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S. ENDERS WIMBUSH

# Muslims of the Soviet Empire

A Guide

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*Les Codouls and Ruères*  
June 1986

A.A.B.  
S.E.W.



# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	page v
Foreword by Hans Bräker	vii

## PART ONE

1. Introduction	1
2. The Spread of Islam and Russian Expansion	5
<i>Arab conquest, 600-800</i>	6
<i>Expansion along trade routes, 800-1200</i>	6
<i>The Mongol empire, 1200-1300</i>	7
<i>Russian expansion, 1500-1900</i>	7
<i>Revolutionary period and Soviet takeover, 1905-1928</i>	11
3. The Official Practice of Islam in the Soviet Union	13
<i>Sunni Islam — Ja'afarite Rite of Shi'ism — The Ismailis of Nizarit rite — The Bahais — The Shi'a extremists — The Yezidis — The official administration</i>	14
4. Mosques, <i>Medressehs</i> and Islamic Publications	17
<i>The number of mosques</i>	17
<i>The religious educational institutions</i>	19
<i>Religious publications</i>	19
5. Parallel Islam	21
6. Soviet Muslims and the Future: Prospects and Problems	24
<i>Demographic shifts</i>	24
<i>Labour distribution</i>	26
<i>Military manpower</i>	28
<i>The problem of identity</i>	31
<i>Borderland dilemmas</i>	35

## Notes to Part One

40

## PART TWO

7. The Muslims of Central Asia	45
(i) <i>The Uzbeks</i>	50
(ii) <i>The Kazakhs</i>	63
(iii) <i>The Kirghiz</i>	73
(iv) <i>The Tajiks</i>	85
(v) <i>The Turkmen</i>	93
(vi) <i>The Dungans</i>	106
(vii) <i>The Karakalpaks</i>	108
(viii) <i>The Uighurs</i>	115
(ix) <i>The Baluchi</i>	120
(x) <i>The Pamirian peoples</i>	121
(xi) <i>The Ironis</i>	123
(xii) <i>The Central Asian Tsiganes</i>	124
(xiii) <i>The Central Asian Arabs</i>	125
8. The Muslims of Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus	127
(i) <i>The Azeri Turks</i>	133
(ii) <i>The Muslims of the North Caucasus</i>	146
(iii) <i>The Daghestanis</i>	160
(iv) <i>The Chechen-Ingush</i>	181
(v) <i>The Cherkess tribes</i>	190
(vi) <i>The Abazas</i>	200
(vii) <i>The Karachai-Balkars</i>	201
(viii) <i>The Muslim Ossetians</i>	204
(ix) <i>The Shah Dagh peoples</i>	206
(x) <i>The Georgian Muslims: Adjars, Ingilois, Laz</i>	207
(xi) <i>The Kurds</i>	209
(xii) <i>The Abkhaz</i>	213
(xiii) <i>The Meskhetians</i>	216
(xiv) <i>The Talyshes</i>	219
(xv) <i>The Muslim Tats</i>	220



9. The Muslims of European Russia and Siberia	224
(i) <i>The Tatars</i>	224
(ii) <i>The Crimean Tatars</i>	240
(iii) <i>The Bashkirs</i>	241
Glossary	249
Bibliography	251
Index	278

## MAPS

Distribution of the Muslim peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan	I-II (between pages 44 and 45)
The Muslim peoples of the Caucasus	126
The Muslim peoples of the Middle Volga	224

# Muslims of the Soviet Empire

## *A Guide*

By Alexandre Bennigsen and  
S. Enders Wimbush

The Soviet Union, with an Islamic population of some 50 million, is one of the world's largest Muslim states. This wide-ranging reference work by two leading specialists culminates years of research and provides basic information about the Muslims of the Soviet Union. Part I considers the historical roots of Islam in Russia, the political dynamics of Muslim life within the multinational Soviet state, the practice of Islam, and the domestic and regional issues likely to affect the future of the Soviet Muslim community. Part II is devoted to a detailed examination of the history, culture, demography and politics of Muslim ethnic groups in Central Asia, Transcaucasia, the North Caucasus, European Russia and Siberia. Up-to-date demographic information is presented in 86 tables. An extensive bibliography provides sources in many languages for the further study of each of the groups.

In this work, which provides the basic building blocks for an accurate understanding of Soviet Muslim society, Bennigsen and Wimbush emphasise that an appreciation of the Islamic factor should constitute the central pillar of research on the subject. Rapid population increases have probably been more important in bringing Soviet Muslim issues to the fore than the attachment of millions of individuals, deep inside the Communist camp, to the community of Islam, the *umma*. Yet today the demographic dynamism of Soviet Muslim people cannot be considered apart from questions of the Soviet Muslims' self-identity and their adherence to a body of Islamic traditions and psychological

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