

# MIDDLE ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

## COMMUNIQUE

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### THE MIDDLE ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

The Middle Asian Studies Association has been established by scholars and researchers whose primary focus is on Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle Volga, but, since these regions for most of their history have been closely linked with the areas immediately to the west and south, the Association will also encourage participation by specialists in Russia and Slavic studies, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and the whole inner Asian area from the Himalayas northeastward. Far Eastern specialists interested in Central Asia will be welcome as well. Though the focus of concern is primarily geographically defined, there are common cultural, linguistic, and even political factors which are also focal points of interest: Islam, Turkic, and Iranian historical and cultural traditions, the legacies of Ottoman, Russian, British, and Chinese imperial experience. In the XXth century, this entire region has been affected by complex processes of revolution, economic development, cultural and political transformation, much of it in the framework, or in the shadow, of Communist systems. Participation by specialists in Soviet and Chinese minority policies, planned economic development, demography, and cultural and social reform as it affects all the peoples of Middle Asia, is encouraged.

The Association aims to be inclusive rather than exclusive. It prefers not to draw rigid boundaries around its geographic area nor to attempt to define narrowly the functional fields from which it expects to attract participation. The Association aims to collaborate, not compete

or supplant, existing groups which specialize in Slavic or various branches of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Oriental studies.

Specialists in the academic world and in government who have taken the initiative to establish this Association are responding to the need they have perceived for a mechanism for a more efficient exchange of news and information as well as an instrument for encouraging and coordinating research on a region which has been gaining increasing attention for a period of several years. The populations of this entire area are growing rapidly in numbers. Most of the peoples of the region are caught up in a process of modernization which is accelerating. At the same time, Islam has been reasserting itself in various--and in part poorly understood--ways and many of the nationalities of the region are becoming more conscious of their own history and traditions. It is a region of Russian-Chinese rivalries, a region where American and European interests compete not only with political influence from the north but have recently been seen to clash with local traditions. Those of us who have taken the initiative to form this Association feel that we are responding to an obvious need which will become more apparent during the years ahead.

In its membership, too, the Association aims to be inclusive. Academic specialists, journalists, businessmen, and



government officials are all welcome. The initiative for formation of the Association has been American, but we hope to see the membership become broadly international.

In its initial stages, the Association aims to do no more than exchange information and in this way to encourage and informally coordinate research. If resources can be found, the Association may be able to collect materials, organize conferences, subsidize research, and sponsor publication. When, and if, such tasks can be undertaken depends on the membership we attract and the initiative we are able to generate.

#### THE MASA COMMUNIQUÉ

This Communiqué is the product of considerable planning and thinking about bringing some order to our research on the region called Middle Asia. The American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) found merit in this idea and provided MASA with a modest grant to initiate the project. In the beginning, we intend to publish four issues of the Communiqué per year; given the time constraints on those who actually will assemble each issue, as well as the difficulties associated with collecting material from all parts of the globe, the publication schedule likely will be erratic. We sue for patience in advance.

AAASS largesse is not forever. MASA has been advised that it may have to find funding elsewhere for a second year effort or become self-sustaining. If the latter becomes necessary, we may have to consider a small subscription fee. But not yet.

The Communiqué will succeed or fail on the basis of the amount and variety of material submitted for publication. Therefore, we request that our readers keep us informed about all facets of Middle Asian research. For example, we seek up-to-date information on the following:

--New books (including those published over the last three or four years) in all languages. Mention should include a brief (one or two paragraph) description of the book but not a review;

--Conferences and workshops on topics of interest to the readership, preferably before they are held, if possible, or afterward. Include a summary of what was discussed and mention of any papers that were delivered and whether they are available;

--Articles from all sources dealing with historical, cultural, economic, political, sociological, or ethnographic aspects of Middle Asian life;

--Travel and research opportunities;

--Academic research in progress, including theses and dissertations;

--Nonacademic work in progress. We view this information to be especially important, as we seek to acknowledge the efforts of many individuals whose research efforts have proceeded independent of formal institutional ties and who often possess rich archives and extensive personal experience;

--Official and unofficial exchanges with Middle Asia, including faculty exchanges, students, and delegations;

--Language training. Mention where it is available, the cost, and dates;

--Descriptions of travel to Middle Asia;

--Societies, clubs, gatherings. Include the name of the organization, the names of its leadership, where and when it meets.

This is far from an exclusive list. When in doubt about the significance of any particular information, please, send it along.

#### TRIBUTE TO AVICENNA

James Critchlow (Board of International Broadcasting, 1030 15th St., N.W., Washington D.C. 20005), long a student of Avicenna and his times, writes:

This year marks the 1,000th anniversary of the birth of the Islamic philosopher and physician known in the West as Avicenna, and in the East as Abu Ali al-Husain ibn Abdullah al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Sina. He was born near Bukhara during the beginning of the month of Safar A.H. 370, corresponding to the



second half of August A.D. 980.

