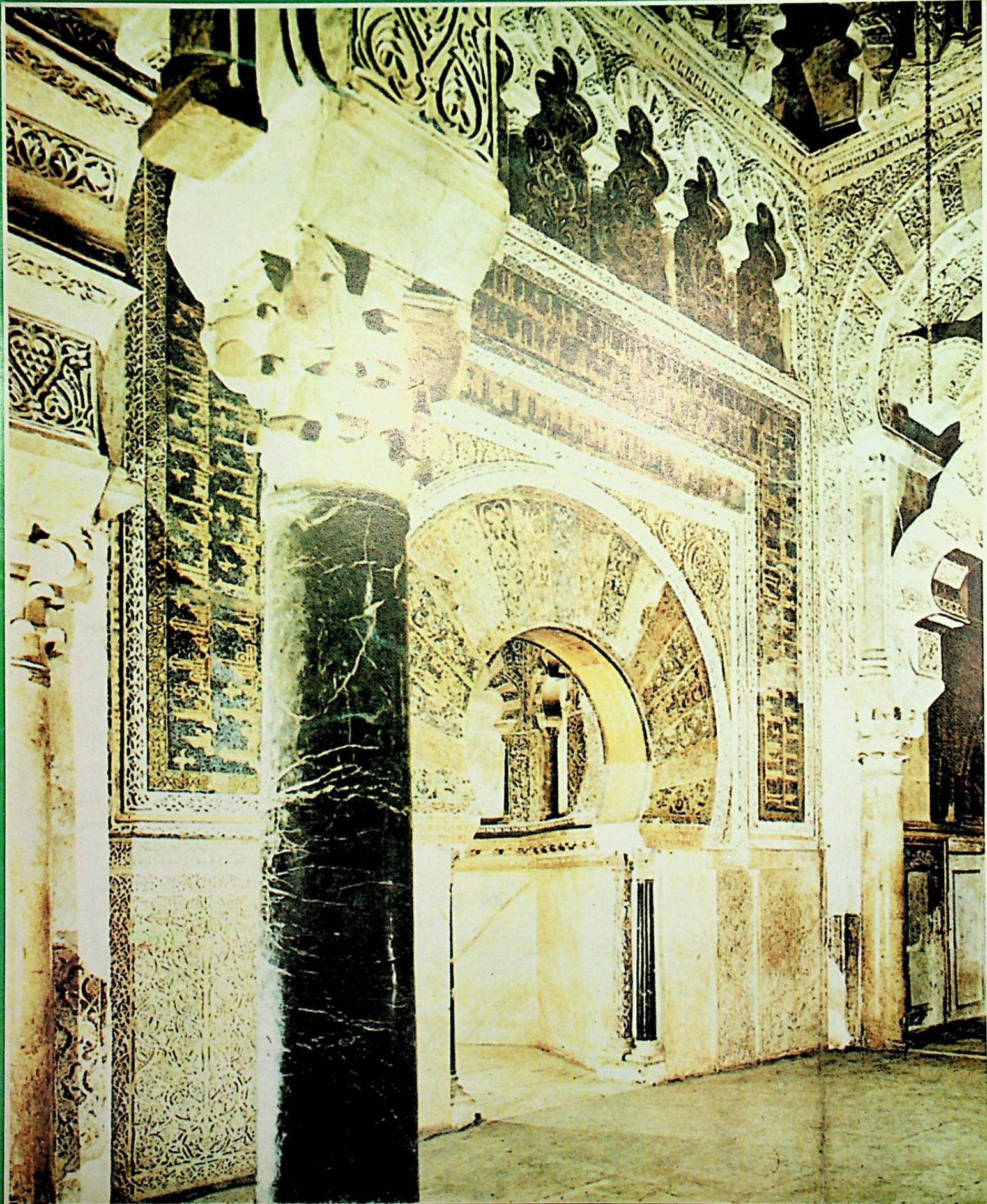


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Makkah al-Mukarramah

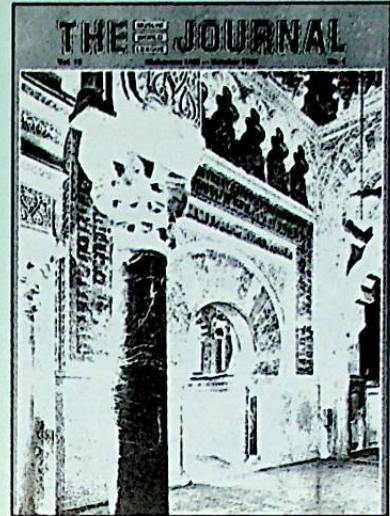
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Lest We Forget....

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

(This article is based on figures taken from Soviet publications, and freely quotes judgements from the same sources. At the end of the article, there are some comments and corrections by Mehmet Allahverdi. But, since we do not possess exact figures, the population, etc. figures taken from Soviet sources remain as they are. It is certain that these figures grossly and purposely distort and reduce the numbers of the Muslim population and contain other distortions of the truth such as representing the various tribes and dialects of Turks in the Soviet Union as separate "nations," falsifying their origin and descent, etc. The readers will have to use their own judgement in evaluating and correcting these. — Voice of Eastern Turkistan).

Mrs. Shirin Akiner

Being a Muslim means submission to the will of God: Belief in God, His Scriptures and His Apostles. The question whether a person is a Muslim or not, depends on the way he lives. The basis of belief is generally accepted to be willingness to associate oneself with it. All those people in the Soviet Union who indentify themselves as Muslims belong to the Islamic community; there is nothing hypocritical or fanciful in their claim of being such.

Islam in the Soviet Union was introduced by the Arabs when they conquered Central Asia in the second half of the seventh century. The earliest people to come into its fold were the Turkic natives. By the end of the ninth century, it had spread in Transcaucasia and the European part of Russia.

The Soviet Muslims came first under Russian rule for periods ranging between fifty to three hundred and fifty years ago. They are under the Soviet Communist system for the last sixty-odd years. During this time, the attitude of the rulers towards them has been mostly that of coercion and oppression. But they have remained steadfast in their faith.

They present a vast spectrum of ethnic groups. The differences between them are legion. It is only common religion and citizenship which binds them together. Unlike Muslim populations in most other countries, they do not have a corporate identity. They are formed of a great number of separate elements that have no direct links with one another.

The Sufis of various schools of "Tariqat," such as Naqashbandi, Qadiri, Chishti and Jilani have played a vital role in disseminating Islam in the Soviet Union. Prominent among them were Yousuf Hamadani; Ahmad Yasavi, Najmuddin al-Kubra (twelfth century); and Bahauddin Naqashbandi (1318-89). The Muslims of Transcaucasia, the Volga region and Azerbaizhan owe much to Ahmad Yasavi, the first Turkic Sufi who worked tirelessly to

promote Islam in these areas. During Russian rule, the followers of these schools of "Tariqat" put strong resistance to all moves against Islam. They have been doing whatever is possible to strengthen religious spirit in the Soviet Muslims and till now have great influence among them.

Though divided into various Khanates, the Muslims were the rulers in Russia at first. Their downfall started in the sixteenth century when the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan (Russia proper) fell to Ivan IV, the Terrible, in 1552 and 1556 respectively. In Central Asia, they lost Tashkand (1865), Samarkand (1868) and Khokand (1876). Turkestan finally came under Russian control in 1919. In 1820, they desposed the Emir of Bokhara and the Khan of Khiva. The Muslims thus came under complete control of the Communist regime in 1924 when the former Khanates were annexed into the Soviet Union.

Muslim Areas

The Muslims are spread over the whole of the USSR. They are found as far West as the borders of Poland, as far East as the borders of China; in Siberia to the North and Central Asia as well as Transcaucasia in the South.

