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**THE SOVIET
UNION**



**AND
ISLAM**

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R. N. NISHANOV

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NOVOSTI PRESS AGENCY
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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

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THE SOVIET UNION AND ISLAM

Recently, the Novosti Press Agency issued in English a set of four booklets with the title *Moslems in the Soviet Union*. Each booklet is an interview with an official representative of the Moslem religion in our country and presents the views of these individuals.

Our laws strictly protect the rights of believers. Offences against the feelings of believers or discrimination of any kind is prosecuted by law. It is only under such conditions as exist in our country that each citizen can be guaranteed the freedom of belief or disbelief, the freedom of religious worship as well as the freedom to engage in religious propaganda.

With this latter thought uppermost in mind, this booklet is being issued to balance the conflicting and prejudiced views presented in the *Moslems in the Soviet Union* booklets and to reflect the opinions and beliefs of the vast majority of the Soviet people, including Moslems of various communities

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

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in the USSR. In refuting the arguments of the Moslem theologians, it must be pointed out that the majority of the clergy in the USSR are law abiding and loyal in their attitudes toward the Soviet Government in both its domestic and foreign policies. In the favour of Soviet Moslems, the contributions of the Moslem clergy in the USSR to the cause of world peace, to the prevention of a new world war and to the strengthening of international friendship should not be left unmentioned.

The first interview in the *Moslems in the Soviet Union* booklets is with Mufti Ziyavutdin Babakhanov, President of the Moslem Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. His answers, as the answers of the other religious representatives, give a vivid picture of the changes that have occurred in Islam (just as in other religions) in the years of Soviet power.

Replying to a question about religious rites, customs and holidays observed by Soviet Moslems, the head of the Moslems forgets to mention—quite deliberately it seems—the main thing: that the overwhelming majority of representatives of what is known as Moslem peoples have already departed from religion and do not observe these rites.

The Supreme Imam makes his most important contribution when he dwells on the structure of the four religious boards existing in the USSR and gives a brief history of their foundation. For example, the Moslem Religious Board of the European Part of the USSR and Siberia is in Ufa. The Moslem Religious Board of North Caucasus and Daghestan has been functioning in the city of Bui-naksk for over twenty years. The Moslems of three

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Trans-Caucasian republics have their Religious Board in Baku. This Religious Board stands on guard of the interests of both Shiites and Sunnites who used to be hostile in their relations in the past. The Moslems of the four republics of Central Asia and Kazakhstan are subordinated to the Religious Board in Tashkent.

Such centralisation has produced great positive results, Babakhanov points out significantly, inasmuch as, for example, the Moslem believers have got a religious centre of their own for the first time in the centuries of the existence of Islam in Central Asia. It is called upon to put an end to different interpretations of the Koran and the Hadiths by local Imams and to provide a centralised all-Soviet interpretation. The practical value of this is rather obvious: to increase the subordination of the lower links of the theological hierarchy to the highest links.

In the second interview booklet, Muniriddin Mahdun Isametdinov, Imam-khatib of the Tilla Sheikh in Tashkent, speaks mostly of the people who come to his mosque and of the ideological contrasts in their families. It is highly noteworthy that almost all of the most pious believers attending his mosque are people well advanced in years, just as the Imam himself, who, incidentally, became Imam-khatib of the mosque not because he had a particularly strong inclination to do so (he says himself that gardening had been his main interest in life for long years) but because it was a family tradition (his father and grandfather were important religious leaders in their time).

The interview given by Kazi Ismail Mahmud

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Sattiyev covers, mainly, questions of Moslem culture: mausoleums, mosques and other religious structures which are often historical-architectural memorials of great value.

In the fourth interview, another Kazi—Abdulodjan Kalonov, a member of the Moslem Religious Board—gives a detailed account of the Board's relations with Moslem organisations in 44 countries. He says that they often exchange delegations and individual representatives. Quite unlike their past behaviour, at the present time the official Moslem clergy does not come out openly against the ideas of the internationalism and friendship of peoples, seeing in them an already confirmed, unshakeable force. On the contrary, it does not cease repeating that it is precisely the religion of Islam that has unceasingly called for the friendship of peoples, and Soviet Moslem organisations take an active part in the international peace movement.

A recent important example of the efforts of Soviet Moslem leaders to support the position of our Government in international matters was the three-day conference of Moslem organisations of the Soviet Union which took place in Tashkent from October 6 until October 8, 1970. Under the motto "For the Unity and Cooperation of Moslems in the Struggle for Peace and Against Imperialist Aggression", the conference was attended by Moslem religious leaders from the United Arab Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Iraqi Republic, the Yemen Arab Republic, the People's Republic of Southern Yemen, the Somali Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Bulgaria,

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

the People's Republic of Yugoslavia, the Sudan Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iran, Morocco, Ceylon, Guyana, the Philippines, Cameroun, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania and Gambia.

Mufti Ziyavutdin Babakhanov, who in January 1968 on his 60th birthday was given the Soviet Government award of the Badge of Honour as a reward for his work toward peace, delivered a report at the plenary session of the conference. Commenting on the conference, he said, "The Tashkent conference is regarded to be the first of its kind in the history of the Soviet Moslems. Representatives of the Islamic organisations in the Soviet Union who realise their responsibility to preserve world peace met with representatives of the Moslems of many countries in the world to express their protest against the criminal action of imperialism which is causing the situation in the world to worsen. The Israeli aggressors usurped from the Arabs their original land. The United States government and its political tool, the ruling circles of Israel, bear full responsibility for the dangerous situation in the Middle East. On behalf of the Soviet Moslems and Moslems of other countries the conference appealed to all who cherish the ideals of peace to "condemn and isolate the aggressors and to make them renounce their adventurist course in the Middle East."

Mufti Babakhanov went on to say, "In their appeal the delegates also urged peace fighters to raise their voice against the United States government's aggressive acts in Indochina and to come out resolutely for an immediate unconditional withdrawal of United States troops and their allies from this

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

region in order to secure for the people of Indo-China the right to decide their own fate without foreign intervention."

Sheikh Mohammed Miallim, who represented the Somali Moslems at the Tashkent Conference, on his return to the Somali Democratic Republic, delivered a lecture before prominent religious figures at the capital city of Mogadiscio. He said, "There is a complete freedom for professing the Moslem religion in the Soviet Union. When I went to the Soviet Union I realised and saw for myself that the Soviet Government does not at all interfere in the various religions, including Islam. Therefore the old propaganda that the Soviet Moslems do not enjoy religious freedom are lies spread by the enemies of the Soviet Union."

He said that he went to several Moslem republics in the Soviet Union where he was able to see how the Moslem people lived. He stressed that there are special committees that help Moslems in their religious life. He stated that he was greatly impressed by the wish of the Soviet Moslems to strengthen friendship and cooperation with the Somali Moslems.

Thus it may be seen that Moslems, like other religious entities in the Soviet Union, enjoy the right to freely perform religious rites. Inasmuch as the materialist world outlook prevails in Soviet society and the overwhelming majority of Soviet people are atheists, we must also respect the rights of these Soviet citizens to freely conduct anti-religious propaganda. Without this, there would be no real freedom of conscience. If nobody can be prevented from believing in any

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

God, then how can anyone be prevented from not believing in God, from being an atheist and proving the incompatibility of religion and modern science?

A journal, *Science and Religion*, published in Moscow contains materials proving the harm of religious prejudices, the bankruptcy of religious philosophy and its moral danger to the people. The Znaniye ("Knowledge") Society (a nationwide organisation, run on a voluntary basis) also denotes considerable attention to atheist propaganda. It sponsors public lectures of an anti-religious nature, with believers and clergymen having the opportunity to come out at these lectures with their arguments. Anti-religious propaganda is conducted on a scientific basis without insulting the feelings of those who cherish the faith.

In a typical discussion between the Mufti Ziyatyudin Babakhanov and the greatest Soviet Islamic scholar Professor Lyutsian I. Klimovich, the Mufti would be permitted to express his views on Islam as in the booklet *Moslems in the Soviet Union* and Klimovich, without prejudice, might eloquently respond as he has so frequently in the past:

Islam is an anti-scientific reactionary world concept, alien and inimical to the scientific Marxist-Leninist world concept. Islam is an opposition to the optimistic and life-affirming materialistic teaching; it is incompatible with the fundamental interests of the Soviet peoples; it prevents believers from being active and conscientious constructors of the Communist society.

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

The Koran was compiled to please the Calif's feudal lords and merchants and its stories about paradise and hell are merely a means of converting the workers into will-less slaves. The Moslem holy days, especially Kurban Bayrami and the Ramadan fast, are survivals of a past when man believed that by magic he could bribe the evil spirits or gods. The hajj is a source of income for the merchants and feudalists of Arabia and has become of late an opportunity widely used by the imperialists for the recruitment of spies and diversionists.

The teachings of the Koran and the sunna on the appearance and structure of the world develop in the people wrong ideas of natural phenomena and justify the cruel relations existing among people in feudal or bourgeois societies. The Koran rejects laws of nature and society replacing them with the formulae: "God creates the way He wishes" and "He does what He wants."

It is therefore obvious that the authors of the Koran were unfamiliar with the fact that the natural phenomena are interrelated not arbitrarily or accidentally through the will and whim of divinity, as explained by Islam, but necessarily, naturally. Without interrelated natural phenomena there would be neither elementary conditions for the development of life nor for human existence; a knowledge of nature and scientific forecast would be impossible. Naturally, when the Koran was being written, not only its authors but those to whom it appealed, understood very little of natural phenomena and, failing to find

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

a proper explanation, they believed that anything incomprehensible comes from God. However, as F. Engels pointed out, "essentially it is entirely a matter of indifference whether I would give the name of accident or God to the reason of incomprehensible phenomena. Both these names are only the expression of my ignorance and, therefore, have nothing in common with science. Science does not exist where the necessary links are broken."

