

# Islam and Communism in China

Hajji Yusuf Chang

Before discussing the problems of "Islam and Communism" in Red China, I would like to introduce to you some of the most important characteristics of Chinese Islam, which have enabled it to grow quite freely and independently without being completely absorbed or assimilated by Chinese culture.

The Chinese Muslims, except a very few, are the descendants of the Arabs, Turks or Persians, who migrated to China during the seventh to fourteenth centuries. They are related to the Hans through inter-marriage and form a religious group and an ethnic minority. Thus religious faith and ethnic solidarity are the two fundamental characteristics of the Muslim community in China.<sup>1</sup>

The size of the Chinese Muslim population has been a controversial subject for more than half a century. In 1938 the Nationalist Government gave a total figure of more than 10,000,000 Muslims in China, whereas the Communist regime gave a figure of only 10,000,000 in 1952.<sup>2</sup> According to the Nationalist census, there were 42,371 mosques in China for the 48 million Muslims, averaging one mosque for every 1,130 Muslims. But according to the Communist estimates, although there were still more than 40,000 mosques in 1952,<sup>3</sup> the Muslim population has been

This paper was read at the Upstate Conference of the Association of Asian Studies at the Syracuse University, New York, on 7 October 1967 by a Chinese scholar, Hajji Yusuf Chang, at present lecturer in Chinese at the University of Chicago. The learned writer makes some startling revelations about the Muslims of China and observes that they are steadily being engulfed by Communism.

(arbitrarily) reduced to 10,000,000, averaging one mosque for only 250 Muslims. For example, among the 80,000 Peking Muslims<sup>4</sup> right now, there are 49 mosques<sup>5</sup>, averaging one mosque for 1630 Muslims. Taking the low Communist figure and the actual high Peking figure into consideration, we will find out easily the actual average number of Muslims for one mosque, i.e., between 500 and 800. In other words, the total Chinese Muslim population on the mainland should be somewhere between 20,000,000 and 32,000,000 at least.<sup>6</sup>

In China, wherever one finds Muslims, he will find a mosque. It functions as their religious and social centre. During uprisings, both in the Manchu and the Republican periods, the mosques in the North-West and South-West were used as headquarters or commanding posts of the Muslim armies. In each mosque, there is an *Ahung*, who is not only an Islamic teacher, but also a spiritual leader, "who exercises a civil power, real, though unofficial."<sup>7</sup>

By nature, the Chinese Mus-

lims are tough soldiers, hard-working farmers, cattle-raisers, and clever businessmen. They monopolise the mutton-beef trade, and are skilful in running restaurants and inns. The jade trade has been largely operated by them. There were many high-ranking Muslim officials, both civil and military, during the Yuan-Ming period (1280-1644) and in the Nationalist Government.<sup>8</sup>

## Pre-Republican Period

In their daily life, the Chinese get up before daybreak to perform the morning prayer, and go to bed soon after the evening prayer. In Muslim villages, there are to be found neither pigs nor dogs. There are neither gambling halls, bars, nor houses of prostitution. There the air is fresher, the streets cleaner, and the people healthier. They enjoy very much the games such as horse-racing, hunting, or shooting. These differences between the Muslims and the Hans separate them in their daily life. It is only through economic and political interre-

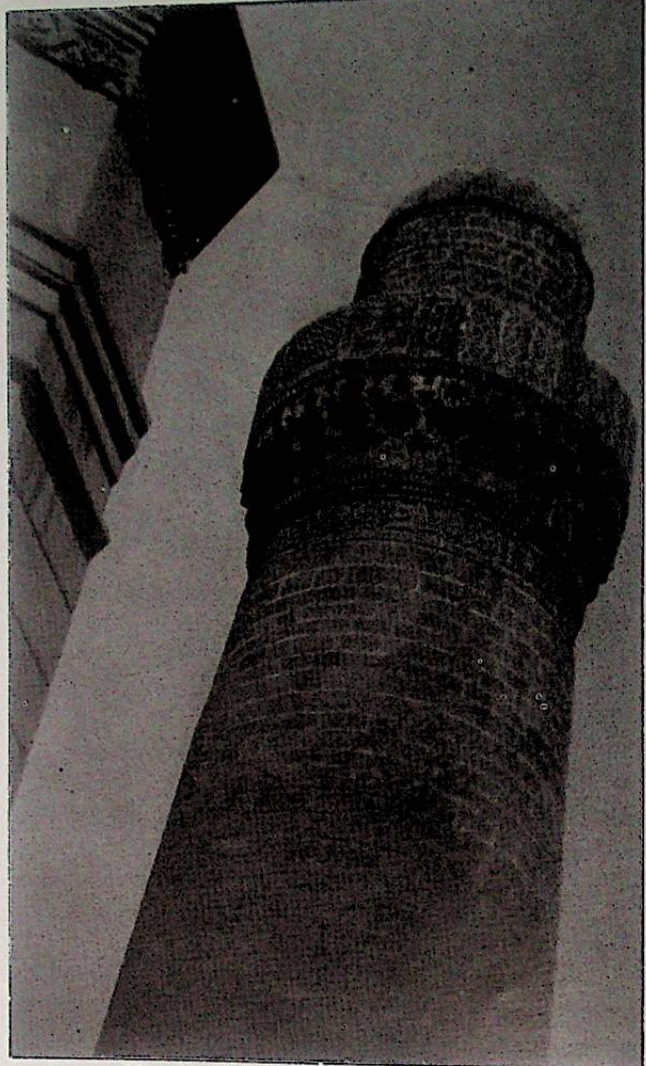
lations that the Muslim and the Hans meet in public contact, but not in private life.