The Soviet Union is a large country. It has 15 Union Republics and 20 Autonomous Regions. In several of these administrative units, the indigenous population is Muslim, as indicated below:

Union Republics

1. Uzbek Central Asia.
2. Kazakh Central Asia.
3. Kirghiz Central Asia.
4. Tadzhik Central Asia.
5. Turkmen Central Asia.
6. Azerbaijan SSR—Transcaucasia.

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

Uighurs 210,612

There are Turkic people who formed a state in Eastern Turkestan and North-West of Mongolia in 845 AD.

Azerbaijanis 5,477,330

Originally they were Iranian-speaking people but were Turkified during the period 7-11th centuries when Turkic tribes from Mongolia came to Azerbaijan. (The "Iranian-speaking people...were Turkified" is a Soviet fabrication, but echoed by some hostile elements in Iran, too.)

Chuvash 1,751,366

They are descended from Finno-Ugric tribes of Middle Volga and the Turkic-speaking Bolgars. They assumed separate identity in 10th century and embraced Islam during the Golden Horde period.

Bashkirs 1,371,452

They represent an intermingling of Finno-Ugric and Turkic tribes such as Kazakhs and Karakitais. Adopted Islam in 10th century.

Karakalpak 303,324

They represent intermingling of indigenous Iranian-speaking peoples of the Aral Sea region and Oghuz tribes of Mongolia.

Karachais 131,074

They are a Turkic-speaking people of the North Caucasus, descended from Kipchak tribes and related to Balkars.

Balkars 66,334

They are indigenous people of the Northern Caucasus, Turkified through contact with Bolgars/Khazar tribes.

Nogais 59,546

They are descended from the Nogai Horde, a commander of the Golden Horde. Became Muslim during the rule of Khan Uzbek (1282-1312.)

Kумыкs 228,418

Their origin is not clear. Most probably they represent intermingling of indigenous Caucasian elements with Turkic tribes of Kipchaks They adopted Islam in the 11th century.

Turks (Meskhetian) 92,689

Some of them are descended from Turks, others from Turkicized Georgians when Meskhetia, a part of Georgia, came under Turkish rule in the 16th century.

The Turkic people are found in all parts of the USSR. Their approximate distribution in various areas in 1979 was as under.

Central Asi & Kazakhstan

Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmen, Kirghiz,	
Uighurs, Turks Karakalpaks etc.	60 %
European USSR & Siberia	25 %

(According to 1979 census). Tatars, Chuvash, Bashkirs, Yakuts* Gagauz*, Tuvinians*, Khakass*, Altais*, Shors*, *Dolgans*, Tofas*

(*These are non-Muslims)

Trauscaucasia & Northern Caucasus 15%
Azerbaijanis, Kумыкs, Karachais, Balkars, Nogais.

The nine non-Muslim groups constitute just over two percent (823,260) of the total Turkic population in the USSR (39,779,477 according to 1979 census). Except for the Karaims and Krymchaks who are Jews, all the rest are Christians.

Nothing definite is known about the earliest stages of emergence of the Turkic people. Generally it is accepted that their original homeland was in the region of Mongolia. They came to Central Asia towards the end of the fifth century. They went further into other parts of the USSR and surrounding areas during the eleventh and thirteenth century.

Exact figures about the total world population of the Turkic peoples are not available. According to Soviet sources (Baskakov), they were 58,638,000 in 1962. If the growth rate of Soviet Turks is accepted also for the rest of the Turks elsewhere, their total world population must be around 100 millions. The Turks of Turkey constitute the largest single group (over 40 million), while about 40 % of the world population of Turkic people are in the Soviet Union.

Iranis

In 1926, twelve ethnic groups of the Iranis in the USSR were listed. Two of them 'Hazaras' and 'Jamshids' were thereafter included in Turkmen and Tadjiks respectively. The other two—Talysh and Yagnobis—are very small groups. Each one of the remaining eight groups has the status of "Nationality" and its own language. Brief background and population of each group:

Name of Group	Population (1979)
---------------	-------------------

Tadjiks	2,897,697
----------------	-----------

They were in Central Asia even before the advent of the Turks. Possibly they formed a distinct ethnic group as early as the 8th century.

Tats*	22,441
--------------	--------

Little is known about their origin. They are thought to be descendants of settlers sent from Persia by the Sasanid empire during the 4-5th century.

Ossetians*	541,893
-------------------	---------

They are descendants of Scythian and Sarmatian tribes who inhabited Central Caucasus in the 6th century.

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

Autonomous Republics

European USSR and Siberia.

1. Bashkir
2. Chuvash
3. Tatar - Transcaucasia and Northern Caucasus.
4. Checheno-Ingush
5. Kabardino-Balkar
6. Daghستان
7. Nakhchevan
8. Abkhazian
9. North Ossetian - Central Asia.
10. Karakalpak

For the purpose of Muslim populations, these administrative units can be grouped into three main areas as:

European USSR and Siberia:	21 %
Transcaucasia and Northern Caucasias:	21 %
Central Asia and Kazakhestan:	58 %

At the time of the Communist Revolution in 1917, the population of Soviet Muslims was twenty millions. It rose to about thirty-seven millions (36,848,455) in 1970. In 1979, it exceeded forty-five and a half millions (45,544,114). The Muslims in the USSR constitute 17.4% of the total Soviet population (262,084,654).

During the period 1970-79, their growth rate was 2.5% per year as against 0.8% for the Slav population. Among Muslims, the highest rate was that of 'Tabasarans' (Turkics of Daghستان) viz. over 4%, followed by Tadzhihs 4%.

About ninety percent of Soviet Muslims are Sunnis, following "Hanafi" school of thought. A small number of them are Shafiis. The remaining ten percent are Shias, most of whom are Ithna Ashariyyas with a relatively small number of Ismailis (followers of Aga Khan). Shia population is composed mainly of Azerbaijanis, Tats, Kurds and Pamiris.

A few thousand Bahais and about twenty-three thousand Yazidis (a tribal group of Kurds) also exist in the Soviet Union. These two groups do not believe in any one religion as a whole. Instead they have made separate religions of their own by combining certain elements from different religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism. Most Muslims do not accept them as part of the Ummah. In 1926, Yazidis were listed separately but now they have been grouped with Muslim Kurds. Amongst the Kurds, there are a quite small number of "Ali Ilahis," or "Ahli Haq" (who worship Sayyidna Ali); they also have not been listed separately.

Ethnic Composition

Soviet Muslims mainly are of three races: Turkics, Iranis and Caucasians. There are a few other small

groups such as Arabs, Dungans (Chinese Muslims), Chalas (Jews convert Muslims), etc. Among the aforesaid three races, Turkics have the largest majority, followed by Iranis; their approximate percentage in the total Muslim population in 1979 was:

Turkics:	85 % (38,956,217)
Iranis:	8%
Caucasians:	6.9%
Others:	0.1 %
(Arabs, Dungans, Chalas, Gypsies etc.)	

In 1926, 40 ethnic groups (big and small) of the Turkic peoples were listed by the Soviet authorities. But 16 of them have not been mentioned separately thereafter. Now there are 24 in all; 9 of them are non-Muslims. Each one of the remaining groups has "Nationality" status and its own "language." Brief background and population of each group are as follows:

Name of Group	Population (1979)
---------------	-------------------

Uzbeks	12,455,978
---------------	------------

The Uzbeks took their name from Khan Uzbek (1282-1312), the ruler responsible for the conversion of the Golden Horde to Islam. They are basically a conglomeration of Turkic tribes, though their leaders were Mongols.

