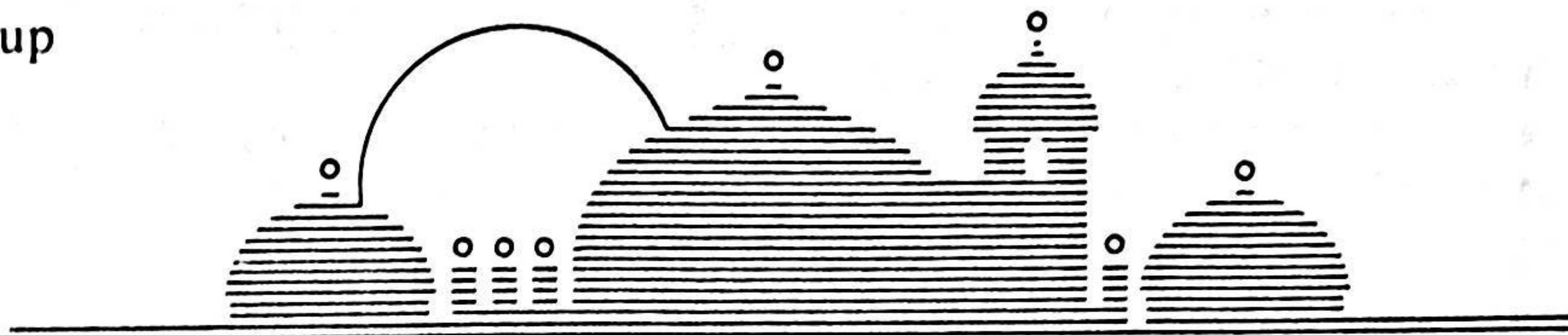


THE CENTRAL ASIAN NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE SOVIET PRESS

PRAVDA VOSTOKA

19 October 1984, "Molodezhi-Ateisticheskuiu Ubezhdennost'" (Atheistic Conviction for Youth). Editorial, reprint from Pravda of 18 October 1984. On the importance of atheistic education. Article points out Turkmenistan as one of the main areas where official indifference regarding atheistic propaganda plays in the hand of religious communities which are thus able to ensnare the youth.

9 November 1984, S. Gerinovich, "Kalinin na Krasnykh Krestinakh. Iz Istorii Sovetskikh Grazhdanskikh Obriadov" (Kalinin and Red Baptism. From the History of the Soviet Civilian Rites). With an attack on Muslim attitude to women in the 1920s.

SOVETSKAIA KIRGIZIIA

4 September 1984, V. Stroilov, "Antisovetizm v Toge Zashchitnika Islama (Antisovietism Dressed as Defender of Islam). The article begins by praising the activity of the Soviet Muslim Religious Boards in countering Western propaganda in the Muslim world regarding the status of the Soviet Muslims. However, the author remarks that due to the activity of foreign radio stations and reactionary Muslim clergy, many Muslims abroad have a distorted view of the life of Soviet Muslims. The loyalty of the Soviet Muslim clergy to the regime is praised and compared favourably to the "morale decadence

and corruption" of some "spiritual shepherds" in the Muslim world abroad which, according to the author, the Soviet Muftis have had many opportunities to witness. This is followed by an attack on Alexandre Bennigsen and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse. Bennigsen is said to be the creator of the "myth of the 'awakening' (probuzhdenie) of Islam in the USSR." Bennigsen's "fury" claims the author has been awakened by the loyal services of the Soviet Muftis to the government and he is accused of deliberately denigrating their activity. "Islam professed by believers in Central Asia, according to Bennigsen, is not the real one, it is 'official' therefore bad. Instead he offers the 'real', traditional one, characterised by hatred towards foreigners, anti-Russian and anti-Soviet and uncompromisingly opposed to Soviet rule. This aspect of Islam A. Bennigsen has contrived to find, supposedly, only among the followers of 'underground Sufi tariqa, numbering hundreds of thousands of members and controlling a network of Qoranic schools and houses of prayers which are more numerous than official mosques'". Hélène Carrère d'Encausse is specifically attacked for having written in L'Empire Eclaté that Soviet Muslims are trying to "unite within the system", and that there is an exodus by Muslims from Central Asian cities to the rural areas in order to avoid proximity with Russians and Ukrainians. In order to refute H. Carrere d'Encausse's argument, Stroilov quotes some figures from the 1979 All-Union census, but out of context

which renders them meaningless. She is accused of dreaming of the collapse of the Soviet empire through an awakening of nationalist cum religious feelings among the Muslims of the USSR.

