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CONTENTS

A WORD ABOUT OURSELVES

REFLECTIONS

- Muslims as Minorities: An Outsider's Perspective 1
Crawford Young

COMMUNISM RE-VISITED

- Islam Under the Tsars and the October 1917 Revolution 23
Muhammad A. Khan
- Shamil's Most Successful Offensive: Daghestan 1843 41
Moshe Gammer
- The Soviet Deportation in 1943 of the Karachays:
Turkic Muslim People of North Caucasus 55
Alf Grannes
- The Crisis in Azerbaijan: Origins and Outcome 69
Saleh M. Aliev
- Impressions of a Recent Visit to the Soviet Union 77
Rahmatullah Enayatullah
- A Journey to Mongolia 91
Halifa Altay



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Impressions of a Recent Visit to the Soviet Union

Rahmatullah Enayatullah

Introduction

The Soviet Union is an enormous country and the Muslims are distributed in all of its republics. They belong to quite distinct racial and linguistic groups. They are separated as well by environmental and political factors whose roots go back into the distant past. Under the Communist order of all sectors of Soviet society, Muslims suffered the most. Communist hegemony represented in reality a continuation of the policies earlier pursued by the Tsarist regimes. These policies included russification through the implantation of Russian settlers, often by force, from Russian areas, together with the imposition of Russian culture and language, and required adherence to traditions and norms foreign to the Muslim communities.

These policies were principally directed at exploitation of the natural resources of Muslim lands, compelling Muslims to serve the needs of the Russian economy. For instance, Uzbekistan was compelled to introduce massive cotton cultivation to the exclusion of other crops; while Kazakhstan was required to produce nothing but wheat. All mineral and other natural resources were utilised without due regard for the needs of the Muslims themselves.

A divide-and-rule policy was imposed on the Muslims under the cloak of concern for their cultures and traditions. Tribal rivalries were encouraged. For instance, Western Turkestan was divided into six geographical areas and a number of small nationalities, on the basis of the distribution of Turkish tribes which in fact constituted one entity, united by race, religion, language and history.

The Islamic religion was attacked through the execution of detention of its leaders, the closure of its institutions, prohibition on religious instructions, and open contempt for its principles. Links with the Muslim heritage and past were severed, and the historical image of Islamic civilisation was distorted.

The Muslims were kept in a state of ignorance; their cultural and Islamic contacts with their brethren in the free world were restricted.

In this way, the suffering inflicted by Communism on the Muslims proved even greater than that inflicted earlier by the Tsars. Hence Muslims needed glasnost and perestroika more than any other sector of the Soviet society.

The extent to which the Muslims have profited from the new freedoms cannot yet be ascertained, but it does seem at the moment that they have benefited rather less than other sections of the Soviet Union, particularly in political matters. As proof of this, Muslims point to the divergent nature of the Soviet response to events in Azerbaijan and Lithuania.

However, it is clear from recent developments that the Soviet Union is prepared

REGIONAL STUDIES

- ✶ The Uighurs of Xinjiang: Their Place in Swedish
History and Research 105
Gunnar Jarring
- Notes on Race and Class in Malaysia 115
Syed Farid Alatas
- Problems of Islamic Education in Malawi 127
Alfred J. Matiki
- Islamic Scholars of Ilorin and Their Place in
Yorubaland 135
Musa Ali Agetunmobi

DIALOGUE

- Studying Conversions to Islam in Indian History:
A Case Study 149
Mohammad Ishaq Khan
- Becoming a Muslim in the Christian West: A Profile of
Conversion to a Minority Religion 159
Larry Poston
- Christian and Islamic Valuation of Human Rights:
Consequences for Minorities, Vol. XI, No. 1 171
Comment: *Nasim Hasan Shah*
- Minority Predicament, Vol. X, No. 2 172
Comment: *Mohammad Ishaq Khan*
- A Word About Ourselves, Vol. X, No. 2 174
Comments: *Syed Shahabuddin, Abubakr A. Bagader,
Saiyid Hamid, Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi, Sheikh
Yusuf al-Qardhawi, Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, Mahmud
M. Ayoub; and Inamullah Khan*
- Al-Dhimmah and Related Concepts in Historical
Perspective: Vol. IX, No. 1 193
Comments: *Rashid Ali Mohammad and Syed Z. Abedin*