Kazakhs	6,556,442
----------------	-----------

They are descended from Turkic and Mongol tribes who, settled in the area now known as Kazakhestan from about the end of first century BC. They embraced Islam during the 19th century. (To distort the origin of Turkish tribes, and claim a foreign root or mongrelization, is typical Soviet strategy.)

Turkmens	2,027,913
-----------------	-----------

They are descended from Oghuz tribes of Mongolia who settled in South-Western region of Central Asia in 10th century. They embraced Islam by the end of that century.

Kirghiz	1,906,271
----------------	-----------

They overthrew the Uighur state in North-West Mongolia in 840AD. Were Turkified in the 13th century. Began converting to Islam in mid-seventeenth century. (The expression "were Turkified," implying non-Turkish origin, is also typical Soviet propaganda.)

Tatars	6,317,468
---------------	-----------

They are descended from Turkic (mainly Kipchak) tribes who constituted the bulk of the Mongol army that invaded Russia in early 13th century. (Of course, Turkic tribes are aboriginal inhabitants there, not recent "invaders.")

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

The Muslims are not alone. They have ties of race and language with the people of several neighbouring countries such as China, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, etc. Given below is the population and some of the countries with which they have ethnic links:

Central Asia in 1944. The whole lot of Meskhetian Turks settled in the border areas of North-East Turkey were uprooted and deported to Central Asia. During this process of persecution, about ninety thousand Crimean Tatars and thirty thousand Meskhetian Turks died, besides a large number of

	China	Turkey	Iran	Afghanistan	Iraq
Tatars	8,000	10,000	—	—	—
Azerbaijanis	—	—	—	4,625,000	—
Kurds	—	3,200,000	2,000,000	—	1,500,000
Uzbeks	18,000	—	—	1,649,000	—
Kazakhs	700,000	—	—	3,000	—
Tadzhiks	20,000	—	—	2,000,000	—
Turkmen	—	300,000	500,000	400,000	500,000
Kirghiz	80,000	1,000	—	25,000	—
Uighurs	5,000,000	—	—	—	—
Baluchis	—	—	600,000	40,000	—
Total	1,326,000	3,511,000	7,725,000	2,117,000	2,000,000

It can be seen from the above that Soviet Muslims are linked with over 40 millions (Turks of Turkey) in the immediate neighbourhood.

Communist Rule

Since the Communist takeover in 1917, several measures have been taken by the Soviet regime against the Islamic faith. During the first decade (1917-1927), polygamy and wearing of the veil by Muslim women were forbidden. Shariah Courts were abolished. The institution of "waqf" was terminated. Hajj to Makkah was prohibited. The giving of Zakat, Sadaqa and fasting were strongly discouraged. The printing of the Holy Qur'an and other religious material was banned. On top of all, pig farming was introduced in the Muslim areas, and is continuing.

The pressures have lately been relaxed to some extent. The Hajj has been allowed to a small officially-selected group of people. A limited quantity of religious material has been permitted to be published. The Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience: the right to profess any religion or to profess none, to perform religious worship or to conduct atheistic propaganda.

Persecution of Muslims

The Communist government of the Soviet Union has always looked upon the Muslims with suspicion. During the Second World War, Nazi Germany occupied certain parts of Soviet territory where the local population was Muslim. The authorities suspected them of collaboration with German invaders and charged them with treason. The entire population of Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachais and Balkars were exiled to

people from the other groups. In 1957, these people were allowed to return to their original places. But practically this remained impossible for them because of occupation of their lands by the Slavs during their exile.

Masajid

Besides other anti-Islamic measures, the institution of the Mosque became the main target of Soviet Communists. In early twentieth century, there were over 26,000 Mosques in the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara which were not under Russian rule at that time. The atheist rulers of the USSR ordered large scale closure of Mosques. In some areas such as Karachojev-Cherkess Autonomous Province and Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Republic, all the Mosques were closed. In the latter case, 2 were opened in 1978 as against 2675 in 1930, while none has been reopened so far in the former. In Kabardia Republic, there were 113 Mosques in 1830, now there is only one. Similarly, in Turkmenia, there are only 5 Mosques as against 481 in 1911. Soviet sources are evasive when asked about the total number of Mosques now open for prayers. According to a recent estimate, not more than 450 Mosques are open in the whole of the USSR with their break-down as follows:

European USSR and Siberia	200
Central Asia and Kazakistan	143
Northern Caucasia	45
Azerbaijan	16
Daghestan	27

It is hard to know how many people go to the Mosques regularly. In private conversations, the Imams give the impression that quite a large number

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

Kurds** 115,858

Nothing certain is known about their early history except that their original home was the Near East.

*Majority of them are not Muslims.

**They include about 23,000 Yazidis also.

Persians 31,313

Persians went to Central Asia during Safavid incursions. Many were brought as captives of the Turkmens to be sold as slaves.

Afghans (Dari speaking) 4,185 (1970)

Nothing definite is known of their origin. Probably they migrated from Northern Afghanistan to Turkmenia towards the end of 19th century.

Baluchis 18,997

Their original homeland was in the Kerman region. During Mongol invasions, they migrated South and then East to settle in the area now known as Baluchistan. They went to Central Asia during early twentieth century.

Pamiris 50-60,000

Also known as "Mountain Tadjiks," they are believed to be descendants from the army of Alexander the Great.

Caucasians

34 Ethnic groups (big and small) of Caucasians were listed in 1926. Thereafter, 19 of them have not been listed separately by Soviet authorities: 13 of them have been grouped with Avars, 2 with Darghins, while nothing is known about the remaining 2. Each of the remaining 15 groups, mentioned below, has "Nationality" status and its own language:

Name of Group	Population
Avars	482,844
Lezghis	382,611
Darghins	287,282

Laks	100,148
Tabasarans	75,239
Rutuls	15,032
Tsakhurs	13,478
Aguls	12,078
Chechens	755,782
Kabardians	321,719
Ingush	186,198
Adygeis	108,711
Abkhazians	90,915
Cherkess	46,470
Abazins	29,497

All these groups are indigenous people of caucasia.

Others

In addition to Turkics, Iranis and Caucasians, there are the following other small ethnic groups among the Soviet Muslims:

Dungans*	51,694
Arabs	7,987 (1959)
Chalas (Jews of Bokhara who adopted Islam)	number?
Gypsies	5,000 (1970)

Of these, the Arabs, Chalas and Gypsies have been assimilated most probably by the Uzbeks of Central Asia.

*Chinese Muslims who migrated to Russia during anti-Manchu Muslim uprising (1862-77).

They are not listed separately since 1970. The Dungans are however maintaining their separate identity.

Different Faiths

Another important feature about these people is that there are certain groups with different faiths despite their bond of blood and language. Some of them are the following:

Turkics	Population	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Chuvash	1,751,366	Majority	A small number (Christians)
Inghiloy	Not known	Majority	Nominal (Christians)
Iranis			
Kurds	115,858	Majority	23,000 (Yazidis)
Ossetians	541,893	A small number	Majority (Christians)
Causasians			
Akbhazians	90,915	Majority	Nominal (Christians)
Kabardians	321,719	Majority	A small number (Christians)

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

involved to be conducted in his native language. But due to lack of translation facilities, this option is almost never available. In some Republics, even street signs and public notices are in Russian only.

A large number of periodicals and newspapers are published in the native languages of the Muslims. During the year 1979, the number of journals and newspapers published in the language of indigenous peoples in Muslim-majority Union Republics was as below:

Republic	Newspapers	Periodicals
Uzbek SSR	185	83
Kazakh SSR	159	114
Tadzhik SSR	51	55
Turkmen SSR	45	31
Kirghiz SSR	60	31
Azerbaijan SSR	98	58

There is a special feature of Soviet publications; these have a strong political bias. The contents are mostly Communist ideas, whether the publications are in Russian or native language of the Muslims. On religion there is only one journal, "Muslims of the Soviet East" which is published in Uzbek with an Arabic edition. It is, however, doubtful if its copies are available in the local market; it is mainly meant for circulation abroad.

