931, r. 1985-1991) at first took a harsh line towards Islam, presumably because of the then ongoing war in Afghanistan, but from 1989 changed tack, permitted the large-scale opening of mosques as part of *perestroyka*, the period of "restructuring" society and the Soviet state inaugurated by the 27th Party Congress in 1986, and began to attribute a positive role to the religion, in particular as a means to mobilise the Muslims in combating crime, alcoholism, and drug abuse.[138]

So much for the relations between Islam and the state as seen by the political centre in Moscow. At the local level, of course, religious groups were influenced as much, if not more, by the position on Islam adopted by local officials than by the policies announced in Moscow. And since local officials had to share a social environment with the religiously inclined, few anti-religious campaigns of the post-Second

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[135] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 398, 401-2.

[136] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 40-41, 94-8, (for a list) 115-56; Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 99-102.

[137] Kurojedov, *Religion och kyrka,* 26-7.

[138] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 10, 36 n.88, 47, 714, 727.

World War period ever turned into physical repression of religion. The organs of local government thus played a major part in the survival of Islam as a viable faith, even when they ostensibly enforced regulations against it.[139]

Among the Soviet arguments against Islam were general anti-religious notions such as that religion, in the words of Karl Marx (1818-1883), was "the opium of the people" and primarily has been "an instrument in the hands of the exploiting classes." Other arguments, and not the crudest ones, specifically dealt with Islam, which, the Soviet historians argued, was founded by "a member of the feudal trading classes of Mecca with the object of providing a religious pretext for the plundering expeditions organised by the Arab aristocracy" and was "a foreign religion imposed on the peoples of Central Asia and Transcaucasia by fire and sword." They also pointed out that Islam "has impeded all reform and has retarded the evolution of Turkestan" and, in addition, was guilty of "sanctifying the submission of woman."[140] From an intellectual and modernist perspective, there was something to say for these arguments. Many of the Jadists would have agreed with at least some of them. Yet, these arguments would not and did not sway the genuine believer. This was in most cases also, arguably, not the intention. The Soviet authorities, except for a few periods, sought generally to promote atheism and discourage religion, not to eradicate religious faith as such. Faith was, at times, even a quality of use to the Soviet state, such as during the Second World War. And, as noted, the stubborn belief that religion would disappear by itself was a key aspect of the Marxist ideology.

In addition, the Soviet rulers, after a few brief, failed attempts to eliminate religion altogether, realised that the only threat to state control rested in popular Islam, which they believed almost exclusively consisted of Sufism and depended on Sufi leaders, some of whom might set themselves up as rival authorites to the state structures. By appointing and controlling a small number of state-controlled ulama, the Soviet rulers tried to channel the religious aspirations of the Muslims into directions acceptable to the state.

However, the Soviet leaders realised that there were numerous customary religious rituals in Central Asia that had nothing whatsoever to do with Islam as it had been practiced under the prophet Muhammad. There were Sufi rituals of various kinds, regulations for local pilgrimages, the distribution of inheritance, donations for reading the Koran, issues involving divorce, and so on. These customs had become part of traditional law and had, over time, acquired Islamic legitimacy in the eyes of all except the purists. Being manifestations of popular religiosity, the Soviet leaders wished to see them gone, or at least seen less often. This was a wish that the Soviet leaders shared with the Islamic modernists. However, it was no easy matter for the latter to justify to the local population that all these actions were, in their interpretation of the religion, unlawful in the eyes of God. To do so, the establishment muftis had to find theological justification in Salafite works or at least legal schools more severe than the Hanafite one common in the region. When theology did not suffice, the prohibition of these customs was frequently justified by the fact that they were deemed unacceptable in modern Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and thus, in the eyes of the modernists, the final arbiter of religious purity.[141] The official ulama supported this interpretation, since many of them in fact had studied in Saudi Arabia or at least in other Islamic educational centres in the Middle East. They had thus picked up Salafi, or Wahhabi (as it usually was called due to the connection with Saudi Arabia), thought and made it their own.

It was in particular the Sufi practices that were frowned upon by Wahhabism (more on which below), which henceforth came to influence the Soviet religious establishment. The Soviet leaders thus realised that Islamic extremism could be used as a further weapon against popular Islam.[142] It may therefore have been natural for the Soviet security services to support Wahhabism in the hope of destroying the Sufi orders, which were regarded as more dangerous than the extremists. This is at least indicated by numerous rumours in Central Asia and, despite the impossibility of confirmation without access to the

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[139] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 54, 607-81.

[140] These examples, as well as several others, were collected and translated by Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 175-6. Karl Marx noted his conclusion about religion in the introduction to his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843-1844).

[141] Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan," 305.

[142] Islamic extremism has been a useful tool for mobilising Muslims against whatever enemy its proponents wish to name. Germany in the First World War and the Soviet Union in the years following the Russian Revolution of 1917 used it as a weapon against British India. The early Soviet rulers also used it as a weapon against the Sufi orders. The United States, British, and French intelligence services eventually realised the potential in harnessing Islamic extremism as well, in their case primarily but not exclusively against the Soviet Union. And in recent years, various Muslim extremist leaders have used it to further their own ambitions. Trahit sua quemque voluptas, as Virgil would have said. Fredholm, *Great Game,* 20-36 with references.

still closed archives of the Soviet security services, is likely to be true at least to some extent in the first decades of Soviet power. However, declassified Soviet documentation has shown that in the course of the 1970s, if not before, the government took measures to terminate the activities of at least some proponents of Wahhabism, namely the group called the Ahl al-Qur'an. A house search was conducted, illegal religious materials were confiscated, and the members of the group were cautioned that if they continued their activities, they would be prosecuted (which was a common way to address the problem of unregistered religious activities).[143] Yet, for the Soviets, the campaign against holy places was a campaign against the Sufi orders and thus a means to return to the Soviet state a measure of lost social control. For the Wahhabi-influenced official ulama, it was a matter of the purity of the faith. Both sides accordingly did their best to eradicate Sufi Islam.

In many ways they succeeded. During the seven decades of Soviet rule, and despite the continued existence of the mahallas, Central Asian Islam lost its link and thereby continuity with the past. The hitherto prevalent Sufi tradition was irreparably disrupted throughout the Soviet Union, except to some measure in the North Caucasus. The Soviet governments, expounding the doctrine of "scientific atheism," destroyed or assumed control over existing Islamic institutions. The Naqshbandiyya system was almost completely eradicated. This is also the conclusion one must draw from the Soviet archival material made available to outside scholars, in which there is no indication of the order's existence, except in the North Caucasus, in the years following the Second World War. Only a few of the Soviet archive documents touch even remotely upon Sufi masters in Central Asia, and then only in the form of few reports on the activity of this or that individual ishan in Tajikistan and certain parts of Uzbekistan.[144] Although some Sufi practices remained even when the population no longer perceived themselves as followers of any Sufi order, the relationship between Sufi master and disciple was destroyed, as Stalin had ulama and Sufis liquidated and madrasahs closed. Mazars too were often closed down, with institutions such as schools, clinics, and so on built on the sites formerly the objectives of local pilgrimages. For these reasons, there is little hope for a revival of the Sufi tradition in Central Asia on the popular level. However, since independence in 1991 some Central Asian writers, mainly academics, have attempted to revive the Sufi tradition as a literary reconstruction. These attempts have often, such as in Uzbekistan, enjoyed the support of the government, since a literary reconstruction of the Sufi tradition would fit snugly into the agenda of nation-building. There is little or nothing in the emerging literary Sufism that would challenge the state. Literary Sufism for obvious reasons lacks the master-disciple tradition and therefore does not constitute a rival source of power or loyalty with regard to the state. Indeed, this "recreation of Islam is in some ways like the reconstruction of the memory of an amnesiac who has been told he was a Muslim and tries to regain his Islam through reading books about Islam or questioning other Muslims."[145]

Unlike many other parts of Muslim Asia, where the Sufi tradition remains predominantly oral while Islamic extremism of the Wahhabi variety is being spread through pamphlets and books, the opposite is true for post-Soviet Central Asia. Here Islamic extremism has been active as an underground movement since at least the 1970s, being passed orally from preacher to disciple, while Sufism, to the extent that it has survived at all, does so mainly in the form of intellectual, literary study.[146]

There was yet another key reason for the success of the shared Soviet-Wahhabi goal of destroying the influence of the Sufi orders and their traditional Islamic practices. The period under Soviet rule had a tremendous cultural impact on the world of Islam in Central Asia. Unlike any previous period in the history of Central Asian Islam, the Soviet period was a time of widespread secular modernism. Central Asian society went through modernisation and industrialisation. A key reason for this was the Soviet educational policy. Primary education was made universal and compulsory in 1930. A literacy campaign was launched, and local languages were used for instruction. It is fair to say that the Soviets successfully achieved the mass education of the country's entire population, including its numerous Muslim segments, to the same standards that prevailed throughout the Soviet Union and to a higher degree of universality than was ever, before or since, achieved in any Muslim society. Women were given equal rights in

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[143] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 425. On the Ahl al-Qur'an, see Michael Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force: A Comparative Study of Central Asian Islamic Extremist Movements* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Report 12, forthcoming 2006).

[144] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 92.

[145] Vernon James Schubel, "Post-Soviet Hagiography and the Reconstruction of the Naqshbandi Tradition in Contemporary Uzbekistan," Elisabeth Özdalga (ed), *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul Transactions 9, 1999), 73-87. Citation from 84.

[146] Schubel, "Post-Soviet Hagiography," 85-6.

divorce and property, and the Soviet leaders made forceful attempts to enforce these rights, even though social pressures among Soviet Muslims made asserting such rights difficult for many women.[147]

The Soviet Union also to a large extent succeeded in breaking up any traditional notions of tribal, territorial, or for that matter pan-Islamic political identity, as envisaged by the Jadids, among its Muslims.[148] This was achieved by the combination of purges aimed at local leaders and the support of newly-created national cultures and identities (*narodnost'* for titular ethnic groups, *natsional'nost'* for others) along the lines of the national Soviet republics introduced from 1924 onwards. In other words, the Soviet Union engaged in certain forms of nation-building as a means to break up what the Soviet leaders regarded as the pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic threats. But this created a dilemma for the Central Asian Muslim. Russian and Soviet culture and science came to stand for modernity in Central Asia. Generally speaking, the higher level of education, emancipation of women, urbanisation, and industrialisation of the Soviet period produced a fairly secular-minded Soviet Muslim population and a modern society. Yet the Muslim regions of Central Asia, with the general exception of the major cities, to a large extent retained, and due to the nation-building process even reinforced, its separate character. Even educated party members often resisted assimilation. They would in most cases continue practicing traditional customs with regard to birth, circumcision, marriage, and burial rituals as well as Ramadan observances and traditional festivals. This also affected the choice of marriage partners. As late as in the late 1970s or early 1980s, after decades of Soviet indoctrination, as many as 88 per cent of young people in Uzbekistan, in towns as well as rural areas, regarded parental consent essential for the choice of marriage partner. This entailed the selection of a marriage partner from one's own ethnic and religious group.[149] While Muslim men under certain circumstances might marry Russian women, the opposite seldom held true and then almost only when the Muslim woman had left her native area and moved to a large ethnic-Russian city such as Moscow.[150] The latter holds true to this day; in 1994 a Muslim woman in Bashkortostan even wrote an article in a newspaper advising "each and every one" of Muslim women never to repeat her mistake, marrying a non-Muslim, which, she claimed, had ruined her life.[151]

Jadidism and Marxism Conquer Chinese East Turkestan

The close although often turbulent control mantained by the Sufi orders in East Turkestan, Chinese Xinjiang, and the lack of interest in Islam among the region's Mongol, Manchu, and Chinese rulers, did not prove a more fruitful ground for the introduction of Islamic modernism than Russian Central Asia. Before the 1949 communist victory in the Chinese Civil War, the region's non-Muslim rulers often based their power on the acquiesence of an alliance between the traditional aristocracy and the very conservative clergy. These two groups were together against all forms of modernism, including developments that took place in China, due to the chance that any innovation might threaten their own privileged position.