- ii) the creation of an Islamic Centre in Kazan, capital of Tataristan;
- iii) the construction of a new mosque, and the extension of the Moscow mosque;
- iv) the preparation of a translation of the meaning of the Qur'an into Russian and Tatar;
- v) the building of a bricks factory to help in restoring and building of mosques and other Islamic institutions and to exchange its surplus production for rare building materials such as cement etc.;
- vi) construction of an Arabian thoroughbred breeding farm and financing of a project to build 100 agricultural farms in the region;
- vii) construction of orphanages and homes for the elderly;
- viii) offering of scholarships by the Muslim World League to students from the region; and reprinting of Islamic works first printed prior to 1917 in the Tatar language.

At the conclusion of the meeting the head of the delegation handed Shaykh Talat Tajeddin a sum of \$13,000 as initial assistance to help start some of the projects discussed in the meeting and promised to refer the other projects to the concerned organs for approval.

The delegation together with other leading guests then paid a visit to the Bashkiri Peoples Assembly where they met Faizullah Wali Sultanov, Deputy President of the Soviet Presidium of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Bashkirstan. The delegation was very warmly welcomed by senior Soviet official who drew pointed attention in Bashkiri language to the religious freedom Muslims in Soviet Union were enjoying under perestroika and underscored the significance of religious upbringing in raising social and cultural standards. Not un-meaningfully Shaykh Talat Tajeddin noted in his reply how in 1986 a similar Muslim World League delegation was coldly received by the then President of the Presidium and how in line with the government's hostile attitude he had spoken disparagingly about Islam.

At the end of the meeting a copy of the Holy Qur'an was presented as a gift to Faizullah Wali Sultanov who received it with great respect and reverence, again in marked contrast to how a similar gift was received in 1986. Then the President of the Presidium had offered a copy of the constitution of Bashkiristan in return and had spoken haughtily in Russian about the achievements of socialism in that region.

The League delegation then flew to Tashkent to visit the headquarters of the Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan and toured important cities in the region such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Ferghana, Margalan, Namangan and Urgendj, all in Uzbekistan, Dushanbe, the capital of Tadjhikistan and Tash-hodh in Turkmania.

Accompanied by Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf, the delegation

in the short term, perhaps in order to retain the goodwill and tacit approval of the United States and Western Europe towards its reformist policies, to improve relations towards a situation of equal status for all Soviet citizens under a future federal system which would grant sovereignty to each Soviet republic in matters of internal and economic policy, while the Soviet Centre would retain responsibility for foreign policy, defense, security, and economic cooperation.

Uzbekistan among the Muslim republics was the first to take advantage of this prospect of oncoming change. On 20 July 1990, it declared independence. Earlier on 20 October 1989, it had officially adopted Uzbek as the language of the republic.

The Muslim World League Delegation

It was in the midst of this changing situation that the Muslim World League of Makkah Al-Mukarramah decided to send a delegation of its members to pay a visit to the Soviet Union.

The purpose of this visit was to discover more about the situation of Soviet Muslims, and to investigate their projects and needs as these are now being expressed in the new and improved conditions and also in order to reinforce fraternal Islamic ties.

The delegation was led by Muhammad ibn Nasir al-Aboudi, the Assistant Secretary General of the League; it included as members Hatim Hasan Qadi and this writer. It arrived at Moscow's Shirmatova Airport on June 5, and was received by a group of Soviet Muslims including the imams of Moscow and Ufa mosques and government officials. After a short rest at Moscow's Zaria Hotel the delegation was flown to Ufa, capital of the Bashkir SSR where it was able to participate in the proceedings of the fifth annual conference of the Siberian and European Soviet Muslims.

The conference was attended by representatives of various Islamic religious boards in the Soviet Union, in addition to ambassadors of a number of Islamic countries such as Morocco, Senegal, Algeria, Kuwait, Gambia and Mauritania and the Assistant Secretary General Ambassador Muhammed Mohsin of the Jeddah-based Organization of Islamic Conference, as well as a large number of local Muslims.

The Islamic Community Party

The Conference was organized by the Religious Board of the Siberian and European Soviet Muslims. It was held in Ufa in the first week of June. It re-elected Talat Tajeddin as head of the Religious Board. It also decided to bring into being a new Muslim party to be known as the Islamic Community Party, which would be the representative voice of all groups of Muslims in the region.