In fact, Russian language has been given supremacy in all spheres of life. It is the language of federal administration, inter-Republic communication, Armed Forces, scientific research and technology. This situation has forced the Muslim younger generation to learn Russian (the language of Communism). This trend among them seems to be on the rise as can be seen from the following percentages of people with Russian as their second language in 1970 and 1979 in six Union Republics:

	1970	1979
Azerbaijanis	16.6	29.5
Uzbeks	14.5	49.3
Kazakhs	41.8	52.3
Tadzhiks	15.4	29.6
Turkmens	15.4	25.4
Kirghiz	19.1	29.4

The pre-eminence accorded to Russian has largely decreased the status of the mother tongue of the Muslims and there is a danger that it shall further jeopardize the function of the latter as a literary language.

Though the Soviet authorities have recognized various ethnic groups as "Nationalities" to prove them a diversified people; the trend among them of

mixed nationality marriages is rising. The percentage of such marriages in the six Union Republics where the Muslims are in overwhelming majority was as below in 1959 and 1970:

	1959	1970
Azerbaijan	7.1	7.8
Uzbek	8.2	10.9
Kazakh	14.4	20.7
Tadzhik	9.4	13.2
Turkmen	8.5	12.1
Kirghiz	12.3	14.9

Economic Status

The areas inhabited by the Muslims in European USSR, Transcaucasia and Central Asia are rich in minerals such as coal, oil, salt, gold, copper, etc. In addition to the mineral wealth, these areas produce fruits, cotton and grain crops. Majority of the Muslims (about 60%) in the USSR are settled in rural areas and engaged in farming, live-stock breeding, sericulture etc. Those in cities/towns are employed in carpet-weaving, mining and textile industries.

The standard of housing of Soviet Muslims is comparable to other peoples in the USSR. But no information is available about the incomes, standard of life and percentage of their employment in various State offices/enterprises. While it seems that standards have greatly improved during the last fifteen years in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Central Asian Republics, these are still considerably lower than elsewhere in USSR ("Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union" by A. McAuley).

Muslim women are not allowed to wear the veil. They receive education with men because all schools are co-educational. Like Russian women, they go out of their homes and work on collective farms and industries along with atheist men who have different standards of morality. It is not known what percentage of them are employed in various fields of life. But it seems they still lag behind Slav women.

Pig farming has been introduced in Muslim areas. There were 3,794,000 pigs in Central Asian Republics in 1979. Muslims have been forced by Soviet authorities to live among pigs.

Comments

The definition of Muslim given by the author is incomplete. In addition to belief in God, His Scriptures and His Apostles, a Muslim is required to have belief in God's Angels (Malaikah), the Day of Judgement and the Finality of Prophethood.

Merely identifying oneself as a Muslim or associating with the Islamic faith is not enough. The Yazidis (not believing in any one religion), Ali Ilahis

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

do. Certainly the Mosques are packed on the occasion of two Eids and hundreds of people join in communal celebrations.

Madrassahs

Out of 24,000 Madrassahs which existed in the Russian empire in the beginning of the twentieth century, now there are only two: one in Bukhara and the other in Tashkend. These too were opened after decades of Communist rule: in 1945 and 1971 respectively. The capacity of these Madrassahs is limited to merely a few dozen students who are admitted only after competitive examination which includes a stiff test in Arabic. Learning enough Arabic to qualify for admission is a major problem with the applicants who have not seen the Arabic script since 1940. Not surprisingly, there were some years when nobody qualified for admission.

The administration of Islam in the Soviet Union is represented by four spiritual Directorates with their Headquarters at Tashkend, Ufa, Makhachkala and Baku. These were established after World War II. Each one of these is responsible for its respective region. The function of these Directorates is essentially to interpret religious law. Their Fatawas are no more than recommendations. These can hardly be expected to look after the problems of Soviet Muslims because it is outside the scope of their function.

Anti-Islam Propaganda

A limited quantity of religious material is permitted to be published. But no person or organization can do so except the Spiritual Directorates who are under official control. Since their founding, they have published six editions of the Holy Qur'an, one edition of "Sahih-i-Bukhari" and a few other small works on religion. But compared with the volume of anti-Islam propaganda material, the number of religious publications is only nominal. During the period 1948-75, nearly one thousand anti-Islam works were published in the languages of Soviet Muslims, not counting all those published in Russian.

Rituals & Practices

Burials are often performed in accordance with Muslim requirements. Circumcision is widespread.

No special dispensations are given by the Soviet authorities to those keeping the fast but clearly a large number of Muslims do persist in fasting and in celebrating the appropriate occasions.

Soviet citizens have the right of free education. Full-time secondary education is compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 15 years. All schools are co-educational.

The number of schools and universities in the six Union Republics, largely populated by the

Muslims, is:

Name of Republic	Number of schools	Number of universities
Uzbek	9400	2
Kazakh	8800	1
Tajik	3000	1
Turkmen	1800	1
Kirghiz	1700	1
Azerbaijan	4300	1

School education is in native languages, while university education is in Russian. Though Secondary Education is compulsory for all, there is clear difference in the level of education between Russians and Muslims, as seen below:

	Russians	Muslims
Secondary Education	50 %	37 %
Higher Education	above 4 %	below 3 %

According to Article 45 of the Constitution, every Soviet citizen has been guaranteed the right of education in his native language. But in actual fact this is not the position. Except in the six Union Republics, the medium of instruction in other administrative units viz. Autonomous Republics, Provinces and Regions, is Russian. Muslim children have to study in Russian language schools.

Furthermore, all professional/technical and higher education is in Russian. Admission to higher educational institutions is by competitive examination which includes compulsory papers in Russian language and literature. This largely deprives Muslim students of professional skills and university education.

Islamic Culture

The largest chunk of Soviet Muslims are the Turkic people who have their own mother-tongue. It was written in Arabic script which has a very special significance for the Muslims because of the Holy Qur'an being in Arabic. The Soviet government first replaced it with Latin script. In 1940, Cyrillic script was introduced, which is still in use. This deprived the younger generation of Muslims of knowledge of the Islamic religion, the material on which is mostly in Arabic.

According to Article 159 of the Constitution, there is no de jure official language in the USSR; all the languages of the indigenous peoples are equal before the law and may be used in all administrative/judicial proceedings. But in practice Russian is the only language of administration in most Muslim populated areas. In theory, a citizen can ask for any official proceedings in which he is

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their morale within the Soviet Union.

Religious Freedom?

The freedom of conscience guaranteed in the Soviet Constitution has become meaningless because of drastic reduction of religious institutions and serious curbs on religious activities. Propagation of religion outside the place of worship is prohibited. Teenagers cannot participate in religious activities. Slaughtering of sacrificial animals on "Eid-ul-Adha" is prohibited. No person or organization is permitted to publish any religious material except the Spiritual Directorates which are under official control. These restrictions make a mockery of the freedom of conscience. The Constitution guarantees the right "to perform religious worship or to conduct atheistic propaganda." The second part of the clause has over-riding power. In fact the propagation of atheism has been guaranteed Constitutional protection. The Constitution is a basic document of a State; the Soviets have made it also a piece of propaganda.

