

# Islam in Russia and Central Asia

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## Preface to First English Edition

This book was published in Bangla (national language of Bangladesh) in June 1976 under the title "Islam in the Soviet Union". This book has now been translated in English by Dr. Abu Kholdun Al-Mahmud, my dear student and a noted medical expert. This book is the result of over 5 years study on (former) Soviet Muslim History.

It is important to know this history for many reasons. First of all this area comprises a big part of Muslim world and Muslim Ummah. Secondly, it is important to know how the Muslims adjusted their life under Russian colonialists, how they tried to maintain their identity and finally how they freed themselves from colonial occupation. This is a valuable experience for the Ummah.

The book contains six chapters. First chapter discusses the spread of Islam in the Central Asia and part of Russian Federation. Second chapter discusses Russian conquest of Central Asia. Third Chapter discusses Muslim Revival Movement in the area. Fourth chapter discusses Muslim politics upto 1920. Fifth and sixth chapter discusses the Soviet Muslim Policy between 1917-1945 and between 1945-75 respectively.

I hope this book will be beneficial for the students of history of the Central Asian Region and its adjacent areas. I am grateful to Dr. Kholdun for the translation and to Mr. Mahmudul Hasan my another student and Ph. D. candidate for his assistance in editing the book.

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## Islam in Russia and Central Asia

### Chapter - I

#### Early History of Spread of Islam in (former) Soviet Union

The former Soviet Union consisted of fifteen Republics, six of them were Muslim majority. These were Azerbeizan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizia. There were also a large number of Muslims in Russian federation under USSR. Tatars and Bashkhirs of Volga-Ural region and most of the population of North Caucasus of Russian federation were Muslims. Besides a large number of Tatar Muslims live in Siberia and other regions. Crimea on the north of Black sea was Muslim majority area. But after second world war, the Communist Soviet government expelled all Tatars from Crimea and exiled them to Siberia, showing the reason that they helped the Germans during second world war. Later Crimea was included in another Soviet state Ukraine and Christian Slavs from Ukraine made settlement in Crimea.

The Muslim population of Soviet Union are mainly concentrated in three regions. These are Central Asia, Volga-Ural and Caucasus. Firstly there are five Muslim states on the north of Afghanistan and Iran. These are Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Secondly the Muslim settlements on the banks of Volga river and Muslim regions of Tataria and Bashkhiria on the Ural mountains. Lastly the region between Black sea and Kashpian Sea.

About one fourth of the area of Soviet Union was Muslim majority. If we exclude Siberia then it can be said that around half of the area of Soviet Union was Muslim majority, because the ice-covered barren Siberia occupies half of Soviet Union.

Total population of Soviet Union was 22 crores(in 1975), of them Muslims are around 4 crores. There is shortage of authentic information about the exact population of Muslims in Soviet Union. In 1913 there were around one crore and eighty lac Muslims in Tsar ruled Russia[1]. In 1960 it was assumed that Muslim population of Soviet Union was more than three crore[2]. Depending on these statistics it is assumed that Muslim population of Russia is now around 4 crore(in the year 1975).

Almost 85% of the Muslim population of Soviet Union are Turkish in origin and Turkish speaking. People of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan of Central Asia, Tataria and Bashkhiria of Volga-Ural, and Azerbeizan of South Caucasus mountains are Turkish speaking. Beside these there are several Turkish speaking population in North Caucasus, Siberia, Lithuania and Belarus.

The rest 15% Muslim population of Soviet Union are mainly the Farsi speaking population of Tajikistan. Beside Turkish and Farsi speaking population, there are Muslim population in Caucasus with different local languages (e.g Dagestani, Chechen, Inguish, Kabarda, Adizei) and few Arabic speaking Muslims.

It can be inferred from this discussion that only with the exception of Tajikistan and North Caucasus whole of the Muslim population of Soviet Union are Turkish speaking and Turkish in origin.

It is true that Turkish language in different parts of Soviet Union have different dialects. Soviet government have divided Turkish Muslim population on the basis of this difference. But the linguistic and nationalist unity of Turkish people cannot be overlooked. According

to Alexander Bennigsen one Uzbek feel no problem to understand the language of Kazakh, Turkmen or Azeri people[3].

The call of Islam reached Central Asia and South Caucasus Mountains in the eighth century. At that time the whole of Central Asia(except Northern part of Kazakhstan) and Caucasus came under Muslim Rule. In course of time most of the population of these areas accepted Islam and became Muslims.

Islam entered in different parts of Russia from Central Asia and Caucasus. The Tatars of Volga-Ural accepted Islam in the middle age. The Tatars are also Turkish speaking and Turkish in origin. The nomads of North Kazakhstan and Kirghiz peoples of Kirghizistan accepted Islam between 16th and 19th century.

Almost all Muslims of Lithuania, Siberia and Belarus are Tatar-Turk. They settled there during the reign of Tsar. Most of the Muslim regions came under Russian control during Tsars reign. Yet propagation and expansion of Islam continued upto the beginning of 20th century. Different tribes of Volga like Mari, Mordvinian, Udmurt and Chuvash accepted Islam during this time.

References:

1. Bennigsen. A. Islam in The Soviet Union, Pali Mall Press, London
2. Ibid
3. Ibid

## Islam in Russia and Central Asia

### Chapter - II

#### Russian Conquest of Central Asia and its Effect

Islam expanded in Central Asia in the eighth century. Ibn Muslim, the Arab governor of Khorasan was first able to include a large portion of Central Asia within Muslim Khilafat. Whole of Central Asia except North Kazakhstan became part of Muslim Khilafat before the end of eighth century. Expansion of Arabic language took place with the advancement of Islam. In course of time Arabic became the literary, scientific and administrative language of this area.

Reign of Samani family was established in Central Asia in the 9th and 10th century. Iran and Central Asia was under Samani rule with his main centre in Bukhara. At this time Persian language spread in this area and famous Persian poet Ferdousi wrote his immortal epic 'Shahanama'. Education, science and technology got a new dimension from this region in the eighth and the ninth century. Ibn Musa Al Khorejimi developed Algebraic branch of Mathematics. The term 'Algebra' was derived from his renowned book 'Al-Jabar'. Besides this he had contribution in Geography, Astrology and History. The greatest physician of the millennium Abu Ali Ibn Sina wrote 'Kanun' the famous text book of medicine in the 12th century. After its translation into Latin, Kanun was accepted as the text book of medicine in the western countries for the next six hundred years. Abu Nasr Al Farabi wrote several important books on Philosophy. He also had many research work on Philosophy. Another contemporary scholar was Al-Biruni. 'Tawarikh-e-Hind' written by Al-Biruni is still regarded as a very important book on History.

At the end of 10th century, after the fall of Samani empire, by the efforts of Sobuktogin and Bogra Khan, the rule of Gazni and Karakhani family respectively was established in Central Asia. But these two forces were defeated by the rising force of Seljuk family in the 11th century. The Seljuk's ruled Central Asia upto the first part of the thirteenth century. After the fall of Seljuk empire large Kharejim empire rose making its centre in Kharejim. Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Central Asia were under Seljuk rule. But this large empire was destroyed by non-Muslim Mongol leader Chengis Khan. This Mongol force destroyed many educational institutes, libraries, towns and this destruction was a great casualty for culture and heritage. Later the successors of Chengis Khan accepted Islam and made Turkish language their own language. World famous hero Taimur Lung was also a Mongol by origin. In the fourteenth century after many struggles Taimur Lung was able to establish a great empire extended from India to Volga and from Syria to China. Hirat was the centre of this empire.

The successors of Taimur family became weaker at the beginning of 15th century. After this upto the occupation of Central Asia by Russia there was no unitary rule of any family in Central Asia. After the fall of Taimurid empire, there arose three states in the southern part of Central Asia. These were Amirat of Bukhara, Khanat of Kokond and Khanat of Khiva. In the Northern part of Central Asia, four main tribes of Kazakhstan, Ulu-jhuz, Orta-jhuj, Kishi-jhuj and Bukai-jhuj ruled independently.

A powerful Tatar state was established in Crimea in the 14th Century. This state was able to maintain its independence until the invasion of Russia. Like this, three independent Tatar Khanat were ruling in Volga-Ural region. These were Kazan, Astrakhan and Bashkhir Khanat. There was no ruling central power in the North Caucasus before the invasion of

Russia. But the Muslims of Dagestan were fighting unitedly under the leadership of Imam Shamil to achieve independence from Russia.

Russia started to invade the Muslim regions in the 16th century. During the time of Tsar Ivan (Ivan the Terrible), operation against Muslims of Volga began. In 1522 Russia captured Kazan, the capital city of Kazan Khanat and destroyed it. Thus a Muslim region came under Russian empire for the first time. Tsar's army captured the Astrakhan Khanat of lower Volga in 1554. Siberian Muslim state Sibir came under Russian empire in 1598.

The Russians extended their hand towards Asia after around a hundred year in the 18th century. From 1822 to 1848 all four tribal states of Kazakhstan were taken under control of Russia. However before this these four tribal states wanted Russian cooperation and help against the attack of Jungarians from the East and Kalmicks from the West. But taking this opportunity, instead of helping them, Russia captured Kazakhstan.

Taking advantage of internal conflict, Russia occupied Crimean Tatar state in 1782 and also planned to capture North Caucasus. Russia forced different Muslim populations from the plain lands of North Caucasus to the mountains of North Caucasus by the help of Russian Cossaks'. But Russia faced great obstacle in the mountain of Caucasus. The Muslims of Caucasus continued their resistance from 1784 to 1877. Among the leaders who led the Muslims against Russian occupation and aggression, the name of Imam Shamil is most important. After the defeat of Caucasian resistance force in 1877, Russia was able to incorporate North Caucasus within its empire. In the beginning of 19th century, Russian army took possession of Azerbaijan of south Caucasus from Persia.(Iran)

Finally Turkistan (the southern part of Central Asia) came under the control of Russia. The frontier town of Kokond Khanat was captured first in 1855. In 1865 Tashkent was captured. Russians attacked Bukhara Amirat in 1867 and Samarkhand was brought within the rule of Russian empire in 1868. Bukhara Amirat was left as a vassal state by an agreement. Khiva was occupied by Russia in 1873. By an imposed agreement, the Administrator of Khiva was compelled to agree that he was an obedient servant of Russian Emperor and should not keep relation with any other state other than Russia<sup>1</sup> Khiva was given the status of a vassal state. After the fall of the capital of Kokond Khanat, this Khanat was included within Russian empire. It was named as Fargana province. After this only Turkmen region remained free. This region was situated on the south-west side of Central Asia extended between Amudaria river to Kaspian sea. Russia captured this region between 1874 to 1884.