At the end of the conference the Muslim World League delegation had an extended discussion with Shaykh Talat Tajeddin relative to the various Islamic projects which stood in need of support. Some of the projects and proposals discussed in this meeting may be noted:

- i) The creation of an Islamic Centre in Ufa, the Bashkir capital;

Turkestan; provision of financial assistance to a plantation run by the Religious Board which needs to be expanded and its productivity raised; and to explore prospects of marketing its produce in Saudi Arabia. The need to expedite dispatch of one million disposable plastic syringes donated by the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) to the Muslims of the Soviet Union was also raised.

The League delegation then visited the province of Khwarezm. Shaykh Muhammed Sadiq Muhammed Yusuf insisted on accompanying them despite his preoccupation with the serious ethnic conflicts that had erupted among some Kirghiz and Uzbeks in the town of Osh over lands that were being distributed by local authorities.

The delegation toured some Islamic monuments of historical significance in the province including the Niaz Shalimar mosque in the city of Khiva which was built in 1835, the Allah Barkan Ishan mosque and the Emir Qala mosque, the Shalimar mosque and the Dost-Liq mosque in the town of Tash-Hodh and the Shihabuddin Khojah mosque in the town of Urgendi. The delegation made financial donation to help in the building, restoration and renovation of these mosques.

In the city of Samarkand the delegation visited the Khojah Dhul Murad mosque which dates back to the sixteenth century as well as the Dah-Beit mosque and extended financial assistance to help in their maintenance.

They then visited the village of Khertinak or the village of Imam Al Bukhari as it is known at present, and toured the mosque complex that bears the name of this prominent Muslim scholar.

The delegation then flew to Bukhara where it was received upon arrival by government and Muslim dignitaries. It visited the Kalan mosque which was first built in 712 C.E. or 94H by the famous Muslim military commander Quteibah ibn Muslim Al-Bahili but was confiscated and transformed into a warehouse under communist rule till it was returned to Muslims last year.

It also visited the Miri Arab Islamic School which is said to have been built in the sixteenth century by an Arab Emir from Hadhramut called Abdullah Al-Hadhrami.

Before returning to Tashkent the delegation made a tour of important historical sites in Bukhara including the Ark Citadel, the seat of government of the Samanids who ruled the region during the eighth and ninth centuries, the mausoleum of Ismail Al Samani which dates back to the tenth century, the Jashma Ayoub or the Spring of Ayoub, a spa, and the mosque of Bahauddin Al Naqshbandi the founder of the Naqshbandi order.

In Tashkent the delegation visited a number of mosques that were either being built or restored. These included the Nur-ul-Islam mosque, the Quiluq Ata mosque, the Qadi Rubat mosque, the Nozah mosque, the Al-Fateh mosque, the Jumber Ata mosque, the Makkah-al-Mukarramah mosque and the Ziya ud-Din mosque which has been named after the former head of the Religious Board of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Sheikh Ziya ud-Din Babakhanov.

The delegation extended financial aid to help in completing these projects. The delegation then flew to Dushanbe the capital of Tadzhikistan where upon arrival

visited a number of mosques which have recently been restored or built. These included the Tokhta Bai mosque in Sagjiman which was initially built in 1890 but was changed under Communist rule into a warehouse till it was handed over back to the Muslims in 1989; the Yunusabad mosque in Chemikent Kochasi, the Kalal Gozghan mosque, a small new built wooden mosque, the Un Gozghan mosque in the Communist Kalkhoz (cooperative), which is currently being built by the local inhabitants and the Mirza Yusuf mosque which was confiscated by the Communists but recently restored after suffering considerable damage.