Yet, from the fall of the Manchu empire in 1911, and under influence from Russian Central Asia, various reformers attempted to introduce Jadid schools and reforms of the Russian Muslim model in Xinjiang as well. In many ways, the developments within Islam in Xinjiang came to mirror those that had already taken place in Russian and Soviet Central Asia. As in Russian Central Asia, the introduction of Jadid thought encouraged political activities and an interest in having an independent, perhaps pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic republic of one's own. The Jadids indeed appear to have proved the inspiration for the Turkic Islamic Republic of East Turkestan, proclaimed in November 1933. However, already in February 1934 the republic was defeated and dissolved by Chinese provincial forces. Another attempt to establish an independent Turkestan republic was made in 1944-1950. It was suppressed and abolished immediately after the Chinese communist victory.[152]

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147 See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 805, 807-8.

148 See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 805-6.

149 T. S. Saidbayev, *Islam i obshchestvo: Opyt istoriko-sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya* (Moscow: Nauka, 2nd edn 1984), 258. There were, at times, even cases of Muslim men who killed their Russian wives after suddenly finding Islam. Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 701.

150 See, e.g., Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies,* 813.

151 Aleksey Malashenko, *Islamskiye orientiry Severnogo Kavkaza* (Moscow: Carnegie Center/Gendal'f, 2001), 87. It would, for sure, be unwise to attribute exclusively religious sentiments to such cases of personal failure. Yet the fact that in the final analysis it was religion that was regarded as the determining factor would seem to count for something. If religion was not the key factor in the marital breakdown, then at least it was a convenient excuse for giving in to failure.

152 See, e.g., David D. Wang, *Clouds over Tianshan: Essays on Social Disturbance in Xinjiang in the 1940s* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 1999); Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Far Northwest* (London:

Following the formation of and their incorporation into the People's Republic of China, the Muslims of Xinjiang found themselves facing a situation very similar to the Central Asian Muslims under Soviet rule. Official Islam was subordinated the atheistic, Chinese-dominated Communist Party and recognised by the Chinese government in the form of local Islamic Associations.[153] As in Soviet Central Asia, the Sufi orders declined in influence and eventually all but disappeared. Islamic modernism of the Jadid variety, in Xinjiang too closely connected with the attempts to build an independent state for the region's Muslims to be tolerated by the new Chinese rulers, appears to have been largely eliminated as well, as in Soviet Central Asia, through violent purges. In China, the purges took place during the various ideological campaigns of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976.

The Fourth, Belated Disruption: Islamic Modernism Revives as Islamic Extremism - Wahhabism

Non-Establishment Islam and Parallel Islam

Under Soviet rule, outside scholars both in the Soviet Union and in particular abroad to a large extent lost interest in and contact with the developments among Soviet Muslims. For political and ideological reasons, Soviet officials and researchers usually felt obliged to report a decrease in religiosity, among Muslims as well as in other religions. For economic reasons, the existing Muslim clergy under-reported their activities, as they wished to conceal part of their resultant income so as to avoid taxation.[154] Outside the Soviet Union, the few scholars who still attempted to keep these matters under observation keenly felt the lack of reliable data. In the words of Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, their studies were "based primarily on Soviet sources, and because of this one must exercise the kind of caution towards the reliability and objectivity of those sources that would be required in any examination of any aspect of Soviet society" and "we would be remiss if we failed to point out that there are still a number of important qustions that cannot be answered with confidence on the strength of the existing evidence."[155] Whether the Soviet officials responsible for developments among Soviet Muslims felt likewise is unknown but quite likely. Yaacov Ro'i noted the situation too and commented that he sought "to provide only data which seem relatively reliable and without which the picture would be less complete, although aware that they, too, may not be completely correct."[156]

The long hiatus in the study of Soviet Muslim affairs and lack of data led to overstatement as well as understatement when scholars attempted to evaluate the situation in the Soviet Muslim territories. In the words of S. Enders Wimbush, the Muslim borderlands were neither the fuse that would presage the explosion of the Soviet empire, nor were they perfect illustrations of successfully employed social-science theory. Soviet Muslims, especially the current elites, had been integrated at least to some extent, undergone social and political mobilisation in the Soviet manner, and most had developed such a stake in the Soviet political and economic system, that is, been co-opted, that they had little interest in serious anti-Soviet activities. Yet they remained part of the Islamic world. Islam remained more than a religion. Even among atheists born to Central Asian Muslim families, Islam remained the cultural substructure of much social activity. Islam, as Wimbush noted, remained a cultural outlook and a set of of social conventions, that is, a way of life.[157] With few exceptions, Central Asian Muslims were not Russified under Russian or Soviet rule. They accepted modernity in its Soviet form but not Russification. So far, at least, scholarship got it right.[158]

However, both Soviet and outside scholarship largely failed to see the key development within Central Asian Islam in the late Soviet period. Both groups of researchers wrongly came to regard the Sufi brotherhoods as the chief alternative to the Soviet system as posed from an Islamic perspective. Judging

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RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force: A Comparative Study* with references.

153 See, e.g., Dillon, *Xinjiang,* 70.

154 See, e.g., Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 85-6.

155 Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 6, 110.

156 Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 288 n.3.

157 S. Enders Wimbush, "The Soviet Muslim Borderlands," Robert Conquest (ed.), *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 218-19.

158 On the various, at times misguided, attempts by leading Western scholars such as Richard Pipes, Olaf Caroe, Geoffrey Wheeler, Alexandre Bennigsen, Hélène Carrère-d'Encausse, and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay to analyse how the Central Asian Muslims interacted with the political centre in Moscow at the time of the Cold War and how they responded to what was often referred to as Soviet colonialism, see Will Myer, *Islam and Colonialism: Western Perspectives on Soviet Asia* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

from historical events and with the benefit of hindsight, this misunderstanding is all too easy to grasp. The Sufi brotherhoods had, after all, played key roles in anti-Russian and anti-Soviet uprisings in Central Asia as well as the Caucasus. They had also thrived when open, ulama-led Islam was under attack, such as during the Mongol conquest. In the 1980s, the Sufi brotherhoods, indeed often the very same brotherhoods that previously had been active in the uprisings against Russian and Soviet rule, also played a prominent part in the war in Afghanistan. Most observers accordingly came to the conclusion that the Sufi brotherhoods in Central Asia enjoyed considerable popular support, provided a structure for the rigid discipline of Sufi adepts, guaranteed the continuity of Islam as a source of political mobilisation, were politically important for their apparent success in operating clandestinely, and could become a catalyst for Muslim opposition to Soviet rule.

Furthermore, many observers of Islamic affairs in the Soviet Union, both inside and outside Soviet academe, reached the conclusion that the social phenomenon known as parallel Islam, non-official Islam, or even underground Islam, which from the 1970s onwards became increasingly prominent in Soviet Central Asia, was connected with the Sufi brotherhoods. Parallel Islam consisted of networks of underground mosques and often itinerant preachers, usually with a very limited knowledge of Islamic doctrine but able to provide basic religious services and thus satisfy the spiritual and cultural needs of the population that the few officially sanctioned mosques were unable to do. Those who realised that parallel Islam had but little to do with the Sufi brotherhoods and the maintenance of holy places of Sufi saints instead usually connected the phenomenon with influences from Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

These conclusions were wrong. The Central Asian Sufi brotherhoods were, together with the clan structures that supported them, fundamentally destroyed in the decades of Soviet rule, and Sufism never achieved any political importance, nor ever served as a catalyst for Muslim opposition when the Soviet Union weakened and eventually, in 1991, dissolved. Nor had parallel Islam, with its many clandestine and semi-clandestine mosques, preachers, and missionaries, ever had anything to do with Sufi beliefs. Parallel Islam, being a Sunni Islamic phenomenon, also had little if anything to do with Khomeini's Islamic revolution.

Most academics failed to recognise parallel Islam for what it was, and it reflects poorly on the international collective of non-Muslim Islamic scholars that the first outside the world of parallel Islam itself to understand what was afoot were not academics but professionals. The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, headed by Yevgeniy Primakov (himself of course no mean orientalist), in 1994 stressed the distinction between "Islamic fundamentalism" and "Islamic extremism" (often referred to as Wahhabism) and pointed out that only the latter was a threat to Russia. Primakov, a Middle East expert, realised that Iran no longer formed a threat but that Sunni extremism did. Henceforth, Russian intelligence devoted substantial resources to tracking the Wahhabi extremists, especially when they were active in what Russia regarded as its zone of interest: the Caucasus and Central Asia. The threat re-evaluation also enabled Russian intelligence to begin an increasingly fruitful co-operation with Iranian intelligence, itself the target of Sunni Islamic extremism.[159]

The "parallel Islam" and "unregistered mullahs" often referred to from the late 1960s in the Soviet media, and tentatively identified by Bennigsen as Sufis,[160] thus had little if anything to do with the Sufi brotherhoods. Instead they were radical Islamic extremists inspired by the Wahhabi sect of Saudi Arabia, although most had been further radicalised through their contacts with one or another of the many offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt (more on which below).

What outsiders referred to as parallel Islam in fact involved two very different manifestations of Muslim faith. One was the pietist form of Islam, consisting of surviving popular and often private manifestations of piety. Originally sustained by the Sufi orders, in the Soviet period this form of expression of faith increasingly came to form part of the region's Muslim heritage, that is, Islam as a way of life rather than, or at least in conjunction with, religious faith. It manifested itself in adherence to popular Muslim traditions, such as circumcisions and weddings, and in pilgrimages and celebrations at sacred places. Yet it did not contradict establishment Islam, to which the many unregistered Islamic groups related as a supporting prop rather than a competing belief system. There were, after all, usually only about three to four hundred registered mosques throughout Soviet territory, and these were far from

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[159] Lena Jonson, *Russia and Central Asia: A New Web of Relations* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998), 30; Yevgeniy Primakov, "Rossiya ne protivodeystvuyet islamu: My ne stavim znak ravenstva mezhdu islamskim fundamentalizmom i islamskim ekstremizmom," *Nezavisimaya gazeta,* 18 September 1996. See also, e.g., Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 177.