Ibn Sina/Avicenna, who was at home in Persian and Arabic, was a prolific writer on both philosophical and scientific topics. He was one of the Islamic authors who helped to preserve the work of Aristotle and other ancient Greek philosophers, while carrying it forward along original lines. Avicennan influence is traceable in the work of later philosophers, not only Muslim but also Jewish and Christian, among them Moses Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas.

According to the *Cambridge History of Islam*: "With Ibn Sina, Muslim medicine reached the peak of its achievement. While less of a clinical physician than al-Razi, he was more philosophical, more systematic; he tried to rationalize the immense accumulations of medical science which had been inherited from antiquity and enriched by his predecessors. He left behind him a lively autobiography, from which it emerged that he had been a precocious genius, who by the age of sixteen had mastered the medical science of his time. In spite of a disturbed social and political career, he succeeded in pursuing his studies, writing all the time on his travels, in the evenings after his day's work, and even in prison when the troubled turn of events had brought him there."

Ibn Sina first became known in the West when in the twelfth century his medical treatise "Kitab al-qanun fi'l-Tibb" was translated from Arabic into Latin by an Italian of Cremona. His works have been published in various Western as well as Eastern languages, and a new five-volume edition of the "Qanun" is currently being issued in Uzbek.

This Bukharan genius, who lived and worked in a flourishing Islamic civilization when Europe was still struggling in the aftermath of the Dark Ages, is a major figure in the concept of *miras*, or cultural heritage, which has become key to Central Asian ethnic awareness. The observance of his anniversary is now being celebrated almost daily by articles, verse, plays and stories in the vernacular media of Soviet Central Asia. It provides Western

scientific and academic institutions with an opportunity to recognize their common heritage with Central Asian counterparts, and by extension to signal their appreciation of such other historic figures from the area as Al-Biruni (whose travelogue on India was recently reissued in English), or the Samarqand astronomer Ulugh Bek, or the mathematician al-Khorezmi (from whose work the word "algebra" is derived).

#### NEW RESEARCH MATERIALS

Yildiz. Creation of a Tatar-language journal in Tashkent is revealed by the Uzbek-language *Ozbekistan madaniyati* (June 29, 1979) in reporting on its front page a decree of the Uzbek Central Committee devoted solely to the event.

The new "sociopolitical and literary-artistic journal," to be called *Yildiz* ("Star"), will come into being as of January 1980, with six issues a year each consisting of 14 printer's sheets. (For comparison, the June 1979 issue of the monthly journal of the Uzbek Writers Union, *Sharq yulduzi*, was made up of 21 printer's sheets and contained 240 pages.)

\* Shärqi Türkstan ävazi. According to reports, nine issues of this handwritten, Uighur-language newspaper in the Arabic script have appeared. To date, we know little about this newspaper and have never seen a copy. Perhaps one of our readers can provide more information. Better still, does anyone know how MASA can get on the mailing list for *Shärqi Türkstan ävazi*? For more detailed information on this new source, see John Soper's recent piece of Radio Liberty Research (RL 38/80, January 28, 1980).

#### OTHER NEWSLETTERS

TASG NEWS (Newsletter of the Turkish/Turkic Area Study Group, Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, School for Oriental and African Studies, University of London). This newsletter reports the events of the Turkish/Turkic Area Study Group, whose aim "is to promote the study of any aspect of the Turkish/Turkic peoples or the areas in



which they live, reaching across disciplinary, college and national boundaries" (from issue No. 1). The Convenor and Editor of the TASG NEWS is Dr. Margaret Bainbridge; subscription requests should be directed to her at The School for Oriental and African Studies, Univ. of London, Room 433, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HP; telephone: 01-637-2388.

#### CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Western Slavic Conference, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, March 20, 1980, 1:00--3:00 PM:

Panel Title: Uzbek Ethnicity Today

Chairman: Paul Henze (National Security Council)

Papers: Ilse Cirtautas (Univ. of Washington)  
"Trends in Foreign Borrowings in Uzbek"  
James Critchlow (Board of International Broadcasting)  
"Boundaries of 'Uzbek' Identity"  
John Soper (Radio Liberty, Munich)  
"Uzbek Ethnic Symbols"

Discussant: Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone (Carleton University)

#### ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

In each issue of the MASA Communiqué, we hope to be able to identify associations, research groups, cultural centers, and individuals who possess specialized or unique knowledge of various aspects of Middle Asian history and culture. To this end, we encourage our readers to bring to our attention individuals and groups, publications and archival resources which might be of benefit to researchers and scholars throughout the world. This issue of the *Communiqué* focuses on Volga-Ural Tatar communities, their organizations and/or their community leaders.