The delegation extended financial assistance to help renovate these mosques. They also spent time with the officials of the Religious Board discussing ways of cooperation in other Islamic activities and projects in need of support. Among the topics discussed some may be noted below:

The establishment of an Islamic printing press at Tashkent; the preparation of translations of the meaning of the Qur'an into the Uzbek, Kazakh and Farsi languages; the preparation, printing and publication of Arabic Islamic text books in the local languages of the Central Asian and Kazakh Muslims which were destroyed during the Revolution; the restoration and construction of mosques; changing transmission hours of the religious broadcasting programs "Nidai Islam" of the Saudi Radio Service for Muslims of the region. Similar broadcasts from Iran for Tadjiks, and Turkmens have already proved to be very effective; the need to expedite the dispatch according to the distribution plan agreed upon with the Muslim World League in the Makkah meeting of 15-07-1410H, from Saudi Arabia of the remaining copies of the Holy Qur'an gifted by King Fahd. The number of copies agreed upon was as follows:

The Religious Board for the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (Tashkent)	500,000 copies
The Religious Board for the Muslims of Siberia and the European section of the Soviet Union (Ufa)	200,000 copies
The Religious Board for the Muslims of the North Caucasus (Makhachkala)	150,000 copies
The Religious Board for the Muslims of Transcaucasia (Baku)	150,000 copies

Among the other issues discussed was the provision of scholarships for young Muslims to study the Islamic sciences, Arabic language, and Muslim civilisation; provision of financial assistance to a number of Islamic educational projects that are being planned by the Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The establishment of a college or a higher institute for hadith bearing the name of Imam Al-Bukhari in commemoration of this leading scholar and other leading ulema from

The delegation returned to Moscow after having failed to obtain an entry visa to Mongolia from the Mongolian Consulate.

On the way back to Moscow the delegation visited Kazan, the Tatar ASSR capital, where it visited the mosque of Shihab al-Din al-Marjani, and the Market mosque, where it met the Muslims, and discussed their improving situation with them.

In the Soviet capital before their return flight to Saudi Arabia the delegation visited the Moscow mosque, where it held discussions with local Muslims on plans to extend the mosque, and the possibility of constructing a new mosque in the Soviet capital.

This visit offered the delegation a real opportunity to gather information on the various aspects of the transformation now in process in Soviet society, and which has had substantial implications for the Russian Muslim community. The delegation returned with a number of key observations about the general conditions of life obtaining in the Soviet Union at present.

General Observations

It appears that the country as a whole is in the grip of a serious economic crisis, revealed in the lack of foodstuffs and other basic supplies, long queues outside shops, and the use of identity cards for most consumer goods. For instance, to buy food in Moscow one must show one's identity card to prove that one is a Moscow resident before any sale can be made.

There has been a major decline in the black market value of the rouble. The official rate is one and a half roubles to one dollar, the tourist rate is six roubles to a dollar, while the black market rate can reach twenty.

Major cities in the Soviet Union are witnessing a housing crisis, with people having to wait more than three years for accommodation, while obtaining a telephone takes at least five years. It is impossible to buy a car without having recourse to bribery.

Jobs are scarce; university graduates commonly wait for years before finding employment; although it is said the offspring of Party leaders are spared this difficulty. It is extremely difficult to obtain a seat in an academic institution without family influence or bribery. The unemployment problem is less serious in the villages.

The bureaucracy and red tape is burdensome and complex. Students proposed by the Islamic Religious Boards for study abroad had their papers submitted to the government in Moscow some time ago. But their fate is uncertain. To eat in a restaurant requires permission, while hotels only operate through advance bookings.

Conversations with ordinary Russians however reflect happiness at the freedom accorded them by glasnost and perestroika, and a certain optimism and satisfaction that they have been released to an extent from the attentions of the secret police, which was once so omnipresent.

A renewal of enthusiasm can also be felt among the Muslims. They have recovered many of the mosques confiscated earlier by the regime. Local

they were welcomed by a large number of Muslim Tadzhiks. They toured a number of mosques in the city including the Qadi Abdul-Reshid mosque, the Yaqoub mosque, the Yaqoub Al Jarkhi mosque, the Yengan mosque which was confiscated and used as a silkworm breeding facility till it was returned to Muslims in 1990, the Karatikin village mosque and the Kara Mir Shikar mosque. The delegation made financial donations to assist in the building and maintenance of these mosques.

The delegation then flew to the city of Ferghana where it visited a number of mosques that were being constructed or renovated. These included the Yengi Jik mosque, the Busay mosque which was re-named Al Rahma mosque on the suggestions of the delegation, the Walik mosque, the Yengi Margolan mosque which was renamed the Hamza mosque, the Sae Boi mosque, the Khojah Ke Ze mosque which was built 500 years ago but was confiscated and transformed into a warehouse for chemical products till it was returned to Muslims only six months ago; the Tiwah-Kom mosque which was re-named the Al Barakah mosque by the delegation on the request of the local community, the Khan-Shah mosque which was built 430 years ago, the Jalayel Mosque and the Shah Taleb mosque.