[160] Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars,* 1.

each other.[161] In the same way, there were few registered clerics. Yet unregistered mullahs of various kinds existed wherever there were Muslims. While a few were itinerant, most were not. If no mullah was at hand, then an elder was usually chosen to perform urgent religious rites. Some were scornful of their registered colleagues and called them and their houses of prayer "Soviet" mullahs and mosques. Most, however, appear to have sought to become part of the establishment. Many had insufficient knowledge of Islam, thus over-simplifying or even misunderstanding the rites they performed. Others were mainly, or solely, motivated by the financial benefits of being a mullah. The majority of unregistered mullahs could thus be better referred to as mosqueless mullahs than itinerant mullahs. Yet, these representatives of non-establishment Islam sustained Islam and enabled the religion to survive, although in a condition that many theologians would call debased.[162] The Soviet authorities in charge of regulating religion already in 1946, if not before, perceived the distinction between such fundamentally loyal unregistered religious associations and any true "religious underground" opposed to the Soviet state.[163]

The other, and in many ways real parallel Islam consisted of those who had embarked upon an active mission to purify Muslim society of non-Islamic practices and Soviet laws and customs. Its proponents wanted to deprive the, in their opinion, misguided Muslim masses of what they regarded as superstitions and dangerous innovations. These men, who in the light of the already existing forms of Islam in Central Asia with a great deal of justification can be referred to as activists of parallel Islam, brought the ideology of Islamic extremism to the fore in the region.[164]

The Arrival of Islamic Extremism in Soviet and Ex-Soviet Central Asia

Until the last years of the Soviet Union, the various anti-religious campaigns of the secular authorities discouraged too intimate connections between the proponents of parallel Islam (as distinct from non-establishment Islam) and the pious masses. However, the perestroyka period, inaugurated in 1986, brought in a period, especially from 1989, of increasing tolerance of religious practices. And after the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, there was, for a while, no longer the same pressure from an authoritarian government committed to reducing the influences of what had been seen as dated, religious beliefs. The preachers of parallel Islam were quick to take advantage of the situation. The pious masses, this late in the Soviet period knowing but little of how the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition had customarily been interpreted, were quickly drawn to the flags of parallel Islam.

From the late 1980s onwards, Central Asia thus began to undergo a process of re-Islamicisation. The number of people who openly called themselves Muslims increased sharply, numerous new mosques and religious schools were established; the Muslim holidays of Qurban-Bayram (*id al-kurban*, *id al-adha*; Feast of the Sacrifice) and Uraz-Bayram (*id al-fitr*; Little Festival celebrated at the end of the fast month of Ramadan, Uzbek *O'roz*, from Turkic *uruç*, "ascent" or "fast") were recognised as state holidays; important dates in the lives of the great religious figures of Central Asian history were officially commemorated; books, brochures, television and radio programmes propagandising the values and norms of Islam were permitted for legal dissemination; new, more liberal legislation was introduced with regard to the government's control over Islam, including eased procedures for the registration of Islamic organisations; and the international contacts with Muslim countries grew rapidly, among other reasons because of the entrance of the Central Asian states into international Islamic organisations such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).[165]

The collapse of Soviet rule and the communist ideology, apparent already in the perestroyka period of the second half of the 1980s, caused an ideological vacuum. When the Soviet Central Asian republics in 1991 all of a sudden found themselves independent states, they were no more prepared for this abrupt and unexpected freedom than Russian Central Asia had been at the time of the overthrow of the Tsar in 1917. Each country, and each Central Asian, urgently needed a new identity. The Soviet one was no longer, if it ever had been, sufficient. National and tribal traditions were all fine, but as with the Sufi networks, the modernisation under Soviet rule had changed Central Asian society and eradicated most genuine tribal ties. Nor had the Soviet-created national identities yet taken a firm hold. Something else was needed. People, and countries, began to turn towards Islam as a unifying national and personal identity. And so

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[161] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 60-62, 181.

[162] See, e.g., Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 186, 285, 293 n.22, 326, 383-4. Ro'i does not always successfully distinguish between non-establishment Islam and parallel Islam.

[163] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 29-30, 383.

[164] Michael Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force in Central Asia* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Report 5, October 2003); Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force: A Comparative Study.*

[165] Evgeniy Abdullaev, "The Central Asian Nexus: Islam and Politics," Boris Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 245-98, on 249-50.

the fruit of Islamic modernism, planted in the late nineteenth century, finally ripened. It did so in the form of Islamic extremism.[166]

Not all of the renewed interest in Islam was caused by the spread of Islamic extremism. There was also much genuine, indigenous religious faith that emerged or re-emerged as the peoples of Central Asia found a renewed interest in themselves, their ethnic and/or religious identity, and their native traditions and customs. Yet, the problem was, virtually all Central Asian *Islamic* traditions, as distinct from the Central Asian *Muslim* traditions such as funerals, a few traditional festivals, and so on, disappeared during the Soviet period. The clergy who set out to teach Islam anew, relying on the Wahhabi interpretation to do so, set in motion a process of Wahhabisation or, for those who prefer another term for what in Central Asia fundamentally is the same phenomenon, Salafisation. This process has now, after several years without serious interruption or genuine religious alternatives, in many districts probably passed the point of no return. Young people who found traditional Sufi mysticism daunting or irrational were much attracted by Wahhabi rationalism and by the easy and unambiguous, that is, radical, answers provided by the extremist missionaries in response to questions on how a genuine Muslim should live his life. Since most of the young Muslims had little previous knowledge or experience from Islamic devotions, they took to the new faith, as preached by the extremists, as new converts everywhere - with much enthusiasm and sect-like devotion and obedience to their new leaders. Many young or reborn Muslims became convinced that it was sufficient for any Muslim, or indeed any Muslim teacher, to learn how to read and understand a little of the Koran, perform the rites, and explain the basic Surahs. Indeed they could hardly have done any more, since few if any qualified Muslim teachers were available.[167]

In the early years following independence, large numbers of new mosques were opened. Many were in fact not new at all, merely earlier unsanctioned mosques, which finally received official recognition.[168] Others were genuinely new, and many of these were funded from sources abroad. The latter were founded by activist mullahs who had received an Islamic education in the Middle East and who enjoyed financial support from these religious centres. It could be argued that even if those mullahs who now established new mosques did not yet share the Wahhabi theology, the fact that they received huge amounts of Saudi money, with strings attached in the form of ideological and spiritual demands, in the end ultimately Wahhabised the clergy.

As has been made clear elsewhere, Islamic extremist thought in the form of Wahhabism had already reached Central Asia during several separate periods and from several directions. In the Middle East and India, the ultimate source of the ideology had been the Islamic modernists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Central Asia, the link with the Jadids was not as obvious, but the insistence on purity and, often, militancy by the Jadids had sown seeds that now grew into activism. Even so, Islamic extremism was not an indigenous plant but reached Central Asia from abroad. Wahhabi missionaries from the Arabian peninsula and eventually India had arrived in the region already from the 1890s and in particular in the years following 1912. Deobandi missionaries from India, again much influenced by Wahhabism, had turned up in the years following 1925. These preachers and missionaries had prepared the ground for what would come later, and indeed even many representatives of official Soviet Islam professed ideas influenced by Wahhabism. However, from the 1970s onwards yet other missionaries from the Middle East, known as Wahhabis, from those modern extremist organisations that originally grew out of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood also penetrated Central Asia. These men were joined, in the same time period, by even more radical Deobandi missionaries from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Finally, at the time of the 1979-1989 Soviet war in Afghanistan, several mainly Pakistani missionary organisations with Wahhabi tendencies, such as the Tabligh, turned up to further the cause. Many missionaries had only a rudimentary knowledge of the religion they preached, so it is often difficult to define exactly which strand of Islam influenced which particular movement.[169]

Within Central Asia, the newcomers influenced many indigenous young Muslims, who inspired by the simplicity and purity of the new sect sought out the old Muslim clerics who had studied abroad and still remained in the region. Some of the latter did not teach Wahhabism as such or indeed what might be

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[166] The connection between Jadidism and modern Islamic extremism seems to have been quite clear to the proponents of Salafi/Wahhabi thought in Central Asia. See, e.g., Abdujabbar A. Abduvakhitov, "The Jadid Movement and Its Impact on Contemporary Central Asia," Hafeez Malik (ed), *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 65-76, on 72.

[167] See, e.g., Kanatbek Murzakhalilov; Kanybek Mamataliev; and Omurzak Mamaiusupov, "Islam in the Democratic Context of Kyrgyzstan: Comparative Analysis," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 3 (33), 2005, 44-54, on 48.

[168] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* xxii.

[169] Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force;* Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force: A Comparative Study.*

termed political Islam. Yet, even those who insisted that they never taught politics typically concentrated their teachings on the works of Egyptian and Pakistani Islamic extremist thinkers such as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Sayyid Abul Ala al-Maududi. The Islamic schools also, in emulation of the extremists in the Middle East, soon widened their curricula to include physical training and the martial arts. Again following the example of their Middle Eastern role models, the extremist networks in the 1980s began to infiltrate the state power structures, including law enforcement. They also began to receive funds from a few local supporters, and, at first apparently with the help of Middle Eastern Muslim students in the Soviet Union, began to acquire the means for printing clandestine publications.[170]

At present, it appears that regardless of what means are deployed against it, Islamic extremism of the Wahhabi variety has come to stay. According to the results of a sociological survey carried out by Anatoliy Kosichenko and his team among students and religious experts in Kazakstan in 2005, Wahhabisation does indeed seem to have passed the point of no return in certain districts of Central Asia. According to madrasah students at the mosque Otes in the southern Kazakstani city of Shymkent, all acts of terrorism attributed to Muslims are in fact the work of the United States and the Western countries, in a plot to stop the development and spread of Islam. Indeed, the very term Islamic extremism has been made up by the enemies of Islam, they argue, since such terms cause disrespect for Islam and, in their opinion, Islam and extremism are incompatible phenomena (a common enough conclusion in the Islamic world, since extremism would never be referred to as such by those who believe in it - since they believe that what they preach is true Islam). Others believe that the United States is using the Muslims as weapons against Russia and Russian Orthodox civilisation. When Russia is destroyed, the West will destroy the Muslims, they argue. Perhaps more worryingly, 22.2 per cent of the students polled (who in most but probably not all cases were Muslims) believe that the values of Islam completely contradict the liberal values of Western civilisation. Another 36.1 per cent found the question difficult to answer, which also gives cause for concern. In comparison, only 40.7 per cent of the students polled thought that these values were compatible, partly compatible, or complemented each other.[171]

When religious experts (clergy, religious teachers, and activists from religious groups) were polled in the same survey, about the same share, 22.7 per cent, were found to believe that the values of Islam completely contradict the liberal values of Western civilisation. Even among the experts, another 20.5 per cent found the question difficult to answer. As compared with the students, 52.3 per cent of the experts thought that these values were compatible, partly compatible, or complemented each other.