In peace time, the Chinese Muslims are good believers and loyal subjects. In war, they always stand by the side of the party or the government, which protects the freedom of religion; and they will fight against any side which tries to destroy Islam.

In 757 C.E., it was due largely to the military assistance of the Arab contingent, sent by the second Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (R.754-75) that the T'ang Dynasty (617-907) was saved from the rebel forces under An Lu-Shan (d.757). It was mainly with the naval assistance of P'u Shou-keng, a Sinised Arab, the Superintendent of Merchant Shipping at Ch'uan-chou and the Military Commandant of Fukien province during the later years of the Southern Sung Dynasty (1127-1279), who defeated the Mongols in 1276, that Kublai Khan (R.1260-94) finally destroyed the Sung house in 1279.<sup>10</sup>

During the early Ming period (1279-1368), Admiral Cheng Ho (1371-1435), a descendant of the Holy Prophet in the thirty-seventh generation, was the first Chinese naval explorer who conducted seven naval expeditions to South-east Asia and the Middle East in the fifteenth century.<sup>11</sup> But after the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, the Chinese Muslims were persecuted by the Manchu and Hans authorities. Muslim rebellions in Shensi, Kansu, Yunnan, and Sinkiang, between 1648 and 1878, at least resulted in a total loss of about 10,000,000 lives, sacrificed for Islam.<sup>12</sup>

All the above historical facts



Minaret of a Jama Mosque in Central Asia.

speak clearly for the strong characteristics of the Chinese Muslims, who fight for the Chinese rulers when their religion is respected, and fight against the ruling class when Islam is endangered.

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### Early Communist Attempts

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In 1936 Mao Tse-tung formed a provisional Muslim Soviet Government in the North-west and even recruited whole regiments of Muslims, granting them full freedom of

religion. Since then the Muslims living in the occupied areas have been influenced by the Communists. But according to Nym Wales, "Although the Mohammedans of China are much less fanatical than those in Islam proper, these believers in Allah were still loyal even after inoculation with the virus of Marxism," and "They were prepared to march under the Red Star and the Crescent, but had not yet embroidered the name of Karl Marx on their prayer rugs."<sup>13</sup>

In 1837 when the Red armies were moved westward along the

route through Kansu, advancing within 300 miles of the Sinkiang border, they were halted by the Muslim forces from Ninghsia, Kansu and Ch'inghai. They were severely beaten and were driven out of the Kansu corridor, and so their plan to achieve a direct contact with Soviet Russia through Sinkiang collapsed. This Communist defeat clearly shows Mao Tse-tung's ignorance, in that, "Islam was not merely the collection of religious ideas of a racial group, but a universal religion which transcended not only race, but also class divisions."<sup>14</sup>

Everyone knows that Communism advocates atheism, and religion is theism. However, there was one Chinese Muslim, by the name of Ma Chun, whom I met in Peking before 1927, who was the Secretary of the Communist Party in Peking. This man, who had been trained in Moscow, used to come to the famous Tung-ssu P'ailou mosque in Peking, where I lived for several years (1922-32) as a student. He came there to attend prayers and keep the fast, but he never gave any open Communist propaganda. Later, he was captured and then executed by Chang Tsolin in 1927.<sup>15</sup> He willed to his wife that he should be buried as a Muslim.

P'u-sheng, a famous *Alim* himself, is now the vice-chairman of the China Islamic Association in Peking. Ma Chien, a graduate of al-Azhar University of Cairo, is professor of Arabic at the National Peking University, an author of many books on Islam, and a deputy of the National People's Congress in Red China.<sup>15</sup> Pai Shou-i, a famous historian and a Muslim

scholar, is an active member of the China Asia-Africa Society in Peking.<sup>17</sup>

I know all these three men personally. They are ardent Muslims. But I do not believe they could be sincere followers of Mao Tse-tung. If they became sincere followers of Mao Tse-tung, then they would not be ardent Muslims. But so far nothing causes me to believe that they have become unfaithful to Islam.