There is a controversy and difference of opinion among the historians and Russlogists regarding the justification of Russian occupation of these Muslim regions. Modern(pro-Soviet) writers argue that expansion of Russian empire was a dynamic and progressive step. It was for this occupation by Russia that capitalism expanded in these regions which ultimately initiated class struggle. This created fertile field for expansion of socialism. The Muslims had the scope for contact with the socialists. Thus, they argued, by the expansion of Russian empire establishment of socialism became possible in those region<sup>3</sup>.

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But the history writers immediately after the revolution of October 1917 described Russian invasion and occupation as a colonial step<sup>4</sup>. They considered all movements against Tsar as freedom movement<sup>5</sup>. Western writer Richard Pipes<sup>6</sup> and Sheton Watson<sup>7</sup> also criticized Russian invasion. Pipes described the explanation of modern Soviet writers supporting the invasion of Russia as a measure to support colonialism directly. According to Alexander Bennigsen, the opinion of Russian historian on this issue changed several times after 1920. However, all Muslim writers are of the same opinion that Russian occupation was equivalent to expansionism and colonialism and the resistance of Muslims was the symbol of Muslim nationalism and a glorious chapter of their history<sup>8</sup>.

It is not justified to make a difference between Russian expansion and other colonial expansions. If Russian expansion is regarded justified and progressive, then the expansion of Britain in South Asian subcontinent, and of France in Indo-China are also progressive. A nation can take modern thought and technology from another nation without being captured by them. Many states became modernized without becoming colony of another state. In this connection the name of Japan, Iran and Turkey can be mentioned. It is also not justified to say that to become a socialist state, it is essential to be colonised by Russia.

Russian invasion had important impact on political, social and cultural fields in Muslim regions. The Muslim rulers were the initial targets of the Russian invasion because Russian leaders thought the Muslim rulers as the key enemy and obstacle to Russian aggression. It was for this reason that the Russians acquired the properties of Muslim landlords, thus destroying their economic power.

At the beginning of Russian aggression, the policy of converting Muslims forcefully to Christianity was followed. During the time of Tsar Ivan, a group of converted Tatars were formed by such a policy. This policy was withheld during the rule of three Romanov Tsars. But this was revived during the reign of Tsar Peter. Between the period of 1738 to 1755 in Kazan region 418 out of 536 Mosques were closed. State acquired the Waqf properties<sup>10</sup>. Preaching of Islam was declared as a crime which was liable to death penalty.

These policies created serious unrest among the Muslims. During the period of Catherine the second, this policy against Islam was stopped. Permission was given to build new Mosques. But during the rule of Alexander, the second, again the policy of converting Muslims to Christianity by propagation and education was revived. In this process some Tatars who have been converted previously were used as propagators. By this process, they converted three to four lacs of Turk-Tatars to Christianity. But of them, the number of converted Muslims were not more than one lac. Others were followers of different ancient religions. For this aggressive policy, Tatar Muslims left the country in large numbers to Barhkhiria, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. This issue created a long lasting hatred towards Russia and Russians among the Muslim people.

Russian victory had a tremendous effect on the population balance of Muslim regions. A large number of Russian began to settle in Muslim regions. Russians settled in all parts of

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Muslim regions. Russian settlement in Crimea, the plain lands of North Caucasus, Tatar region of Volga-Ural and steppe of Kazakhstan are to be mentioned specially. The Muslims of the plain lands of Caucasus were compelled to move towards high lands due to the pressure created by increased numbers of Russian settlers. After the occupation of Crimea by Russia in 1783, the migration of Muslims from there to Turkey continued until 1893 because the most fertile lands of them were being occupied by Russian and Ukrainian settlers. Thus during the reign of Tsars (before the revolution of 1917). Muslims of the plain lands of North Caucasus, Crimea and Volga-Ural became minority population in their own lands. Russians and Ukrainians began to settle in Kazakhstan from 1891. Within 1914, more than a million Russian and Ukrainian made settlement there.

A conflict between original Muslims and new settlers in the Muslims regions started. Local people and their leaders never agreed to this settlement because it was creating enormous economic pressure on them. The best lands of Kazakhs were going under the control of new settlers. With the cooperation of the Russian-backed administration and government employees.

From these events Russian colonialism and settlement became a common issue for all Muslim political movements and activities. After the revolution in 1917 Muslim leaders called an all Russia Muslim conference in the May of that year. One of the main demands in that conference was to stop Russian settlement in Muslim regions and to return the acquired properties<sup>12</sup>. But the government led by Krenosky did not give any importance to these demands. So Muslim peoples themselves initiated struggle against new settlements. There was serious blood shedding in the North Caucasus, Baskhiria and Kazakh steppe regions which further worsened the relation between the Russians and the Muslims<sup>13</sup>. Of the different issues which created difference of opinion between Russian communists and Muslim communists, the main issue was the expansion of Russian and European settlement in Muslim region<sup>14</sup>.

Expansion of Russian settlement was continued even after the Communist revolution of 1917. The Muslim population of five states of Central Asia which were 78% in 1926 became 55% in 1965. Though even now the Muslims are majority as a whole in the Central Asia, yet in the meantime they have become minority in some states. The Muslim population of Kazakhstan was 35% in 1959. But this was 78%, 80% and 82% respectively in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (where massive settlement was not possible). Muslim population of Kirghizia is 60%. In most of the large cities and towns the Russian and Europeans are the majority. There were 57% European in Tashkent, 64% in Ashakhabad, 82% in Alma Ata and 84% in the Frunze. (Russians are emigrating after the independence of Muslim states as a result of breakdown of Soviet Union.)

It is the common practice of every colonialist state to make the economy of its colony dependent on the colonial power. So the Russian government made Central Asia a source for supply of raw materials for its industries. As a result, the Central Asia never became the competitor of Russia in any way. According to Lenin, Central Asia was direct colony of Russia<sup>15</sup>. For this, the cultivation of cotton was favoured instead of essential items like, rice or wheat. The Director of land administration of Turkistan wrote in

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1913, every 'pud'<sup>16</sup> of rice of Turkistan was the competitor to that of Russia and Siberia but every 'Pud' of cotton was competitor to that of America. So cultivation of cotton in this region should be encouraged even if there arose any need to import crops<sup>17</sup>. But though the main agricultural product of Central Asia became cotton, no cotton industry was developed there. Cotton industries were set up in the central parts of Russia. The Russian rulers did not allow development of any main industry in Muslim region, they only permitted establishment of few raw material processing plants. Few industries like separation of cotton from its seeds, wool purification, extraction of oil from oil seed and preparation of soap developed at this time.

To connect Central Asia with Russia 3377 Kilometre of rail road was made for military and economic purpose. Samarkhand was joined through railway to Tashkent and Andizan. This railway connection between Central Asia and Europe had great impact on future development of this area.

There were some reforms in the field of education at the time of the Tsars. Upto the end of 19th Century ancient Madrasha (School) system of education was the only system of education in the Muslim areas. But this Madrasha system failed to maintain its impact with newer advancements in Science and technology. In 1870 first Russian system school was established in Samarkhand. Christianity was taught in these schools with modern education. But as there was no scope to teach Islam in these schools, so these institutions failed to achieve public support. Later new types of schools were established where Russian teachers taught modern education and Muslim teachers taught about local language, culture and Islam.

These institutions became popular and a new modern educated class of people emerged in Muslim regions. Later a new educational system arose in Russia by the efforts of 'Jadid' Thinkers which was a successful combination of modern science and Islamic education. That educational system ultimately became the general education system for whole of the Muslim Russia.

#### Reference:

- 1) The English term 'Cossack' evolved from the term Quzzak. It means he who works in favour of others. Those who left South-East Russia to save themselves from the brutality of land lords of Russia were termed 'Cossack'. They used to work as a defence force for Russian Government to save the South-East part of the empire.
- 2) Devendra Kaushik, Central Asia in Modern Times, Page 87.
- 3) Ibid, Page 48, 88.
- 4) Ibid, Page 82.
- 5) P.G. Galuzo, Turkistan Koloniya, Tashkent 1935.
- 6) Richard Pipes, The Formation of Soviet Union, Harvard University Press.
- 7) Seton Watson, The new Imperialism, London 1964.
- 8) Bennigsen, Islam in the Soviet Union, Page 218.
- 9) Will be discussed later.
- 10) Bennigsen, Islam in the Soviet Union, Page 218.
- 11) Ahmed Ozenbashly, Tatar Hijretlery (Tatar Emigration), Simferpol, 1925.
- 12) Bennigsen, Islam in the Soviet Union, Page 68.

- 13) Ibid, Page 69.
- 14) Ibid, Page 153. \* The term 'Muslim Communist' is used in this book to differentiate those communists who were born in Muslim family from Russian Communists. However, the analysis of juridical correctness of this term is not within jurisdiction of this book.
- 15) V.I. Lenin, collected works Vol-22, Page 338.
- 16) Unit of Weight of Turkistan at that period.
- 17) Istoriya Narodov Uzbekistan Vol. II, Page 261.
- 18) The activity of 'Jadids will be discussed in detail in the third Chapter of this book.
- 19) Ibid, Page 48, 88.