That certain districts have passed the point of no return is also indicated by the difference in responses from students and religious experts in Kazakstan to the question of whether Wahhabites have an impact on their city. Among the students (not all of whom were Muslims), 11.4 per cent stated that Wahhabites had an undoubted impact and another 11.4 per cent believed that Wahhabites had an insignificant (but higher than zero) impact. The religious experts saw a greater Wahhabite impact: as many as 44.4 per cent saw an undoubted impact, while another 17.8 per cent believed that Wahhabites had an insignificant impact. In both cases, many respondents (36.6 and 22.2 per cent, respectively) stated that they did not know. There was a similar discrepancy between students and religious experts on the question of impact from other extremist groups, such as the Hizb ut-Tahrir, suggesting that the students did not worry as much about the impact of Islamic extremism as the experts. Does one dare to postulate that the polled students in some cases would have been positive to extremist thought? Among the experts, 62.8 per cent thought it was quite feasible that there was a threat of religious extremism in the country. Only 28.4 per cent of the students agreed.

Both Muslim students and Muslim experts were quite tolerant of Islamic suicide bombers in Central Asia. A total of 48.5 per cent of Muslim students characterised them as people who deliberately sacrifice their lives for their faith, as opposed to 16.2 per cent who saw them as terrorists who cannot be condoned by any religion. Among Muslim experts, the corresponding figures were 46.2 and 11.5 per cent, respectively.[172] While quite many other opinions were also expressed about suicide bombers, yet it would seem clear that almost half of the polled Muslims were disposed to see them as deeply religious martyrs for the faith. In other words, the suicide bombers are seen as Muslims, pure and simple,

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[170] Davlat Nazirov, "Political Islam in Central Asia: Its Sources and Development Stages," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 4 (22), 2003, 154-62, on 158.

[171] V. D. Kurganskaya; A. G. Kosichenko; and V. Yu. Dunayev, *Nauchno-analiticheskiy otchet po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya-Ekstremizm v Tsentral'noy Azii: Otsenki tendentsiy (na primere Kazakhstana)* (Almaty: Tsentr gumanitarnykh issledovaniy, 2005).

[172] Certain groups of Muslims in southern Kazakstan, where Islamic sentiments generally are stronger than in other parts of the country, displayed yet higher levels of identification of religious values in suidice bombers. See V. D. Kurganskaya and A. G. Kosichenko, *Islam i islamskiye lidery v Yuzhnom Kazakhstane: Nauchno-issledovatel'skiy otchet* (Almaty: Tsentr gumanitarnykh issledovaniy, 2005), 44.

regardless of whether one supports their activities or not. This would seem to belie the often expressed statement that Islamic extremism has nothing to do with Islam. In this case at least, almost half of the polled Muslims clearly identified the suicide bombers with religious beliefs.

However, when faced with the question of whether any religion could cause social tensions in their country, both Muslim students and experts stated their belief that Islam is more prone to cause social tensions than other denominations. No less than 37.3 per cent of Muslim students and 23.1 per cent of Muslim experts believed this, and this was far in excess of how they rated the risk that other denominations would do so (from 6.2 to 8 per cent, depending on denomination in question and polled group).

The Arrival of Islamic Extremism in Chinese East Turkestan

In the early 1980s, Chinese policies on religion and minorities grew increasingly liberal. Cultural and religious reforms took place in 1978, followed by the opening of Xinjiang to foreign trade and tourism in 1985.[173] Developments within Xinjiang Islam again came to mirror those that were taking place in Soviet and ex-Soviet Central Asia. Funds for the building of new mosques and the opening of Islamic seminaries increasingly arrived from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.[174] This, somewhat later than in Soviet Central Asia, brought Islamic modernism in the form of Islamic extremism to Xinjiang. There a foundation for radical thought was already laid in reaction to the harsh Chinese domination of the region of the previous decades. Beginning from 1989, violent anti-Chinese riots took place in Xinjiang's capital Urumchi as well as in and around major cities such as Kashghar and Yining.[175] Beginning in April 1990, when an extremist named Zahideen Yusuf attacked government targets in southwestern Xinjiang in inspiration of the Afghan mujahidin, violence began to appear over wide areas indicating a pattern of if not outright co-ordination, then at least a network of militant separatists.[176] The Chinese government responded to the situation by blaming a new, previously unheard of local Islamic group known as the Islamic Party (or Islamic Movement) of East Turkestan. Further unrest and bombings followed.[177] At present, the unrest has largely disappeared. Yet, since 2001, China has successfully, in the eyes of the international community, managed to equate any Xinjiang separatist tendencies with international terrorism. To a very limited extent, as noted, this is a correct assessment. A few Uighurs from Xinjiang were found among the Taliban in Afghanistan, where they established bases for armed struggle and - under Taliban protection - established contacts with Islamic extremists from other Muslim countries (who in their turn may have involved themselves also in Xinjiang).[178] Even so, Xinjiang has yet seen but insignificant Islamic extremism, although the extremist movement there appears slowly to be growing in influence. As in the rest of Central Asia, Wahhabism may have come to stay. But the present extent of it remains unknown to outside observers.

The Afghan Experience: Traditional Sufism and Islamic Modernism Join Forces Against Secular Modernism

Despite the reputation, and celebrated name, of al-Afghani, his activities did not much affect Afghanistan, where he had first made a name for himself. Afghanistan took but little part in the nineteenth-century Islamic modernist movement. This did not mean that Afghanistan avoided secular modernisation. Resolute attempts to introduce such reforms followed the centralisation of power and effort to reconstruct Afghanistan into an Afghan (Pashtun) national state by Abdur Rahman Khan (1844-1901, r. 1880-1901), and the modernisation effort was intensified in the twentieth century. Yet, despite several secular reforms

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[173] Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 123.

[174] Anthony Davis, "Xinjiang Learns to Live with Resurgent Islam," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 8: 9 (September 1996), 417-21.

[175] Mark Burles, *Chinese Policy Toward Russia and the Central Asian Republics* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1999), 9-10.

[176] See, e.g., Colin Mackerras, "Xinjiang at the Turn of the Century, and the Causes of Separatism," Craig Benjamin and Samuel N. C. Lieu (eds), *Walls and Frontiers in Inner-Asian History* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002; Silk Road Studies 6: Proceedings from the Fourth Conference of the Australasian Society for Inner Asian Studies (A.S.I.A.S.), Macquarie University, November 18-19 2000), 19-48, on 24 with notes; Dillon, *Xinjiang,* 62-8.

[177] Davis, "Xinjiang," 417-21.

[178] Michele Zanini, "Middle Eastern Terrorism and Netwar," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 22: 3 (1999): 247-56, on 250. See also Burles, *Chinese Policy,* 18.

(inspired chiefly by the Soviet experience), little changed except in the major cities. The Sufi orders and the ulama remained paramount in the country.

All constitutions of modern Afghanistan, from the first one adopted in October 1923 to the current one of January 2004, show the struggle between secular and religious powers. The ulama stubbornly attempted to retain its influence in the courts and schools. King Amanullah Khan (1892-1960, r. 1919-1929) limited the influence of the ulama in the judicial sphere. He also abolished slavery, granted non-Muslims religious freedom, and initiated a reform to emancipate women. These measures were impopular to say the least with the conservative clergy. The constitution was never fully implemented, the clergy led by the Mujaddidi family, the chief clan of the Afghan Naqshbandiyya, revolted in 1928, and the reforms were abandoned, with the king eventually forced into exile. A new constitution was introduced by King Muhammad Nadir Shah (1880-1933, r. 1929-1933), who reversed most of his predecessor's policies and restored the ulama to its traditional position. The constitution of October 1931 made the observance of religious demands compulsory. No legislation was to be contrary to Islamic law. Two members of the Mujaddidi family even held the position of minister of justice until 1935. King Muhammad Zahir Shah (born 1914, r. 1933-1973), finally, adopted a constitution in October 1964 which stated that the "observance of religious norms and rites" was not obligatory. The constitution went so far as to guarantee freedom of thought and education. The ulama thus lost its chief powers. They did not recover them until the 1992 overthrow of President Sayyid Muhammad Najibullah (1947-1996, r. 1986-1992), as the former Comrade Najib styled himself since July 1990 to display his Islamic credentials, which led to abolishment of the then valid 1987 constitution and the establishment of Islamic law.[179]

Afghanistan managed to stay independent in the mid-twentieth century primarily because of foreign financial support, first from Britain and, following the British exit from India, the United States and the Soviet Union. The latter became the most important donor, probably because Soviet leaders, in addition to other political objectives, wanted to prevent the country from relapsing into religious fanaticism and thereafter inspire pan-Islamic sentiments in Soviet Central Asia, which Afghanistan from time to time had done during the Muslim Basmachi revolts of 1918-1928. By providing Afghanistan with a generous subsidy, Soviet leaders wished to reassure themselves that the country would be increasingly influenced by the Soviet model of modernisation and thus grow into a dependable ally. To a large extent they were proved correct at least with regard to the first of their goals. Not only did the Soviet model of modernisation become dominant, Marxism also won converts in Afghanistan.[180]

So did the preachers of Islamic extremism. Islamic as distinct from secular modernism made an impact on Afghanistan only in the 1950s and 1960s, and then in the form of Islamic extremist thought from the Middle East. In effect, the Islamic modernist movement in Afghanistan (unlike, for instance, in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union) skipped several generations of Islamic modernist teachers and went straight to the radical opinions of the Pakistani modernist, Sayyid Abul Ala al-Maududi (1903-1979), and the extremist views of the Egyptian ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). The Islamic modernist movement in Afghanistan originated in 1958 in the Shariah Faculty of Kabul University, several of the teachers and students of which had joined the Muslim Brotherhood while studying in Egypt. In 1972, the movement adopted a constitution and shifted its focus to acquiring political power as a political party. The movement formed a leadership council (*shura*), named itself the *Jamiat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan* ("Islamic Society of Afghanistan;" named after the movement that Maududi had established in India in 1941), but was popularly called the *Ikhwan* ("brothers") in apparent imitation of the Egyptian *Jamaat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin,* "Society of Muslim Brethren," the formal name of the Muslim Brotherhood, and began to register its members. Burhanuddin Rabbani (born 1940) was elected leader and chairman of the council, while Abdul Rasul Sayyaf (born 1946) was elected deputy leader. The dean of the Shariah Faculty, Ghulam Muhammad Niyazi (probably executed in prison in 1979), who in 1958 had founded the group after his return from Egypt and hitherto been the movement's *amir* (leader), remained the protector of the movement but did not attend the meeting and accepted no official position because of his public position at the university. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (born 1947), who

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[179] See, e.g., Ludwig W. Adamec, *Dictionary of Afghan Wars, Revolutions, and Insurgencies* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 78-9; Ruslan Sikoev, "Muslim Clergy in the Social and Political Life of Afghanistan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 2 (38), 2006, 126-30, on 127-8. On Najibullah, see, e.g., Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan,* 146-7. On the participation of the Mujaddidi in the events of 1928, see Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn 1990), 47.