Col. Geoffrey Wheeler, described as "sober-minded", is quoted as having written, regarding the development of nationalism in the USSR: "...even if such a possibility existed before (ie increased nationalism), now it has come to nothing. In the present circumstances any Muslim national movement, like any similar movements in the Near and Middle East and in Southern Asia, is completely lacking in prospects." To conclude the author writes that it is particularly important to fight against "any attempts to fan the flames of nationalist prejudices among individual people, to decisively oppose any deviation from the Leninist principles on nationality policy of our Party, and to repulse all anti-Soviet saboteurs." This article is interesting on several counts:

- o Although the Soviet Press has usually been careful to avoid open criticism of the Soviet Muftis, it is rare to read on its pages such glowing and exhaustive praises of the official Muslim establishment. This should be noted, taking into account the intensive renewed political activity of the Soviet Muftis since late 1983-1984 in the Muslim world abroad. This follows on almost complete lack of their foreign activity up to 1983, after the invasion of Afghanistan and the failure of the Tashkent conference in Summer 1980.

- o It is the first attack on Bennigsen's writings on the Sufi brotherhood in the USSR and on "official" and "parallel" Islam.
- o Stroilov goes to great length to prove that the multi-national development of Central Asian cities is smooth, thus implicitly denying what serious Soviet ethnographers (such as Professor Bromlei for instance) have been writing for the last few years.

KOMMUNIST TADZHIKISTANA

17 August 1984, A. Safarov, "v Dukhe Ateizma" (In the Spirit of Atheism). The author is professor of philosophy at the Pedagogical Institute Shevchenko in Dushanbe. Following information is given:

- o In the higher education pedagogical institutions students begin by studying philosophy in the second year. Scientific atheism is only taught in the last year after they have absorbed dialectical and historical materialism.

- o Parallel subjects are extremely important - for instance: psychologists must show the students how religion can negatively affect personality; historians have a role to play by convincingly proving the reactionary essence of religion; literature teachers could also help: "It is well known that many of the classic works of Persian-Tajik literature have an anti-clerical character. Ancient authors have very accurately and ruthlessly ridiculed the disreputable way of life of the clerics and their anti-humanitarian ideology, teachers at philological faculties should widely use this literature." Natural sciences naturally feature high as a parallel subject. However, Safarov states that results at examinations are very disappointing - the students answers are weak, they do not use natural sciences in their deductions. This is the case even among students of mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. This situation has sufficiently worried the Institute to force it to amend its programmes for the 1984-1985 teaching year. Until now only four hours a week were devoted to the study of contemporary religions which according to Safarov was not enough to encompass all the complexities of Islam, Christianity and other religions of the USSR. "Therefore, the chair of philosophy of the Institute is devising a special course on the critical analysis of the Muslim religious Weltanschauung." It is recommended that similar measures should be taken by other higher

education institutions in the republic.

TURKMENSKAIA ISKRA

15 August 1984 "Narodnye Universitety" (People's Universities). 1st page editorial. Ashkhabad has 5 "People's universities" and 3 "faculties" of scientific atheism with approximately 300 students. The article complains that not enough attention is paid during the lectures of these "universities" to the negative aspect of religious ideology and survivals of the past.

16 August 1984, T. Ataev, "Pravdo o 'Sviatykh' Mestakh" (The Truth About Holy Places). Several active holy places of pilgrimage are mentioned in this article, all in the Tashauz oblast': Ezber-baba, Ibragim-edkhem and Ashik-Aidyn in the Lenin raion, and Bibal-baba in Ul'ialin raion. The author describes Ashik-Aidyn, which he visited, as a lively place of pilgrimage: usually a religious "activist" is present at the holy place. A book is left there where "we read many religious maxims likely to influence the minds of the listeners." Ataev deplores the lack of combativeness of the Party ideological workers of the Lenin raion. He acknowledges that this holy place is in a remote area difficult to reach but notes that it does not stop the religious "activist" to get there to have "edifying talks with the pilgrims." Nevertheless, the author writes: "It has long been an undeniable fact that the social roots of religion in our country have been cut definitely. Nowadays no-one would dream of going to the ishans or mullahs to solve family or legal problems. Even the most hardened worshipper of Allah will not dream of giving his son to serve the ishans." The main reason for visiting the holy places according to Ataev is to be cured of various illnesses. Ataev's strongest argument against Ashik-Aidyn is that it is not the mausoleum of a pir but that of an ordinary musician.