## Islam in Russia and Central Asia

### Chapter - III

#### Muslim Revival Movement in Central Asia (1850-1920)

Muslim civilization and culture faced a great challenge in central Asia during the reign of the Tsar. At that time cultural, educational, religious and political revival was needed among the Muslims mainly to keep intact their identity and existence. The Muslim revival movements in central Asia of 19th century were influenced by different thoughts and doctrines which came from Russia, Turkey and Persia. At the end of 18th century and during the early 19th century Russia itself was highly influenced by post French revolutionary literature and thinking.

Democratic thinking spread widely among the educated Muslims of the Russia-ruled Muslim areas because of the influence of modern Russian literature of that time. Similarly Pan-turk and Pan-Islamic ideas entered in Russia. At that time the Russian Muslims used to send their youths to Turkey, Beirut or Cairo for higher education. Because then there was no sophisticated higher educational institute for Muslims in Russia. Pan-turk and Pan-Islamic ideas and movements entered Russia mainly through those students. At the same time Allama Jamaluddin Afghani and his disciples were preaching Pan-Islamic ideas in different parts of the world.

Pan-Islamic ideas spread widely in Muslim majority areas of Russia by the political workers who took political asylum in Turkey from the autocracy of Tsar. At that time the Muslim leaders of Russia were able to understand that the only realistic way to face the challenge from Russia is to be united against Russian rule. There were only two fundamental basis of this unity. One was Islam and the other was Turkic nationalism. In fact then there was no confrontation or any rivalry between Turkic nationalism and Islamic idealism in Russia because the Muslim unity initiated by Turkish language and nationalism got a momentum by the addition of Islamic idealism. So Islamic idealism and Turkish nationalism went hand in hand in Russia in the early 19th century to establish broad spectrum and multi-dimensional Muslim unity.

Among the Muslim leaders and theologians who led Muslim revival and spread of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turk ideas in Russia, the names of Yusuf Akchura Oglu, Shihabuddin Marjani, Abdul Qayum Nasiri, Ismail Bogamprinski, Abdur Rashid Ibrahim and Muhammad Amin Rasaljada are to be specially remembered. Ismail Bey (1851-1914) played an important role in the propagation of Pan-Turk ideas by his famous journal, 'Tarjuman'. Besides he wrote a number of books and plays on Pan-Turkism. Ismail Bey was born in Crimea. After completion of his higher education in France and Turkey, he returned to Russia and dedicated himself in reformation of Muslim education and Turkish language in Russia. Yusuf Akchura Oglu (1871-1931) was trying to convince Turks of Russia towards Turkism by his renowned article 'Uch Torj-e-Siasat'( The three political system). That article was published in the famous periodical of Cairo named,'Turk'. In that article he said, 'Turkish nation is the inheritor of both Islam and western civilization'.

He published the journal,'Turk Yurdu(Turkish motherland)' in 1911. This journal became the spokesman of the Pan-turkism of Russia and Turkey. Yusuf Oglu was born in a Tatar family and got education in Istanbul and Paris. He played a major role in the All Russia Muslim political organization (Ittefaq-Al-Muslimin) during 1905-1906. He was also a member of the Duma[1]. In 1908 he was exiled to Turkey when his understanding with the Russians

ended. Famous Turkish thinker Zia Gokalp(1876-1924) and Caucasian thinker Ali-Be Huseinzada(1876-1941) also believed in similar political thinking[2]. Turkism mainly aimed to establish unity among Turk nation to achieve cultural freedom from the Russians and finally to establish an independent Turk state separated from Tsar ruled Russia.

Ultimate goal of Turkism was to unite all Turks of the world. It can be said that all Pan-Turk thinkers of Russia were also Pan-Islamic in their thinking because Turkism and Pan-Islamism were spreading parallelly in Russia[3]. There was no confrontation between these doctrines, because all Turks were also religious Muslims. Pan-Islamism aimed to unite all Muslims of Russia, to protect their cultural identity and heritage from Russo-Slavic cultural aggression and to fight for their political freedom.

The Muslim Renaissance in Russia was initiated by the Pan-Turk and Pan-Islamic thinkers and leaders. They understood that without cultural, religious and political reform real advancement of Pan-Turk and Pan-Islamic idealism was impossible. Their struggle for modernization of education, language and culture is known as, 'Jadid movement' in the history. The meaning of the Arabic term 'jadid' is something new or modern. Jadid movement was also aimed to make Islam free from superstition and prejudice and to reconstruct it according to the guidance of the Quran and the Sunnah in the future.

Abdul Qayum Nasiri[4] initiated language reform activities. He believed that an important cause of backwardness and lack of development of Muslim culture and civilization was failure to use mother-language properly. He also believed that to popularise Muslim culture the approach should be based on a language which is popular and easy. At that time three languages were in use as a media of literature and education. These were Arabic, Persian and Chagatai-Turk. Of these Arabic and Persian languages were not used as spoken languages in any part of Muslim Russia. Though Chagatai-Turk was used very commonly as a language of Turkish civilization in Central Asia and Volga region from 15th to middle 19th century, yet it was not so familiar to general Turkish people of Russia because it was far different from their spoken language. In this situation Nasiri was able to popularise a new Tatar language based of Turk-Tatars of Kazan, which very rapidly took the position of Chagatai-Turk language in Volga region. At the same time a new Turkish literary language spread in Caucasian Azerbaijan by the influence of Hasan Bey Melik[5]. This language was known as Azeri-Turkish. On the other hand Kazakh-Turkish language became popular in Kazakhstan as a language of literature by the influence of Abay Kunanbayev.

Though these new literary languages were easily understandable to the people but they created a new challenge on the movement to unite all Turks by the Pan- Turkists. Leaders and thinkers of Pan-Turkism realized the problem in right time. To solve this problem they planned to create such a Turkish language which should be very easy to understand by all Turkish Muslims of all parts of Russia. Ismail Bogamprinski had an important role in creating and popularizing this language by his paper, 'Tarjuman'. Ismail thought that unity in language would be the first step towards cultural unity of Turks. He further simplified 'Osmani-Turk[6]' in his 'Tarjuman' by using more words from Tatars spoken language and avoiding too much use of Arabic and Persian words. His belief was that this language would be very easy to understand by all Turkish people from Balkan[7] to China and from Bosphorus to Kashgarh.

Within a short time this new language spread all over Crimea, Volga and even Central Asia by the 'Tarjuman'. By the end of 19th century this language reform activity created a very strong literature of the Tatars, Azeris and Kazakhs of Russia. The subjects of these new

literature were problems like education-reformation, religious-reformation, equal rights with Russians, cultural and political autonomy and freedom of Muslim women. Language reform activities created renaissance in the field of education.

Bogamprinski also took special efforts for education reformation. The existing Muslim education system in Russia which was developed on the model of Bukhara Madrasa of Central Asia was not sufficient to meet the needs of time. There was no modern knowledge, science and technology. There was also no scope of research. Ismail Bey advocated a total reconstruction of the old education system. He wanted to provide Islamic knowledge with the knowledge of modern science and technology. By the efforts of Ismail and his followers 5000 Jadid(modern) education institutes were established in different parts of Central Russia. Beside Russia, Jadid institutes also extended to Iran and Turkey.

Those who especially participated in religious reformation activities, the name of Shihabuddin Marjani and his two follower Riazuddin Fakhruddin Oglu and Musa Yarullah Bigi are to be remembered. Marjani was a Tatar of volga region. He thought that without religious reformation development of Muslims was impossible. It was a fact that Muslim renaissance in Russia was very difficult because Muslim society at that time had many superstitions and different types of shirk(polytheistic practices) and bidaah (religious innovation). Marjani believed that for the development of Muslims it is not needed to go far from Islam, rather the need was to return more consciously towards The Quran and The Sunnah. According to Marjani it did not mean to return to the past but to go ahead with Islam. He opposed blind imitation of old jurists and believed that every person had the right to make 'Ijtihad' in order to face problems of the time. After Marjani, his prescribed educational reformation was taken up by Ismail Bogumprinski. Actually Islamic reformation activity began in different states earlier than Russia. The name of the reformation movement led by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab in Najd of Saudi Arabia and Senousi movement led by Muhammad Ibn Ali Al Senousi can be mentioned in this connection. The movement initiated by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab spread all over Arabia and India and Senousi movement spread all over the Africa. Both the movements aimed at moral, social and political revival of Islam[8]. The Islamic reformation movement initiated in Russia was influenced by these two movements. The Islamic thinkers and Alims of Russia came in contact with Wahabi and Senousi movement while they were performing 'hajj', besides the literature which came from Arabia also influenced Russian thinkers.

Musa Yarullah Bigi(1875-1949) was a Tatar Alim who helped Marjani in his reformation activity. He got education in Kazan, Bukhara, Cairo and Istanbul. He was an orthodox but courageous Alim. Bigi was in favour of the real evaluation of western civilization and taking their beneficial influences. Though he was opposed by anti-reformation Alims of that time but history has proved his opinion to be correct. He stayed in Russia even after communist revolution and tried to work in favour of Islam as much as possible within communist autocracy. In 1930 he left Russia and died in Cairo in 1949. Riazuddin Fakhruddin Oglu[9] also helped Marjani in his reformation movement.

Reformation process in language, education and religious field initiated by 'Jadid' movement later initiated a great influence in political sector. The Muslim political parties in Russia began under the leadership of Jadids, though there is a difference in opinion about the historical role of 'Jadid' movement. Soviet scholars do not appreciate Jadid movement as progressive movement. Even they do not appreciate Jadid movement as pioneer of the national movements that came later[10]. But this judgement of Soviet

scholars is not unbiased and justified. Upgradation of social status of Muslim people and their creation of awareness about Russian colonialism were their progressive activity.