[180] When no other source is given, this section is based on Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan;* Michael Fredholm, *Afghanistan and Central Asian Security* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Report 1, March 2002) with references.

was then in jail (in 1972 -1973) for the murder of a Maoist student, was placed in charge of political activities.[181]

The Islamic movement at Kabul University was rudely awakened by the coup in July 1973 staged by the king's brother-in-law and cousin as well as former prime minister, Sardar Muhammad Daud Khan (1909-1978, president 1973-1978). This halted the limited yet real Afghan experiment with democracy, and replaced the monarchy with a Marxist-inspired republic. The previous introduction of secular schools, combined with the retention of the traditional madrasah system, had, in conjunction with massive Soviet support, produced two fundamentally opposed or even mutually hostile elites, the secular-minded Marxists on the one side and the religious-minded clergy as well as radical young Islamic firebrands at the university on the other.[182]

In the summer of 1974, Niyazi, and in 1975, Sayyaf were jailed. Their movement's other leaders, among them Hekmatyar, Rabbani, and Ahmad Shah Masud (1953-2001), in 1974 fled with several student followers to Pakistan, where they settled in Peshawar. There they received Pakistani funding, weapons, and clandestine military training by the government of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979, president 1971-1973, prime minister 1973-1977), who quickly made Hekmatyar, the leading Pashtun among the exiles, the contact for all Afghans seeking assistance in their struggle against the Afghan government. In July 1975, the Islamic student activists attempted a national uprising against President Daud. No such rising materialised; the activists themselves were far too few, only about three thousand of whom many remained in Pakistan.[183] The students merely executed a series of failed guerrilla attacks. A typical example was Masud's abortive rising in his native Panjshir Valley in late July 1975. Masud, who later would rise to fame as an efficient military commander but clearly had not yet gained the necessary experience, led thirty-six young Islamic students to his native territory in the hope that the population would rise against Daud. Although he due to surprise quickly captured one district and two sub-district headquarters, the locals within twenty-four hours of the affair chased the invaders into the mountains, killing or capturing half of them. Two months later, Masud returned to Pakistan.[184]

Meanwhile, the movement of the Islamic student activists had split into two factions, the Jamiat-e Islami under Rabbani and the *Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan* ("Islamic Party of Afghanistan") under Hekmatyar. Differences had erupted between the two men, because while Hekmatyar's stature had suddenly risen due to the support of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Rabbani had in 1974 spent six months in Saudi Arabia, which funded his first year of exile, making new and useful contacts there.

The split among the exiled activists did not make the Afghan government any more stable. In 1978, another coup known as the Saur Revolution brought the leftist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to power and left President Daud assassinated.[185]

There were also further splits among the exiled radicals. After the 1978 coup, Mawlawi Muhammad Yunus Khalis (born 1919), a radical modernist but of an older generation than the student activists, broke with Hekmatyar and formed a second Hezb-e Islami.[186]

Yunus Khalis was not the only older Islamic leader who turned against the government. In early 1979, the traditional Sufi leaders as well made common cause with the student activists. Several religious leaders of Sufi orders issued fatwas calling for a jihad against the "godless PDPA government and its allies." Among them was reportedly Pir Mia Guljan Tagavi of the Qadiriyya, already on 26 January, and Hazrat Sibghatullah Mujaddidi (born 1925) of the Naqshbandiyya.[187] The latter believed himself to have reason to turn against the government. Most male members of his family, the leading clan of the Afghan Naqshbandiyya, had been arrested in January 1979. However, his fatwa would seem to have been an imprudent move since his relatives were executed in February 1979 - perhaps in response to the fatwa. A few survived in exile abroad, however, and the Naqshbandiyya came to play an important role in Afghan civil war beginning in 1979.[188] The Mujaddidi clan was not the only one which had lost its high-level contacts with the overthrow of the king. So had the prominent Qadiriyya leader, Pir Sayyid Ahmad Gailani (b. 1932). The Gailani had early on married into the royal family, but this was now of little use.

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[181] Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan,* 69-79. On these various Afghan leaders, see, e.g., M. J. Gohari, *The Taliban: Ascent to Power* (Oxford: Oxford Logos Society, 1999); Adamec, *Dictionary of Afghan Wars.*

[182] See, e.g., Adamec, *Dictionary of Afghan Wars,* 80.

[183] Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan,* 185.

[184] See, e.g., Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan,* 75.

[185] See, e.g., Adamec, *Dictionary of Afghan Wars,* 196.

[186] See, e.g., Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan,* 83-4, 103.

[187] Sikoev, "Muslim Clergy," 128-9.

[188] See, for instance, Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism,* 230; Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan,* 115.

Having left Afghanistan for Pakistan, Mujaddidi and Gailani joined the modernist leaders Rabbani, Yunus Khalis, and Hekmatyar in Peshawar, Pakistan, where they on 27 November 1979 issued a joint declaration of holy war.[189] Traditional Sufism and Islamic modernism thus joined forces against the secular modernists of the various but chiefly leftist Afghan governments. Unlike in the Soviet Union, the Afghan governments, even when fighting Islamic modernists, had not been sufficiently strong also to oppose the Sufi-dominated ulama, which thereby had retained its traditional influence and, through the Sufi orders, hold over the population.

By then great power intervention in Afghanistan was already assured. As early as on 3 July 1979, United States President Jimmy Carter had in a secret presidential finding ordered the provision of clandestine aid to Islamist opponents of the then pro-Soviet Afghan government. Secret the finding may have been, yet the Soviet leaders quite correctly realised that their Afghan client government was under threat not only from domestic opposition but from hostile foreign forces as well, in particular Pakistan. They responded by ordering a pre-emptive military intervention. This decision was further facilitated by the fact that in Afghanistan, the PDPA could not get along with its Soviet masters. On 26 December 1979, Soviet military forces intervened in Afghanistan.[190]

The result of these schemes was the international Islamic jihad against not only the Soviet forces in Afghanistan but against the Afghan government as well. An informal alliance of countries, chiefly the United States, Britain, France, and China, soon after the invasion, apparently already in early 1980, began to encourage their Muslim allies, in particular Pakistan and Saudi Arabia but many others as well, to send volunteer fighters to Afghanistan to rouse the Afghans and to fight the Soviets in a jihad. In any case, many Muslims needed no further encouragement. In their view, an ungodly, atheist superpower had invaded a pious Muslim country. Following the Soviet intervention, many Muslims who had the means immediately made their way to Pakistan and the Afghan border, where the Pakistani intelligence service armed and assigned them to operations.[191]

When the Soviet Union pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989, the Afghan government fought on alone. However, on 25 April 1992 Kabul, and thereby the Afghan government, most of which had already taken refuge elsewhere, finally fell to the loose alliance of Sufi and Islamic modernist forces. This in no ways marked an end to the fighting. In 1994, the Taliban movement appeared on the scene. This movement was only a yet more extreme manifestation of the form of Islamic modernism - Islamic extremism - that had entered Afghanistan a couple of decades earlier with the small group of students at Kabul University. Due to its initial generous funding by Saudi Arabia, the Taliban displayed a form of Wahhabism very close to its Saudi origin. Being armed and funded by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and primarily deployed by the former for geopolitical reasons, the Taliban were hostile to the existing generation of Islamic modernists and Sufi orders alike.[192]

However, the military defeat of the Taliban in late 2001 enabled the old alliance between Sufi orders and Islamic modernists to return to power. The Sufi brotherhoods are indeed reported as re-emerging and regaining their previous position of influence, although most Sufis these days are affiliated to more than one order - which might indicate that the original Sufi networks did not survive the war intact after all.[193] Secularism, decisively defeated already in 1992, by then had few remaining proponents, and none with the power to include it in the new constitution of 26 January 2004, which (in Article 3) states: “None of the laws of Afghanistan shall contradict the laws and instructions of the holy religion of Islam.” Thanks to the war waged under the banners of jihad, the alliance of Sufi leaders and Islamic modernists recovered all ground lost to the former, more secular-minded governments up to 1992. It was thus unsurprising that (in Article 18) a new official holiday was established in commemoration of the date of 28 Asad (28 April) 1992, the day when Hazrat Sibghatullah Mujaddidi arrived in Kabul and proclaimed the Islamic State of Afghanistan.[194]

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189 Sikoev, “Muslim Clergy,” 128-9.

190 Fredholm, *Great Game,* 34-5 with references.

191 Fredholm, *Great Game,* 34-6 with references.

192 Fredholm, *Great Game,* 37-8 with references.

193 Dan Alexe, “Afghanistan: Sufi Brotherhoods Reemerge after the Fall of the Taliban,” RFE/RL (www.rferl.org), 1 February 2002.

194 Sikoev, “Muslim Clergy,” 129. See also RFE/RL *Afghanistan Report* 3: 1 (8 January 2004); 3: 4 (30 January 2004); *IWPR’s Afghan Recovery Report* 102 (27 January 2004).

Islam in Contemporary Central Asia

The Central Asian Muslim Identity

While seven decades of Soviet rule, as noted, by no means eradicated Islam in Central Asia, it certainly went a long way in undermining the authority of local religious leaders, and in loosening many religious norms taken for granted when the region was an integral part of the Islamic world. The Soviet system produced a set of values within Central Asian Islam that set it apart from the rest of the Muslim world. Identifying oneself as a Muslim remained important, but Islam was regarded as synonymous with Central Asian customs and traditions (many of them of Sufi origin), not through observance of Islamic law and ritual. A person would identify himself as a Muslim because he was, for instance, an Uzbek, not because he considered himself particularly religious. It was not even uncommon to find people who described themselves as being "a Muslim but also an atheist." The more highly educated were the most secularised. Religious faith only really survived among the less educated rural population, which of course included the great majority of the indigenous peoples of Central Asia. When Muslim traditions were in demand, it was from the least educated the intelligentsia took their cues. Most Central Asians, Muslim clerics included, thus had a very limited knowledge of Islamic theology. This situation has to a large extent persisted in post-Soviet Central Asia. Islam is no longer, if it ever was, the central factor in the life of a majority of Central Asians. Instead Soviet-style secularism seems to have become the norm for most people as they struggle to make a daily living.[195] Popular festivals of Muslim origin remained attended by most Central Asians, but their emphasis tended to shift from that of a religious devotion to a general coming together among family and friends. The festivals also functioned as a means to retain and reinforce the national identity of the participants. Yet Muslim traditions remain. This is particularly evident in customs mandated by social pressure. As late as in the early to mid-mid 1970s, for instance, data suggest that even after decades of Soviet indoctrination, no less than 90 per cent of the Muslim males of Shymkent Oblast (then Chimkent) were circumcised.[196]