Science and experience deny any "miracles", any arbitrariness, any accident in natural phenomena and in social life. Progress is possible only on the basis of the knowledge of the laws, with as full a consideration of objective laws of nature and society as possible. The actions of people have a meaning only when they may expect some predetermined results, and forecasting the future is possible only because everything is interconnected in nature, it develops naturally, i.e., identical causes with identical conditions linked to identical consequences.

Science and religion are incompatible. "If science relies on fact, on scientific experiments and conclusions strictly tested and proved by life, any religion relies only on Biblical and other legends, on fantastic inventions." No compromising, despite the efforts of the modern defenders of Islam, is possible, between science and Islam as well as between science and any other religion. "Science cannot tolerate the religious imaginary ideas of the life of nature and man and, therefore, it is incompatible with religion. Science helps mankind become familiar, deeper and deeper, with

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

the objective laws of the development of nature and society. It helps put the forces of nature in the service of man. Science contributes to increased awareness and to increased human culture; religion darkens the mind of man, condemning him to passivity in the face of the forces of nature, binds his creative activity and initiative."

Let us now discuss the dogmas and teachings of the Koran affecting public life, the meaning and ways of development of human society.

Popular works show that man has always tried to look ahead, to look into the future as a time for the achievement of his ideals, the fulfillment of his ideal of a free and happy life. However, the Koran turns the eyes of man not forward, into the future, but back, into the past. According to the myth of the Koran concerning Adam and his wife who were unaware of hunger and of their nakedness in Paradise, who did not experience heat or thirst, the happy time in the history of mankind, its "golden age", remained behind.

This story, quite similar to the Biblical story, does not have a grain of truth and is a harmful idealisation of primitive society. "The idea that the primitive man was given what was necessary as a free gift from nature," wrote V. I. Lenin, "is a foolish fable . . . There has been no golden age behind us, and primitive man was entirely subordinated to the difficulty of existing, to the difficult fight with nature."

The Islamic theory of the "golden age" of the past is an appeal to abandon the struggle for a

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

just reorganisation of life on earth, a sermon of subordination, of passivity, of lack of faith in the triumph of human labour and in the possibility of building a happy human society.

The Koran lowers the dignity of man, his mind, his nobility, his boundless possibilities for the development of his creative forces. No matter how hard man may try, according to the Koran, he will not create anything good. The Koran presents the life and concern of man as a false solace, as vainglory. "Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children; as the lightness of vegetation after rain whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman but afterward it drieth up and thou seest it turning yellow, then it becometh straw." ". . . Whereas the life of the world is but a matter of illusion." "Whoso desireth the harvest of the hereafter, we give him increase in its harvest." "O mankind! Keep your duty to your Lord and fear a day when the parent will not be able to avail the child in aught, nor the child to avail the parent. Lo! God's promise is the very truth. Let not the life of the world beguile you. . .", i.e., this is the only life on earth. If we trust the Koran, it would seem that the duty of man is not found in socially useful labour, not in the joint struggle of people of various countries for better life completely eliminating national and social oppression but in patiently supporting any misfortunes, the merciless oppression of the exploiters, turning one's thoughts toward personal "salvation" in a non-existing heaven, in

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

life after death. This is an anti-social, anti-people's teaching; it alienates the working people from the class struggle for the reorganisation of a society in which injustice reigns. This is why reactionary regimes are eager to support Islam.

The role assigned to God in all those teachings and dogmas of the Koran proves the idea of F. Engels to the effect that "the unity of God controlling the numerous phenomena of nature and combining opposite forces of nature is no more than a copy of the single eastern despot who truly or really rallies the people with clashing interests." It is not accidental that the various "names" for God include the word "Malik", i.e., King. The Koran proclaims: "Blessed be He who has the kingdom in His hands, for He is omnipotent."

Islam is the religion of a class society. Its doctrine of Paradise defends the interests of the exploiters. The Koran promises the believers heavenly coolness, pleasant dreams and dark-eyed women — the houris — as a reward for their obedience. "Lo! This is the supreme triumph. For the like of this, then, let the workers work."

As all religious teachings of life after death, the tale of the Koran on the bliss of the Moslem Paradise was always, in the exploiting society, a class weapon of the haves, means for turning the working people into abject slaves. The more difficult and hopeless the position of the exploited in this only real world was, the more beautifully and temptingly did the theologians describe the imaginary Paradise.

A similar social significance is the myth of

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

the torture of the sinners in the Moslem hell where the merciful God has "prepared for disbelievers manacles and carcans and a raging fire".

The Koran supports the exploiting society as being of "divine origin" and proclaims that inequality, class oppression and slavery were established by God. "We," states the Koran, speaking in the name of God, "have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of the world and raised some of them above others in rank that some of them take labour from others." According to the Koran, Islam itself is one type of religion for the representatives of the power of the exploiters — the slave owners, the feudals and the merchants — and another type for the poor and the oppressed. The first must obey only God and His messenger; while the others, God, His messenger and those in power.

Private property and inequality are firmly defended by the Koran. They are depicted as the "mercy of God". "God hath favoured some of you above others in provision. Now those who are more favoured will by no means hand over their provisions to those (slaves) whom their right hands possess so that they may be equal with them in respect thereof." And this despite the fact that the first — the rich — are afraid of the second! "Have ye, from among those whom your right hand possess, partners in the wealth we have bestowed upon you, equal with you in respect thereof, so that ye fear them as ye fear each other?" The Koran warns the have-nots not to try to change their difficult situation by any at-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

tempt whatsoever upon the property of the rich.
"And strain not thine eyes toward that which we cause some wedded pairs among them to enjoy . . ." Poverty, severe human suffering, social injustice, slavery are all, according to the Koran, God's good deeds.

Such ideas, stemming from the teachings of the Koran, permeated hundreds of Moslem works and were reflected in official documents, the purpose of which was to praise the power based on the oppression of the majority by the minority. For example, in the Yarlyk of the Emir of Bukhara Muzaffar issued to the Bey Mohammed-Sharif, in 1884, we read: "The way the creator of the night and the day and the Almighty, (who) chooses whom He wishes (inaccurate version of the 68th verse of the 28th chapter of the Koran, which states: "The Lord creates what He wants and freely chooses"), (promoted) the sons of man, in His own words: 'We have honoured the children of Adam' with the greatness of superiority and with the announcement: 'we elevate some of them above the others' so our just person He has put on the throne of the kingdom and has clothed our body with the nobility of the rule." The big round state seal of the Bukhara Emir on the reverse of this Yarlyk, reads: "The Emir is the Khalifate of Almighty God . . ." "His Majesty the Merciful Khalif", was the way the Bukhara Emir was usually addressed by petitioners and officials in the petitions and documents submitted to him.

History has long refuted those views and revealed the total unfoundedness of the defence

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

of exploitation and oppression of man by man, as well as the weakness of those who, like the Emir, used the Koran for their own benefit. The Teaching according to which mankind must always live in an exploiting society split by antagonistic contradictions has nothing in common with the proper understanding of the laws of social development.

Studying the Koran, it is easy to understand how misled are those who uncritically repeat the thoughts of modern bourgeois interpreters of this book, to the effect that "the Koran is the most democratic constitution in the world".

The development of mankind also revealed the human-hating nature of the sermons of intolerance toward people of another faith, the promotion of discord among the people because of their religious affiliation. This sermon of the authors of the Koran is explained not only by the influence of religion in the ancient East with its characteristic separation among the peoples of different beliefs, but also with the conditions of the sharp political struggle which took place during the period of early Islam, as reflected by this book. For the same reason, the Koran includes writings which speak differently ("There is no coercion in religion", etc.). Subsequently, however, the Moslem theologians depicted the sermon of intolerance as a truth given by God once and forever. According to this "truth", "the believers should not have unbelievers as friends". "All ye who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you and let them find harshness in you." "Mohammed is the messenger of God. And those

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

with him are hard against the disbelievers. . .”.

In our time, the struggle for peace, for national independence and democracy in all countries rallies the forces of the atheists and the people of different faiths — Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus and others. All of them cooperate with one another as required by life, as demanded by their noble aspirations and feelings. These people have risen far above those laws and customs of antiquity which, as a rule, demanded the followers of different religions to not drink, not eat, or do anything usual in common.

Particularly clear now is the falsity and harm of the teachings of Islam, separating the people into believers and nonbelievers, dividing all countries of the world into countries of Islam and countries of war, i.e., non-Moslem countries. This teaching frequently permitted the oppressors and aggressors to depict their unjust wars as “holy”.

K. Marx in his article, “Declaring War”, devoted to the Russian-Turkish War, wrote: “The Koran and Moslem legislation based on it bring geography and ethnography of the various peoples down to a simple and convenient formula, dividing them into two countries and two nations: believers and non-believers. The non-believer is the ‘harbi’, the enemy. Islam places the non-believers outside the law and creates a state of continuous enmity between Moslems and non-believers.”

The promotion of discord among the peoples of various faiths, cultivated by Islam as well as by the other religions, has been frequently used by the exploiters in their struggle against the

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

national-liberation movements of the peoples of the East for weakening them. That was the case, for example, with the English imperialists who, in 1947, divided India into the Indian union and Pakistan on the basis of religion.

Under circumstances in which the peoples of various countries have begun more and more actively to unify their forces in the struggle for national and social rights, when the people of various faiths and the atheists jointly participate in solving the problems of the entire world, the old appeals for "holy war" and opposing the "true" religion to the "false" one can now only compromise those who promote such slogans. For this reason, new interpreters of Islam have appeared, in whose opinion the jihad is no longer a "war for the faith", but only a demand for "general mobilisation". Some Moslem theologians as well as representatives of bourgeois Islamic studies are engaged in promoting such an interpretation.