References:

1. The Parliament established in Russia after the revolution of 1905 was called 'Duma'. That revolution forced Tsar to make constitutional amendment and to give democratic rights to the people.
2. Mariam Jamila; Islam and Modernism: page 101 &109
3. Bennigsen; Islam in The Soviet Union: page 80
4. Abdul Qayum Nasiri(1824-1904) was simultaneously a teacher, linguist and historian. He was born in Kazan in a Tatar Alim family. After getting education in Kazan he served as a teacher in Russo-Tatarian school of Kazan. Due to his reformatory effort there was an widespread expansion of Tatar literature in early 20th century. He and Marjani are simultaneously regarded as founder of Jadid movement.
5. Hasan Bey Malik(1837-1907) was born in Azerbaijan. After getting education in Moscow he devoted himself in teaching profession in Baku. He was simultaneously a biologist, economist and writer. In 1875 he published first Muslim newspaper of Russia named 'Ekenji' from Baku.
6. Spoken language of Turkey during Osmani period.
7. Central Europe( presently Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Croatia, Masedonia)
8. Muhammad Asad; Road to Mecca: page 110, 159, 160, 232, 282, 313
9. One of the top Alims of Russia. He was the Mufti of Russia and Siberia from 1922 to 1936. He wrote a large number of books on history and Islam.
10. Devendra Koushik; Central Asia: page 75-77

## Islam in Russia and Central Asia

### Chapter-IV

#### Muslim Politics (upto 1920) in Former Soviet Union

There was widespread political consciousness among the Russian Muslims as a result of the renaissance initiated by 'Jadid' movement. Upto 1905 the Muslim Leaders were working carefully and cautiously, because political activity was very dangerous and risky under the autocracy of the Tsar. By the revolution of 1905, Tsar was compelled to leave his absolute power and fundamental political and social rights of people were established. Parliament (Duma) was consequently established and major matters of the country were decided in the Duma. Before this revolution, the Muslim leaders showed at least apparent obedience to the Tsar. At that time their main demand was to ensure equal social, political and economic rights with the Russians. But the Russo-Japan War of 1905[1] caused many changes in the situation. The Russo-Japan war had a great psychological impact. In this war for the first time an European force was defeated by an Asian state. After this war movement for independence and freedom began in different colonies in Asia. Political movements became easier due to the free and moderate environment which was established as a result of the revolution of 1905.

Establishment of first Muslim political party was initiated in Tataristan, the Muslim majority region of Volga-Ural. Famous Pan-Islamic leader Abdur Rashid Ibrahim led political organisation. In 1904 he made some secret meetings with Muslim leaders and workers of different opinion. After successful completion of primary organizational preparations through secret meetings, the first Muslim congress was held in Nighny-Novogord[2]. As there was no government permission this congress was also arranged secretly. The moderators of the meeting were Ismail Bogamprinski of Crimea, Ali Mordan Be Topchibashi[3] of Azerbaijan and Yousuf Oglu a Volgan-Tatar. From this panel from different regions of Russia this can be easily understood that the meeting was widely representative of all corners of Muslim Russia. Congress demanded equal rights of Muslim people with the Russians. Congress also agreed to create a Muslim political party named 'Ittefaql Muslimin[4]' including Muslims of all sectors and regions of Russia. In 1906 second Muslim conference was held in Saint-Petersburg[5]. More than a hundred representative from Caucasus, Kazakhstan, Crimea and Volga participated in the congress. The congress decided to cooperate with the 'Constitutional Democratic Party' of Russia. That party believed in democratic type of government and from that view they had similarity of opinion with most of the democratic leaders of Muslim congress. Moreover it seemed to Muslim leaders that Constitutional Democratic party was more sympathetic to the demands of Muslims. Third Muslim congress was held in Nighny-Novogord in 1906 with prior permission from the government. In this congress the establishment of 'Ittefaql Muslimin' was declared according to the resolution of first congress. But few leftist Muslim did not join Ittefaql Muslimin as it supported Constitutional Democratic Party instead of Marxist Social Democratic Party.

Besides this all Russia based Ittefaql Muslimin, some other political organizations of Muslims were formed locally in different parts of Russia. 'Young Bukharan' was formed in Bukhara of Turkistan and 'Young Khivan' in Khiva under the leadership of Jadids. They demanded economic and social reform and they also protested against the autocracy of Russian and local administrators. They were highly influenced by Pan-Islamic thinking. These parties played a revolutionary role in Turkistan. After the 'October revolution' many leaders of Jadid movement (like Abdur Rouf Fitrat and Munwar Kari) played important

role in Soviet administrative system. The nationalist Kazakh Muslims established a political institution named 'Alam-Orda' in 1912 under the leadership of Ali Khan[6] and Ahmad Baitursun[7]. They were preparing to organize the political institution from 1905. They were under the influence of Tatarian thinkers of Volga and were in favour of co-operation with the Constitutional Democratic Party of Russia. Among the demands of Alam-Orda were to establish equal rights with the Russians, and to stop settlement of Russians in Kazakhstan. The party named Musawat(equity) was established in Azerbaijan in 1911 under the leadership of Muhammad Amin Rasuljada[8]. This party was influenced by Azeri nationalism. Actually due to competition with the Armenians the Azeri Muslims were more politically conscious from long time back. From 1904 Turkish people of Caucasus were being made politically conscious by the influence of different newspapers and periodicals, of them 'Haiat', 'Irshad' and 'Tarakki' were important. The Azeris ultimately became orthodox nationalists due to continuous competition with the Armenians and Russian tilt towards them(Armenians).

Several pro-socialist party and institutions were established in the Central Asia before 1917 as a result of expansion of socialist thinking from Russia or Europe. Psychologically only the labourers of industrialized Baku[9] and the newly educated people were prone to accept socialism as their political ideology and actually they participated in the formation of different socialist parties. Under the leadership of Abdur Rashid Mehedi(1880-1912) a socialist organization was established in Crimea named 'Young Tatar' in 1906. This party was highly influenced by the thinking of Socialist Revolutionary Party. But Abdur Rashid Mehedi himself was simultaneously an orthodox nationalist. His main thinking was to remove autocracy of the Tsar and economic lordship of Russia from Crimea. He raised the demand of land reform and redistribution of land to the farmers. Among the socialist organizations of Kazakhstan the name of 'Usjhuz' can be mentioned. They were not so much influenced by Marxism of Russian socialists rather the Usjhuz was also influenced by Pan-Islamism. This party was preaching the policy of armed revolution against Russian autocracy.

A Marxist socialist study circle formed in Azerbaijan in 1904. They worked under the leadership of Russian Social Democratic Party. In 1905 this study circle was converted into 'Muslim Social Democratic Party'. This party was more known as 'Himmat Party'. They took up socialist manifesto. They used to propagating the thoughts of class struggle and internationalism and attacked reactionary ideas. But there was also the influence of Turkic nationalism and Pan-Turkism on them. In Kazan of Volga region one socialist organization was formed on the basis of Bolshevich ideology. The name of the organization was 'Ural Chilar' and it was controlled by the Bolshevich unit of Russian Social Democratic Party.

Until February 1917 the influence of socialism on Russian Muslims was not significant. Of the different socialist organizations, all excluding 'Himmat' and 'Uralchilar' were socialist by name only. Though they took up many working class demand like land and social reform, policies of Russian Socialist Parties but at the same time there were influence of nationalism, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism on them. From this it can be clearly inferred that they did not actually believe in Marxist philosophy. Even the socialist influence of the Himmat's and Uralchilar was not so deep rooted. One of the founder leader of Himmat Mr. Amin Rasuljada later left Himmat and joined Pan-Turkish party Musawat. Though most of the leaders of Himmat led Azerbaijan government and Communist party after the establishment of Communist Soviet Union, yet they were not accepted as reliable or faithful by the Central government. The Communist government in the cleansing operation of 1938[9a] gave death sentence to most of them. Most of the leaders of



UralChilar joined Menoshevic group and army after 1917 and fought against Communist Soviet government. In this connection the name of Ahmatov, Omer Teregulov and Galimean Saifuddin can be mentioned. From this discussion it can be inferred that a small portion of Muslim community was influenced by Marxism before 1917. Actually socialism expanded in Muslim Community after the establishment of Communist Soviet administration.

In 1914 first world war began. Russia with France and Britain were engaged in war against Germany. At the end of this war Stolipin[10] and other pro-kingship leaders planned a new revolution to reverse the effects of the revolution of 1905. To remove the democratic reforms Stolipin started operation on political parties with violence. As a result it became difficult for the political parties to continue open activities. Political parties went underground and continued to re-organize them secretly. As a result of first world war there was severe economic crisis in Russia. Inflation caused several times increase of cost of living but the salary of the labourer remained the same. As a result unrest arose among the labourers. The war continued for years without any sign of ending. Russian army was defeated in different war fields. Russia had no more economic strength to continue war. Anti-war sentiment and agitation broke out among people and soldiers. The situation took a final shape in February 1917. There occurred a nationwide general strike demanding the cessation of war, establishment of peace and resignation of the Tsar. On 27th February the army joined with the revolutionary people. The Tsar was forced to resign. Democratic interim government took position after resignation of Tsar. In the revolution of February 1917 the Constitutional Democratic Party, Social Democratic Party(Bolshevic and Menshevic) and Socialist Revolutionary Party played an important role.

The interim government faced serious crisis and a lot of problems. The most important question was whether to continue war or to establish peace. Then there were need to establish law and order, to rebuild economy and to meet the needs and demands of the minority population. Meanwhile Russian Social Democratic Party raised several demands to the interim government without giving them any chance to reorganize the economy. Among these demands were to stop war, to handover lands to the peasants and to abolish bureaucracy, police and army and give power to the local 'Soviets'[11-12].

The ultimate aim of the Bolsheviks was to direct Russia towards socialism by movement and without giving any chance to the interim government to get settled firmly[13]. Because without the meeting of a legislative assembly it was impossible for the interim government to take decision about most of these demands. But the main leaders of interim government including Miliucov and Krenosky took several wrong decision which ultimately agitated minority nations (mainly Muslims) against interim government. The interim government failed to realize the anti-war sentiment of the people. In spite of inability to continue war, the government decided to continue the war due to pressure from Britain and France. This decision created a serious unrest and agitation among people. One main objective of the war was to capture Istanbul the centre of 'Khilafat'. Due to this reason and also due to failure of the interim government to declare any policy for the minority nations, the Muslims became displeased with the government. They got mentally prepared to support anyone instead of interim government who showed interest towards their needs and demands.