The delegation also visited a number of villages on its return journey to Tashkent and inspected their mosque projects that were either under construction or being restored. They included the mosques of Quwah and Niaz Batour villages, the Aq-Kor mosque, the Omer ibn Al Khattab mosque in the village of Jozaq, the Yaqoub Kilkhoz mosque in the Pakhte Abad Dayon village, the Dhul Nurein mosque in the town of Baitu and the Imam Abi Hanifa mosque in Noor Abad in Namangan.

After returning to Tashkent the delegation held its last meeting with officials of the Religious Board of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. At the conclusion of the session the Muslim World League delegation donated \$10,000 to assist cultural and religious activities undertaken by the Board and an extra sum of \$132,500 to be distributed among 41 mosques in Tashkent, Bukhara, Khawarezm, Dushanbe, Samarkand and Ferghana to help in covering the cost of their construction or maintenance.

The two sides stressed the need to follow up on the outcome of their meetings and coordinate efforts in their implementation.

The Religious Board for the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazekhistan extended invitations to Muslim World League Secretary General, its Assistant Secretary General and some Muslim ulema and dignitaries to participate in the Islamic conference it intended to organise in Tashkent on September 14-16, 1990 on the occasion of the 1200th birth anniversary of Imam Al Tirmizi.

The Muslim World League pledged to cooperate with the Board in rendering all available facilities and assistance to Soviet pilgrims during their performance of the Haj. The Muslim World League delegation also made known to the Board the willingness of the Jeddah-based Okaz Organisation for Press and Publication to provide the Board with technical and scientific assistance to improve the performance of its media centre and to supply it with the expertise it needed in this regard.

achieving these objectives. But while it failed to uproot Islam from the hearts of its followers, it bequeathed a considerable amount of intellectual confusion and doubt. This state of the mind appears to have produced three behaviour patterns among the region's Muslims.

There is a certain constituency which preserved its religion by careful thought and right knowledge, and hence rescued itself from deviation, despite intense atheistic oppression. It adopted every possible means, secret or open, to preserve its religion and to bring up its children in Islam. Such people, however, were few.

Another sector among the Muslims recognized that Communist anti-religious activities were really directed at colonising, enslaving and exploiting them. Such Muslims were able to resist these attempts and remained loyal to Islam. But they were unable to learn enough to preserve their religion or that of their children intact. Their faith thus weakened, and their practice of the rites of Islam was only sporadic.

A third group remained conscious of the truths of Islam and knowledgeable of its ancestral heritage, but decided that the road to power, wealth and recognition lay with the Communists in power. They adopted the trappings of Communism. Some remained Muslim in name, but abandoned its rites and teachings; others made attacks on Islam in order to please their Communist masters. There were still others who attacked Islam publicly yet continued to practice some of its duties and rites in secret.

Apart from these general categories the actual conditions of life among Muslims alternates from region to region. For instance, the Muslims of the Volga basin have been more affected by Russian culture than the Muslims of Central Asia, since the Russian occupation of the Volga region is much older than of Central Asia, and Russian immigration to the Volga provinces was more intensive.

It should also be said here that the present concern for the various regional cultures, together with the attention paid to national languages and alphabets, and the sense of cultural particularism now stirring in the USSR, is serving to awaken a sense of pride and self-respect among the Muslims which promises to accelerate the process of blowing away the dust which had settled over their eyes and veiled the light of Islam from them.

In the light of the above analysis of the situation of Muslims in Russia and with the purposes of accelerating their return to true Islamic belief and practice, the Muslim World League would like to propose to the world community of Islam the following recommended steps:

Contacts with Muslims in the USSR should be reinforced with regular visits and meetings, and by cementing the relationship with the official Islamic religious authorities in such a way as to bring benefit to the Muslims.