Together with the new interpretations of those parts of the Koran which preach enmity among the peoples of different faiths, the defenders of Islam intensively disseminate the appeals contained in the Koran for "brotherhood among all Moslems". Yet, in such appeals, the Koran substitutes the class interests of the people with their religious affiliation. Essentially, such ideas are similar to the evangelical teachings of non-resistance to evil. Both the Koran and the Scriptures ask the working people to love their oppressors and exploiters. The Koran says: They must do so because they

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

are Moslem; the Scriptures say that evil should not be countered.

It is not by accident that such Islamic ideas, borrowed from the sunna, were published (from the collection of Abdallah Suradardi) also by such "non-resisters", as the sectarian-Tolstoians. For example, in the "sayings by Mohammed, not included in the Koran" published by the "Posrednik" publishing house (1910), the following text is quoted: "Help your Moslem brother, regardless of who he is: oppressor or oppressed." The anti-people's nature of this idea is so clear that, apparently, even its authors, who had ascribed these words to the prophet Mohammed, had to think about it. They went on: "However, how could you help him, if he is an oppressor?" the prophet was asked. Mohammed answered: "Help the oppressor to abstain from oppressing." However, the working people will know what it means to "help the oppressor to abstain from oppressing". This means to abandon the class struggle and the defence of social and national rights, always bow to the exploiters and colonizers, always remain in slavery, poverty, hunger and righteousness. Such is the real meaning of those teachings.

Similar teachings are found on the pages of the bourgeois newspapers published for a national minority of Russia. The editorial of the newspaper *Tardzhuman*, expressing the interest of the Tatar bourgeoisie, the landowners and the mul-lahs, said the following, on March 29, 1892: "Islam levels off not only nationality but status as well. It teaches: 'among you, there are neither

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

rich nor poor, neither princes nor paupers, but only Moslems'." Thus, with the help of Islam, the exploiters and their lackeys tried to trick the working people, to substitute their class and national interests with religious aspirations alien to them.

Reality was radically different from such propaganda, reflected in the progressive Russian press. Here is, for example, how the peasants protested against landlessness and capitalist exploitation in the reader *Matter for Conversation*, published in 1884 by the outstanding Tatar educator, Kayum Nasyri:

"A man read the divine verse: 'Paradise, which is as big as the skies and the earth . . .' and started crying. He was asked why. This is not such a terrible verse worth crying about. The man said: 'What is the use for all this space when I do not possess even a handful of land?'"

Such was the attitude of the poor peasants toward the Islamic Paradise. The extremely difficult life of the landless peasants taught them that there is not now, and there could not be, an equality between the rich and the poor, even though both were Moslem, that Islam itself is far from leveling off their status.

"The Russian Moslems," we read in issue No. 3 of the social democratic newspaper *Ural*, published in 1907 in Orenburg in the Tartar language, "exactly like all the other people of the world, are divided into classes, whatever their religion or nationality. The Moslems as well . . . have, on the one hand, landowners and capitalists, and on the other, peasants and workers who sell their

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

manpower. People sharing economic interests constitute a given class. The interests of the workers selling their working force are entirely opposite to those of the owner who purchases this manpower . . ." In our days again, this article in *Ural* remains topical since today the bourgeois ideologists still are trying to confuse the people with anti-scientific assertions to the effect that "Islam levels off the nations", that the "Moslems are one nation", that "there are no classes and class struggle among the Moslems", that Islam opens a "third way" of development, and similar stupidity.

Historical experience has indicated that this propaganda becomes particularly intensive in periods of upsurge of the liberation struggle of the working people. Thus, after the three-year period of black reaction, 1908-1910, when a new revolutionary upsurge began, the newspaper published in Petersburg, *In the Moslem World*, on November 11 (24), 1911, turned to the "Moslem intelligentsia", with the appeal to go to the masses, "not with Marx's *Das Kapital*, but, above all, with the Koran and the Shariat". This historical fact is eloquent proof of what precisely the bourgeois Moslem press values in the Koran. Actually, in our time, when the imperialists have lost their former domination over the countries of the East, some religious preachers, adapting themselves to the new circumstances, have tried to find something "common" between the Koran and *Das Kapital*; they write articles and books in the spirit of the "religious socialism", on "socialist ideas in Islam". In a word, times change and, together

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

with them, the interpretation of the Koran and of Islam changes.

In our time again, preachers of Islam use the Koran as a means to protect the private ownership relations. Defending the "vitality" of the Koran, they point out that it, as well as the Shariat based on it, condemns some crimes. The Koran, for example, demands the punishment of people for thievery.

Indeed, the 42nd verse of the 5th chapter of the Koran states: "As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands. It is the reward of their own deeds, an exemplary punishment from God." The Shariat explains that the right hand of a thief should be cut even if he has stolen no more than a quarter of a dinar. Thus, if a poor man, threatened by death from hunger, has stolen something on the market place, he, according to the Shariat, must be deprived of his right hand.

As far back as 1875, the greatest Azerbaydzhani educator, Akhundov, wrote that this law displayed cruelty "for the sake of providing property security to some individuals". "It is well known," he continued, "that the thief steals because of his incapacity to earn means of existence. If his hand be cut off, he will become even more incapacitated and, in such case, he will have to go back to stealing (for which, according to the Shariat, he should be deprived of his left hand as well) or die of hunger. Thus, in fact, cutting off a hand means, in a way, killing the individual. If, in punishment for the theft for one quarter dinar, his hand is not cut off or he is not punished at all, it is possible that he will repent

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and try to find a way to support himself and make use of his own life. Nothing in the world is more precious than life, which should not be taken away in the name of any justice whatsoever for petty reasons."

A Shariat is in effect in Saudi Arabia, according to which the thief has his hand cut off and it is typical that "this barbaric habit has been fully retained on the concessions granted to Aramco" (American Oil Company exploiting the natural wealth of Saudi Arabia). However, the knife of the executioner is sterilised in a hospital, and the American physician who is present at this mediaeval torture sews up the wound. The noted writer of the English workers' movement, R. Palme Dutt, quotes this fact as an example of "combining most modern imperialism with mediaeval reaction".

Stealing is a crime and, naturally, must be punished. However, all the facts prove that even this cruel punishment promoted by the Koran as "punishment from God", applied in the course of many centuries, has not been able to cure this crime. The roots of mass crime in the exploiting society are based on the regime itself, found on the exploitation of man by man. It is only with the elimination of the exploiting classes and the elimination of poverty and unemployment that grounds for mass crime will be eliminated.

The moral and legal norms of the Koran and the Shariat developed in a class society and reflect the interests of the exploiters. They have nothing in common with true humanism, with the humanism inherent to the builders of communism

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

and which includes moral principles such as "humane relations and mutual respect among the peoples: man is to man a friend, a comrade and a brother"; "friendship and brotherhood among all the peoples of the USSR, intolerance for national and racial hatred"; "brotherly solidarity with the working people of all countries, with all peoples".

"The Moslem worker is rapidly and firmly putting an end to old and obsolete traditions and to everything borrowed from the outside . . . He is making his mark"; "the Moslem workers in the Transcaucasus are not degenerating or falling asleep, they are growing and raising higher and higher," pointed out the article "The Moslem Worker," published on June 24, 1911, in the newspaper, *In the Moslem World*, trying both to ingratiate itself with the workers and "prove" the vitality and attractiveness of Islam. The growth of the proletarian movement worried Islamic ideologists; they feared the further decline of their influence among the masses. It was not by accident that this article included an appeal to renew and correct Islamic obsolescence sooner. Before it is too late, wrote the author of the article, "we must, above all, deliver our religion, Islam, from those deadly forms in which it has been bound, clean up the weeds which have grown in it . . . Our intelligentsia must recall that in the fields, in factories and in plants, millions of its darker brothers are working the land, hammering the iron and dying in an impossible struggle . . . They need spiritual food." The Koran (as well as its new interpretations), translated into Tatar and

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

some other Eastern languages of the peoples of our country, was the "food" suggested by the supporters of the reformist current of Islam.

The ideologists of Islam were also afraid that some of the national intelligentsia, agreeing "with the materialistic understanding of human life", would become stronger and stronger, that it would take up Marxism, the only proper way. Pointing this out, one of the actual editors of *In the Moslem World*, A. G. Datiyev, wrote: "During our unafraid slumber this segment of our intelligentsia will find the causes of the awakening in the 'class contradictions' and will encourage this awakening with the principles of 'class struggle' while they are working in factories and plants." This, according to Datiyev, should not be allowed to occur and he appealed to go to the people "with the Koran and the Shariat", and with Marx's *Das Kapital*. "If the words 'Moslems are brothers'," adds Datiyev, "are frightening to . . . some of the Moslem intelligentsia, it is easy to replace the word 'brother' with their agreeable word 'comrade' and say that 'Moslems are comrades' . . ."

Closely linked to such writings aimed at tricking the working people were arguments on the new translations and interpretations of the Koran. Such arguments were fanned by the desire of the bourgeoisie of Islamic countries, interested in bourgeois reforms, for finding their justification in the Koran. The constitutional way of government, in particular, according to the new tafsir, was justified with the 153rd verse of the 3rd chapter of the Koran which states, among others:

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

“Consult with us on the matter.” Referring to this text, which had nothing in common with a constitution or a democratic regime, not so long ago a theologian wrote: “Islam means democracy . . .”