After the revolution of February the Muslim leaders were able to realize the indefinite future of Russia and its Muslim people. So they began to organize more strongly the political institutions that were developed before 1917. There activity was facilitated by

the withdrawal of ban on political activity after the revolution. The nationalist Muslim leaders who were influenced by Pan-Turk and Pan-Islamism led these activities. A branch of 'Ittefaql Muslimin' the central Muslim organization of Russia was opened in Crimea in 1906. For that reason no regional nationalist organization grew there. But the activity of Ittefaql Muslimin was stopped due to oppression made by Stolipin. So there was no political significance of Ittefaql Muslimin after 1914. The Tatars of Crimea called a conference in March 1917 to re-organize them after the revolution of February. On 23rd march the conference selected an executive committee to consider political future of Crimea. In July of that year, a political party of the Muslims was formed named 'Milli Firka' by uniting Muslim executive committee and other organizations. Milli- Firka mainly fought to achieve self autonomy and political rights for Crimea. Osman Akokorakli, Ahmad Ojanbasly and Hasan Mabri Ayaz were the main leaders of 'Milli Firka'. In Kazakhstan in 1917 the 'Alam Orda' political organization took the form of a complete political party. 'Alam Orda' was highly influenced by the democratic thinking of constitutional democrats and socialist thinking of socialist revolutionaries. In July 1917 Alas-Orda raised the demand of autonomy of Kazakhstan. Meanwhile the Jadid leaders of Turkistan (rest of Central Asia excluding Kazakhstan) called a conference on march 1917 in Tashkent. The conference appointed a committee named Turkistan Muslim Markaji Shura (Turkistan Central Council of Muslims). In that conference after detailed discussion on political situation it was decided to make a federation between autonomous Turkistan and Russia. After this in the month of April the Jadid leaders formed a political party named Shura Islamia. Observing the colonial attitude of Tashkent Soviet, leaders of the Jadid and all other Muslim organizations joined in Shura Islamia by forgetting and minimizing internal conflicts between them. Thus the Muslims arose as third power after the representative of interim government (Turkistan committee) and Tashkent Soviet. In 1917 the modern educated Muslims of North Caucasus organized two conferences in Bladicavcaz. They made a Muslim political party named 'Shoyuz Gorsik Nordov'. Their objective was to achieve autonomy under Russian federation. But the most influential movement of North Caucasus was pro-Nokshbandian Sufi movement. The followers of this movement was known as 'Murids'. They had a glorious history of struggle against Russia. They fought against Russian colonialism for more than a hundred years under the leadership of Imam Mansur and Imam Shamil. After the revolution of February the Murids organized under the leadership of Imam Nazimuddin Gotskinsky. Their aim was to establish a state in North Caucasus based on Islamic ideology. In South Caucasus Pan-Turk nationalist Musawat party and socialist Himmat party organized them more strongly. Besides Turk federalist party merged with Musawat party in June 1917. Musawat and its associates were fighting for autonomy within Russia and did not demanded for separate state before 1918. The active political role of Ittefaql Muslimin in Volga region was ended in 1904. After the revolution of February nationalist Muslim leaders established an organization named 'Muslim Committee'. The branch of this organization was established in different towns of Volga region. On the other side the local Muslim socialist leaders established another organization named 'Muslim Socialist Committee'. The Socialist Comity of Kazan played an important role later. Mollah Noor Wahid of Kazan committee became a reliable person of Bolshevic party after October revolution and he got many important responsibilities.

In this situation a group of Muslim thinkers understood the necessity to form an all Russia based Muslim political party to keep the rights of Muslim nation. With this objective Muslim members of fourth Duma met in a conference in Petrogard (once upon a time St. Petersburg) on 15th march 1917. The conference set up a Bureau under the leadership of Caucasian Muslim leader Ahmad Besalikhov. The responsibility of the Bureau was to arrange a conference with participation of Muslims of all sectors and all parts of Russia.

The conference also withdrew support of Muslims from all political parties of Russia because Muslim people and leaders had no confidence on those parties. By the activity of Bureau first Muslim congress after revolution was held in Moscow on 1st May 1917 with participation of 900 Muslim representatives. In that conference leaders of all organizations and opinions including nationalists, Pan-Turks, Pan-Islamists and socialists participated. Conference called to form Muslim army in every region of Russia. Conference also decided to reorganize the entire educational system according to the model of Gamprinski. It also decided to establish an Islamic board independent from Russian government to take decision about the Islamic affairs in Ufa and Volga. Conference also took resolution in favour of aquisition of property of big land lords. But in spite of wide consensus and great enthusiasm, the conference failed to take an uniform political decision. The conference was divided on whether the Muslim people want unitary government with cultural freedom of the Muslim regions or political autonomy with federal type of government. The Volgan Tatars were in favour of Unitary type of government with cultural freedom. Other Muslims were in favour of federal type of government. Upto that time the Muslim people and leaders did not raise the demand of separate Muslim state. Finally the conference decided in favour of federal type of government. Conference established a Central Muslim organization named "Milli Shura", with responsibility to co-ordinate Muslim political activity all over Russia. The central office of Milli Shura was established in Moscow and Ahmad Salikov was elected as president. The centre of executive committee of Milli Shura was in Petrograd.

Second all Russian Muslim conference was held in Kazan in July 1917. In that conference according to the resolution of first conference a military council( Harbi Shura) was formed to establish a Muslim Army. A national Muslim board based on Ufa named Milli-Idara was also formed. Conference also decided to form another national council for Muslims which was formed in November 1917 named 'Millat Majlish'. But before the development of any Muslim political or military organization capable to face political crisis the Bolshevics were able to organize socialist revolution in October 1917. The main reasons behind the success of October revolution was some wrong actions of the interim government. Those wrong acts (discussed previously) of interim government inspired Bolshevics to plan a revolution under the leadership of Lenin. In his 'April' thesis[13] Lenin showed that in the first step of revolution the power had gone to the democrats and bourgeoisie but it will finally go to the labourers and peasants in the next step of revolution. So the Bolshevics did not support the interim government and raised demands to give power to the local Soviets[14]. But it was impossible for the interim government to give absolute power to the local Soviets according to the demands of Bolshevics because it would ultimately break the central power and every region would take the form of separate state. The Soviets were under the Menoshevics and Socialist Revolutionary Party at the time of revolution of February. But Bolshevics were able to increase their influence in the local Soviets by mass movements. They also made organizations in armed forces. At last Lenin decided to uproot the democratic government by armed revolution. On 10th October 1917 the central committee of Bolshevik Party decided to begin revolution and complete its processes very swiftly[15]. A bureau was formed under the leadership of Lenin for the planning of revolution. Preparation for revolution was going on throughout the country. Revolutionary military committee was formed by the participation of trade union, armed forces and political workers to lead armed revolutionary process in Petrograd, the capital of Russia. Bolshevik operation against the interim government began at 5p.m on 24th October. The revolutionary force took possession of ten bridges[16] of the capital city. Within the night all important centres of the capital came under the control of revolutionaries. In the morning of 25th October Lenin declared that interim government has been thrown out

from position. The socialist revolutionaries arrested the leaders of interim government after capturing their headquarter. Thus the process of establishment of democracy was ended and socialism was established. Its now difficult to comment what would happened if there was no socialist revolution in Russia. Probably democracy and free economy like those of Europe may have developed.

The revolution of October was mainly organized by the activity of Russians. The role of Muslim leaders in this revolution was not significant. After this revolution Muslim majority areas faced a new situation. In all Muslim regions Russian backed local Soviets took possession of power in favour of revolutionary socialist government. On the other hand Muslim political organizations like Milli Shura and Milli Idara were also working beside Soviets. The military forces of Harbi Shura were also working in Muslim regions beside Red Army. After October revolution Muslim regions tried to achieve independence and declared independent government one after another. Turkistan declared independence in November 1917. The capital of this new state was Kokond. Soviet government sent army against this government in January 1918. The soldiers of Tashkent Soviet attacked Kokond and after serious battle took possession of the capital. The city was destroyed extensively. The leaders of Turkistan government fled and joined with the Basmakis. At the same time independence of Kazakhstan was declared by Alas-Orda party. But the main cities of Kazakhstan were captured by Red army within February 1918. At last the Red army captured Alma Ata the capital city of Kazakhstan on 3rd march 1918.

The national government of Bashkhiria was established in Oren burg in December 1917 under the leadership of Ahmad Jaki Walid[17]. Later in February 1918 a joint Tatar-Bashkir conference was held which decided to establish a joint Tatar-Bashkir state. The new state was named Idel-Ural. But the Kazan Soviet suddenly arrested most of the nationalist leaders on 27th February. Bashkir fled government and Idel-Ural government remained unimplemented. The Muslim leaders of Crimea formed a government in November 1917. The centre and parliament of this government was in Simpherphul. The Savastapal Soviet sent Army against this government. On 14th January Red army captured Simpharphul and most Tatar leaders took shelter in Crimea. Soviet government sent Red army in March to capture Azerbaijan. After a serious battle the Bolsheviks captured Azerbaijan. A number of three thousand Muslim soldiers died in this war[18]. Then the Bolsheviks established Baku Commune. Most of the nationalist Muslim leaders left Baku and went to more western Kirovabad. There they established an independent Azerbaijan government in may 1918. Soviet government failed to capture North Caucasus(Dagestan), Khiva Khanat and Bukhara Amirat before the onset of civil war. The peoples of North Caucasus were able to maintain their independence under the leadership of Imam Nazmuddin. Peoples of Khiva and Bukhara successfully resisted the attack of Tashkent Soviet.