### Contemporary Communist Policies

After the conquest of Mainland China, the Chinese Communists have considered the Muslims as ethnic groups, but not purely religious minorities. They have been trying to minimise the value of religion, which, according to Communism, must be eliminated.<sup>18</sup> But they have been trying to maximise the value of nationalities. In order to carry out this policy, they proclaimed that in 1958 there were altogether 50 ethnic groups in the border areas,<sup>19</sup> of which ten were Muslim minorities<sup>20</sup> having a total of only 10,000,000 souls.<sup>21</sup> This is an unfounded, unreal, and manipulated figure. Since 1949 they have used the "minority peoples autonomy" and "social reform" in an attempt to destroy the social organisation and leadership of the various small nationalities, and to change the habits of life, social relationships, and religious faith of the Muslims, and thus destroying their national consciousness.<sup>22</sup>

*The First Stage.* Early in 1936 Mao Tse-tung made the following promises to the Muslims in

North-west China:<sup>23</sup>

- 1) to help form an autonomous Muslim government,
- 2) to protect Muslim culture,
- 3) to guarantee religious freedom,
- 4) to help unite the Muslims of China, Outer Mongolia, Sinkiang and Soviet Russia.

These promises were undoubtedly made for the purpose of winning over the Chinese Muslims to stand by the Communist in their struggle with the Nationalists in that area. But, sad to say, none of these promises has been fulfilled by the Communists. However, it was at about the same time that a mosque was built with their encouragement in Yen-an, obviously aiming at getting the cooperation and confidence of the Muslim soldiers in the Red Army.<sup>24</sup>

*The Second Stage.* This stage begins with the Communist conquest of Mainland China in 1949. It is clearly stipulated in Article 88 of the Constitution of Red China: "Citizens of the Chinese People's Republic have the freedom of religious belief."<sup>25</sup> In fact, Communists give only limited freedom to a religion, provided that religion can be utilised for carrying out their socialist revolution and construction.

Islam, with the Muslim world as its background, being a strong competitor to Christianity, and having never been involved in underworld organisations, is the only religion that Peking rulers are trying hard to utilise in their planned revolutionary conquest of Asia. Because of these reasons, the Chinese Communists allow more freedom to the Muslims than to the Buddhists or Christians. For instance, during the Land

Reform, many of the mosques were allowed to retain their lands.<sup>26</sup> The customs and habits of the Muslims are protected by law.<sup>27</sup> Many famous mosques in China have been repaired by the Communists.<sup>28</sup> Even the circulation of the Qur'an has been aided by Red officials.<sup>29</sup> The China Islamic Association was established in Peking in 1953.<sup>30</sup> It sends Hajj missions every year to Makkah.

*The Third Stage.* The above information sounds promising to the Chinese Muslims, but it is not uniformly bright. Since 1949, many mosques in rural areas have been used as theatres, warehouses, or slaughter-houses. Muslim schools attached to the mosques have been closed. All *Ahungs* have to interpret the Qur'an from the Communist point of view. Young Muslims working in factories have been compelled to take the same meals as non-Muslims.<sup>31</sup> *The Newsweek* of 2 September 1966 reports: "Recently the Red Guards dragged a Muslim leader from a mosque in Peking and beat him."

In the year 1967, the Ch'inghai Provincial Revolutionary Committee issued a proclamation on 12 August emphasising: all party, government, financial, and cultural powers in the province belong to the Committee; everyone should "take firm hold of the revolution and promote production;" "all-counter-revolutionaries must be resolutely suppressed"; and "the study and application of Mao Tse-tung's works should be carried to new heights."<sup>32</sup>

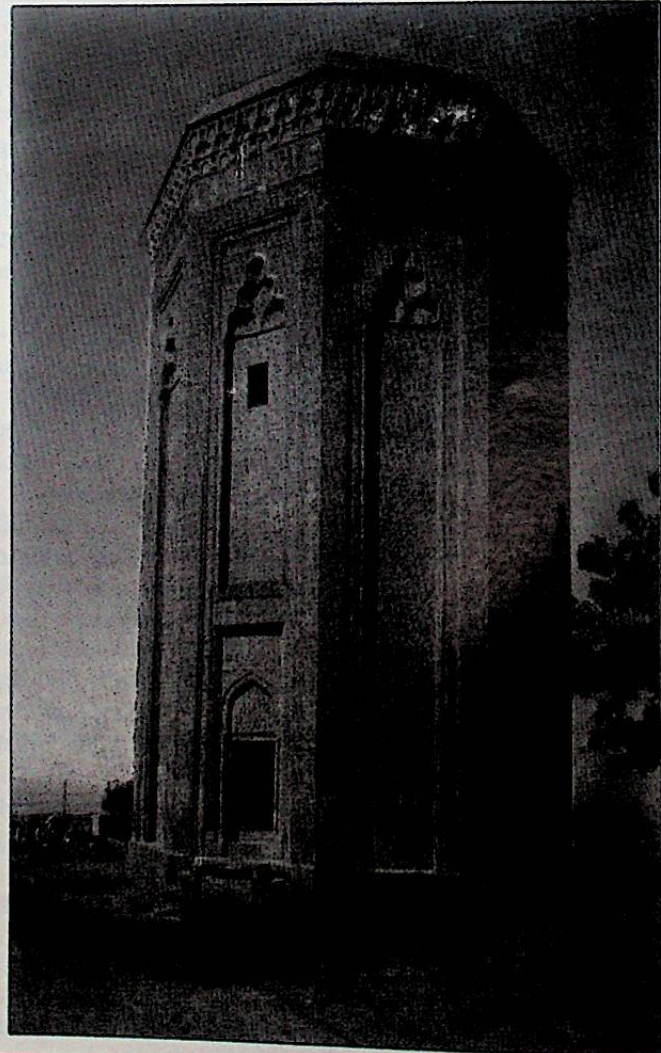
The spirit of this proclamation is contradictory to Mao