It was not by accident that in bourgeois, land-owning Turkey the task of the new interpretation of the Koran was considered one of the main goals of the theological faculty of the University of Istanbul. The faculty was inaugurated in 1924, after the overthrow of the Khalifate. “The most important thing,” stated the report of the special commission of this faculty, “is not the translation of the Koran into Turkish and not its versification. The main thing is a new interpretation of its concepts and rules, their reevaluation. If this book is not reevaluated from the scientific point of view,” unwillingly acknowledged the authors of the report, “hardly anything in it could be understood.”

In the final account, all the new interpretations of this book which are still appearing, in large numbers, in the capitalist countries, aim at adapting the obsolete religious teachings and dogmas of the Koran to the requirements of the bourgeois society. Among others, they deal with the colourful description in the Koran of the charms of Paradise and the horrors of Hell. The Koranic Paradise and Hell, according to such interpretations, are stories of the emotions of the “soul”. Naturally, essentially these new interpretations change nothing. In this case, they leave untouched the belief that man has a spiritual double — “the soul”. In other words, the authors

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

of the renewed versions try to retain one of the errors which appeared in early human history, when the people were engaged in a struggle against the dominating forces of nature, when they lacked, whatsoever, any accurate knowledge of the work of the mind and blindly believed that the phenomena of the world around them were controlled by some supernatural beings, by spirits.

The idea of Allah as being the one God, the Creator of the world, the Ruler of everything in nature and in the life of the people, developed under the period of the establishment of class relations among the Arabs. This idea developed in the minds of the people as the imaginary "copy of the one Eastern despot" (F. Engels) and coincided with the left-overs of primitive beliefs, retained in Islam, according to which God was an anthropomorphic being. Such a depiction of God abetted the interests of the dominating classes of the Kalifate and the other feudal and feudal-theocratic monarchies. With the help of such ideas the power of the Khalifs and the Sultans became divine, they called themselves "the shadow of God on His earth".

Deliverance from religious left-overs is a long-term project, particularly in capitalist countries where there are sources supporting religion, where its social roots are strong, where religion is supported by the dominating exploiting classes which consider it a suitable ideological weapon. However, under new conditions, when the Khalifate has disappeared; where in the majority of Islamic countries republican regimes have developed; when the political activity of the masses, their

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

culture and social awareness have risen; when science and technology are developing, the religious concepts of the Middle Ages are losing. For this reason, many of the modern Islamic ideologists are trying to "renovate" the old ideas of God, even though they still turn, above all, to the Koran, to achieve this.

The power of monopolistic capitalism is faceless. As though reflecting it, the theologians of our days in bourgeois countries promote the text of the Koran which, assumedly, contained traces of religious-philosophical influences ("God is the light of the sky and the earth"), interpreting most of the other passages as allegories. Verse 35, chapter 24, which mentions God as something faceless, even though embracing everything that exists, is now considered as a sort of a slogan in many religious articles. An example of this is the heading of the work by S. Vahiduddin, "The Koran on Prayer," published in the Moslem journal *Islamic Review*. To this same purpose, the Moslem theologians turn to texts of a pantheistic nature, i.e., to ideas which identify nature and God, borrowed from the mediaeval mystics-Sufists.

Despite the fact that, in our century, the total unfoundedness of the aspirations of the theologians to subordinate science to religion has been exposed, they nevertheless keep trying to adapt to science. To this effect, they distort scientific data concerning the world surrounding us, again defend the dogma of the non-creation of the Koran, try to identify God in nature, write of the mystery of the universe, apply various forms of

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philosophical idealism. However, the theologians still lack any persuasive grounds whatsoever in favour of the "scientific nature of the Koran or the "lack of contradiction" between Islam and science other than their wish to find the most efficient means for the artificial renewal of religious feelings.

In this connection, a characteristic article is that by Hammouda Choraba on the theory of acquisition of Al-Ach'ari, published in 1955 in the *Islamic Quarterly* in London's Islamic Cultural Centre. "I realise," writes its author, "that I am sympathetic to the resolution of the matter by Al-Ach'ari, despite the weaknesses of his proofs, for if we believe, as Al-Ach'ari said, that we have created nothing and that our capacity to work has vanished but that we always, in any work, need God's help, our religious feeling will increase; yet, the theory of the Mu'tazilites asks us to feel that we are creators and that we do not depend upon God." That is what the author is most afraid of.

The desire, whatever the case, to belittle the creative value of human labour and of the people is the main point in the article of the modern theologian. Its author cannot even conceal his intention. "Possibly," he writes, "by disseminating the theory of the kasba, this might impoverish man of the reality of his choice, but it may also weaken the solution of the problem by Ibn-Rosht (Averroes, 1126-1198), according to which man is free in his choice but limited by circumstances."

Thus, the struggle against free thought and science is now the main thing, forcing the modern theologians to tolerate mediaeval casuistry and

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considerations the erroneousness and absurdity of which had been proven already in the Middle Ages, among others by the famous philosopher Ibn-Rosht and Nasiraddin Tusi.

It is interesting, from this point of view, to look at the report of the Pakistani philosopher K. M. Jamil, "Philosophy and Religion", delivered at the section of religious philosophy of the Fourth Pakistan Philosophical Congress in Dacca in February 1957. On the basis of verse 103, chapter 6 of the Koran — "Vision comprehendeth Him not but comprehendeth all vision", — Jamil tries to restore the scientifically rejected opinion of the mystery of the world and the inadequacy of human feelings to comprehend the world in its totality. On the basis of this erroneous idea he praises the Moslem mystics-majubs and the people of other stages of "holiness", as "unsurpassable" in the knowledge of the "supernatural" and as being inaccessible to the philosophers. Repeating and defending the old theories of the mystics, according to whom superior knowledge is reached by "inner contemplation", by "a miracle", Jamil repeats to a great extent the theories of the most modern West European and American reactionary philosophers.

The "theory" of the mystery of the world and the inadequacy of human feelings expresses the fear of the exploiting classes for their future and their desire to distract the masses from the main social problems facing them. It is not accidental that the paper on "philosophy and religion" combines the appeals for the reconciliation between science and religion with the striving "to free

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mankind from the ever growing influence of materialism".

The readiness of the representatives of bourgeois science to help, with all possible means, the further reforms in Islam so that it could be retained as a weapon useful to the colonizers also explains the fact that the organs of West European Islamism publish, more and more frequently, appeals to the Moslem organisations to adopt a "critical" attitude toward the mediaeval "values" of Islam. In particular, this task has been frequently entrusted to the theological faculty of the University of Ankara, inaugurated at the beginning of 1949. "If the theological faculty in Ankara, on the basis of studies of sources, would engage in historical criticism, benefits to Islam would be great and Turkey could return to the reorganised Shariat," i.e., draft Moslem legislation which would reflect no longer the feudal but the bourgeois interests.

With a view to adapting to modern conditions and misleading the masses, the theological faculty of the University of Ankara was also given the task "to promote comparison between the spiritual values of Islam and the modern sciences . . ." This is not a new venture and its meaning is clear. Attempts at "reconciling" religion with science, i.e., falsifying science, have been frequently undertaken by Christian theology as well, on which, let it be said immediately, relies the author of the cited article. In our days, the church has frequently engaged in such "proofs", in its struggle against science, for the success of true knowledge, of a scientific-materialistic outlook,

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cannot but undermine the foundations of any religion as an anti-scientific ideology.

In our century — the time of breakdown of the colonial system and the all-round upsurge of the activity of the masses — the modern Moslem theologians and bourgeois Orientalists are finding it more and more difficult to implement their intentions of renovating, bringing back to life the Koran and Islam as a whole. In the foreign East, in Islamic countries, particularly in those which acquired political independence and are actively fighting for peace and progress, there are forces which are becoming stronger and stronger, waging the struggle against rightlessness, routine and Philistinism. The times when it was considered that knowledge of the Koran was the greatest virtue and a sign of all-round education have passed on forever. Very interesting, in this sense, are the observations made by the Czechoslovak travelers, Engineers I. Ganzelka and M. Zikmund, who visited Libya in 1947. In that country (it became independent in 1951), as Ganzelka and Zikmund wrote, "Rank and file Moslems appeared who dared to make an attempt, even though mental and within a circle of close friends, on the inviolable dogmas of the Koran. These people were blinded by the beauty of a new Tripolitania which would have no illiteracy, which would have enough schools for everyone, in which not a single woman would wear the veil. These young Arabs are getting so used to the tremendous switch in their thinking that they are already trying to bring it in order and are beginning to search for ways for implementing their dreams." The ideas of such

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

people, as pointed out by the Czechoslovak travelers, are quite sober. "We do not need people who know by heart the Koran," we frequently heard the indignant criticism from the mouth of the 18-year-old Salim Shatani. "We are short of physicians, engineers, builders, agronomists. We know how to drive a car, but we do not know how to construct it. We know how to turn on a switch, but we do not know why there is electricity. We need teachers who, instead of the Koran, would talk to us about democratic constitutions or of the technology of producing colour films . . ."

The progressive literary workers of the Near East speak of the Koran already not as something outside of time, "uncreated", but as a work covering a certain epoch of our literature, together with other such works. More and more people realise that only on the basis of progressive scientific knowledge — and not of religious dogmas and teachings of the Koran, the Bible and other books proclaimed by their preachers as sacred but in fact reflecting the erroneous concepts and ideas of ancient people concerning nature and society — is it possible properly to evaluate the past, the present and the future of mankind, to use most fully the wealth of nature for the good of the people.

The sober critical evaluation of teachings and dogmas found in the Koran and other religious works helps many people realise their lack of logic and anti-scientific nature and successfully overcome religious left-overs. Considerable interest in this respect are the admissions and articles of former clergymen who have broken with Islam

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

or any other religion. In the Soviet Union, where the church is separated from the state and the school from the church and where all citizens have real true freedom of conscience, these people have been offered the possibility to express their views in the press, at lectures, in the cinema, on radio and television.