Civil war broke out in Russia on 25th may 1918. Members of Chekoslovak army imprisoned by Russia during world war rebelled suddenly while they were being transported to Bladivostok. The rebel army captured the main cities situated on the trans-Siberian railway. The Cossacks of Ural and Oren burg replaced local Soviets and took power. At the same time the Menshevik and other members of the Parliament which was sacked by the Bolsheviks united in Samara and formed an interim government. They asked the people to depose the Bolsheviks from power. The nationalist Muslim leaders, the governments and institutions of whom were dismissed by Bolshevik Soviet government, began to fight against Bolsheviks in favour of new government. Within august 1917 the Bolsheviks lost their power from whole of the South East Russia. The Muslim leaders took

the opportunity of civil war and several independent Muslim states emerged in different parts of Russia. Within the month of May four independent states were formed in Caucasus region two of them (Georgia and Armenia) were Christian dominant. Other two (Azerbaijan and North Caucasus) were Muslim. Amin Rasulzada was elected as the President of Azerbaijan. Haider Bama[19] was elected the Prime minister and the Foreign minister of North Caucasus. North Caucasus signed a friendship treaty with Turkey. Ahmad Jaki Walid who went in hiding in mountain region after the fall of the government of Bashkhir, returned at this time and re-established national government of Bashkhir in August 1918. Using the opportunity of the civil war Alas-Orda party of Kazakhstan declared two independent governments; one each in East and West Kazakhstan. Dost Muhammad and Ali Bukaikhan were the chiefs of governments of West and East Kazakhstan respectively. But the power of these two Kazakh governments was limited within the rural areas only. Most of the towns were under the control of Bolsheviks or anti-Bolshevik interim government[20]. The Turkistan government recaptured their power in Kokond. The Soviet government of Crimea was deposed by the Crimean army. In November 1918 after the withdrawal of Crimean army from Crimea, a new Muslim nationalist government was formed in Crimea under the leadership of Milli Firka Party.

Thus within only one year of Bolshevik revolution Soviet government lost control over all Muslim majority regions. Though it became easier for the counter revolution of Menshevik and other parties, yet the deeper cause behind this was the will of Muslim people to achieve political and cultural sovereignty. They were not prepared to act any more as the tools of political parties of Russia. They felt the necessity to establish their states, independent from Russia. But according to G. Safarov and other modern historians of Russia the colonial attitude of local Soviets and Russian Communist leaders were responsible for this[21]. But ultimately all these Muslim states failed to maintain their independence. Their army was not so organized, their administrative experience was limited. Moreover these new states had poor connection and co-operation between them. On the other hand anti-Bolshevik interim government's Muslim policy was also not good for Muslims. They were not ready to accept any demand for Muslim autonomy. In this situation the Bolsheviks took a realistic nationalist policy to attract the support of Muslims. So Bashkhir and Kazakhstan went in favour of Bolshevik Soviet. General Denikin[22] deposed the independent government of Crimea in June 1919. The Bolsheviks captured Crimea from the anti-revolutionaries in October 1920. The fall of independent Azerbaijan took place in April 1920. North Caucasus went under Bolshevik control in 1919. Thus the struggle for independence of Russian Muslims failed at least for the time being. ( However many of them became again independent in the 90's of 20th century.)

#### References:

1. This war started in 1904.
2. An industrial town of Volga region.
3. Ali Mordan Bey (1862-1934) was an eminent lawyer of Baku. Was elected as a member of the Duma. Led the delegation team of Azerbaijan in the peace conference of Versailles in 1919 after the cessation of 1st world war.
4. Ittefaqul Muslimin means Muslim united front.
5. The former capital of Russia(Later termed Leningrad)
6. Ali Khan(1869-1932) was the governor general of the Steppe region of Kazakhstan. He was the elected member of the 1st and 2nd Duma.
7. Ahmad Baitursun (1873-1937) was a prominent poet.
8. Amin Rasuljada(1884-1954) was a prominent writer and publisher. He went to Iran in 1908 and published the paper named 'Irane-Nao' from there. In 1910 he went to Turkey

and joined in the Pan-Turk movement. In 1913 he returned to Russia and became the President of Musawat party in 1917. When independent Azerbaijan state was declared in 1918, he became the President of it. He left the country after the fall of independent Azerbaijan. Died in Turkey in 1954.

9. Capital City of Azerbaijan.

10. Stolipin was appointed as the Prime Minister of Russia in 1906.

11. The term 'Soviet' means council or committee. After the revolution of 1917 many Soviets of farmers, Labourers and military were formed in Russia.

12. Manzoorul Ahsan; Rush Biplober Itihash (in Bengali).

13. April Thesis; V.I Lenin.

14. Manzoorul Ahsan; Rush Biplober Itihash (History of Russian Revolution) page 93.

15. Ibid

16. The Petrograd city is situated on the bank of the river Neva. Ten bridges used to keep communication between different parts of the city.

17. Prominent historian and public leader of Bashkhir. Was the chief of the independent government of Bashkhiria. Went to Turkey after the fall of the government of Bashkhir, later became the professor of history in the University of Istanbul.

18. Richard Pipes; The Formation of Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism. page-200

19. Haider Bammate (1890-1965) born in the North Caucasus. Got Ph.D degree in law from Leningrad University. Was a sincere practitioner of Islamic ideology. Got excellence in Arabic language and Islamic studies. Went to France in 1921 after the fall of independent North Caucasus. From there he published the paper 'The Caucasus' by which he tried to create sentiment in favour of freedom of North Caucasus. He wrote a book named, 'The Caucasus Problem'. He got the citizenship of Afganistan by king Amanullah as a reward for his contribution towards Muslim people. He died in Paris on 31st march 1965.

20. G. Park; Bolshevism in Turkistan: Columbia University Press, 1957.

21. G. Safarov; The Colonial Revolution: The Case of Turkistan, Moscow.

22. General Denikin was a renowned general against the Bolshevic Soviet.

## Islam in Russia and Central Asia

### Chapter - V

#### The Muslim Policy of Soviet Government(1917-1945)

After the revolution of October 1917 Soviet government declared a policy on the rights of different nations of Russia. This policy was published on the 24th November 1917. The policy accepted equal rights of all nations of Russia, rights of autonomy and rights of forming independent states, separated from Russia[1]. This declaration was very significant for Muslims because most of the minority population of Russia were Muslims. This charter about the rights of nations was derived from the 'April thesis' of Lenin. He presented this thesis in the conference of Russian Social Democratic Party in the April of 1917. In that thesis Lenin said, "We must have to appreciate the right of every part of Russia to become separated and form independent states. The rejection of this right or to put obstacle on this is equivalent to invade and capture other states..... The rights of nations to get separated willingly and the benefits of separation or the correct time for separation for a particular nation is not the same question. The proletariat will ultimately decide the question[2]".

But in fact no Muslim nation of Russia got the opportunity to get separated and form independent state (until in the 90's when the Soviet Union broke down). The different Muslim nations and regions who declared independence during the civil war were forcefully taken under the control of Communist Soviet Union. The excuse of Communist Soviet government behind this was that these independent states were being established by anti-revolutionary bourgeoisie Muslim leaders. The pro-Bolshevik Muslims (so called Muslim proletariat) did not raise the demand of independence. So by giving this excuse the issue of independence of Muslim states was overlooked. But the fact was that within the rule of Soviet Communist regime it was practically impossible for any Muslim majority region of Russia or any provincial Communist Party to take any resolution in favour of separation or independence. Because the Communist party of every state of USSR was simply a branch of Soviet Communist party. As Soviet Communist Party was guided by democratic-Centralism so it was beyond imagination that any such resolution would get approval of the (central) Party. In this connection a quotation from a speech of Sordolov President of central Soviet Communist Party can be mentioned. In march 1919 he said in the conference of Ukraine Communist Party, "It is not within the jurisdiction of Ukraine Communist Party to select or guide principles. All of these are the responsibility of Central Committee of Communist Party. We want to keep supremacy of Russian Communist Party on the states we have created[3]." For this policy of Communist leaders the, 'April thesis' of Lenin and 'November declaration' of Soviet government remained unimplemented.

The Muslim peoples of Russia were an unified nation due to Islamic ideology, brotherhood and Turkic language and nationalism[4]. Yet Soviet government planned to divide Muslim nation into different nationality. The Bolshevik leaders did not appreciate Islamic brotherhood as any basis of nationalism. According to Stalin the characteristics of a nation is an unity based on geography, language, economics and culture[5]. Though Muslims of Russia lived in a definite geographical area and most of them spoke in Turkish language but there were many Persian speakers. There were some regional difference among the Turkish speakers. There were also some differences in their local culture.

Nomadic lifestyle prevailed in Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Turkmen and the economy of other regions were mainly agro-based. Showing these excuse Stalin did not consider Muslims as a single nation. Accordingly different new nationalities were created dividing the Muslim nation. Two new states were formed in Volga region; Bashkhiria state was formed in march 1919 and Tatar state in 1920. There was not sufficient reason to make separate state in Bashkhiria. Muslims of Volga-Ural had the dream to form a combined Idel-Ural state. Moreover only 25% of the population of Bashkhiria were actually Bashkhir rest were Tatar. In 1923 one spoken language of Bashkhir was given a literary form under the sponsorship of Soviet government. The language was declared as the state language of Bashkhiria. But till today most of the Bashkhirs do not speak in this language. According to Alexander Benigson now a days 62% Bashkhir people speak in this language[6]. Different tribes lived in North Caucasus and Arabic language was the medium of communication among them. In fact the Arabic language became the general language of North Caucasus. A separate state could be made including whole of North Caucasus on the basis of Arabic language. But Soviet government was thinking to form a nation on the basis of local language though most of the local languages did not have written form at that time. During Soviet reign Chechen language got written form in 1925, Inguish in 1923 and Kabarda-Bolkar in 1924. Then Soviet government divided North Caucasus into six autonomous states on the basis of local language. Those are: Chechen-Inguish autonomous state(two language), Kabarda-Bolkar autonomous state(two language), Dagestan autonomous state, Adizai autonomous state, North Osetia autonomous state and Karachai-Cherkes autonomous state. Due to influence of many tribal languages Soviet government approved eleven languages as state language of Dagestan. As a result ultimately Russian language became the language of communication between peoples of different autonomous states and tribes. But historically we find no justified reason as to why Soviets divided north Caucasus into so many parts. The only reason seems to abolish Muslim nationalism. A hundred years old fighting against Russian aggression and finally declaration of independence of North Caucasus in 1918 under the leadership of Imam Najmuddin led Soviet government to divide the political unity of North Caucasus.