The statement that on Eids the mosques are packed and that in private conversations the Soviet Imams give the impression that quite a large number of people regularly go to the mosques cannot be taken on its face-value. It calls for a deeper examination of the situation. In a way it is indicative of the existence of Islam in the USSR. But it is based on the published work of Demidov. Soviet publications have a strong political bias. No publication on religion is possible unless its contents are attuned to the Soviet official line. Communist authorities have made it a point of their foreign policy to project that they are permissive to religion. The actual position is different. The number of mosques has been reduced drastically. The existing ones are insufficient to meet the requirements of Muslims. For example, Central Asia has 143 mosques for Muslim population of 27 millions which means $27,000,000 \div 143 = 190,000$ persons on the average. This situation shows the extreme inadequacy of mosques.

Soviet housing concentrations are in big cities, towns, settlements/villages. Generally, localities with 12000 inhabitants have the status of towns and those with 3000 inhabitants have been designated as "settlements." Localities with lesser inhabitants are considered as villages. It can be interpreted from the existing mosques and population ratio, as worked out above, that all towns and settlements are without mosques, not to speak of villages where all mosques were closed at the very outset of the Communist takeover. It appears that most of the existing mosques are in big cities only. These have been kept open by the authorities to show to the outside world that Islamic activities

are going on in the Soviet Union.

Facilities for religious education are nominal. The conditions under which the two madrassahs at Bukhara and Tashkend are functioning have reduced their usefulness. Lack of knowledge in Arabic language may be one of the reasons that for some years no candidate qualified for admission to the madrassah at Bokhara, which provides only elementary education in religion. Higher education is imparted at Tashkend Madrassah. The question is why such a stiff test in Arabic has been prescribed for admission to an elementary course. The requirement of a good knowledge of Arabic coupled with the condition of two years compulsory military service for admission seems to be a tactic to keep the enrolment to the minimum. The management must be under instructions to do so. The two madrassahs with their capacity for a few dozen students only are totally inadequate for a Muslim population of over 45 millions.

To say that circumcision is widespread, *aqeeqa* is practised, festivals are celebrated and burials are often performed in an Islamic fashion does not sound credible. The act of circumcision requires the services of a professional. It seems doubtful if any person can perform circumcision without being approved or registered with the authorities, as is the case with the Imams of the mosques. Whether the doctors in urban areas are allowed to accept freely circumcision cases and the villages/settlements have the services of professionals is a matter of guesswork.

Aqeeqa is performed by slaughtering one/two animals on the birth of a child. It is essentially a religious function. Its observance is certainly difficult, because slaughtering of animals for religious purposes is prohibited in the Soviet Union; even on Eid-ul-Adha, Muslims are not allowed to slaughter sacrificial animals.

The Soviet government does not recognize any festival other than that of Communist significance. On religious festivals, there is neither a holiday nor do the authorities allow rest off from work. All these rituals: circumcision, *aqeeqa*, festivals and burials: are public functions which must catch the eyes of the KGB/Communist Party. In the presence of these organizations which closely watch the Muslims, the observance of such rituals is very difficult, if not impossible.

Ramadhan Fasting

It is heartening to know that Soviet Muslims tend to persist in fasting. But no assistance is given by the authorities to those keeping the fast. If during duty hours on the collective farms or factories, the Muslims are not allowed any break to take meals for 'Sehri' or 'Iftari,' how is it possible for them to fast? Whether stores/shops of eatable items are open at

Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union

(worshippers of Sayyidna Ali) and Ahmedis (who do not believe in the finality of Prophethood) claim to be Muslims. But there is consensus among the Islamic Jurists that they are not. One has to believe in the aforesaid six fundamentals for being a Muslim. The moment a Muslim deviates from any of these fundamentals, he gets out of the fold of Islam, regardless of his claim to be a Muslim.

In relation to the Soviet Muslims, there can be no disagreement with Shirin Akiner that there is nothing hypocritical or fanciful in their claim of belonging to the Islamic community. If they are not practising religion to a significant degree, they are not to be blamed for this; prevailing conditions do not allow them to do so.

It is incorrect to say that Soviet Muslims do not have a corporate identity or have no direct links with one another. Eighty-five percent of them are Turkics who share a common origin and language. Whatever the minor linguistic variations, these are of dialect only which does not prevent them from understanding each other. The remaining fifteen percent are Iranis and Caucasians. They have been living with the Turkics for several hundred years. Centuries-old association of the three, with common bonds of faith and citizenship, must be enough to create a sense of community between them, especially against the non-Muslim majority of the country. Inter-nationality marriages are a proof that there is no communication-gap between them. They constitute a distinct single community for all purposes.

By according "Nationality" status to various ethnic groups who otherwise belong to the same race, the authorities have attempted to inject in them the concept of tribalism with the ulterior motive of weakening their allegiance to religion. It reflects the Soviet machiavellian attitude. One has to be careful before drawing any conclusion about Soviet Muslims.

Accuracy of Figures ?

The information about the total number of Muslims in the USSR is based on Soviet official sources who would never like to disclose the actual strength of a community squarely opposed to the Communist system. At the time of Revolution (1917), the Muslims were twenty millions. Majority of them are Turkic people who traditionally have large families. During the period 1970-79, their annual growth rate has been 2.5%. Taking this rate for the period 1917-79 and calculating increase on the original figure of twenty millions, and on the basis of geometrical progression which is the standard formula to determine population increase, the population of Muslims in the Soviet Union must be over 60 millions in 1979, as against 45 millions quoted by the author. No doubt there have been

large-scale executions and migrations during the Communist regime, still there is a wide gap between the two figures of 45 and 60 millions. One tends to believe that the real number of Muslims in the USSR is higher than given by Soviet sources.

The Yazidis and Ali Ilahis are not Muslims, but the Soviet regime have included them in the population of Muslim Kurds. It is wrong. Their inclusion in Muslim Kurds have enabled them to penetrate the Islamic community within and outside the Soviet Union. It is likely that the authorities have done so intentionally for using them in disguise against Islam.

The accuracy of Soviet official sources about ethnic groups is doubtful. In 1926, they listed a large number of groups but thereafter dismissed the distinct entity of several of them. In one case, thirteen groups of Caucasian peoples have now been merged into one group.

In another case, they mentioned only one person of Rudukh (a Caucasian ethnic group) in 1926 but estimated one thousand members of it in the 1960s. This much expansion in thirty-four years from a single person is not possible: apparently, the information of the 1926 census was wrong.

In some cases, little information is available about the early history of certain important ethnic groups. The Kurds, Tats and Avars are major groups but nothing conclusive is known about their origin. Similarly, large-scale inter-Republic migrations are mentioned to have taken place in Central Asia during the years 1968-69, but it is not known what were the reasons for these migrations.

The number of Kazakhs and Uighurs in China is at least 0.8 million and 5.96 million respectively instead of 0.7 million and 5 million as given by the Soviet sources. The number of Baluchis in Iran and Pakistan has also been under-estimated. They are about one million in Iran and over two millions in Pakistan and not 0.6 million and one million as stated.

The information about the origin and population of the ethnic groups of Soviet Muslims seems to have been taken by the author mostly from Soviet sources. These inaccuracies lend support to the suspicion that the first Soviet census (1962) was largely based on guess-work. Subsequent data are also not beyond suspicion. Soviet figures about Muslims are not reliable.

The Hajj is one of the five fundamental obligations of Islam. It has been totally banned to the Soviet Muslims. A small official delegation of 20 people allowed to visit Makkah for Hajj cannot be a substitute for the Muslim community, each member of which is obliged to perform Hajj if he can afford it. By denying Hajj to the Muslims, the Soviet regime has cut them off from the Muslim Ummah. Their contact with the Muslims of the world could raise

Muslim Gold Coins Draw Attention

Robert Obojski



In 998 Hisham II minted this gold Dinar in Cordoba



In Saudi Arabia gold coins have always been important in the monetary system. The Kingdom issued gold coins in 1952. But this (above and below) one guinea coin was struck in 1957.