Thus, the former Ahun Abbaz Aleully, who lost many years in the study of the Koran and its interpretation in four Central Asian religious schools, speaking of how he lost faith in the veracity of the "sacred books", said: "Could any sensible man agree, for example, with the Moslem dogma of "predestination", according to which the fate and actions of any believer have been predetermined by God, i.e., that the poor must remain poor, the rich, rich; the unhappy, unhappy, etc? Or could any honest man agree that for the sake of disseminating Islam the believer must enslave and even destroy people professing another faith? That is precisely the call of the Moslem dogma."

Another former clergyman, Mullah Khamid Batchayev from Arkhyza (Karachai-Cherkess Autonomous Region), criticising the Koran on its theory of predestination, points out that, according to this teaching, man is unable to change anything whatsoever. "If we believe this," he continues, "my rejection of religious beliefs also has been predetermined by God Himself. Yet, had God existed, He would have hardly promoted in me disbelief in His power. The point is precisely that there is no God or any other supernatural force . . . It is not God, it is not any super-

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

natural force but man himself who has built powerful machines, factories and plants, penetrated into the secret of the atom, created artificial satellites of earth, an artificial planet, put on the moon the pennant of the USSR, photographed the invisible side of the moon, successfully launched a space ship and is preparing for travel to other planets of the solar system."

Islam, as any other religion, retreats when faced with the voice of the mind and knowledge. The dogmas and teachings of the Koran are historically limited and their ideas are incompatible with those of science and progress.

Thus has Klimovich, the greatest Soviet scholar on Islam, eloquently expressed the views of the overwhelming atheist majority of the Soviet Union.

The struggle against Islam in the Soviet Union was complicated by serious difficulties caused by a number of factors. First of all, in the organisation of atheistic propaganda it was necessary to take into consideration the degree of the economic, cultural and everyday backwardness of the Moslem area where, prior to the October Revolution itself, feudal forms of class enslavement and oppression were still intact. The masses of the people were, almost without exception, illiterate and, as V. I. Lenin indicated, "it is impossible to construct a communist society in an illiterate country." Women in Moslem areas were treated as chattels and were completely isolated from sociopolitical, productive and cultural life. The Moslem clergy continued to exert a strong influence upon all aspects of life. Orthodox Islam

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

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was closely intertwined with pre-Islamic beliefs, rites and customs. In the Moslem areas of Tsarist Russia, the ideology of Islam for a period of centuries had the decisive role in all areas of life. Islam regulated literally all aspects of the everyday life of the people.

The ideas of religion, over a period of centuries, were introduced into the psychology of the people, became a firm factor in family life, and were intertwined with national customs. The Moslem clergy for a long time exerted exceptional influence upon people's everyday life, adding religious colouration even to those customs and rites that did not have anything in common with religion.

Another factor of no small importance was the circumstance that the tsarist government, which had converted most of the Moslem areas of Russia into colonies and carried out a forcible policy of Russification, left Islam completely untouched. On the contrary, the government did everything to support the mosque, so that, with its help, the government could keep the oppressed peoples in a more reliable state of obedience. That, to a great extent, contributed to the reinforcement of the positions of the Moslem clergy. In its turn, the clergy, like the local feudal lords, eagerly collaborated with the tsarist administrators, obediently executing their will. It was precisely for that reason that the Turkestan governors-general, Christians by religion, ordered the Moslem population of the territory, under threat of severe punishments, to observe unques-

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

tioning the prescriptions of Islam, to be obedient to the clergy.

The Soviet authority, with a vital interest in educating the people, could not leave it under the reactionary influence of the Islamic religion. The struggle for the development of the economy of the territory, its culture and science, was logically directed against Islamic obscurantism.

In his letter to G. V. Chicherin in 1921, V. I. Lenin recommended the preparation of a circular letter of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party concerning the necessity of carrying out anti-religious propaganda in republics with Moslem population, obviously with a consideration of the local conditions. V. I. Lenin suggested including in that circular letter a speech given to the mullahs by the famous revolutionary N. Narimanov, a speech that G. V. Chicherin called a model of the "tactical approach to the Moslem public". It was required of the local party organisations that, in carrying out anti-religious propaganda, they skillfully separate the truly national customs and traditions from religious accretions.

The atheistic work in the Moslem areas of the Soviet Union was not only of an educational but also a political nature. It included within itself cessation of the actions of that part of the Moslem clergy that violated religious legality, that openly spoke out against the measures of the Communist Party to carry out the socialist transformation of the Moslem areas. That struggle was of tremendous importance to the government as a whole.

V. I. Lenin, when acquainting himself with the

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

draft version of the decision of the Central Committee concerning the tasks of the Communist Party in Turkestan, proposed, "methods of combatting the clergy and Pan-Islamism and the bourgeois-nationalistic movement should especially be developed . . ." He sharply censured the attempt of the national deviationists to justify Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. As is well known, during the first years of the Soviet authority the propaganda of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism in Turkestan were considerably activated. The bourgeois nationalists issued the summons to unite the peoples speaking the Turkic languages into a single Moslem state.

The national deviationists dreamed of converting Turkestan into a center of the all-Turkic state. They attempted to assert that, under conditions of Soviet Turkestan, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism had ceased to be reactionary.

The decisive struggle against Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism was of very great importance for the unmasking of the essence of Mohammedanism, which, in the Moslem areas, occupied positions that still were extremely stable.

As was shown by life, the working masses of the territory rejected those anti-socialist ideas and, instead of uniting on the basis of religious commonality, unanimously supported the party line of consolidation in the process of socialist construction.

V. I. Lenin directed special attention to the development of the tactics of the Communists of Turkestan who, at that time, were under compli-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

cated conditions. Speaking at the 8th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1919, he said,

“But what can we do with regard to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbek, the Tajik and the Turkmen, who are still under the influence of their mullahs? Here in Russia the population, after long experience with village priests, helped us to kick them out . . . Can we approach these peoples and say, ‘We’ll kick your exploiters out?’ We cannot do this because they are completely subjugated by their mullahs. What is necessary here is to wait until the development of a given nation, the differentiation between the proletariat and the bourgeois elements, a development that is inevitable.”

V. I. Lenin warned the Communists of Turkestan against the mechanical copying of the tactics and policy of the Russian Communists. He decisively censured the attempts to carry out immediately in the backward national borderlands the revolutionary transformations for which the time was not yet ripe and spoke out against revolutionary actions.

In the August 16, 1923, circular letter of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, it was emphasised that success in the eradication of religious prejudices depends “upon the tactical attitude toward the believers with a patient and well thought-out criticism of religious prejudices, the serious historical illumination of the idea of god, cult and religion”. Intolerance toward administrative methods of combatting religious prejudices was expressed at the July 18, 1927, session of the Executive Commission of the

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee
of the Russian Communist Party.

Among the specific peculiarities of the situation in the Moslem areas, one must include the fact that in these areas, until the October Revolution, in contrast to Central Russia, no proper prerequisites were formed for the more or less wide spread of atheism. There was no industrial proletariat here, and therefore there did not arise any revolutionary social-democratic forces sufficiently influential to carry out an offensive struggle "against every religious deception of the workers", to help the working Moslems to liberate themselves from the power of religion and to gain a materialistic political philosophy.

It is not by chance that V. I. Lenin unceasingly called for a cautious and attentive approach to the atheistic education of the peoples professing the Moslem religion. The Soviet and party agencies of Uzbekistan, guided by V. I. Lenin's instruction that "it is necessary to combat religious prejudices extremely cautiously, otherwise much harm is caused by those who introduce into that struggle the insulting of religious feeling", from the very first days of carrying out anti-religious work have been strict about the observance of the ideological principles of the struggle.

In Central Russia the proletariat, upon coming into power, swept away the remnants of the Middle Ages with exceptional speed and boldness. Most of the Russian workers and the leading part of the peasantry, as is well known, even before the revolution had become accustomed to seeing in the

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clergy the faithful servants of autocracy, bourgeoisie and the landowners.

But in the national republics those views, prior to the revolution, manifested themselves very weakly, although atheistic thought and free-thinking occurred in works of the leading thinkers of the peoples of the Moslem areas as well as in the very rich folklore.

It was only after the October Revolution—when the reactionary part of the Moslem clergy joined forces with the landowner elements and came out in opposition to the land-and-water reform, the freeing of women, and industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture—that a broad social base was placed under atheistic education.

The Party decisions adopted during the first years of the Soviet authority were of great importance in the struggle against religion and religious-everyday survivals. Those decisions include, in particular, the "Political Directive for Work Among the Peoples of the East," adopted by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on February 21, 1920; the resolution of the 12th Party Congress concerning the state of anti-religious propaganda and agitation; and others.

Guided by V. I. Lenin's instruction that the successful struggle for the consciousness of the masses of the people requires first of all the unmasking of the tie between the class interests and class organisations of the present-day bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the organisations of religious institutions and religious propaganda, on the other, the Communists of Turkestan explained to the working Moslems the class essence of the actions of the

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

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reactionary Moslem clergy and indicated whose interest that clergy was defending, what goals it was pursuing.

It is well known that many Moslem ministers of the cult, especially the upper stratum of the clergy, gave a hostile reception to the decrees of the Soviet state that were aimed at the nationalisation of the land and the socialising of the means of production. And it could not have been otherwise, for the mosques were major landowners. They did everything to hinder the liberation of the women and to hinder the separation of the instruction of children from the mosque and thus unmasked themselves in the eyes of the people.