Alexei Malashenko has shown that Islam displays itself on two levels, the personal and the traditional-ritual. At the personal level, the matter concerns belief in God with accompanying changes in the individual's world view. By turning to religion, the individual is attempting to rid himself of the secular, Soviet-style world outlook and dissociates from, indeed sets himself against the believers of other religions. At the the traditional-ritual level, the individual's degree of association with Islam is defined by his degree of observation of Islamic prohibitions and permissions, that is, codes of behaviour, and by how regularly he carries out Islamic rituals. The first level, signifying a personal religious consciousness, is that of the genuine believer, the second is an ethno-cultural identifier and merely manifests group identification and affiliation with one's community.[197]

Other scholars largely agree with this interpretation. Religion is thus primarily, and in most cases only, in the words of Anatoliy Kosichenko and his team of researchers "a carrier of national traditions and inseparable element of culture."[198]

A consequence of relying on a Muslim identity as ethno-cultural identifier and carrier of national traditions was that regardless of the Islamic ideal of the Muslim community, different Muslim ethnic groups often disparaged one another. So was there, for instance, often strife between ethnic Uighurs and Uzbeks in Andijon in Uzbekistan over which of the two ethnic groups would run the traditionally "Uighur" mosque there.[199]

How strong is then the average Central Asian's Islamic belief on the personal as opposed to the traditional-ritual level? Disregarding the obvious fact that there is no single average Central Asian, much can yet be ascertained with regard to this question. Central Asian sociologists and other researchers have

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[195] On Islam in contemporary Central Asia, see International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central Asia: Islam and the State* (Osh/Brussels: ICG Asia Report 59, 10 July 2003); Shirin Akiner, "The Contestation of Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia: A Nascent Security Threat," H. Carter and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds), *The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 75-102, provided by the author in ms. See also Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 54, 685; and specifically with regard to Kazakstan although many of its conclusions can be applied to all former Soviet Central Asian republics, V. D. Kurganskaya; V. Yu. Dunayev; A. G. Kosichenko; R. A. Podoprigora; Ye. Yu. Sadovskaya; and I. Yu. Chuprynina, *Vliyaniye religioznykh organisatsiy na molodezh' v Kazakhstane: Nauchno-issledovatel'skiy otchet* (Almaty: Tsentr gumanitarnykh issledovaniy, 2003).

[196] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 84, 508, 509-10.

[197] Malashenko, *Islamskiye orientiry,* 82-3. Malashenko discusses Islam in the North Caucasus, but his arguments are equally valid for former Soviet Central Asia.

[198] Kurganskaya et al., *Vliyaniye religioznykh organisatsiy.*

[199] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 285.

conducted several studies, in the form of questionnaires, on how religiosity affects Central Asian societies. Unfortunately, most of these studies seem to have been designed to skirt around the issue of specifically Islamic belief by concentrating on regions with mixed populations professing a number of religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and so on. This at times makes it very hard, indeed almost impossible to extrapolate figures from the data on Islamic belief as such. Yet, there are some results that address the question of Islamic beliefs.

One survey, carried out by Cholpon Chotaeva in Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 2003, offers some clues to the level of personal religiosity among Central Asians.[200] She divided her respondents according to ethnicity into Kyrgyz, Russians, Uzbeks, and "others." According to her data, 96.3 per cent of the Kyrgyz and 100 per cent of the Uzbeks considered themselves Muslims. Among the Kyrgyz, 3.0 per cent stated that they did not confess any religion, while 0.5 per cent were Christians and 0.2 per cent were undecided.

How often did the respondents observe Islamic rituals? On this question, the data are less clear, since the survey did not further distinguish between adherents to the various religions. Yet, by simplifying the interpretation of the data by regarding all Kyrgyz, and not 96.3 per cent of them, as Muslims, the data can be made to offer some intriguing information. Among the Kyrgyz, 25.9 per cent claimed that they always observed religious rituals, while 55.2 per cent indicated that they observed them, but not always. A total of 12.8 per cent indicated that they did not observe religious rituals, while 6.1 per cent were undecided. However, the respondents also had to indicate how often they attended the mosque. These figures revealed that only 8.1 per cent attended once a week. Another 8.3 per cent attended once a month. A total of 29.0 per cent attended only occasionally (whatever that means, in any case clearly less than once a month), while as many as 54.5 per cent never attended the mosque. Since prayer is a key Islamic ritual, these figures would seem to suggest that Islamic belief, regardless of the respondents' answers to the first question, on the personal rather than traditional-ritual level is confined to the 8.1 per cent of Kyrgyz who attended the mosque every week. While it is of course also possible to pray at home or elsewhere, the large number of new mosques established in Kyrgyzstan due to the Islamic resurgence since the late 1980s would seem to suggest that those who believe, also attend a mosque.[201] On the other hand, those 83.5 per cent of Kyrgyz who attended a mosque less than once a month or not at all, but still indicated their religious identity as that of a Muslim, without much doubt can be characterised as those who would regard their belief as a traditional-ritual ethno-cultural identifier rather than a genuine religious faith.

Do the Kyrgyz Muslims read the Koran? This question, it should be noted, is not without ambiguities, since quite a few people read holy books without actually believing in their religious message. Besides, few Central Asians are able to read the Koran in the original Arabic, so it was translated into the languages of all main Soviet Muslim nationalities following the introduction of perestroyka and its appendage *glasnost'* (openness), even though few if any Muslim clerics in Central Asia could bring themselves to advocate such an undertaking.[202] Yet, the resulting data would seem to compare well to the level of religiosity already deduced. Among the Kyrgyz, 15.1 per cent claimed to have read the Koran in full. As many as 52.1 per cent indicated that they had read certain chapters or pages, while 32.8 per cent stated that they had not read it at all. The last two groups, a total of 84.9 per cent of the Kyrgyz, would seem sufficiently close to the already mentioned 83.5 per cent who attended a mosque less than once a month or not at all to confirm that certainly less than twenty per cent of Kyrgyz are believers on a personal as opposed to a traditional-ritual level.

Among the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan (100 per cent of whom indicated their religious identity as that of Muslims), the survey data indicated a somewhat higher religiosity. Yet, this level of religiosity must again be tempered by the results of the other questions of the survey.

Among the Uzbek respondents, 41.0 per cent claimed that they always observed religious rituals, while 44.4 per cent indicated that they observed them, but not always. A total of 7.7 per cent indicated that they did not observe religious rituals, while 6.8 per cent were undecided. However, as noted, the respondents also had to indicate how often they attended the mosque. These figures again revealed a lower level of personal religiosity. Only 28.7 per cent attended once a week (and this was in any case a significantly higher percentage than the corresponding one for the Kyrgyz). Another 3.5 per cent attended once a month. A total of 15.7 per cent attended only occasionally (in any case less than once a month), while as many as 52.2 per cent never attended the mosque (which corresponded well to the Kyrgyz figure of 54.5 per cent). Since prayer is a key Islamic ritual, these figures again would seem to suggest that Islamic

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[200] Cholpon Chotaeva, "The Ethnic and Religious Situation in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 3 (33), 2005, 64-71, on 68-71.

[201] On the number of mosques in Kyrgyzstan, see Chotaeva, "Ethnic and Religious Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 65; and in particular Murzakhalilov et al., "Islam in the Democratic Context of Kyrgyzstan," 47-8.

[202] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 260.

belief, regardless of the respondents' answers to the first question, on the personal rather than traditional-ritual level is confined to the 28.7 per cent of Uzbeks who attended the mosque every week. On the other hand, those 67.9 per cent of Uzbeks who attended a mosque less than once a month or not at all, but still indicated their religious identity as that of a Muslim, no doubt regarded their belief as a traditional-ritual ethno-cultural identifier rather than a genuine religious faith. This, as noted, was a lower share than among the Kyrgyz, among whom as many as 83.5 per cent belonged in this category, but still came quite close.

Do the Uzbeks read the Koran? This question, surprisingly, produced a somewhat lower level of Koran-reading than among the Kyrgyz. Does this indicate a lack of copies translated into Uzbek in Kyrgyzstan? Among the Uzbeks, 13.7 per cent (as compared to 15.1 per cent among the Kyrgyz) claimed to have read the Koran in full. As many as 46.2 per cent (52.1 per cent among the Kyrgyz) indicated that they had read certain chapters or pages, while 40.2 per cent (32.8 per cent among the Kyrgyz) stated that they had not read it at all. The last two groups, a total of 86.4 per cent of Uzbeks (as compared to 84.9 per cent of the Kyrgyz), would still seem sufficiently close to the already mentioned 67.9 per cent of Uzbeks who attended a mosque less than once a month or not at all to confirm that even among the Uzbeks, probably less than twenty per cent are believers on a personal as opposed to a traditional-ritual level.

Or to turn the figures around: less than twenty per cent of those Kyrgyz and Uzbeks who indicate their identity as that of a Muslim are actually genuine believers on the personal level. Chotaeva thus concluded that "(A)ffiliation to a religion, in the understanding of the respondents, largely helps to form their ethnic identity."[203]

There are also major differences in religiosity and view on religiosity between the different countries of Central Asia, and even between different regions of the same country. Anatoliy Kosichenko and his team in 2005 carried out a similar survey in Kazakstan among students and religious experts.[204] They unfortunately did not separate Muslims from Russian Orthodox and devotees of other religions in most of their published results. Even so, a number of interesting conclusions were noted. Among the many results they acquired was the question on what kind of country the respondents would like to see Kazakstan become in the future. Among those who responded that they wished to see Kazakstan become an Islamic state, who it is safe to assume all would be Muslims, the results varied sharply between those in the former capital, Almaty, and the southern city of Shymkent. In Almaty, only 4.4 per cent of respondents desired an Islamic state, while in Shymkent, as many as 27 per cent wanted one.[205] In comparison, 39.4 per cent in Almaty wanted Kazakstan to be a secular state (and one can assume that not all of these were Muslims), while only 24.3 per cent in Shymkent thought so.

Most respondents expressed no particular bad feelings towards other religions. However, 6.8 per cent of the Muslim students and 7.7 per cent of the Muslim religious experts, as opposed to none among the Russian Orthodox respondents, did not accept multi-religious or multi-ethnic environments. Thus insisting on life in a fully Islamic state, cleansed of other religions and other ethnic groups (ethnic identity being usually tied to religious identity, as both this and the Kyrgyz survey showed), these presumably represented the genuine believers who, if one may extrapolate conclusions in comparison with the Kyrgyz survey, would attend mosque every week. For sure, some believing Muslims would have accepted multi-religious or multi-ethnic environments, so this figure would presumably not constitute the total number of believers on the personal level. The team that carried out the survey estimated that about 15-20 per cent of the Kazakstani population consisted of believers (Muslims and others).[206] This figure, incidentally, would seem to correspond fairly well to the one deduced from Chotaeva's survey of the Kyrgyz, who after all are culturally related to the Kazaks. As noted, the percentage of believers among the Uzbeks in Chotaeva's survey would seem to be somewhat higher than both Kyrgyz and Kazaks.