17 August 1984, S. Kurenov, "Turkmeny Severnogo Kavkaza" (The Turkmens of

the North Caucasus). Historical, anthropological study of the Turkmens of the North Caucasus, their relations with the various ethnic groups established there, especially with the Turkic speaking groups.

2 September 1984, General N. Liashchenko, "Nas Vodila Molodost'" (We Were led by Youth). Very long article by a former deputy commander of the Turkestan Military District (1965-69) who fought in the 1930s in Turkmenistan against the Basmachi. The article is particularly derogatory towards the Basmachi.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales is organising a round table "Les Confréries Soufies dans le Monde Arabo-Islamique: Les Naqshbandis", on 2, 3 and 4 May 1985. For further information contact Alexandre Popovic, 54 Bd Raspail, 75006 Paris, France.

The University of Chicago in conjunction with the 4th International Conference on the Non-Slavic Languages of the Soviet Union is holding a conference on the Cultures of the Caucasus, on 18 May 1985. For further information contact: Howard I. Aronson or Bill J. Darden, Center for Balkan and Slavic Studies, University of Chicago, 1010 E, 59th Street, Chicago, IL, USA 60637.

The University of Wisconsin at Madison shall hold its second international conference on Central Asia on 10-12 October 1985, at the J.F. Friederich Center on the campus. The subject of the conference will be leadership in Central Asia, namely: Native Elites and the Distribution of Power, Authority and Income in Central Asia.

For participants paying their own expenses the cost of room and three meals shall be approximately \$40 per day. For further information write to: Professor Kemal H. Karpat c/o Audrey Altstadt-Mirhadi 4116 Humanities Building University of Wisconsin Madison, Wis. USA 53706

Radio Liberty Conference

Munich, Germany, 19-20 August 1985
CENTRAL ASIA: THE DECADES AHEAD

The Fall of the Soviet Empire:
Prospects for transition to a
Post-Soviet World.

The Second International Congress of
Professors World Peace Academy,
Geneva, Switzerland, 13-18 August 1985

SUMMER RESEARCH LABORATORY AT ILLINOIS

The Russian and East European Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will offer in 1985 its thirteenth annual Summer Research Laboratory on Russia and East Europe. The programme is designed for scholars who wish to use the resources of the University Library. Graduate students doing dissertation research are also eligible. Associateships will be available for any period of time between 1 June and 3 August. In addition to full library privileges, Associates will be offered housing awards for up to fourteen nights, and are welcome to stay longer at their own expense.

In addition to carrying on independent study, Associates will have the opportunity to meet with their colleagues for the presentation of papers and the discussion of current research. Special seminars devoted to Russian and Soviet culture, Soviet international behaviour, and Ukrainian history are planned. Application forms and additional information are available from Dianne Merridith, Russian and East European Center, University of Illinois, 1208 West California, Urbana, Illinois 61801, USA.

WAKE UP TO UZBEK

The Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center and the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies, Indiana University will offer an intensive course on Introductory Uzbek in the second summer session of 1985. The course will be held 14 June to 9 August 1985 and taught by U. Schamiloglu. The course is designed to introduce the student to the official literary language of the

Uzbek SSR, a language which is now spoken by the third largest ethnic group--and the largest Turkic group--in the Soviet Union (12 million people). It will cover pronunciation, essential grammar, reading and writing. Additional readings will introduce the student to the culture and the daily life of the Uzbek people. The course will be offered for 4 credits for undergraduate students, and for 3 credits for graduate students. A limited number of fellowships are available through the Inner Asian & Uralic National Resource Center. For further information please contact: Professor Denis Sinor Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center, Goodbody Hall 101, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405, USA tel: 812-335-0959

CENTRAL ASIAN SURVEY--SPECIAL ISSUE

Volume 2, Number 4 of Central Asian Survey is devoted to the study of Sufism in the USSR. It contains the following articles on this topic:

- o Chantal Lemerancier-Quellejray, "Sufi Brotherhoods in the USSR: A Historical Survey."
- o Azade-Ayse Rorlich, "Sufism in Tatarstan: Deep Roots and New Concerns."
- o David Nissman, "Iran and Soviet Islam: The Azerbaijan and Turkmen SSRs."
- o Olivier Roy, "Sufism and the Afghan Resistance."

This issue also includes a substantial bibliography on Sufism in the USSR by Alexandre Bennigsen. The issue is available from Pergamon Press Ltd., Headington Hill Hall, Oxford UK OX3 0BW

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The Central Asian Newsletter is available from PO Box 131, Oxford OX1 2NJ. Subscription fees are 10 pounds sterling or \$12 (US) for individuals and 20 pounds sterling or \$24 (US) for institutions.