A recent gold coin — two sides of a Syrian one pound issued in 1950.



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these times is a matter not probed by the author. What is the official attitude towards those who persist in fasting has not been discussed. Maybe a certain percentage of the Muslims are in a position to observe fast. The conditions certainly prevent the majority from doing so.

In fact the main problem with Soviet studies is that Soviet authorities do not allow outsiders any direct contact with local people. This hampers their gaining first-hand knowledge of the situation, neither is it possible for Soviet citizens to publish any information without official consent. Perforce Sovietologists have to revert to Soviet official sources. The case has been the same with Shirin Akiner. She has relied on the statement of Demidov who must be obliged to present a picture which shows that the Soviet Government is not anti-Islam. The situation in the Soviet Union is deceptive. The authorities have made up different zones, some of which they show to the outside world and certain areas they conceal. Samarkand is in open zone. Maybe religious activities of some sort are going on in this area for showing to outsiders.

Soviet Muslims have a Constitutional right to receive school education in their native language. But the authorities have not taken measures which could make the realisation of this right possible for them. This is outright injustice to the Muslim community.

The supremacy accorded to Russian in all spheres is a measure to detach Muslims from their mother tongue, which is the main link between them and their culture. Despite Constitutional recognition, the mother-tongue of the Muslims has not been allowed to flourish. The change of script from Arabic to Latin and then to Cyrillic by the Communist regime is a blatant step towards elimination of its distinct character. It has not only affected its entity but also cut off the Muslims of the USSR first from the Arabs and other Muslim brothers who are using Arabic script; and then from their blood brothers of Turkey who are using Latin script. The Islamic community of the Soviet Union has thus

been isolated from the rest of the Muslim world.

The number of newspapers reported to be published in the native languages of the Muslims seems to be exaggerated. Even if it is believed, their main purpose is nothing other than propagation of Communist ideology. In Communist countries, the flow of information is merely a part of the propaganda campaign, unlike non-Communist countries where propaganda is a part of the flow of information.

About the economic status of Soviet Muslims, the information given is scanty. The author has referred to the book of A. McAulay "that standards have been greatly improved in Azerbaidzhan, Central Asia and that still these are considerably lower than elsewhere in the Soviet Union." But no facts and figures have been quoted. In the absence of precise data, it is difficult to measure the economic gap between Muslims and Slav peoples. Lack of full information prevents our knowing if the standard of life of Soviet Muslims has been really improved. The economic condition of Soviet people has been a matter for guessing if not a riddle. Soviet authorities are afraid of releasing such information, because it would falsify their claim that the Communist system is the panacea for all economic ills.

By banning the wearing of the veil and requiring Muslim women to study/work with atheist males who have a different standard of morality and little regard for Islamic values, the authorities have forced them to accept an unwelcome situation. The Muslims are allergic to the word "pig" but pig farming has been introduced in their areas and they have to live among the pigs. All these steps are meant to brain-wash and mould them into the Communist frame of mind.

A concerted and well-planned strategy is required to ameliorate the conditions of Muslims in the Soviet Union.

(The author is the daughter of a diplomat. She received her education in various countries, including India, Holland and the USSR, and has widely travelled in the Middle East and the Soviet Union.)

Tel Aviv-Pretoria Nuclear Test

American declassified documents showed that Israeli entity and racist regime of South Africa had conducted a nuclear test in 1979 and the Carter White House suppressed the information because it was "politically inconvenient." The report said that the nuclear fuel and technology was made available in large parts by the US.

Recent press reports also referred to the smuggling of American nuclear devices from the US to the Zionist entity. The Carter administration suppressed the news of the Israeli-South African explosion test, which was conducted on 22 September, 1979 because being conclusively proved would require the American government to cut off all military aid to Tel Aviv.

Secondly it would expose the several decades of Western complicity in providing South Africa and Israeli state with goods and technology to make their own nuclear weapons.

Muslim Gold Coins Draw Attention

Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C. Much later, as empires waxed and waned, Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins were circulated throughout the Middle East too, some of which were still in use when Umayyad dynasty was founded and began to accept tribute from its territories.

Up to this point the Arabs had not yet produced coins of their own, having been content to use the Byzantine gold *solidi* they found in the former imperial provinces now under their jurisdiction. By the end of the 7th century, the conquered territories were delivering considerable amounts of tribute to the court at Damascus and a mintage of new coins became a necessity—though even then the coins were really imitations of Byzantine *solidi*. The Christian emblems were altered, of course, but otherwise they adhered to Byzantine designs. According to most numismatists, the first purely Islamic coins to be issued were the gold *dinars* struck by the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik at the Damascus mint, and one, minted in 693, shows that they were patterned after a *solidus* of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-41).

The Byzantine gold piece features standing figures of the Emperor and his two sons, while the reverse side displays a cross at the top of a flight of four steps, presumably meant to represent the cross of Calvary. On the Arab *dinar*, the figures hold staffs or swords rather than crosses, and on the reverse side, there is no cross and the inscription reads: "In the name of God, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God."

These coins, apparently, were an experiment—few specimens have survived—and by the time the Umayyads commenced a fairly large-scale coinage of gold *dinars*, in 696, 'Abd al-Malik had settled on more severe, non-

pictorial designs that were to distinguish Islamic coinage throughout the centuries. *Dinar*, the Arab term for a gold piece, is a development of the word *denarius*, the principal silver coin of Roman times, but under the Byzantines was used as a synonym for the gold *solidus*.

Some 50 years after the coinage of gold *dinars* began, the Umayyad dynasty was overthrown, and the powerful Abbasids who succeeded them transferred the capital—and the mint—from Damascus to Baghdad. But though the Abbasids remained as caliphs until they were overwhelmed by the Mongols in 1258, and were responsible for the "Golden Age," their coinage shows little change; the Abbasid caliphs followed the Umayyad patterns closely and any variation in design was minor. One example is the *dinar* of the Caliph al-Mansur (754-75). Its central inscription, in Arabic, is "There is no god but God," etc., and inscribed around the edge and on the reverse are additional quotations from the Qur'an and the date A. H. 152, the equivalent of A. D. 769.

Coins also tell the story of Muslim Spain. Gold *dinars*, for example, were minted under 'Abd al-Rahman III (912-61). Like silver *dirhams* of the same period they are inscribed with the *Shahada*, the date, the name of the ruling caliph and the mint. One for example, was issued under the Caliph Hisham II (976-1013) and was struck in 988 at Cordoba, the Moorish capital. It was one of the most magnificent cities of Europe: a spacious breezy metropolis extending for a dozen miles along the banks of the Guadalquivir River, and one of the world's greatest centres of commerce, learning and art.

Muslim coins of Moorish Spain, especially the gold *dinars* soon found their way into Christian hands—and were

welcome since virtually no European gold coins were being struck at this time, except in the distant Byzantine Empire. Indeed, a sizable percentage of the gold coins circulating in Poland during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries were of Arab origin.

There are, in fact, gold coins preserved from most of the important periods in Muslim history, and one coin, issued in 1478, announces the arrival of what, for centuries after, would be one of the dominant powers in the world: the Ottoman Empire. This coin, introduced by the Sultan Mehmet II, was the first of a new series called the *altun*—"gold"—or, in Europe, *sequin*, which was itself a corruption of *zecchino*, the name of a Venetian gold coin, in turn derived from *sikka*, the Arabic word for mint.