All these acts of the socialist state brought tremendous segments of the population out from under the unquestioning obedience to the clergy, and it was precisely those segments upon which, for the most part, the income of the mosque and its future depended.

During those years there were also serious failures in atheistic work, which we must not forget. Those failures occurred because no consideration was made of the local conditions, the historical peculiarities of the development of the Moslem peoples of the Soviet Union.

In the fight against religion, administrative measures do not produce the desired results. The chief method here is persuasion. It is necessary to conduct the propaganda in such a way that the people themselves make the choice, after being persuaded concerning the advantages of the new life.

For example, in March 1923 the Communists of

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Khodzhent held an "education week"; public examinations were organised for the students at the old schools—the maktab—and the new, non-religious schools. After one of the examinations in the Russian and Uzbek languages, which, incidentally, was held inside a mosque, the teachers in the religious schools were forced to admit defeat. Frequently, as a result of this type of demonstration, the local population requested the People's Commissariat of Education to replace the religious schools with lay ones.

During the very first years of the Soviet authority the atheists in the Moslem areas of the Soviet Union carried out a decisive struggle for the liberation of everyday life, the national traditions, and customs from a religious colouration, a struggle against those rites that did not have anything in common with the national spirit and were forced on the people by Islam.

In the early 1920's the People's Commissariat of the Nationalities of Turkestan adopted the decision "to deem to be extremely desirable, apart from the existing religious holidays, the establishment of national and national-revolutionary holidays of the indigenous nationalities of the Turkestan republic". The Communists, fulfilling that decision, used all means to involve the local population in the organisation and holding of revolutionary holidays; with every passing year they became broader and broader, and the influence of the religious holidays lessened.

For example, in April 1923 the city and regional party committees mobilised all the primary party organisations, all the Communists, in active anti-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

religious propaganda during the period of the prolonged Moslem fast, the month of Ramadan. Long before the fast, pretty tea rooms were set up with the participation of unions of poor peasants. During the month of Ramadan, people would go to the tea rooms, various types of meetings would be held, and vital political and economic questions and local needs would be discussed. Experienced agitators spoke at those meetings, relying on interesting materials and their ability to catch the interest of the audience.

In 1925-1930, at congresses and plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, for example, decisions on questions of the fight against religion were adopted. Special conferences were convoked, organizations of the Union of the Godless were created, the broad publication of atheistic literature was begun, and mass meetings and debates were held, as were other measures aimed at unmasking the reactionary activity of the Moslem clergy and aimed at the complete liberation of the working Moslems from the influence of religion.

Of great importance for the development of the atheistic movement in the national republics was the special resolution "Anti-religious Propaganda Among the Nationalities of the USSR," adopted at a conference at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in April 1926.

Serious attention was directed at the training and proficiency up-grading of atheistic personnel. Anti-religious universities, schools and departments were opened up at institutions of higher

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

learning, and atheistic seminars, courses and clubs were formed.

In the course of the industrialisation of the country, the collectivisation of agriculture, and the carrying out of the cultural revolution, there occurred the smashing of the economic, social, and family-everyday foundations and bulwarks of Islam. The solution of the national question in our country on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism consolidated all the peoples of our Motherland into a single fraternal family. The anti-popular and anti-humanitarian idea of the imaginary "national exclusivity" of the peoples professing Islam collapsed. During the years of socialist construction in the Moslem areas, "the most profound source of religious prejudices"—to use V. I. Lenin's definition—the poverty and ignorance of the masses was undermined.

The victory of the materialistic, scientific political philosophy over the reactionary ideology of Islam became a fact. The peoples of Central Asia are proud of their successes in science and culture. They are armed with Marxist-Leninist ideology and are guided in their life not by religious ethics but by the principles of the moral code of the builder of Communism.

At the same time, it would be premature to consider that all the tasks in the field of the fight against religion have been resolved.

The modern clergy, including the Moslem clergy, continues to this day to fight not only for the preservation, but also for the reinforcement, of their position.

In certain Moslem areas one still observes fre-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

quently certain religious rites at weddings, the birth of a child, and during funerals. There still exist, here and there, various kinds of "mazars"—or so-called "holy places"—near which charlatans are actively operating.

It happens that religious rites are performed by representatives of even the intellectual occupations. For example, in the Andizhan Region in 1968, among those who entered into matrimony according to the Moslem custom—with the observance of the marriage ceremony "nikokh"—there were 70 workers in public-education agencies, 62 students, and 10 physicians. In words these people defend the scientific philosophy, but in deeds they are led about by religion. People like that harm Communist construction, and their behaviour has a pernicious influence upon the consciousness of people.

There have been instances when individual Communists have a conciliatory attitude toward the religious ideology, toward the anti-humanitarian acts of the clergy, and sometimes even observe religious rites themselves.

Instances such as these are intolerable. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan has severely censured them and suggested to party organisations that they decisively demand of all Communists the unquestioning observance of the party rules.

In our atheistic work we must consider the fact that at the present time the religious system of Islam that took centuries to form is being modernised, and there is a growth of adaptive tendencies among the clergy that is attempting, in one

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

way or another, to make religion conform to modern-day life, to preserve Islam in new forms that are more acceptable to the consciousness of modern people.

The Moslem clergy is actively "renewing" its ideological arsenal and cult practice and rejecting absurd and repellent traditions. The "cleaning up" of religion makes it more flexible and thus, to a certain extent, reinforces the positions of that anti-scientific ideology.

Understanding that for Soviet people, including the overwhelming majority of the faithful, the chief thing in life is the construction of Communism, the clergy attempts to suggest to Moslems the idea that the goals of Islam and Communism coincide. Moslem theologians assert that the social principles of socialism evolve from the Islam dogma, that the prophet Mohammed himself called upon the Moslems to construct a society based upon the principles of social justice and the equal rights of all its members, irrespective of race, nation or social status.

The modernistically inclined Moslem clergy in our country, just as those who share its views in the camp of Christian theologians and bourgeois Islamists, state that religion always has been and remains to this day the source of high morality. Proceeding from this concept, the muftis in their "fetvas", the imam-khatibs in their "khutbas", and the mullahs in their sermons place their principal emphasis upon the moral teachings of Mohammed and the moral teachings of Islam: be honest, work honestly, respect your elders, be

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

meek and patient, do not steal, do not fornicate, etc.

Speculating in moral teachings taken from the arsenal of morality that is common to all mankind and sanctified by religion, the Moslem clergy attempts to preserve its influence upon the faithful.

At the present time the official Moslem clergy does not come out openly against the ideas of the internationalism and friendship of peoples, seeing in them an already finally confirmed, unshakeable force. On the contrary, it does not cease repeating that it is precisely the religion of Islam that has unceasingly called for the friendship of peoples. "Islam calls for friendship among the peoples of various nationalities, irrespective of where they were born and live, irrespective of the colour of their skin and their cultural development," states the imam at one of the Uzbek mosques.

However, religious prejudices continue to feed, to one degree or another, the backslidings of nationalism which manifest themselves in local interests, in national limitation. Religious survivals hinder the development of common, international features in the spiritual make-up of the socialist peoples and hinder the profound perception by Soviet citizens of the commonality of the goal—the construction of Communism.

Moslem ministers of the cult skillfully utilise the national feelings of the faithful. Frequently they complain about the loss of national traditions and customs and attempt to represent Islam as the true preserver of national individuality.

Defending in every way the national exclusivity sanctified by Islam, the nationalistic elements

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

cause unhealthy feelings among part of the population and give rise to oppositional moods with regard to the Soviet way of life and the commonwealth of peoples of our country. In their attempts to rely upon religion, they look for, and frequently find, persons sharing their views precisely among the representatives of the Moslem clergy and the fanatically inclined believers.

Party organisations cannot overlook this. In the Policy Statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "The Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Vladimir Ilich Lenin," it is stated:

"The interests of the working class oblige Communists to fight both against the underestimation of national peculiarities and against their exaggeration. In its struggle against national-deviationism and great-power chauvinism, the CPSU has always been guided by the fact that neither nationalism in any of its forms nor national nihilism are compatible with socialism."

One of the chief tasks in the struggle against the ideology hostile to us is the complete overcoming of nationalistic and religious survivals, the educating of Soviet people in the spirit of internationalism, in the spirit of a materialistic political philosophy. That demands the creation of a deeply thought-out system in organising atheistic work among the population.

In the Moslem areas an active struggle is being waged against religious ideology for the education of the workers in the spirit of Marxist atheism. A number of measures have been carried out to intensify atheistic propaganda among the popula-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

tion, and much attention is being devoted to questions of training and retraining cadres of atheists. Scientific and technical progress deals a crushing blow to theological sermons about the submissiveness of man, his weakness and insignificance. According to the teaching of the church, man must be a meek lamb eternally reliant on the will of God. "Who will enter the kingdom of heaven?" one theologian asks in his sermon. And he replies: "The spiritual beggars, the humble—those who do not think much of themselves but consider themselves merely sinners and the worst of all." In the present time, such sermons can be influential only among the most backward people. But the light of science and truth gradually reached even them. The former seminarian A. A. Kukharenko writes:

"I have become more and more convinced that religion gives a distorted interpretation of the world around us, casts man back into the past, and dooms him to helplessness in the face of the forces of nature. I have seen with my own eyes that religion is not interested in scientific progress, for every scientific discovery has dealt a new blow to it."

Yes, modern scientific and technical progress penetrates the everyday life of every person. His own work experience constantly convinces him of the might of knowledge, destroys religious views, and instills a materialist world outlook.