Tse-Tung's promises made to the North-west Muslims in 1936. Since Islam, as a religion, functions through its cultural power, since a mosque is neither revolutionary nor a productive organ, since religions are regarded as counter-revolutionary forces by the Communists, and since there is nothing in common between the Qur'an and the works of Mao Tse-tung, can we expect that Islam may co-exist with Communism in China for ever?<sup>33</sup>

In practice, both Islam and Communism demand freedom, equality and fraternity. Both condemn hereditary privileges,

distinction of races and classes, unequal distribution of wealth, and those who live at the expense of others. But there is a big difference, which is: the Communists always promote class-wars, but the Muslims prefer to adopt peaceful means.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the difference between Islam and Communism, no Muslim, like any other Chinese or other minority leader, dares to criticise the thought or works of Mao Tse-tung but has to say whatever Mao wished him to say.

However, there is a coalescence of international activities between the Muslims and the





Communists in China. As the Chinese Muslims are an organic part of the Islamic world of Asia, where the Peking rulers have great political ambitions, each side helps the other develop friendly relations between Red China and the Islamic world. The value of Islam to Red China lies in the fact that, through the good offices and efforts of the Chinese Muslims, the latter can win over the friendship of the various Muslim countries in Asia and Africa. On the other hand, Chinese Muslims are willing to be utilised by the Communists and, in return, they receive better treatment.

There is another ideological coalescence between Islam and Communism in China. While the Peking rulers are trying to utilise Chinese Islam in building up good relations with the Islamic world, the Chinese Mus-

lims, through their scholars and leaders, are trying to syncretise Communism with Islam. Among them, the famous ones, such as Ma Chien, Pai Shou-i and Ch'en K'e-li, have written many articles and books on Islam and on the co-relations between Islam and Communism introducing the socialist teachings contained in the Qur'an and the Hadith.<sup>35</sup> Whether syncretism works out well or not for the Muslims under the Communist rule is a question which deserves our close attention.

### Co-existence with Communism

The world outlook of Communism is materialism, which is basically opposed to the idealist world outlook of religion. Mao Tse-tung said: "Communists may establish with certain

idealists or even religious adherents an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal united front in political action, but definitely cannot agree with their idealism or religious tenets."<sup>36</sup> And the Communists believe that, with the development of the revolution, the elimination of religion is slow but definite.<sup>37</sup> It is very clear that there cannot be co-existence between religion and Communism in China in the long run.

Although the gradual elimination of religions has been in progress in China since 1949, it seems that Islam may survive Communist persecutions because of its international background and its non-involvement with the West. With these favourable conditions, it has an opportunity to have its roots watered and fertilised through the hands of the atheist materialists; whereas Buddhism, Christianity and Taoism will be suffocated to death very soon, if they have not already died.

However, as long as the Communists rule China, there will always remain a danger to Islam that sooner or later it will be persecuted. The first possibility for this to occur may be at the time when the Islamic world gives up its neutral attitude in the present world disputes between the East and the West, and stands by the West. The second possibility may occur at the time when the older Muslim generation, born before the 1930s, dies. The belief of the younger generation, born after 1949, may be gradually shifted from Islam to Communism.

As a Chinese Muslim, I know that Chinese Muslims are strong in religious belief and racial

unity. They have had much experience of how to live through persecutions. And I believe that as long as Islam as a religion remains as a decoration in the "Hall of the Chinese Communist Constitution" in Peking, it seems that the Chinese Muslims will not forget to say, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet," as long as they live.