Turkish coinage, like most other Islamic issues, carries inscription designs only. On the obverse we see a line inscription indicating the name of the Sultan, his father (Mehmet I), and the date, according to the Muslim calendar, 883. The two upside down "v's" and the elongated "r" at bottom are the Arabic-Turkish forms of the numerals 883. The reverse inscription translates as "Striker of gold, lord of might and victor by land and sea." Mehmet II was not noted for his modesty.

Modern rulers have also issued gold coins, but many of them tell more of the ancient past than the era of their issue. In 1955 and 1957, for example, the Cairo Mint struck a number of interesting gold pieces that recall Egypt's heritage: the one pound and five pound sets commemorating the third and fifth anniversaries of the 1952 Egyptian Revolution.

The designs on both issues are identical except for the dates: the powerful Ramses II (1304-1237 B.C.) with a bow and arrow, driving a chariot, with the word "Egypt" written out in hieroglyphics above the horse and in

Arabian Gold Coins Draw Attention

Since the late 1870's numismatists — coin collectors have begun to explore a relatively new and potentially invaluable source of coins for their collections: coins in gold from the Muslim world — what they call the "Arab-Asian Empires."

Until then, most Western collectors had skipped over Arabic gold coins, as they had silver coins. They avoided Muslim-world coins because, as one expert put it, "all the coins look alike to the average Western eye," and because they simply couldn't read the Arabic inscriptions. But in the late 1970's, gold coins in general began to attract the eye of both collectors and investors—collectors because they needed new field to explore, investors because the price of gold suddenly skyrocketed; between early 1979 and early 1980 gold shot from about 200 dollars per troy ounce to 800 dollars.

Gold has always fascinated man—for fascinating reasons: because of its lustre, its beauty and its value, of course, but also because of its extraordinary properties.

Gold, for example, is highly malleable; it can be beaten into sheets less than 1/250,000 of an inch thick, and one ounce can be drawn into 60 miles of wire. It is also exceptionally heavy—a 14.2 inch cube weighs one tonne—and does not tarnish or rust, since it does not react to moisture, air or most acids. Thus, gold coins of ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantium often look as they're fresh from the mint, and centuries-old coins dredged from the wrecks at the bottom of the ocean still retain their lustre—the special lustre of gold.

Gold, of course, is also rare; that's the secret of its value. Since the beginning of recorded history, the story goes, some 6,000 years ago, all the pure gold wrested from the earth could be compressed into a cube measuring no more than 13.5 metres (45 feet)

on each side. As a result, gold has been the symbolic—and actual—foundation of monetary economics since civilisation began.

In modern times, gold has been a force for stability. When the United States went off the Gold Standard, in June, 1933, the price of the metal had been fixed at 20.67 dollars per troy ounce—and then in 1934, under the provisions of the Gold Reserve Act, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by executive order, froze the price of gold at 35.00 dollars per ounce, a price that endured for nearly 35 years, and was, in effect, the world price too, since the United States then held a high proportion of the world's monetary gold reserves.

In 1968, however, gold reached 40 dollars in London, and in 1969 reached 47 dollars in Paris. By 1972 the price was up to 70 dollars and on May 14, 1973, the London market closed at 102.50 dollars. And that was just the beginning. In 1974 it became legal for U.S. citizens to own gold and not long after prices touched the 200 dollars mark. Then, after three years of fluctuation, gold, in early 1979, skyrocketed. By the end of the year prices reached 500 dollars an ounce and in mid-January, 1980, shot up to 800 dollars.

For numismatists who were already showing an interest in coins, those prices were frosting on the cake and the result is a small boom in gold coins with significant interest in Middle Eastern coins. "It's truly amazing how many collectors in the West are now taking a serious interest in Middle Eastern gold and silver coins," commented Louis DiLauro, Los Angeles numismatist, who has specialised in coins of the Arab lands for many years. "Newly-published numismatic catalogues and guide-books giving translations of Arabic, Persian and Turkish inscriptions have done a great deal to help collectors attribute their specimens

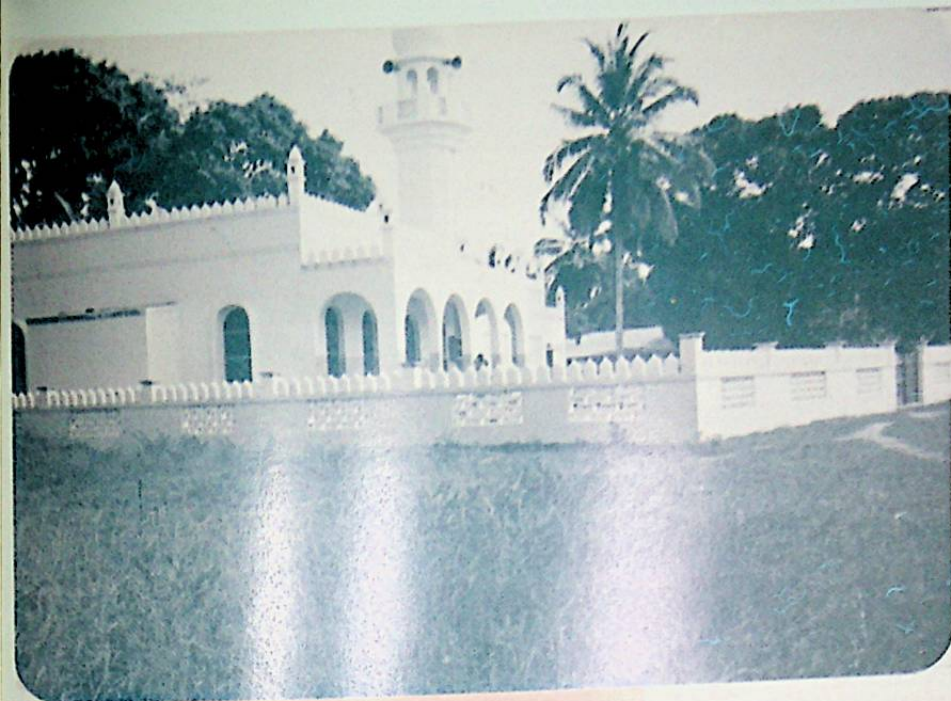
properly," DiLauro added.

Such catalogues also measure the degree of collector interest. One example is Robert Friedberg's *Gold Coins of the World: Complete from 600 A. D. to the Present*, in which he introduced a new "Arab-Asian Empires" section, created especially for the book. The first edition of the book was entirely sold out within a few weeks after it was released in mid-1980 by the Coin and Currency Institute in New York and when a second printing was ordered for the fall of 1980, that too, was sold out within a very short time.