The main aesthetic significance of scientific and technical progress is the fact that technology, as K. Marx said, is "the embodied force of knowledge", and simply, graphically and convincingly shows man's ability to get to know the world about

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

him, to alter it, and thereby to utterly refute religion's doctrine of the incapacity and fundamental impossibility of getting to know the "divine creation"—nature. Man differs from animals in that he does not adopt nature's "gifts" in their original form but transforms them with the help of tools of labour and knowledge of the laws of nature.

"Until we know the law of nature," V. I. Lenin wrote, "it, existing and operating beyond our knowledge, makes us slaves to 'blind necessity'. Once we have discovered this law . . . we are the masters of nature."

It is well known that one of the reasons for the preservation of religious faith is man's dependence on the elemental forces of nature, on the fact that he cannot overcome them and make them serve him and human society. But if, with the aid of technical and scientific knowledge, he can obtain a good harvest, moreover under unfavourable natural conditions, then there is no room for slavish religious submissiveness to this element which is the embodiment of divine force in the eyes of believers. In our day, church services for the granting of a good harvest would seem strange and absurd.

The victory over the elemental forces of nature tears up the roots of religion. The Soviet people do not place hopes in God but transform nature with the aid of scientific knowledge. It is sufficient today that in recent years alone Soviet breeders have created 20 new types of rye out of the 53 under cultivation. Man has raised approximately 400 improved breeds of cattle, more than

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

250 breeds of sheep, and more than 150 breeds of horses.

These achievements vividly confirm man's creative abilities and his independence of supernatural forces. They refute the tenets of "sacred" writings on the immutability of types of animals and plants allegedly created by God.

It is possible to judge the atheistic significance of scientific and technical progress in the field or assimilating nuclear power by the reaction of churchgoers to these achievements. Today they are not capable of anathematising scientists. Those times are long gone. Nor can they negate the obvious nature of the immense benefits which accompany the peaceful use of atomic energy. Therefore they strive somehow to belittle their significance and "prove" that the main thing in man's life is "spiritual needs" and "belief in God's almighty right hand."

Here, theologians defending religion do not confine themselves to statements of facts about the destructive influence of the development of science and technology on religion. It has become obvious that any science refutes religious doctrines to some extent.

One of the American defenders of religion, Pike, writes: "Modern apologetics has to wage the struggle in a more extensive field than before. Ethnographers have formulated theories of the emergence and development of religion which are incompatible with divine revelation; Marxism sees in religion the ideological superstructure built on the economic basis, the opium of the people which prevents the the proletariat from

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

realising its position as an oppressed and exploited class; the miracles, prophecies, and historical nature of the bible are negated by rationalists; even more dangerous, perhaps, is the growth of indifference with regard to religion. Theologians must make incredible efforts to bring religious dogmas into line with the results of the latest scientific discoveries, without, however, subordinating the former to the latter."

Today the long established tendency to "reconcile" science and religion has been intensified. The preachers of Islam are reiterating the old dogma that scientific discoveries allegedly cannot refute Islam for these are two fields whose "truths" lie in different planes. Moreover the "truths" of Moslem dogma are allegedly inaccessible to the scientific world outlook.

The Moslem priesthood has its own interpretations of modern achievements. Even in the field of the conquest of space, for example, it maintains that God is allegedly so great and merciful to man that he has permitted and helped him to achieve the launching of spacecraft. However, man in space will still be only a creature and not a creator. Even there he will "experience fear of the creator" and need God, according to the priesthood. Science can only corroborate and deepen Moslem dogma but in no event refute it. But however Islam strives to adapt to modern conditions and whatever disguise it dons, the essence of it, like any other religion, remains anti-scientific and alien to our world outlook.

Such time-serving does not bring the mullahs the desired result. In fact it not so much

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

strengthens the new modernist aspects of religion as undermines established religious tradition consecrated by centuries. Indeed, theologians are not keeping pace with changes in the field of social life, science, technology and culture. A most prominent modern American theologian, Messol, has to admit bitterly that in questions of modern science any priest is a "poor outsider."

At the present stage of development of Soviet society, when the immense tasks of Communist building are being resolved, our party attaches special significance to ideological work. It educates working people in the spirit of high consciousness, strengthens their ideological steadfastness, and teaches them to overcome the vestiges of the past and resist any forms of bourgeois influence. And a most important constituent part of this varied work is scientific and atheistic propaganda.

In recent years, considerable work has been conducted to overcome religious prejudices. It has become more varied in its forms and methods. Cadres of active propagandists of scientific atheism are constantly on the increase, and special lecture agencies, houses, museums, and atheist clubs have been opened. But in our time the tasks of atheistic propaganda do not amount simply to exposing religious beliefs and prejudices. It is necessary to instill in people the ability to take a rational approach to the wealth of knowledge and make use of culture, including philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic views expressing a strictly scientific and materialistic attitude toward a particular phenomenon. The durability of the atheistic temper-

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

ing of working people depends ultimately on this.

As a result of the large socioeconomic transformations and consolidation of socialist ideology over the years of Soviet power, a real change has taken place in the consciousness of the people in Moslem areas. The ideology of Islam, which dominated for centuries, now, since the victory of socialism, influences only a small part of the population and is losing more and more adherents every year.

It is characteristic that even people of profound faith want their children to study further on leaving school and to become widely educated people. Here is what housewife Kh. Sultanova of the Fergana Region, who observes all religious rites and customs, writes: "So that my children will not turn out like me, we have radio and television at home and subscribe to papers and journals." The eagerness of believers and their families for knowledge is convincing evidence of the crisis of religious ideology.

Believers' desertion of religion is not an isolated accidental phenomenon but a law-governed process of the formation of a Communist world outlook in the face of which all religious fancies fade. The creators of technical progress are real people, and their achievements in the development of the sciences and technology completely refute all religious dogmas and the very idea of God.

A measure of the success of the anti-religious campaign being waged against Islam in the Soviet Union may be found in the following statistics. Before World War I there were over 35,000

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

mosques in the Soviet Union. At the present time there are barely several tens of mosques and most of these are used for ceremonial purposes. On the other hand, there are thousands of universities and schools providing anti-religious training and millions of atheistic seminars, oral journals, and question and answer evenings. Lectures and discussions on anti-religious topics are held every day.

In spite of the positive effect of these measures being taken in all Moslem areas of the Soviet Union, the level and scope of these activities still do not meet the requirements of the program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union nor of the 23rd Party Congress.

Soviet Islamic studies have covered a big and complex way of research and creative achievements. Equipped with the methodology of dialectical and historical materialism on the basis of the study of primary sources and the forms of Islam which remain presently, Soviet scholars were able to critically approach many concepts of Moslem tradition and of the West European scientist-idealists. Considerable attention was paid to the social nature of Islam as well as its history among the peoples of the USSR—a question which was previously left almost entirely alone. Also important were works devoted to Moslem sects and ceremonies, customs, fasts and holidays. On some such matters, in the course of research, sometimes debatable or contradictory ideas appeared which, in subsequent debates were clarified and, as a rule, properly interpreted. Particularly lively debates were created by the

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

problem of the social prerequisites of Islam, the problem of its origins.

In the Soviet Union, under circumstances marking the alienation of wide masses from Islam, as well as from all other religion, and, at the same time, with the ever-intensified aspiration of the clergy to adapt to the new circumstances, studies of the process for overcoming Islam became particularly important. Work in this field is linked also to providing the true picture of the history of free thought and atheism in the republics of the Soviet East as well as in foreign countries in Asia and Africa. A certain, even though inadequate, attention is paid to the study of the modernisation currents within Islam and the peculiarities inherent to this religion in the various areas of its dissemination. In a word, the tasks facing Soviet Islamists are still quite important. The difficulty in resolving them is frequently complicated by the inadequate work on aspects of history, philosophy, archaeology and ethnography of many peoples of areas and countries inhabited by Moslems.

By no means all opportunities and means of ideological influence are being utilised in the struggle against religion prejudices and vestiges. In certain areas of the Soviet Union there is no thought-out system of atheistic education. Broad strata of the population are not yet included in atheistic lecture propaganda. Popular lectures and peoples' universities of atheism have not been organised in a number of places. Scientists, instructors in higher educational institutions and technical schools, teachers, doctors, writers and

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

journalists are still not sufficiently involved in lecture propaganda.

There are also substantial inadequacies in the subject matter of atheistic lectures and discussions. Cliches are frequently permitted in their preparation; the content and nature of existing religious vestiges are often not thoroughly revealed in speeches; adaptive trends in religion in response to present-day conditions are not being exposed; and the pernicious work of the Moslem, Christian and Judaic clergy is not being pointed out.

Cult adherents use the most diverse modes and methods to poison the minds of people with religious opiate. For this they widely use their preaching and philanthropic work, and they cultivate citizens individually. They devote special attention to involving young people and women in religious communities. An increase in the number of citizens observing religious holidays and practising religious rites is being observed in a number of places as the result of increased activities by the clergy, and pilgrimages to so-called "holy places" are being revived. The observance of religious holidays is frequently accompanied by many days of drinking and the mass slaughtering of cattle, and this is very detrimental to the national economy, diverts hundreds and thousands of men from work, and undermines labour discipline.

Unfortunately, the negative role of religion in Soviet society is not always convincingly disclosed in propaganda. Many propagandists of atheism at best limit themselves to citing the harm

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

in observing religious holidays, rites, and fasts, visiting "holy places" for one's health, and mentioning the superficial or economic damage of these actions. Doubtless these problems must be exposed. But the main thing is to expose the harm of religion on a wider scale.

Religion in our country is the only form of idealistic world outlook which opposes Marxism-Leninism. Using such a powerful weapon as Marxist-Leninist theory, propagandists can and must skilfully, without hurting the feelings of the believers, point out the groundlessness of idealistic concepts of world outlook which religion preaches.