## Footnotes

1. Hajji Yusuf Chang, "Islam in Modern China," *Voice of Islam* (Karachi, Jamiyat-ul-Falah Publication, September 1966), XIV, 12/693-5.  
See also John M.H. Lindbeck, "Communism, Islam and Nationalism in China," *The Review of Politics* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, October 1950), XII, 4/473-5; and Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York, 1961), 432-3.
2. *China Handbook* 1954-1955 (Taipei, China Publishing Co., 1954, 60; and "Communism and Islam," *Current Background* (hereafter abbreviated as C.B.), (Hong Kong, U.S. Consulate-General, 25 July 1952), No. 195, 2.
3. The China Islamic Association, *Chinese Moslems in Progress* (Peking, 1957), no page numbers are given; supposed to be on p.12.
4. Liu Sheng-lin, "Muslims in Peking," *People's China* (Peking, 1 March 1957), No.5, 36.
5. P C Yu, "Moslems in China," *ibid* (1 August 1952), No.15, 10.
6. Chang, op. cit., 695-6. See also Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China* (New York, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966), 215. Even Broomhall estimated that the Chinese Muslims could have been 9 821 000 souls as early as 1910. His estimate is very conservative from the Christian missionary viewpoint. How could the Chinese Muslims remain to be only 10,000,000 after a recuperation for more than 50 years, from 1910 to 1967?
7. M. E. Botham, "Islam in Kansu," *The Moslem World* (New York, 1920), X, 378.
8. Chang, op. cit., 685: cf. Note 11 -
- Some high Chinese officials at the Yuan and Ming Courts.  
See also T. S. Chen, "General Pai Chu'ung-hsi: Chinese Patriot," *Friends of Moslems* (Hankow, 1943), XVII, 7-9.
9. *Ou-yang Hsui, Hsin T'ang shu* (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1936), 221b/12a.  
See also Broomhall, op. cit., 26.
10. Ch'en Yu-ch'ing, *P'u Shou-keng k'ao* (Shanghai, Chunghua shu-chu, 1929), 13-16, 21, 26-30.
11. Cheng Ho-Sheng, *Cheng Ho i-shih hui-pien* (a collection of works on the life of Cheng Ho), (Shanghai, Chunghua shu-chu, 1948).  
See also Paul Pelliot, "Les grandes voyages maritimes Chinois au degut du XVe Siecle," *T'oung Pao*, 1933, 30/237-452.
12. Fu T'ung-hsien, *Chung-kuo hui-chiao shih* (the history of Islam in China), (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1940), 115-51.  
See also Broomhall, op. cit., 162.
13. Nym Wales, *Inside Red China* (New York, 1935), 154, 159.
14. Lindbeck, op. cit., 475-8.  
See also Wales, op. cit., 154.
15. Han Tao-jen, *Wo kuo shih min-tsu ping-teng-ti ta-chia-t'ing* (Our country is a big family of equal nationalities), (Peking, Kung-jen ch'u-pan she, 1955), 7.
16. U.S.A. State Department, *Directory of Chinese Communist Officials* (Washington, 1963), 207: "Ma Chien".
17. *Ibid.*, 485: "Pai Shou-i".
18. Yu Hsiang and Liu Chun-wang, "The Correct Recognition and Handling of the Problem of Religion," *Selections China Mainland Magazines* (Hong Kong, U S Consulate-General, 31 March 1964), 410-49.
19. Li Chiu-yi, "Anti-Communist Struggles of the Chinese Minority Peoples," *Issues and Studies* (Taipei, December 1966), III, 3/18.
20. Burhan, "Moslems in China," *Moslems in China* (Peking, 1953), no page numbers are given: Chinese Muslims comprise of 10 minorities, i.e., the Huis, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Tadjiks, Tatars, Uzbeks, Tung-hsiangs, Salas and Pao-ans.
21. *Ibid.*, See also "Communism and Islam," C.B., 195/2-3.
22. Li Chiu-yi, op. cit., 17.
23. Snow, op. cit., 348.
24. Lindbeck, op. cit., 483.
25. E Stuart Kirby, ed., *Contemporary China* (Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1956), p.18: Article 88 of the constitution of the Chinese People's Republic.
26. C. B., 195/2
27. *Ibid.*, See also Burhan, op. cit.
28. "Chinese Moslem Leader on Religious Freedom in China," *Survey of China Mainland Press* (hereafter abbreviated as S.C.M.P.), (Hong Kong, U.S. Consulate-General, 14 November 1963), No. 3100/15.
29. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1963, No. 2987/29-29.
30. Burhan, op. cit.; and S.C.M.P., No. 3100/15.
31. Ma Chien, "Chinese Muslims stand by Other Nationalities in Country," C.B. No. 195/5.  
See also Pai Jui-ch'ang, *Kun fei pi-hai chung-kuo hui-p'ao ti pao-hsing* (a general record on the atrocities committed by the Communists to the Chinese Muslims), (Taipei, 1957).  
And Shih Tzu-chou, *Chung-kuo hui-hui-pao* (Taipei, The Chinese Muslim National League, 1958), No. 61/1.
32. "Chinghai Provincial Revolutionary Committee Founded," *Peking Review*, Vol. X, 34/23.
33. Abdul Khabeer, "Chinese drop Mask of Religious Tolerance," *Radiance Weekly* (Delhi, 2 October 1966), IV, 11, p. 13.
34. Khwaja Nazeer Ahmad, *Islam and Socialism* (Woking, The Basheer Muslim Library, n.d.), 4-6.
35. See Pai Shou-i's *Hui-mshn ch'i-i tzu-liao ts'ung-k'an* (Collectanea of the historical materials of Chinese Muslim uprising during the Ch'ing dynasty), (Shanghai, Shen-chou kuo-kuang she, 1953); Ma Chien, op. cit.; and Ch'en K'e-li's *Ts'ung Mohammed k'an Islam* (a look at Islam through Muhammad), (Peking, Normal College Publishing Department, 1951).  
Through the lines of these books and articles, we will find out that all these Muslim scholars are trying to develop the harmonious points between Islam and Communism by using syncretistic methods.
36. Yu Hsiang and Liu Chun-wang, op. cit., 47.
37. *Ibid.*, 46.