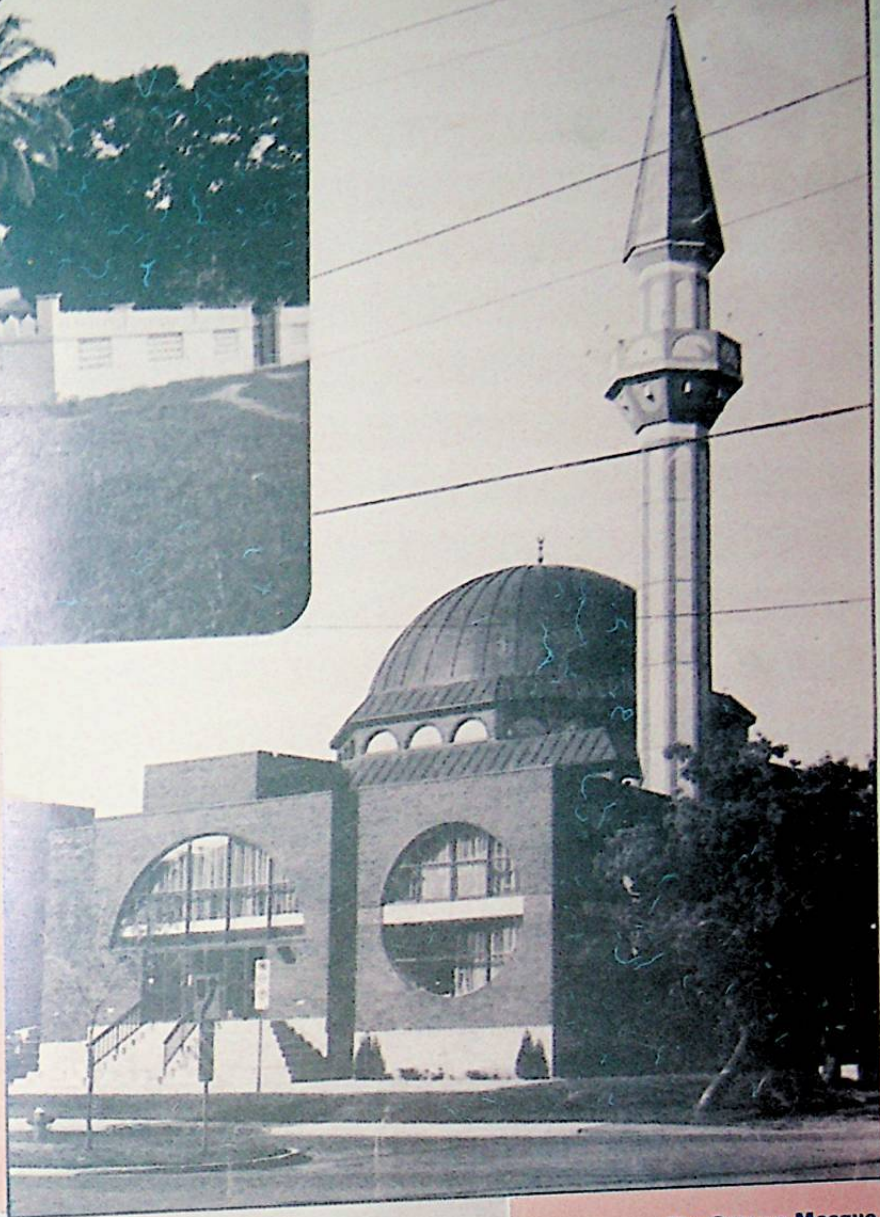
Even Friedberg's book, however, perpetuates the belief that Arabic coins look alike. The author, for example, says that while it would have been possible to make a complete catalogue of the coins struck under each ruler (as has been done for other countries in this book), "it was decided not to do so because all the coins look alike to the average Western eye and because the monotony of type and appearance remains unbroken over centuries of issue."

Actually, as DiLauro has indicated, numismatists are coming to realise that Friedberg's contention is not entirely valid. Design and inscriptions *do* vary from one period to another, though the changes are more subtle than variations we see on Western money and catalogues are now beginning to reflect this. Furthermore, a study of these coins—like the silver "coins of history"—offers a convenient view of the history of the Arab lands and the Muslim empire.

In the Middle East, objects crafted of gold were utilised as currencies long before the first coins were ever struck. As early as the 17th century B. C., for example, gold "money rings" circulated throughout much of Egypt and its environs. Examples can still be seen at the British Museum in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the



A Mosque in
Mombasa, Kenya.



The Ottawa Mosque,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.



Mosque, Sidi Okba - Biskra
Algerie

Muslim Gold Coins Draw Attention

Arabic below. On the reverse, there's winged sun, an Arabic inscription—that reads "Republic of Egypt," one pound—or five pounds—and the date, given according to both the Christian and Muslim calendars.

In 1968 Egypt issued another five pound gold coin; featuring an open Qur'an set upon a globe, it commemorates the 1,400th anniversary of the first revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet. Other modern Egyptian gold pieces commemorate the establishment of the United Arab Republic, the beginning of the construction on the Aswan High Dam, and the diversion of the Nile at the dam site.

Modern coins have also been issued in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran and Turkey. Syria's output is low—one set in 1950—but Turkey's was prolific: 100 varieties from the 1870's to now including a coin for 100 piasters struck under Sultan Mehmet VI in 1919, and a coin for 50 piasters 1959, portraying Kemal Ataturk, the Father of Modern Turkey.

All Turkish coins issued under the sultanate carry the *tugra*, the Sultan's calligraphic emblem, on the obverse, and in most cases the value appears directly under the *tugra*, with the dates, according to the Muslim calendar, on the reverse.

Mehmet II's gold *altun* is a seminal issue in numismatic history because Turkish sultans for nearly 350 years utilised basic design; only the sultan's names and the dates were changed from one reign to another. But then, after the Ottoman Empire fell and Kemal Ataturk founded a republic, a new coinage system was introduced in 1933 in which Christian dates and Western numerals were indicated. This reform made it possible for Europeans to handle Turkish currencies far more easily. The 50 piaster coin is part of an Ataturk portrait series, minted between 1942-61; it also includes 25, 100,

250 and 500 piasters values which are generally known as "De Luxe" gold coins, actually, souvenir and presentation pieces. Though you won't see them in circulation anywhere in Turkey, they are highly popular as collectors' items. And last, another fine coin from Turkey; there is a 500 lira gold piece of 1973 which commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Turkish Republic and the end of the Ottoman Empire. This coin features a facing bust of Ataturk with a symbolic shooting star on the reverse; it contains about a fifth of an ounce of bullion and in 1980 was selling in the 225-250 dollars range on the numismatic market.

Last, there are the gold coins of Iran which until 1854, avoided portraits on their coinage, in accordance with tradition. Recent rulers—Riza Shah Pahlevi (1925-1914) and his son, the

late Muhammad Shah Pahlevi (1941-1980), were more of forthcoming; their portraits appear on gold and silver *pahlevi's* and *riyals*; on the reverse side of one coin, the quarter pahlevi there is a striking design: the arms of Persia, a lion standing before a radiant sun with a sword upheld with one paw. The value is inscribed below the lion in Arabic script. The Shah also issued a single gold commemorative coin, a five *pahlevi* piece struck to celebrate his marriage to Farah Diba in 1961. The coin features the dual portrait of the couple.

All the historic Arab and Turkish gold coins discussed here—except for the *dinar* of 'Abd al-Malik—were comparatively inexpensive since they were struck in large quantities for general circulation.

— *Aramco World*

WAMY Youth Camps Planned

The World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY) is organizing six youth camps in Britain, Kenya, Kashmir, Holland, Mozambique and Mauritius, during a period starting from August 2 and ending on December 24. These camps will host more than 2,000 youth delegates from various countries.

In a statement to SPA, Dr. Tawfiq al-Gasser, the Organization's Secretary-General, said the first camp in Britain ended on Aug. 4, under the supervision of the Islamic Call Organization in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Another three-day camp opened in Kenya on Aug. 8 under the patronage of the Muslim Youth Society and the WAMY bureau in Africa, he said.

A two-week camp started in Kashmir on Aug. 10 under the supervision of the Islamic Students Association. Another week-long camp was held in the Netherlands on Aug. 12 under the patronage of the Islamic Information Centre in Holland.

The four-day camp in Mozambique will open on Sept. 6 under the supervision of the Organization of Muslim Youth Conference in Africa. Another five-day camp will begin in Mauritius under the patronage of the Islamic Society in Mascarene Basin, an Indian Ocean island.

In addition to these camps, al-Gasser said, a camp will also be organized in South Korea at a time to be fixed later. He said the Assembly organized six camps since the beginning of Shawwal (middle of June) this year. They were held in Pakistan, Spain, the Turkish Cyprus, France and Ghana.