In South Caucasus one autonomous state was formed by Soviet government in Azarbeizan and Azeri-Turk was declared as the official language of Azarbeizan. After many experiments, five new nations and five new autonomous states was formed in Central Asia and Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan state was declared in 1924, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 1925, Kirghiz in 1926 and Tajikistan in 1929. The national language of Tajikistan was Persian from the past, and that of other four states were Turkish[7]. But the Soviet authority established these new states on the basis of local spoken language, so it was needed to give a written and literary form to those spoken languages. Kajakh language took literary form before revolution, though Kazan-Turk(which was widely used by Gamprinski via Tarjuman) was also popular as a literary language. In 1923 Kirghiz language was given literary form and declared as the state language of Kirghizistan. In 1921 the spoken language of Yomond and Tekke-Turkmans was given written form and made state language of Turkmenistan. In a similar way Uzbek language was created according to the spoken language of Tashkhent which took the place of Chagata-Turk. Thus Communist Soviet government divided Muslim Russia into different nations and states on the basis of local language. In this way at least they temporarily succeeded to weaken Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turk idealism. Though these new nationalities were imposed and artificial yet in the long run they created some sort of localism among the Muslims.

Lenin first declared the policy of Soviet government for Muslim nation and Islam in his declaration of 24th November 1917. The declaration "Call to the Muslims" was written in a



very powerful and heart touching language. He said, " Muslim people of Russia, Tatar brothers of Crimea and Volga, Kirghiz and Sarats[8] of Siberia and Turkistan, Turks and Tatars of South Caucasus, Chechen and hilly people of North Caucasus, all of your mosques and religious places were being destroyed during the reign of Tsar; your belief and ideals were overruled; from today your beliefs and ideals will prevail and should remain free for ever, there should be no more intervention; you should also know that you have equal rights like all other nations of Russia; and that should be protected by revolution and its different institutions like labourers, peasants and soldiers Soviets[9]". There is no doubt that in this declaration there was clear guarantee to keep the religious, ideological and cultural heritage and traditions of Muslims. In Communist manifesto religion is not regarded as beneficial for people[10], yet Lenin's declaration for Muslim peoples is very important. Though many historian regard this declaration as a means to exploit support of Muslim people during the dangerous period of revolution. But it has another positive explanation. Lenin was born in a Muslim majority area of Volga and got education in Kazan University. So it was quite possible that he had the opportunity to observe Muslim life style very closely and had a good concept about Islam.

But the religious and cultural rights of Muslims given by Lenin were not implemented. Section 124 of the constitution of Soviet Union states that, " To ensure freedom of conscience of all citizen Church[11] should be separated from state in Soviet Union and the education should be separated from the Church. Every citizen should have the right of performing religious worship and right of campaigning against religion". This section of constitution have negated many of the religious rights that was ensured formerly in the main declaration of Lenin. This section accepted religious freedom but it gives no opportunity to propagate religion or give Islamic education. In Soviet Union no one except government can establish any school and in government schools there is no scope for religious education. In fact there were only two Madrasa in Soviet Union to make Imam and Muazzin for Mosques those were Mir-E-Arab Madrasa of Bukhara and BarakKhan[12]. Ordinary Muslims have no opportunity to give religious education to their children. Even pro-Soviet Arab writer Yousuf Sadik also failed to show any instance of such scope in his book, 'Soviet Union,s Musalman'[13]. Only parents had the chance to give religious education to their children in home. But there is also acute crisis of books on Islamic teachings in Soviet Union. According to rule only the religious board of the government can publish such book. But they published very few number of books after revolution. For these reasons it became very difficult for Soviet Muslim parents to give religious education to their future generation. These reasons decreased the number of Mosques in Russia after revolution. According to the report of a journal 'Mir Islam' published from Saint-Petersburg(then the capital of Russia) there were 26279 mosques in Russia in 1912. But according to another report of 'Soviet War News' the number of mosques in Soviet Union decreased to 1312 in 1942[14]. The other mosques were transformed into godowns, clubs or cinema halls showing the excuse of absence or lack of worshippers[15].

Though section 124 of Soviet Constitution ensured, 'Every citizen should have the right of performing religious worship and right of campaigning against religion; but practically there was no benefit for religions in general and Islam in particular from this section. Because this section gave people the right to campaign against religion but there was no scope for any religious institute to oppose anti-religious campaign. Thus in fact one atheist had the right to propagate atheism and oppose religion but a religious person had no right to oppose atheism or propagate religion. For this reason section 124 was biased against religion. Taking the advantage of this section of the constitution a group of atheist opposed religion very indecently. An organization was established in 1925

named, 'Union of Godless Zealots'. The number of members of this organization exceeded 70000 in Azerbeizan within 1932. Most of them were Russian settlers. This organization worked in Muslim regions with the name, 'Alla Sizlar', 'Khoda Sizlar' or 'Din Sizlar'. At first their attack on Islam was careful and gentle but after 1928 their attack became direct. They even attacked on mosques[16] and in this way the number mosques gradually decreased(mentioned earlier). World famous Muslim thinker and diplomat Allama Muhammad Asad in his famous biography 'The Road to Mecca' gave an example of anti-religion propagation in Soviet Union which he experienced while he was moving from Afghanistan to Germany through Russia. He wrote, "my first (and most lasting) impression of Soviet Russia- at the railway station of Marv- was a huge beautifully executed poster which depicted a young proletariat in blue overalls booting a ridiculous white bearded gentleman, clad in flowing robes out of a cloud filled sky. The Russian legend beneath the poster read: Thus have the workers of Soviet Union kicked god out of his heaven. issued by the Bezbozhniki(godless) association of the USSR[17]"

The state policy of Soviet Union about Muslims did not remain same all the time. Sometimes state took extreme attitude towards Islam and Muslims, sometimes there policy was slightly moderate. However the role and freedom of Islam became limited in course of time. At the time of civil war Soviet government took moderate policy towards Muslims, for that reason many Muslim leaders left anti revolutionaries and joined on the side of Soviet Communists. But from 1921 government gradually became more extreme towards Muslims. Governments policy firstly targeted the 'Waqf' properties of Muslims. Actually the process of nationalizing 'Waqf' property began first at the time of Tsar, when they nationalized 'Waqf' properties of Volga region. But the Waqf properties of Muslims were intact in Crimea, Caucasus and Central Asia until the beginning of Communist rule. Around ten percent of agricultural land of Central Asia were Waqf property. Tashkent Soviet nationalised their Waqf properties after revolution. But government of Turkistan returned back the nationalised Waqf properties in 1922 by issuing two decree. On the other hand Uzbek government nationalised all Waqf properties by another decree in 1925. Government declared that this property would be redistributed to the peasants. Within 1930 all Waqf properties of Soviet Union were nationalized. By this action Soviet government destroyed economic backbone of Muslim religious institutions and mosques[18]. After capturing properties of religious organizations, Soviet government targeted 'Shariah Court'. These Shariah courts dealt with marriage, divorce, inheritance and such other matters according to Islamic law . Soviet government banned all these Shariah courts in December 1917. But due to public agitation Shariah courts were reestablished in Turkistan in 1921. Though their jurisdiction were gradually made narrower. At last in 27th September 1927 Soviet government issued a decree by which all Shariah courts were declared invalid[19]. Meanwhile Soviet government also looked at the Muslim religious schools. In a census of November 1921 there were 1117 Muslim religious schools in Turkistan only. These institutions became economically weak loosing their Waqf properties. In 1928 Soviet government closed all Muslim religious schools which survived even after loosing their Waqf property[20].

Islamic ideology faced pressure from all corner in 1928. At that time the atheist organization 'Union of Godless Zealots' organized their aggressive propagation programme. They used to raise charge of stealing, bribery and other dishonesty against Muslim Alims. Often they termed them as the agents of Germany and 'rootless parasite'. In 1935 Soviet government banned Hajj pilgrimage of Muslims[21]. But Soviet government again became slightly moderate towards Muslims during its war against Germany. They stopped anti-religious propoganda under the shelter of government. They removed ban on Hajj in 1944. From then on few Muslims were allowed to perform Hajj, though they

were mainly the members of different government controlled Muslim religious boards. Government decided to establish several Muslim religious board in 1942. These boards were established in 1943 and 1944[22]. Government also gave permission to establish some new mosques in 1944.

(Muslims became free in these states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even now these states are ruled by the ex-Communists. Democratic governments have not really emerged. Islamic parties are not allowed in all the states. All powers are trying to stop the progress of Islam. However the indications are that in the long run Islam will play its role in these states. one thing is however needed, the spread of authentic Islamic education. It is also necessary that extremism is not allowed to mar the prospect of Islamic renaissance.)