# The Strategic Importance of Turkestan

— Dr. Baymirza Hayit —

It is astonishing to find that since 1950 many Western researchers have — wrongly — adopted the Soviet term *Central Asia* instead of Turkestan, and have thus aided in supplanting the name Turkestan in the minds of the public in the West as well as in the Islamic Orient. In doing so no consideration was given to the fact that Turkestan is not Central Asia, but rather that it is located in Central Asia and that in the world's main encyclopaediae the geographic situation is clearly dealt with under the designation "*Turkestan*," (e.g. *The Encyclopedia Americana*, volume 27; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, volume 22, 15th edition, and the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, New York-London 1977, volume 26, p. 458, etc.) It is particularly significant that the Congress of the USA passed a bill relating to *Captive Nations Week* (Public Law 86-90) in July 1959, in which the name Turkestan is unequivocally mentioned. In spite of this, *Radio Liberty's* directors gave the order in the autumn of 1978 that the term Turkestan was no longer to be employed in the broadcasts, but that the term Central Asia and Kazakhstan were to be used instead. In so doing, an American organisation acted contrary to U.S. law (Public Law 86-90). It would be advisable and also correct for us in the West to use the classical terminology *Turkestan* instead of the Soviet terminology *Central Asia*, in order

**Turkestan**, (land of the Turks), which is situated in Central Asia, has an area of approximately 4 million km<sup>2</sup> and accounts for around 19 % of the entire territory of the Soviet Union. Five of the 15 Soviet republics, (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizistan, Tadjikistan and Turkmenistan) are located in Turkestan. It is a well-known fact that Turkestan is one of the most important centres of civilization, and also a centre of Islamic culture and intellectual life since the eighth century. This country has been referred to as *Middle Asia and Kazakhstan* in Soviet terminology since 1925. The Soviet Russian leadership is in no way prepared to tolerate the use of the term "Turkestan," because its intentions are to turn Turkestan into a laboratory for mixing people and races by doing away with the country and abolishing the national feeling of identity of the Turkestan people for the purpose of using the country as a base for the colonisation by the Russians.

not to deny the national identity of this country and also to distance ourselves from Soviet influence.

At present approximately 42 million people live in Turkestan, more than 32 million of whom are Turkestanians and Muslims (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirgiz, Turkmen, Kara-Kalpaks, Uygurs, Tatars, Azerbaidjanians and Tadjiks), and the rest of whom consist of Russian colonialists or administrative personnel, military personnel and deported persons (Ukrainians, Belorussians, Estonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Koreans, etc.).

## Russian Conquest

It is common knowledge that the present-day territory of Turkestan was gradually conquered by the Russians during the period between 1715 and

1897. However, despite this it was possible for two states (Bukhara and Khiwa) to retain their independence in internal affairs under Czarist Russia. On the occasion of the invasion by Soviet troops in the year 1920 these states were proclaimed as the peoples' republics of Bukhara and Kharazim (Khiwa). The government of Soviet Russia recognised by treaty the right of these two states to sovereignty. In the year 1924 these states were then abolished by the government of Soviet Russia by means of war operations, threats and infiltration, and their territories were annexed to the Soviet Union. The leaders of the Soviet Union do not try to conceal the global political and strategic importance of Turkestan. Its strategic importance is particularly obvious in the following areas:

The geographic region of

## The Strategic Importance of Turkestan

Turkestan shares a border with the following countries: Tatar-Baschkiria, Siberia, Mongolia, China (with East Turkestan within the framework of the Chinese sphere of influence), India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and the Caucasia. These bordering countries have a total area of 33 million km<sup>2</sup>. When considered together with its neighbouring countries, Turkestan, with its 4 million km<sup>2</sup> assumes the character of an extended region. Turkestan and the neighbouring countries maintain cultural, economic and religious relations with one another. Europe and the countries of the Middle East can be quickly and easily reached from Turkestan. Thus, for example, Moscow is about 1,000 km by air from the Turkestan border; Kharkow (Ukraine) 770 km; Rostov/Don 710 km; Erzerum (Turkey) 1010; Baghdad (Iraq) 1210; Tehran (Iran) 640; Kabul (Afghanistan) 290; Islamabad (Pakistan) 600; Urumtschi (East Turkestan) 590; and The Gulf about 1000 km. These figures clearly illustrate the favourable communication possibilities between Turkestan and Europe, the Middle East and Inner Asia. The geo-political situation which Turkestan enjoys presents the Soviet Union with the opportunity of initiating actions in all directions.