#### Volga-Ural Tatars

TURKEY: Kazan Türkleri Kültür ve Yardimlasma Dernegi

Istanbul: Fulyali Sokak, 14, Ic Levent.

Ankara: 9-cu Cadde No. 26 A, Emek Mahallesi.

Eskisehir: Hatipoglu Kitabevi, Köprübaşı.

FINLAND: Finlandiya Islam Cemiyeti

Helsinki: Suomen Islam Seurakunta, Fridrikinkatu 33.

JAPAN: Japonya Türk Cemiyeti

Tokyo: c/o Ahmet Apanay, 47-1,2 chome Nishihara-cho. Shibuya-ku.

U.S.A.: American Turco-Tatar Assoc., Burlingame: PO Box 1215, Ca., 94010

American Islamic Assoc., College Point: 20-09, 122nd, NY 11356

W. GERMANY:

Munich: c/o Ferit Agi, 7 Munchen 40, Hiltensperger str.32.

AUSTRALIA:

Sydney: c/o Resit Mansur, 21, Ivanhoe Rd., Croydon, NSW 2132

#### CURRENT INVENTORY

MASA *Communiqué* seeks to identify individuals and groups in all parts of the world who conduct research on various aspects of Middle Asian history, politics, economics, and culture. Again, we ask our readers to contribute to our inventory. Specialists and groups working in many parts of the Middle East, India, the Peoples Republic of China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, and other eastern countries are almost unknown to specialists in the Western Hemisphere and Europe.

Our inventory begins with Soviet specialists of Islam from Moscow and Leningrad. In the next several issues of the *Communiqué*, we intend to identify many Soviet specialists of Islam from other



parts of the USSR. The basis of our sample is the all-Union conference held in Moscow in December 1968 at the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Sciences of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The theme of this conference was: "The Modernization of Islam and Current Problems of Scientific Atheism." This conference marked the beginning of a new era in Soviet Islamology, marked by a more "scientific" approach to the practice of Islam in the USSR and elsewhere. In all, 43 scholars, historians, sociologists, philosophers, and specialists of Islam and anti-Islamic propaganda discussed the condition of Islam in the USSR and abroad. Their papers and findings were published in a rare book entitled *Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii: Modernizatsiia Islama i Aktual'nye voprosy teorii mauchnogo ateizma--Tazixy dokladov* (Moscow, 1968). Nearly all specialists who took part in the conference of 1968 have since become leading authorities in the field of Islamic studies. Therefore, it is useful to present them and, for the most important, to identify some of their works.

#### Moscow

Batunskii, M.A., candidate of Philosophical Sciences, collaborator of the Institute of practical social research, Academy of Science of the USSR, Moscow.

Paper on "The current Western historiography of Islam"

Gordon-Polonskaiia, L.R., Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, senior collaborator of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia, Academy of Science of the USSR, Moscow.

Paper on "The contemporary Muslim nationalism in Pakistan."

Sadagdar, M.I., Candidate of Law, senior collaborator of the Institute of Peoples of Africa, Academy of Science, USSR.

Paper on "The development of the Muslim law in Africa."

Sultanov, A.F., candidate of Historical Sciences, senior collaborator of the Institute of Peoples of Asia, Academy of Science, USSR.

Paper on "The Egyptian clergy and the non-capitalist development of 'UAR'."

Dauletiarov, S.R., aspirant at the Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Science, USSR.

Paper on "The sociological research concerning the religiosity of the rural population of the Chimkent region (Kazakhstan)."

Kerimov, G.M., Candidate of Historical Sciences, scientific collaborator of the Institute of the Scientific Atheism, Academy of Social Sciences, Moscow.

Paper on "Prospects of modernization of Islam abroad."

Klimovich, L.I., Professor, Institute of Literature "Gorki."

Paper on "The Freethinking and atheism in Islam."

Okulov, A.F., Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Director of the Institute of Scientific Atheism, Academy of Social Sciences.

Paper on "The situation and prospects of Soviet research concerning Islam in the USSR and abroad."

Rajapov, U.S., Head of the Section "Islamic Ideology" of the journal *Nauka i Religia*.

Paper on "The attempts to conciliate Islam and Science."

Taverdova, E.A., candidate of Historical Sciences, collaborator of the Institute of Peoples of Africa.

Paper on "Islam in Africa."

#### Leningrad

Stetzkevich, T.A., scientific collaborator of the Museum of the History of Religion and of Atheism.

Paper on "The Soviet historiography and the modernization of Islam."



HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

If you wish to receive the MASA *Communiqué* in the future, or if you know of other individuals and groups who should receive it, please write to the following address:

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1700 Main Street  
Santa Monica, California 90406

U.S.A.

Mark all subscription requests and other communications PERSONAL.