Yet another survey in Kazakstan, in November 2001 and with somewhat different questions and analysis, showed similar (albeit slightly higher) figures for religiosity among Central Asians. This survey showed the level of active religiosity among predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Kazakhstan as follows: Kazaks – 21 per cent, Uzbeks – 45.1 per cent, Uighurs – 34.3 per cent, Chechens – 80 per cent, Tatars – 6.3 per cent. (The survey also indicated religiosity among non-Muslims, including Germans –

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[203] Chotaeva, "Ethnic and Religious Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 71.

[204] Kurganskaya et al., *Nauchno-analiticheskiy otchet po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya.*

[205] For more detailed results on this question with regard to Shymkent, where many were quite positive to the idea of an Islamic state, see Kurganskaya and Kosichenko, *Islam i islamskiye lidery,* 27.

[206] This estimate was based on several previous surveys as well. See Kurganskaya et al., *Vliyaniye religioznykh organisatsiy.*

11.5 per cent, Ukrainians – 8.5 per cent, Russians – 7.8 per cent, and Belarusians – 6.7 per cent.)[207] In the light of the previously described, more recent surveys, these levels of religiosity would seem slightly overstated.

The survey results incidentally also compare favourably to research in the form of sociological surveys carried out in the period 1982-1986. Although neither questions nor results are directly compatible, the Soviet-period studies indicate that a share of the population then not exceding 5 per cent prayed daily, observed the fast, and slaughtered sacrificial animals or gave charity on Qurban-Bayram and Uraz-Bayram. A "considerably higher" percentage did, however, celebrate the two festivals, and an even higher share took part in religious funerals or weddings, in the latter case at least since they perceived these rites "not as an expression of religious belief but of ethnic identification." Another conclusion was that the number of women believers by the early 1980s had decreased substantially, although they then still outnumbered male believers.[208]

As in Kyrgyzstan, and for that matter the other Central Asian states, the last two decades have seen a resurgence in religious activity in Kazakstan. The number of religious associations (not all of them Islamic) has increased nearly five times, from 671 in 1989 to 3,206 (officially registered) in 2003.[209]

Despite the low level of personal religiosity among Kazaks, there is no doubt that they currently identify themselves as Muslims on the traditional-ritual level and as an ethno-cultural identifier. Yet another sociological survey, conducted in 14 oblasts of Kazakstan in 2002, showed that the Kazaks identify themselves, first and foremost, as "Muslims" (64.4 per cent of respondents). In comparison, an "ethnic identity" (*natsional'naya prinadlezhnost'*) was emphasised by only 16.6 per cent; while another 10.3 per cent considered themselves "sons of the fatherland;" as few as 1.7 per cent, Turkic (in a linguistic sense); and no more than 1.4 per cent, representatives of their tribe (*zhuz*).[210]

Indeed, Kosichenko and his Kazakstani team of researchers drew the conclusion that the level of religiosity is not only overstated in Kazakstan, but so are probably the figures for religious believers throughout Central Asia. Religious belief is less prevalent than commonly assumed. Not even the heads of religious denominations know for sure how widespread belief on the personal level is.[211]

Kosichenko's survey in Kazakstan in addition revealed that religion matters also when choosing one's friends. As many as 26.5 per cent of the Muslim respondents (as compared to 16.7 per cent of the Russian Orthodox respondents) pointed out that it is important that their friends follow the same religion. Again respondents in the former capital Almaty and the southern city of Shymkent differed widely. While only 14.9 per cent of the Almaty respondents (who would not all be Muslims) said that their friends' religion mattered, no less than 37.8 per cent of the Shymkent respondents (who mostly would be Muslims) said so. When the religious experts were polled, results were even more alarming for the proponents of multi-religious or multi-ethnic environments. As many as 42.3 per cent of the Muslim religious experts said that the religion was important when choosing one's friends, as compared to 16.7 per cent of the Russian Orthodox experts. While more Muslims, as noted earlier (in the same survey) would *accept* to live in such an environment, they clearly did not *want* to make friends there.[212]

Persistent Social and Economic Ills of Central Asian Muslim Society

Not everything is excellent in contemporary Central Asian society. Certain problems, such as child marriages and the kidnapping of women, without any doubt derive from what is regarded in the region as Muslim traditions. But even macro-economic problems such as the lack of economic development in many Central Asian countries are to some extent caused by Central Asian Muslim traditions. So are yet other problems of a more violent nature, such as the recurring calls to jihad by Islamic extremist groups. The Muslim traditions that do remain in Central Asia are not wholly without responsibility for these many problems. Even disregarding the role that Islamic extremism played in the 1992-1997 civil war of Tajikistan and in various acts of terrorism, Muslim traditions - traditionalism, not personal faith or the lack thereof - including several traditions that are not, in fact, of Islamic origin but are regarded as forming part of the Muslim way of life, cause a number of social ills in modern Central Asian society.

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[207] G. T. Telebayev, *Religioznye predpochteniya nemtsev Kazakhstana: sotsial'nyy podkhod/Rol' religioznykh konfessiy v zhizni nemtsev tsentral'noy Azii* (Almaty: Assotsiatsiya obshchestvennykh ob''yedineniy nemtsev Kazakhstana 'Vozrozhdeniye,' 2002), 60.

[208] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 464-7.

[209] Kurganskaya et al., *Vliyaniye religioznykh organisatsiy.* On the subject of Islam in Kazakstan, see also Kurganskaya and Kosichenko, *Islam i islamskiye lidery.*

[210] Telebayev, *Religioznye predpochteniya nemtsev Kazakhstana,* 60.

[211] Kurganskaya et al., *Nauchno-analiticheskiy otchet po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya.*

[212] Kurganskaya et al., *Nauchno-analiticheskiy otchet po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya.*

This is at least the conclusion of many outside scholars, such as Sergei Poliakov who devoted thirty years of his life to field research in the region.[213] Suffering from the double ignominy first of being outsiders and then of presenting a critical view, they have as would be expected had to sustain severe criticism for this conclusion especially from concerned Westerners with little or no experience from the region.[214] Even so, their arguments would seem to be relevant and worth consideration.

Poliakov has identified several main socio-economic problems in Central Asian society, quite apart from the risks caused by violence due to Islamic extremism (which give rise to substantial socio-economic problems but are better treated as a separate issue), that can be said to derive from Muslim traditions. Many of these Muslim traditions are particularly devastating with regard to the conditions imposed upon women. Based on the list of problems that Poliakov identified, but not limited to these, the key problems, which all are linked, would seem to be the following:

- The perpetuation of traditionalism
- The perpetuation of high birthrates
- The perpetuation of detrimental conditions for women
- The perpetuation of poverty
- The perpetuation of corruption

The main problem, which in turn exacerbates all others, is the perpetuation of traditionalism, in Poliakov's definition a particular form of economic and social control that is legitimated by religion. This has led to Central Asia being a region with high birthrates (in the case of Afghanistan, the twelfth highest in the world) combined with a declining standard of living. The Muslim traditions of the mosque, as a social institution, influence all aspects of life and in many ways regulate daily life within the mahalla. Such traditions also form a decisive influence on the education of the young.[215] In its educational aspect, the emphasis of the culture of the mosque is to perpetuate traditionalism. As noted, the Islamic system is regarded as perfect and cannot be improved. The perpetuation of traditionalism is particularly obvious among the religiously more conservative population groups.

Since the pre-revolutionary Muslim intellectuals of the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and clergy were purged almost to a man during the years leading up to the Second World War, the Muslim intelligentsia - intellectuals, bureaucrats, and technocrats - that emerged in their stead almost exclusively came to consist of the sons and daughters of peasants (and occasionally, but less commonly in Central Asia, those of proletarian background). The peasants were among the most conservative groups in Central Asia when it came to the upholding of traditional life.[216] Having grown up in such a conservative environment, the new, Soviet generation of intellectuals tended, at least within the sphere of family life, to pay closer attention to the customs and traditions of their parents than to any notions of modernity. Compared to the previous generation of intelligentsia, this generation was less fluid, more conservative, and paid greater respect to the customs of the past. Its members grew up, and still in many cases lived their adult lives, in close-knit extended family units under the control of a patriarch. For many this was not a matter of choice. The huge expenses involved in flamboyant wedding and circumcision celebrations, which, as will be shown, was regarded as a necessary display of one's proper Muslim credentials, affected the social pattern of Muslim society. The married son in most cases depended on his father to cover these costs, so had to abide in the father's household until it was felt that he had repaid the costs. Often this meant staying until the father's death, or at least until his own son married. The sons thus remained dependent on their father for both social and financial reasons. In the Soviet period, this exaggerated persistence among Central Asian intellectuals of adherence to family traditions of a religious and often frankly reactionary nature was noted as a serious problem and was in Russian referred to as *aksakalizm* (from Uzbek *oq soqol,* "white beard" or elder), a term that can be explained as exaggerated respect for one's elders.[217]

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[213] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* passim.

[214] See, e.g., Arne Haugen, *Mellom Mekka og Moskva: Kulturell endring i Turkmenistan i Sovjetperioden* (Bergen: Bergen University, 1995; www.ub.uib.no), ch. 4.3.3, which dismisses Poliakov's conclusions as a result of his "typical Soviet orientation, characterised by a tendency to assess Central Asian traditions negatively when they are regarded as obstacles to the Sovietisation process" (my translation).

[215] See, e.g., Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 99.

[216] See, e.g., Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 54.

[217] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 210; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 54-55, 535.

Aksakalism survived the Soviet period and thrives today as well. While it does bring detrimental influences on social and economic life, there are also positive aspects to this cultural survival. Aksakalism shows itself in the display of respect for one's elders, regardless of social class. During an oil and gas industry conference in Tashkent in May 2006, a high official of the state-owned company Uzbekneftegaz was berated in public by an old engineer of the same company, who regardless of the difference in status between the two men made a point of his right to have his say without suffering interruptions because he was older than the high official - and the official accepted this.

Another key problem is the perpetuation of high birthrates. In the period 1870-1931, the political stability and the end of internal war in Central Asia brought major population growth since life expectancy was increased. There was no noticeable lowering of infant mortality, however. From 1931 to at least 1989, infant mortality dropped sharply due to the rise in the standard of living and availability of free medical care. This, together with the fact that Islamic law and local tradition encouraged multiple pregnancies with the view of using the ensuing children as labour, caused massive overpopulation.[218]

The problem of high birthrates leads to the problem of the perpetuation of detrimental conditions imposed on women. This problem was indeed intimately connected to the problem of the perpetuation of high birthrates, as the latter was further supported by the tendency among Muslim families, also in the Soviet period, to support the marriage of under-age girls, that is, child-marriage. A traditional Muslim family that cannot marry off a daughter due to her having lost her virginity does not only lose face for moralistic reasons, it also faces a financial burden for the rest of the daughter's life. The safest solution is obviously to marry off the daughters as early as can be done, if possible as soon as they reach puberty. Hence Muslim girls tended to marry very young, often in contradiction of the Soviet law that fixed the marriage age at eighteen (or sixteen in some Muslim republics). It has been pointed out that even in the Soviet period, the high levels of truancy of girls of between the ages of thirteen and seventeen from school, a situation described as normative in Muslim rural society, strongly suggests that under-age marriage of girls was very prevalent. Truancy could in the Soviet period be found also among the daughters of Communist Party and Komsomol members. In one reported case (of very few in which statistics have been presented) from the period 1946-1954, as many as 98 per cent of Muslim girls in a school in Osh Oblast of the then Soviet Republic of Kirgizia, a region still known for its conservative religious beliefs, left school before completing their studies.[219] In this context, it can be pointed out that for much of the Soviet period, the percentage of women (including non-Muslims) with diplomas or higher education remained unusally low in Central Asia, only 26 per cent of the total of both sexes in 1962.[220] Of these, most can indeed be assumed to have been non-Muslims.