### A Military Base

The Soviet military policy in Turkestan and also as regards the neighbouring countries is coordinated by means of two military zones: *Turkesian* (directly responsible for the Soviet republics of Uzbekistan,



Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan and the Middle East with India and Pakistan, and *Central Asia* (responsible for the Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kirgizistan and China as well as Mongolia). In the case of *x*, military operations are undertaken from these military zones. According to the opinion of the Soviet military leadership in Turkestan both of these zones are very powerful, being equipped with modern weaponry. These military zones are considered to be the main areas for planning the strategy and tactics of the Soviet Union's military leadership with regard to the Orient. Turkestan is also considered as the *Hinterland* for all Soviet war plans and measures in relation to the Middle East, Inner Asia and Europe. Since December 1979 the world is well aware of the fact that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was undertaken from the Soviet military zone of Turkestan. Due

to its geo-political situation (extended area, alternating landscapes: steppes, oases, plains, mountains), Turkestan is also the main storehouse for Soviet weaponry such as atomic bombs, rockets, aircraft spare parts and army supplies. West and East Turkestan are considered to be the central store for Russian and Chinese atomic bombs, respectively. The Soviet Union's rocket launching base is situated in Baikonur, Turkestan, by the way.

The Soviet Union is capable, if need be, of meeting its war needs from Turkestan. Stalin declared in 1943 that "the middle Asiatic Soviet republics and Kazakhstan (Turkestan) had become the most important arsenal of the Red Army." Another Soviet publication revealed that during the year 1942 the same amount of war material was produced in Turkestan as in the entire remaining territory of the Soviet Union



before the Second World War. Russian reflections of this kind reveal that the Soviet Union is in a position to supply its army from Turkestan, should the need arise. It is not a secret that the Soviet armed forces in Turkestan are absolutely superior to those of all other countries in the Middle East.

### Raw Materials

It is common knowledge — and the Soviets themselves even admit this openly — that Turkestan is the main source of raw materials for the Soviet Union. As the main supplier of raw materials this country is of decisive importance for the industry of the Soviet Union. Turkestan claims the following percentage of industrial raw materials of the Soviet Union (USSR ; 100%): Coal, approx. 45%; petroleum more than 60%; earth gas 50%; iron-ore 70%; copper 76%; mercury, approx. 90%; zinc 86%; chrome, more than 80%; nickel, approx. 80%; phosphorous, sulphur, potassium and antimony reserves, more than 75%. There are also plentiful supplies of uranium, gold, silver and platinum in Turkestan. In a report relating to the riches of Turkestan a Soviet newspaper gave the following example with regard to the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan: "It is possible in the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan to produce approximately 120 - 130 million tonnes of iron-ore, 100 million tonnes of mineral oil and 35 million tonnes of steel, annually." Assuming a normal rate of exploiting the mineral resources the raw materials present in Turkestan are enough to supply the entire industry of the Soviet

Union.

The agricultural wealth of Turkestan is also a common knowledge. For example, Turkestan produces more than 95% of the Soviet cotton production; 75% of the raw silk; 60% of fruits; 65% of rice; 100% of jute; 100% of natural rubber and 100% of the karakul furs. This country is also known as the third corn house of the Soviet Union. Thanks to Turkestan's economic riches it is possible for the Soviet Union to follow the political course of a world economic power. It would not be in a position to do this were it not for the economic potential present in Turkestan.

### Communist Infiltration

The Soviet Union has announced on various occasions that Turkestan is to serve as the vanguard of Communism in the Orient. The ideas of the Soviet leadership as listed below reveal Turkestan's role in the infiltration of Communism in the Orient:

- "Turkestan is the main centre for spreading our ideas in the Orient;"
- "Turkestan is to be the carrier of the germ of the communist revolution in the Orient;"
- "Turkestan played the role of gateway from Asia to Europe in world history. It is now Turkestan's role to act as the gateway from Europe (meaning Russia — the author) to Asia;"
- "Socialism and Communism are inevitable for the future of the peoples of the Orient."

There are many more such theses held by the Soviet leader-

ship with regard to the use of Turkestan in Soviet policy in the Orient.

It is common knowledge that the Soviets have made much progress in infiltrating and spreading Communism in the Orient (particularly in the Middle East). We can mention here as examples the origin of the Soviet slogan "The spirit of Tashkent," organisational propaganda measures, such as organising more than 50 international conferences, symposia of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in Turkestan, where the Soviet system is represented as an "exemplary model" for the development of peoples, and finally the fact that many followers and sympathizers of Moscow Communism have been from the ranks of the developing countries. Here one is reminded of the use of oppressed Islam in the Islamic countries.

The Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan shows us that Communism was exported first from Russia to Turkestan by means of armed force, where it continues to be enforced in the same way. The appearance of Communism in Afghanistan came about in exactly the same manner as in Turkestan. It is also interesting to note that more than 20,000 Turkestaners are working as Soviet specialists in the Middle East and who are being used, at the same time, as instruments of Soviet infiltration.

Up to the present our goal has been to provide a general view of the strategic importance of Turkestan for the Soviet Union. It will now be necessary to deal with the country and its impor-

tance for Western strategy, particularly as regards the question of promoting freedom and combating Soviet imperialism, and to report its influence in the Orient.

#### Turkestan: Desire for Freedom

As everyone knows, this country which has been twice conquered by Russia (the first time under the Czars and the second time under the Soviet Russians) does not have the right to lead an independent national existence or to enjoy usual human rights and liberties. Turkestan is subject to the strict and absolute control of Moscow. The Soviet Union has done all it could to oppress Turkestan. Despite this the people of Turkestan have not lost their will or desire for freedom. This became obvious in the struggle for liberation which took place in Turkestan in the years 1918 - 34, (and particularly up to 1923 on a large scale), also in the resistance of the Turkestan people under the Soviet regime, in their attempts to preserve national customs, culture and traditions, not to mention the effectiveness of Islam in the national struggle against Communism and also by the struggle for national liberation in Turkestan during the Second World War. Nor is it a secret that thousands of Turkestanians (Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tadjiks), who are living in Afghanistan are now fighting in the front rows of the liberation front of Afghans against Russian expansionism. It is also a well known fact that when the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan the Soviet soldiers who came from Turkestan were not willing to fight against the Afghans. It appears

that Communism was not capable of converting these Muslim-Turkistanians to "Soviet patriots. Furthermore, it has become known that numerous Soviet soldiers who come from Turkestan have gone over to the side of the freedom fighters (Mujahidin), and that many of them are now active training Afghan freedom fighters.

By initiating a process of liberation for Turkestan the Western powers and the Islamic countries of the Orient could achieve a strategic position in world politics, particularly in the Middle East. Concerted action calling for national liberation for Turkestan would undoubtedly help, first of all, to effect a reinforcement of national identity. The Western powers and the Islamic countries could take the stage as Turkestan's common friend for the purposes of establishing the country's national independence. *The founding of an independent state of Turkestan would mean that Russia and China would be separated from one another; there would no longer be a danger of Russian expansion in the Middle East; the security of the peoples of the Middle East would be guaranteed; Turkestan would return to being one of the Oriental, Islamic communities of the free world, and the world economy would have access to the economic potential of Turkestan.*

The demand for national independence for Turkestan in no way implies interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. The constitutions of the Soviet Union, including those of the Soviet republics, offers,

even if only formally, the conditions according to which each Soviet republic has the right to secede from the USSR. Even the international Basic Declaration, i.e. the UN Declaration of December 14, 1960, relating to colonialism and the rights of national self-determination and the Universal charter of December 19, 1966, relating to human rights, etc., do not deny either a national right to existence or human rights for Turkestan. The Congress of the USA in 1959 which proclaimed the Act relating to "Captive Nations Week," in which Turkestan was included as one of the captive nations, was unique in the history of the world. This Act represents a moral basis for the demand for freedom. The general assembly of the Muslim World League in Makkah, Saudi Arabia adopted a Turkestan Resolution in May 1965, in which it was decided that:

"The Muslim Congress urgently requests all Islamic states and also those states who are in favour of freedom to bring up the problem of Turkestan in the general assembly of the UNO."

The problem of abolishing Russian colonialism in Turkestan and the re-establishment of national independence in this country assumed the character of an international issue through the discussion which took place in the UN General Assembly on the subject of colonialism. The British ambassador to the UN made the following statement to the Assembly on November 26, 1962:

"In 1815 the whole of Ceylon came under British rule at the same time as Azerbaidjan was being occupied by Russia. Ceylon achieved its inde-

## The Strategic Importance of Turkestan

pendence in 1947; *when, may we ask, can we hope to see Azerbaidjan independent?* Nigeria and Ghana came under British influence in the middle of the 19th century. Lagos was proclaimed a colony in 1862; a protectorate was declared for the *Gold Coast* in 1874. The same period saw the Russian conquest of the independent states of Central Asia with their ancient civilization, the last independent *Kazakh state* submitted in 1854, the conquest of the three *Uzbek states of Turkestan* was completed by 1876, and the whole of *Turkmenia* was finally subjugated

and annexed in the early 1880s. After nearly a century of British rule *Ghana* became independent in 1957 and *Nigeria* in 1960; *what is the target date for the independence of the Soviet Central Asian territories?"*

That is the main question to be answered! Up to now the government of the Soviet Union has provided no answer to this question. Nor has any member state of the UN asked the Soviets when they are going to

answer this question. Thus the question remains: *"What is the target date for the independence of the Soviet Central Asian territories"* (Turkestan) and the world has the right to obtain a reply from Moscow and thereby to take measures to arrange a date for the independence of Turkestan.

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