Islamic workers, imams and preachers should be sent with tourist visas for short periods of between one and three months in order to visit the Soviet Muslims and increase their religious awareness. Attention should be paid to Islamic broadcasting to Soviet Muslims in order to explain to them the real teachings of Islam, their Islamic past, and the state of their brethren in the free world. Programmes should be in Chagatay and particularly in Uzbek, Uyghur, Kazakh, Turkmen and Tatar.

governments have helped in mosque construction by providing land, while the religious boards have come forward with financial assistance. Muslims of all age groups and categories have taken part in the building and reconditioning of mosques both with their labour and skills, and with financial aid. Even those who once worked in the Party and government are now engaged in this building and restoration action.

Despite the inadequacies of Islamic education in the region, some Muslims have now begun to gather in mosques to memorise the Qur'an and study the principles and teachings of Islam.

Islamic cultural material has begun to appear on the pages of newspapers and magazines, and Islamic and Arabic books are now being printed, albeit on a limited scale. Radio and television stations are allowing religious leaders to give talks, and broadcast some religious festivals such as the Eid prayers. But although the campaign of arrest and imprisonment of Islamic leaders who advocated Islamic principles has ceased, articles and books hostile to Islam continue to appear.

The Muslim desire to perform the obligation of the hajj is very marked, despite poor economic conditions. However, the Religious Affairs Council of the Soviet Council of Ministers has limited the number of people from the area covered by each religious board who can perform the hajj.

The local Muslims expressed happiness on the arrival of the Muslim World League delegation, particularly since it came from the holy land. The reception from the local government officials was cordial and attentive as well.

The Communist Party policy of creating division among Muslims however continues in some ways. For instance, the Religious Board for the North Caucasus Muslims, once headed by Hajj Mahmut Kiki, has been subdivided into five independent religious authorities: Daghestan, Karajay, Kabardino-Balkar, Checheno-Ingush, and North Ossetia. Similarly, the Religious Board for the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, headed by Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf Muhammad Sadiq, has been divided up. And bloody clashes have occurred between Uzbeks and Kirghis.

However, some Soviet Muslims were permitted to attend the ceremonies held in Tehran to mark the third anniversary of Imam Khomeini's death. Similarly, Iranian broadcasts are quite influential in Turkmenia, Tadjikistan and Azerbaijan, and is backed up with publications sent to the various Islamic organisations in the Soviet Union.

Russian Muslim Future and the Ummah

During its visits to mosques, and encounters with the local communities, the delegation noted that the possibilities for Islamic work were steadily improving, and call for a level of response from the Muslim ummah appropriate to the situation of the Muslims in the USSR.

As we noted earlier, Communism employed every means to distance the Muslims from their religion in order to create a spiritual vacuum into which atheism and a materialising world view could find a place. It did not altogether succeed in

them with access to the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an and the Pure Sunnah in a way which is suited to their present cultural circumstances and requirements.

Priority should be given to Islamic education. Financial assistance should be provided for the creation of schools and Qur'an memorisation centres, which should be supplied with teachers, equipment and other wherewithal.

Qur'an memorisation centres attached to the mosques should be supported with money and equipment. Soviet Muslims who have already memorised the Qur'an should be invited to participate in international Qur'an competitions held annually in Makkah and several other Muslim world cities.

It is strongly suggested that financial support should be made available to establish the following centres and institutes: an Islamic center and an Islamic school at Ufa, an Islamic centre in Kazan; provision of equipment and furniture for the Islamic Institute in Dushanbe, Islamic Institute in Khiva, Ferghana and an Islamic centre in Tashkent. Student hostels, playing fields and language and science laboratories should be established for the Islamic Institute now known as the Imam Bukhari Institute in Tashkent, and the Miri Arab School in Bukhara.

The Islamic Institutes already in existence should be supplied with Islamic books, including the best-known reference books relevant to the study of Islam and the Arabic language, and recordings of Arabic lessons and Qur'anic recitation.

Coordination should be achieved with the Religious Boards over the rapid production and distribution of translations of the meaning of the Qur'an in Russian, Uzbek, Tatar, Kazakh, Farsi, and other languages, in conformity with the arrangements already made during the Muslim World League's discussions with heads of the Boards.

Relief organisations in the Muslim world should be encouraged to send tents, clothing, foodstuffs and medicine to the Muslims displaced in Azerbaijan following the events which occurred between the Muslims and the Armenian community. Similar supplies should be sent to the Muslim survivors of the Chechen-Ingush earthquakes.