The problem of child-marriages and the resulting lack of education for girls was in turn closely connected to the tradition of paying a bride-price, or *kalym* (a term of Turkic origin commonly used for this tradition; Uzbek *qalin*), by the groom's family. Not all families could afford this and yet remain prosperous. The need to economise would particularly affect the educational prospects for girls. Indeed, investments in their education are even seen as opposed to Muslim tradition.[221] Difficulties in raising funds for paying the bride-price encouraged another Central Asian Muslim tradition, the kidnapping of women for marriage, or marriage by abduction to use an expression sometimes favoured by those who wish to show respect for cultural traditions even if they frequently involve coercion and rape. Kalym is a key example of how old customs that do not form part of Islamic law yet came to be regarded as sanctified by, if not Islamic law, then at least Muslim culture. The custom of kalym existed among the sedentary Central Asians until the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was reported as having disappeared among sedentary Uzbeks and Tajiks of the plains. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the custom of kalym only survived among the Central Asian nomads, such as Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, and nomadic Uzbeks. It was originally an actual contract between the family of the bridegroom and that of his future wife, the purpose of which was to indemnify the latter for the loss of a family member. By the 1980s, kalym appears to have remained, or again become, normative in at least Turkmenistan, Kazakstan, and the Karakalpak ASSR of Uzbekistan. It was also common in Tajikistan. The recurrence of kalym would seem to be a key indicator of the enduring and indeed resurging role of Muslim traditions as a way of life. Although the custom, as noted, was already beginning to disappear in the early years of the twentieth century, yet it persisted in certain districts, in which it even appeared in the Soviet period among Communist Party and Komsomol members. In other districts, kalym survived in a disguised form, such as in the form of presents given to the bride's parents of a value fixed at the time of the betrothal.

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218 Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 40-42.

219 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 188-9; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 540-42.

220 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 210.

221 Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 38, 45, 57-8.

Even marriage by forcible abduction survived through the Soviet period, again sometimes also among the new elite such as Party and Komsomol members.[222] At present, the custom is becoming increasingly common, due to its widespread sanctification through Islam as understood by seemingly a majority of believers. In other words, Central Asian civilisation in at least this aspect suffers from a partial revival of traditional customs that can be referred to as de-modernisation or indeed archaisation.[223]

Muslim traditions also justified the practice of controlling women and planning their lives out from birth so that they have little choice but to fulfill their roles as wives and mothers. When women in their turn become mothers-in-law and heads of households, they in their turn ensure that any younger woman brought into the family will be as repressed as they have been. It is indeed the mother-in-law who appears to be the main bearer and transmitter of traditional ways.[224] Some Muslim women will contend that they are not repressed and in fact approve of these traditions. Maybe so, although social pressure - from male relatives as well as other women - would seem a more likely explanation. Other Muslim women would presumably not agree, but their opinions remain unrecorded - and generally unadvocated in Muslim society - since they find no other way out of their misery except by killing themselves. Suicide among married Central Asian women, which is against Islamic law, has remained at an unusually high level as long as data have been recorded, that is, since the Soviet period.[225] The Muslim reformer Gasprinskiy, as noted, already in the late nineteenth century realised that female emancipation would be needed to bring positive socio-economic prospects to the Muslim world. Modernisation in Central Asia has only occurred where there are industrial developments, and in particular where women join the work force.[226] Some observers no doubt find it sad that a key barrier to such prospects would seem to consist of women who do not wish to be emancipated.

Yet another, related key problem is the perpetuation of poverty. On the one hand, this is evident for the national economy as a whole. Already the Soviet rulers complained that employees skipped work for prayers, pilgrimages, and the celebration of religious holidays. The mass sacrifice of cattle also caused hardship, in particular in bad years when there was a shortage of animals and those that remained from an economic perspective really should have been used to replenish the herds rather than for sacrifice.[227] On the other hand, and far more importantly for the individual believer, the traditional way of a Central Asian Muslim's life, as sanctioned by Islam, demands large expenditures on traditional (not to be confused with shariah-imposed) rituals. These are being seen as necessary for living "in the Muslim way." Not infrequently, families need to economise on their everyday needs in order to be able to afford the socially prestigious expenditures (circumcisions, weddings, kalym, funerals, and so on) that - despite outrageous costs that often can only be paid by taking loans - bring social respectability and indicates that the family consists of good Muslims. This will in particular affect the intellectual and educational development of children, especially girls, since, as noted, investments in the education of girls are seen as opposed to Muslim tradition.[228] A key feature of this problem is formed by customary marital practices, such as kalym, polygamy, child marriages, and bridal abductions. These traditional practices are all justified and legitimated by religion as commonly understood. The average amount spent on kalym reportedly even grew substantially in the last years of the Soviet Union.[229]

To the list of key socio-economic problems caused by Muslim traditions can also be added the perpetuation of corruption. Traditionalism functions as a source of corruption. Both shariah and public opinion regard bribes as payment for services rendered a concept compatible with Islamic law. There is also no social stigma in making money by means that the state, but not shariah, considers illegal. Corruption, in this widespread interpretation, is thus sanctioned by tradition and Islamic law.[230] No wonder then that the practice is hard to eradicate.

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[222] Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 186-7, 237 n.2; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 536-7.

[223] Several cases of the kidnapping of women for marriage have in recent years been reported in the media throughout Central Asia. For several fairly typical cases in the Uzbekistani territory of Karakalpakstan, see *IWPR's Reporting Central Asia* 294 (18 June 2004). This report highlights the conclusion of local non-government organisations that at present one in five brides in Karakalpakstan are abducted before marriage, and one in twenty have never previously met their future husband.

[224] See, e.g., Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 55, 80.

[225] Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 546-8, 656.

[226] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 63-66.

[227] See, e.g., Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 37-8.

[228] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 38, 45, 57-8; Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union,* 521-3, 531.

[229] See, e.g., Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 55, 80.

[230] Poliakov, *Everyday Islam,* 47.

Conclusions: The Future of Central Asia and Central Asian Islam

The assessment of the history of Central Asian Islam has indeed offered a number of conclusions, all of which refute the notion that Islam is an essentially unchanging belief system.

As noted, Islam became preeminent in southern Central Asia by the end of the eighth century, and it did so through military conquest. This was the first radical disruption in the region engendered by Islam. It took more than a thousand years for the religion to achieve even a remotely similar status in northern Central Asia.

Islam during this time suffered two internal radical disruptions, both of which came to change the very essence of the religion as it was understood and practiced in Central Asia: first the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century, then the Marxist conquest in the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, and of far less obvious but nonetheless of vital importance to Central Asia and the world, a fourth radical disruption was taking place. This, the nineteenth-century introduction of Islamic modernism, did not bear fruit until the last decades of the twentieth century, but when it did, it did so in the guise of Islamic extemism and returned Central Asia to the centre-stage of international politics.

Each radical disruption has significantly altered the nature of Islam, as perceived in Central Asia and as experienced by the peoples there. Yet, while each disruption brought radical changes, earlier Islamic traditions were not, in most cases, eradicated. Thus, contemporary Central Asian Islam is the composite product of innovations from each successive, radical disruption. The Islam of today is very different from what Islam used to be, and the religion will no doubt display yet other characteristics in centuries to come.

Central Asian Islam is currently undergoing a globalising trend caused by the fourth radical disruption, a trend the magnitude of which has not been seen in the region since the eighth century. Central Asia is undergoing re-Islamicisation. The percentage of the Central Asian population that believes, on a personal level, in the Islamic faith is again growing, after a hiatus caused by the Marxist conquest.

At the same time, available data suggest that the percentage of the Central Asian population that currently believes in, and not merely follows the traditions of, the Islamic faith in fact is smaller than it ever was since the eighth century, ranging from less than twenty per cent among the descendants of nomads such as Kazaks and Kyrgyz to a share only slightly higher among the descendants of settled peoples such as Uzbeks. In the eighth century, Islam suffered from competition from other religions; now Islam suffers from competition from what might be referred to as quite another type of globalisation: secular as opposed to Islamic modernity. For the majority of Central Asians, Islam has become a way of life rather than a religious faith.

Islamic traditions, as well as several traditions that are not, in fact, of Muslim origin but are regarded as forming part of the Muslim way of life, are still causing a number of serious and persistent social and economic problems in Central Asia. The social and traditional demands imposed upon those who wish to live "in the Muslim way" are particularly detrimental to the conditions of women.

Which are the perceived solutions to the apparent social and economic ills of Central Asian Islamic society? There are two fundamentally opposite schools of thought. The Soviet/secular solution entails modernisation, industrialisation, and female emancipation. Modernisation in Central Asia has, as noted, only occurred where industrial developments took place, and in particular where women joined the work force outside the home. This conclusion was already foreseen by the Muslim reformer Gasprinskiy in the late nineteenth century.

The other school of thought, what used to be the Islamic modernist but now is the Islamic extremist solution, instead advocates Islamic modernism in the form of purity, Islamic law, and a return to the righteous and perfect model of Islamic society as revealed by God.

Which school of thought will dominate Central Asian life? The re-Islamicisation process currently underway would seem to favour the latter. On the other hand, the widespread lack of genuine religious sentiments on the personal, as opposed to the traditional-ritual level, would seem to favour the former. As has been argued elsewhere, Islamic extremists have not, so far, showed much success in actually gaining political power in Central Asia, except in Afghanistan, although the mere existence of Islamic extremism in the region has made it an arena for great power rivalry and, furthermore, played an important role in the development of authoritarianism there and elsewhere. Since almost immediately after independence in late 1991, the impact of violent Islamic extremism has been central to the retention, and even strengthening, of authoritarianism within Central Asian state structures. The violent activities of the proponents of Islamic extremism thereby directly prevented the states within the region from acquiring any increased level of democracy and popular legitimacy.[231] Will the widespread perpetuation of traditionalism, even among non-believers, turn the scales in the direction of the extremist solution? If so,

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[231] Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force;* Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force: A Comparative Study.*

the future prospects for Central Asia look bleak indeed. But if not, traditionalism will need to be exchanged for modernisation and further industrialisation, in particular with regard to the emancipation of women.

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