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3. ibid, page 137
4. Discussed in the chapter, 'Muslim Revival Movement in Central Asia'
5. Proveshcheniye Review. no:3 March 5. 1913.
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14. A. Bennigsen and CL. Quelquejay; Islam in The Soviet Union. page151.
15. ibid: page 151
16. ibid: page 151
17. Muhammad Asad; Road to Mecca. Max Rein Hardt. London 1954. page 299.
- 18-20. A Bennigsen and CL. Quelquejay; Islam in The Soviet Union. page 144-149
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22. Discussed in detail in the next chapter

## Islam in Russia and Central Asia

### Chapter - VI

#### Muslim Policy of Soviet Government(1945-75)

The religious activity of Muslims of Soviet Union was being controlled by four Religious Boards, these were:

1. Muslim Religious Board of Russian Federation and Siberia. The centre of it was situated in Ufa the ancient Muslim town and capital of Bashkhiria.
2. Muslim Religious Board of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The centre of it was situated in Tashkent. This Board supervised religious activities of Muslims of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.
3. Muslim Religious Board of North Caucasus.
4. Muslim Religious Board of South Caucasus or Trans Caucasus[1]. Soviet government controlled all these Religious Boards by, 'The Council of The Affairs of Religious Cults'. This council was established in 1944. Every Board had written constitution. According to the constitution, an executive committee used to be formed by direct vote of Alims and general Muslims. The spectrum of activities of the Boards were to give explanation of Islam, to propagate Fatwa of Mufti about any religious matter, to appoint Imam and Muazzin of mosques, to give certificate to the Alims to publish religious books. [2],

Though from the time of 2nd World War a large number of Russians and Soviet Europeans made settlement in Muslim regions of USSR, the Muslims were still the majority of the population in those regions. But in the meantime Muslims became minority in Kazakhstan, Volga, Ural and North Caucasus. The Muslim percentage of population of Kazakhstan became 35% by the year 1959. Yet even now Muslims are the absolute majority of population in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan[3].

General population of Soviet Muslims are facing difficulties and obstacles to give Islamic teachings to their new generation. The problem behind this was discussed in the previous chapter. Actually there was no other Muslim religious educational institute in Soviet Union excluding the two which were absolutely engaged only to train Alims. Only 100 graduates pass out from this two institution per year. This number was very inadequate for around four crores(in 1970) of Muslims of USSR. There are also non-availability and scarcity of Islamic books to educate young Muslims properly.

Now a days anti-Islamic propagation is not going on in an attacking manner like the past. Anti-religion propagation is continued on the basis of philosophical argument. One doctrine which is used commonly against all religions is that religions are like opium for people which is used by the reactionaries, which is also unscientific[4]. Other argument is specially used against Islam that Islam is a bizarre combination of Christianity and Zionism[5]. It was also said that Islam represented the commercial interest for the Arab businessman[6]. This allegation was also brought against Islam that it was an imposed foreign religion on peoples of Central Asia. According to them Islam was all the time used as a tool for the imperialist powers, it teaches people fatalism[7]. They also said that Islam always resisted reformation process in Turkistan[8]. The 'Union of Godless Zealots' stopped their anti-religion propagation during 2nd world war. After the war, a new organization was formed named, 'Association for the Spread of Political and Scientific Knowledge'. This organization started propagation against Islam and other religions in the

Soviet Union. They did these by the help of literature, speech, films, mobile exhibition and also by talk show in Radio and Television. They published 84 books in the Muslim majority regions of Soviet Union between January to August 1957[9]. From this it can be easily understood that their propagation activity was very extensive. Even after such anti-religious propagation of different organization, Soviet Government was able to keep relationship with the authorities of Islam and other religions. According to the reports of official journals of Soviet Government the relation between Soviet government and different religious authorities was good[10]. Religious authorities also maintained obedience to the government.

As there is scarcity of religious education and literature in Soviet Union and on the other hand constitution allows propagation against religion, so the educated Muslim people are trying to keep their traditions, culture and identity themselves. Muslim people can understand the significance of the family as a safeguard to their culture, tradition and identity. So they are trying to maintain their family structure as much as possible. It is a fact that within 50 years of revolution the systems like polygamy(multiple marriage), joint family and dowry have almost gone away. On the other hand there is extensive expansion of female education and women are taking part in different social activities. But these changes or reformations are also going on in all developing countries and this can be considered as a natural upgradation of the society not the result of Communism. Dowry is not allowed in Islamic Shariah and joint family is not an obligatory part of it. Moreover polygamy is only permissible in Islam not anyway mandatory. Female education is mandatory in Islam. Still now old father and mother and in some cases siblings stay together in Soviet Muslim families. It can be regarded as a reflection of teachings of Islam towards the rights of parents and siblings. Still now husband is regarded as the leader of the family and the children maintain obedience towards parents. These are all consistent with Muslim culture and traditions. The total number of marriage of Muslims with non-Muslim Russians or Europeans of Soviet Union are very few. Though a few Muslim male marries non-Muslim Russian female but marriage between Muslim female and non-Muslim male is almost rare. So there is no fear for the Muslims to lose their identity through marital bonds.

On the other hand the educated Muslims of Soviet Union are very conscious to keep their identity, culture and heritage. After the revolution, modern education spread all over the Soviet Union very promptly and a new educated generation came out. Most of them were technical experts and scientists. But their origin was in rural peasant family and they maintained intimate relation with their family and rural society. Like Russian intelligentsia they can carry on all kinds of responsibilities of the state. Gradually they are achieving the key posts of the states. But very often they have to face conflict with Russian settlers regarding this. In 1964 one Kazakh Communist leader charged against Kazakhs that they often tried to remove Russians from key posts of the state[11]. Between 1951 to 1954 a debate began on the question of the status of different folklore literature of Muslim-Turks. Then these educated Muslims very strongly played their role in favour of keeping these literature as a symbol of their national traditions and heritage. Among these folklore literature the 'Dede Korkut' of Azerbaijan, 'Alpamish' of Uzbekistan[12-13], 'Sine-Shora-Bat' of Kazakhstan and 'Manash' of Kirghizia were very popular and famous. Some Communist Russian thinkers tried to reject these folklore literature showing the excuse that these were in favour of religion or Pan-Turkyism or feudalism, but Muslim thinkers urged that these literature were the symbols of national traditions and heritage, so rejection of these were equivalent to rejecting cultural freedom of a nation. They also gave argument that according to Stalin, culture of every nation should be its own. After a long debate the opinion of Muslim thinkers was accepted. From this incident, it is

assumed that educated Muslim society of Soviet Russia is conscious about the preservation of their cultural identity.

After revolution, several modern Muslim nations have emerged in the Soviet Union. Though the Muslim people of Soviet Union was united on the basis of Islamic idealism and Turkish language for a long time[14], but they failed to organize them as an unified nation before Communist revolution. Their struggle to become an unified Muslim nation stopped after revolution. But they became some different but related nations by implementing Soviet nationalism. The minor Muslim communities like Misra, Talish, Jamshid, Nogoy, Tat merged with major communities and thus strengthened them. Among the major Muslim communities, (the strength and population of whom increased in such a way), the name of Uzbek, Kazak, Ajeri, Turkmen, Tajik, Tatar and Bashkhir are to be mentioned. These Muslim nations have an educated competent class of people who can take up any responsibility of the state. This is a very good sign for future development and evolution of these nations. All these nations are able to operate any affairs of the states independently. Another positive event to be mentioned here is that liberal reformation process initiated after the death of Stalin allowed these Muslim nations to establish better communication with Muslim world. The Soviet Muslim people were almost disconnected from rest of the Muslim world for about 35 years after the revolution of 1917. But thereafter they were able to keep contact with Muslim world. Many delegations from different Muslim states are going to Soviet Union now a days. On the other hand some Soviet Muslims are also going to different Muslim states and other parts of the world as state delegate. This allows opportunity to exchange views between Soviet Muslims and Muslims of other states. This will give a good result in future. Moreover Soviet government also cares about the opinion of Muslim world while making policy for Muslims. Islamic secretariat of Jeddah collects information about Muslim minorities of different parts of the world. They take up the matters with concerned government where they observe any violation of rights of Muslim minorities[15].

Lastly this can be evaluated that how much the Soviet Muslim people follow Islam in their everyday life. It has been discussed previously that still now they abide by their own traditions based on Islamic morals and guidance in case of birth, marriage and other social customs. There is lack of authentic information regarding their practice of religious worship. According to information available five times prayer are limited among the rural old people. The number of five times worshippers among young people of towns are very small [This was the situation 25 years back. The situation has now changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union]. Large number of people participate in 'Juma'( Friday prayer) both in villages and in towns. Practice of Ramadan fasting is very popular both in towns and in villages. During Ramadan many people join in Salatul Tarabih and Khatam Tarabih are being practiced in many mosques. Muslim people donates money for the development and maintenance of mosques. The issue regarding Hajj has been already discussed. After the withdrawal of ban against Hajj in 1945 every year 10-15 Muslim from Soviet Union perform Hajj under the management of Muslim Religious Boards. Though this number is very small in comparison with the number of Muslim population of Soviet Union(about 4 crore in 1970)[16]. But the Soviet government never gave any explanation about this matter.

Among other practices all Muslims perform Sunnat-E-Khatna(circumcision) of their male child. Shia[17] Muslims performs Ashura with enthusiasm. All Muslims enjoys Eid-UI-Fitr, Eid-UI-Adha and Lailatul-Qadr with all formalities.

From this brief discussion it is clear that even in the late Soviet period, in spite of many obstacles, especially scarcity of Islamic institutions, religious books and Alims, the Muslims of Russia were observing their religious responsibilities by themselves. They are proud of their Islamic ideology and heritage. In future if there is availability of Islamic institutions and literature then the Soviet Muslims will be able to play their important role as a part of Muslim Ummah because they are the children of Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmizi, Bahauddin Nakshbandi[18], Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ferdousi[19] and many other great Muslims.  
[In fact Islam has strongly revived in the Central Asia after the collapse of Soviet Union.]

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- 12-13. In 'Alpamysh' and 'Manas' the struggles of Muslims against the attack of non-Muslims are described.
14. The different process of unification have been discussed previously.
15. In this connection the role of Islamic secretariat for the Muslims of Eritrea and Philippines are to be remembered.
16. The small number can be assumed by comparing the number with that of other Muslim countries of that time.
17. Maximum population of Azerbaijan belongs to Shia Mazhab. Muslims of other parts of Soviet Union are Sunni. The Muslims of Soviet Union stopped their debate on the question of Shiaism or Sunnism keeping in mind the greater problem of Islam in Communist rule.
18. Founder of Nakshbandia Sufi Tarika.
19. Informations about the practice of Islamic lifestyle among the Muslims of Soviet Union have been taken from the book of Yousuf Sadik.

## Appendix

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