All efforts to raise donations from individual philanthropists or charitable organisations should be institutionalized in the form of a supervisory committee composed of representatives from already active international organizations like the Islamic Development Bank, Iqra Charitable Society, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the Muslim World Relief Organisation and of course the Muslim World League, which could also act as the convenor of the committee.

Because of the limited time available and the large size of the Soviet territory, the League delegation was able to visit only Moscow, Ufa, Kazan, Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, Urgendj, Ferghana, Margalan, Tashhodh, and Dushanbe. In order to study the need for support of the other Muslim regions, the League delegation recommends that another fact-finding visit to the USSR should be organized in the near future. It should cover Groznyy, capital of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, Nalchik, capital of the Kabardina-Balkar ASSR, Makhachkala, capital of the Dagestan ASSR, Cheboksary, capital of the Chuvash ASSR. Ordshonikidze, capital of the N. Ossetian ASSR. Sukhumi, capital of the Abkhaz ASSR. Batumi,

Islamic broadcasting should be strengthened by the establishment of radio facilities in states close to concentrations of Muslims in the USSR and China, such as Pakistan and Turkey.

Member countries of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference should be encouraged to broadcast in Russian and local languages to the Soviet and Chinese Muslim communities. The Organisation for Islamic Broadcasters should be invited to prepare a joint plan for Islamic broadcasting and to develop Islamic programmes and materials of relevance to Soviet and Chinese Muslims.

Media organisations, universities and Islamic research academies should be invited to direct their attention to the affairs of Muslims living in Communist countries, and to make available accurate facts which reflect the Islamic viewpoint. At present the sole source of information for Muslims in the region are non-Muslim media bodies.

The Muslim World League should open an office in Moscow with a branch in Tashkent to monitor Islamic activity and to strengthen links between the Muslims and their religious administration in the USSR.

A programme should be inaugurated to finance and support the publication of Islamic books and other materials which explain the history of the Muslims, and outline the contributions made by their ancestors to human civilization, in order to improve their morale and their pride in being Muslim.

Scholarships should be allocated to young Muslims from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China to allow them to study at the Islamic universities in the Muslim world such as those at Madina, Makkah, Riyadh and Cairo, in order to train a new generation of qualified imams and religious leaders schooled in correct Islamic theology. Diplomatic ties should be established between the Soviet Union and all Muslim countries. Muslim businessmen should be encouraged to trade in the USSR and establish investment projects and Islamic banks in the Muslim areas in order to improve their economic conditions.

Cultural activity is now one of the main priorities of Islamic work among Soviet Muslims. The Muslims of the region need to retrieve their confidence in their civilization. This can be accomplished through (a) Written and audio-visual materials explaining Islam and its teachings, and its connection with life, knowledge and civilization, in a clear and straightforward style containing an implicit refutation of all the fallacies projected by the enemies of religion. This should be done in Russian and the various local languages used by Muslims of the area. (b) Certain books and studies already available should be made suitable to the Soviet Muslim religious culture, and translated into Russian and other languages of the region. The Ahmadiyya and the Ismailis are already doing this for their followers in the Soviet Union. (c) Good books from the Islamic past written by the ancestors of the present Soviet Muslims, and particularly those written in the indigenous Islamic languages, should be reprinted, to remind the new generation of the intellectual life of their forefathers, and to reconnect them to their Islamic cultural heritage. (d) Communities, individuals, and Islamic schools should be supplied with whatever they need by way of Islamic educational and training resources in order to provide

Table II

The Soviet Republics with Islamic Majorities

<i>Republic</i>	<i>Area in Km²</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage of Muslims</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Azerbaijan	82800	7270000	82	Baku
Uzbekistan	447400	19810077	86	Tashkent
Tadzhikistan	143100	5490000	88	Dushanbe
Turkmenia	488100	3789000	86	Askhabad
Kazakhstan	2717000	16782000	52	Alma Ata
Kirghizia	198500	4590000	73	Frunze

Table III

Autonomous Republics with Sizeable Muslim Populations

<i>ASSR</i>	<i>Area in Km²</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage of Muslims</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Tatar	68000	4250000	50	Kazan
Bashkiria	143600	4320000	56	Ufa
Chuvash	183000	1320000	58	Cheboksary
Kabardino-Balkar	12500	762000	55	Nalchik
Daghestan	40300	2350000	60	Makhashkala
Chechen-Ingush	19300	1735000	66	Groznyy
N Ossetia	8000	919000	55	Ordzhonikid
Abkhazia	8600	750000	30	Sukhumi
Adzharia	3000	450000	40	Batumi
Udmurt	42100	1850000	52	Izhevsk
Mordovia	26200	1150000	55	Saransk
Nakhichevan	5500	297000	95	Nakhichevan
Mari	23200	958000	52	Yoshkar Ola
Karakalpak	164900	1450000	80	Nukus

capital of the Adzhar ASSR. Cherkessk, capital of the Karachajevo-Cherkess ASSR. Baku, capital of the Azerbaijani ASSR.

A third visit could then include Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Turkmenia, Karakalpak, Mongolia and Siberia.

Table 1
Muslim population of the Soviet Union
January 19, 1989.

<i>Community</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1979</i>	<i>Average % increase</i>
Uzbek	16686240	12455978	34.0
Kazakh	8137878	6556442	24.1
Azeri	6791106	5477330	24.0
Tadzhik	4216693	2897697	45.5
Turcoman	2718297	2027913	34.0
Kirghiz	2530998	1906271	32.8
Tatar	6645588	6185196	7.4
Daghestani	2072071	1656676	25.1
Chuvash	1839228	1751366	5.0
Bashkir	1449462	1371452	5.7
Chechen	958309	755782	26.8
Ossete	597802	541983	10.3
Kara-Kalpak	423436	303324	39.6
Kabhardo	394651	321719	22.7
Krim	268739	132272	103.2
Uighur	262199	210612	24.5
Ingush	237577	286198	27.6
Turk	207369	92689	123.7
Karachay	156140	131174	19.1
Kurd	152952	115858	32.0
Uvish	124941	108711	14.9
Abkhazi	102938	90915	13.2
Bulgar	88711	66334	32.8
Donkan	69686	51694	34.8
Cherkess	52356	46470	12.7
Baluch	29091	18997	53.1
Arab	11599	6813	70.2

Note: Communist authorities do not issue statistics on the basis of religious affiliation, but rather on a national and ethnic basis, and the above figures therefore do not reflect the actual number of Muslims in the USSR. They do, however, show the size of each Muslim national group, and on the basis of this data we may say that the Muslims amount to approximately 60 million people out of the Soviet total population of 285,688,965

WOMEN AS MINORITIES

- Muslim Cultural Norms Regarding Family,
Women and Sex 211
Muhammad Anaz Zarqa
- Family, Women and Sex Life: Two Alternate Models 212
Muhammad Al-Mubarak

BOOK REVIEWS

- Kenneth Cragg: Readings in the Quran 217
Reviewer: A.B.A. Bawhab
- Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies
Distorted Imagination: Lessons from the Rushdie Affair 223
Reviewer: Ameer Ali
- Serif Mardin: Religion and Social Change in
Modern Turkey: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi 229
Reviewer: Hakan Yavuz
- Muhammed Mufaku: Tarikh Belgrade Al Islamiya
(History of Islamic Belgrade) 232
Reviewer: Abubakr Bagader
- Abubakr Bagader and Ava Molnar Heinrichsdorff:
Assassination of Light: Modern Saudi Short Stories 235
Reviewer: John G. Kuhn
- Stanley Wolpert: Jinnah of Pakistan,
Ayesha Jalal: The Sole Spokesman 238
Reviewer: M. Kamlin
- Iqbal A. Ansari: The Muslim Situation in India 252
Reviewer: Violette Graff
- Rafiq Zakaria: The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict
Between Religion and Politics 253
Reviewer: Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi
- M.B. Hooker: Islamic Law in South-East Asia
and Islam in Southeast Asia 259
Reviewer: Riaz Hassan

Table IV

Autonomous Regions with Sizeable Muslim Population

<i>Region</i>	<i>Area in Km²</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage of Muslims</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Ngorno	4400	278000	30	Stepankert
Karabagh				
Karacha-yevo- Cherkness	14100	450000	60	Cherkessk
Odigha	7600	540000	50	Mabkop
Orenburg	112000	2500000	50	Orenburg
G.-Badakhshan Badakhshan	67300	180000	85	Khorog

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