Here and there some persons still aspire to overcome religiousness in the believers "in a single stroke" by administrative methods. In so doing they forget that "a noisy declaration of war on religion . . . is the best method of reviving interest in religion and hindering the actual dying off of religion" (V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 17, p. 416). This is why religion should be overcome not by administrative methods but by conviction and by purposeful ideological influence on the population.

An atheistic, materialistic world outlook as a scientific system of views is instilled in mass awareness by a broad complex of ideological methods. Vladimir Ilich taught that "the masses must be given the most varied material in atheistic propaganda, be familiarised with the facts from the most diverse phases of life, and approached this way and that so as to interest them, to awaken them from their religious sleep and to shake

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

them up from all different sides, by the most diverse methods, and so forth" (*Coll. Works*, Vol. 45, p. 26).

We are not, however, uniformly using all methods of ideological influence. Such powerful modern technical means as television, radio and cinema are still inadequately used in scientific atheistic propaganda. Little attention is paid to problems of the atheistic direction of the repertoires of theaters, concerts, and amateur art circles. Many cultural-educational institutions are also not conducting active antireligious work. Certain clubs and libraries are still infrequently holding question and answer evenings and teachers' conferences and debates on atheistic topics. There are also serious shortcomings in the publication of scientific-atheistic literature.

Village committees, housing organisations, and the public are not sufficiently involved in overcoming religious vestiges and introducing new Soviet rites and rituals (the wedding of Young Communist League members, the ceremonial registration of marriages and births of children, a celebration on the occasion of receiving a first passport, introduction into the army, being pensioned, and so forth).

Many deficiencies in our atheistic work and its insufficient effectiveness are explained to a considerable degree by the fact that atheists and agitation-propaganda workers frequently have a poor idea of what the level of religious belief is among certain strata of the population and what religious vestiges still exist among us. Some workers on the ideological front cannot explain

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Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

scientifically the reasons for the existence of religious awareness among the people under conditions of a socialist society or describe the peculiarities and content of existing vestiges of the past. Individual propagandists under the influence of the "theory" of the natural withering away of harmful traditions and sometimes from a false fear of offending the religious feelings of the believers fail to carry on active atheistic work.

To improve the effectiveness of atheistic propaganda, we must first of all determine the extent of religious beliefs of various groups of the population, the nature and content of present-day religion. This can be achieved only by conducting special sociological studies, using the method of selective inquiry by oral and written questionnaires, on the observance of rituals, rites and customs. Concrete sociological research makes it possible for atheists to discover the true historical and economic roots of existing religious vestiges; to determine the extent of their influence; and to explain their nature, content and peculiarities. All this will provide an opportunity to create an orderly system of atheistic propaganda and to conduct it differentially.

Sociological research, conducted in recent years and distinguished by specific peculiarities in the tenor of everyday life of the local population, shows that the nature of the beliefs presents quite a complex picture. For example, many of those questioned observe religious rites and customs because of established traditions, others because of the influence of parents and older relatives, and still others because of fear of censure by neigh-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

hours and acquaintances where they live: that is, the opinion of the backward segment of the village inhabitants.

This is explained by the fact that remnants of commune-family traditions which are retained in relic forms and in such form exert a real influence on today's life are still strong in the family life of the local population in certain areas. Up to this time, family rites, especially marriage, burial, and funeral banquets, are viewed in a number of places not as a private family act but as an act which is public, collective, resting on old traditions and on such archaic institutions as the rural or neighbourhood commune. They are the cells in which religious everyday vestiges are preserved to a considerable extent. Moreover, they serve as a fence which prevents new rites and rituals, new views of life and new standards of behaviour from penetrating family life. Here and there among these relics the influence of the older generation is still strong; in the majority of cases this is a religious generation which participates in forming public opinion within the village.

Unfortunately, certain party organisations still do not notice or do not attribute importance to the preserving role of these relics. But you see, to a considerable degree, they serve as the nutrient soil for preserving everyday religious vestiges.

In explaining the causes, nature and content of existing religious vestiges and in developing recommendations and methodological aids for propagandist-atheists, extensive assistance must be given to party organisations by scientific re-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

search institutions. We must improve the work of methodological councils for propagandising scientific atheism, which have been established under party committees.

One of the reasons which promote the retention in our life of remnants of religious ideology is the seclusion of women which is still practised in places and which mainly explains the presence of elements of old family, primarily feudal-patriarchial, traditions. A certain segment of women is still captive to prejudices and superstitions and believes in the "evil eye" and in magic amulets and incantations.

We must pay special attention to problems of the anti-religious training of women. This must be done with consideration for their family position, age, education, national traditions, and customs. Work among women, the fight against vestiges of feudal-bey attitudes toward them, the merciless eradication of vestiges of feudal-patriarchial life, and extensive introduction of new traditions — these are the most important practical goals of party organisations in ideological work.

The creation of cultural and living conditions necessary for women is very important to increasing their labour and political activity. It is impossible to condone the fact that certain party, and Young Communist League members are indifferent to the family and living conditions of people and problems of the relations between spouses, and this facilitates the maintenance of a patriarchal tenor of family life. It should be remembered: the more actively we implement

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

measures outlined in recent years by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for reorganising and improving the standard of living of Moslem areas, the more successful will be the struggle against various vestiges of the past, including everyday-family relations. An improvement in life and its reorganisation on Communist principles is the most important prerequisite for overcoming religious vestiges.

The successful carrying out of atheistic work requires not only a clear-cut concept of a certain dogma and the extent of the population's religious beliefs, but also a knowledge of the believers' psychology. V. I. Lenin pointed out that "we must learn to approach the masses especially patiently and cautiously so as to be able to understand the special features and peculiar traits of the psychology of each stratum . . ." (*Coll. Works*, Vol. 41, p. 192).

Attention to such social-psychological factors in people's life as, for example, personal grief or the misfortunes of relatives, disappointment in life or persons, the loss of vital ideals, suffering before death, the feeling of solitude and such are sometimes of decisive importance because these factors are the nutrient medium for the religious sentiments of the believers or vacillators. Therefore, atheistic propaganda which does not take into consideration the psychology of the believers, their sentiments, and experiences will always be abstract, inefficacious and fruitless.

Atheistic training must encompass all ages and all strata of the population. In this work one must not forget about those people who for some

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reason or another prove to be isolated from production collectives and from active social life and are secluded in a small, narrow domestic world. It is among this category of Soviet people — householders, pensioners and invalids — that we most frequently of all encounter believers; it is among them primarily that atheistic work should be done on an individual basis.

But it would be quite incorrect to think that the propaganda of atheism must be carried on only among believers as certain organisers of this work suggest. The fact of the matter is that, according to sociologists' data, among non-religious strata of the population there are many persons who, although indifferent to religion, are by no means convinced, conscious atheists. They do not possess the necessary scientific information about religion and frequently have very false impressions about it and have a vague idea of its role in society. Their atheistic training is necessary not only to avoid their converting to the position of religion but also to involve them in anti-religious work later when they become convinced atheists.

Cases of party members participating in religious rites, which still occur, are quite intolerable. The inadequate level of education work in certain party organisations, the slackening control over the adherence by Communists to fixed requirements as regards religion frequently leads to a situation where initially small concessions to religious believers end in a complete departure of individual party members from the scientific-materialistic world outlook and lead to a break

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

with the party. Certain party committees do not draw the proper conclusions from such cases and now and then formally discuss problems related to Communists accountable to the party on religious grounds.

Giving people access to scientific and technical progress and elevating their general educational level play a great role in forming a materialistic world outlook. To improve scientific-atheistic propaganda it is necessary to utilise all the various forms and means of ideological and political influence of workers in their native language. The best party and Young Communist League propagandists, political information workers, agitators, persons in the arts and literature, scientists and teachers in school and higher educational institutions should be involved in this work.

Party organisations should do everything to form in each settlement, village, and production collective family a bellicose atheistic social opinion. We must remember V. I. Lenin's instructions that the party cannot and must not be indifferent toward obscurantism in the form of religious beliefs and that scientific-atheistic propaganda must constitute one branch of party work.

We must decisively put an end to passiveness in regard to religion and to the work of the clergy and continuously unmask the reactionary essence of religion and the damage it does, diverting part of our country's citizens from conscious and active participation in Communist construc-

Approved For Release 1999/08/24⁶⁷: CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

tion. Anti-religious work must be carried on systematically, with all persistence.

The basis of this work must be the broad propagandising of natural scientific knowledge, the popular explanation from scientific positions of questions concerning the universe and the laws of natural phenomena, the origin of life and man on earth, the latest discoveries of science and technology, and man's victories in space. We must reveal scientifically the reactionary essence of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and religious sectarianism and explain wherein lies the harm of religious vestiges and why there is a struggle between science and religion.

It is expedient in clubs, palaces of culture, and red corners to organise cycles of atheistic lectures, combining the common body of subject matter to correspond with local conditions. The titles of the lectures must not antagonise believers or non-believers. The people's universities of atheism, where anyone who wishes can attend a systematic course of scientific atheism is still a better form of lecture propaganda. We should be concerned not only about increasing the number of these people's universities but also about the quality of their lectures. It is desirable to hold teacher conferences more frequently and to organise cinema lectures, radio lectures, and television lectures and question and answer evenings on atheistic topics. It would not be a bad idea to supplement the question and answer evenings with a concert, the showing of an anti-religious film, and the organising of a picture exhibit, a photographic exhibit, and a showcase of books. Much

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

attention must be paid to the all-round development of individual anti-religious work among the believers. Only the combining of broad scientific-atheistic propaganda with diverse forms of individual work can bear tangible fruit.

Experience shows us that atheistic propaganda has the greatest effect when it is combined with the widescale introduction of new civil rites and rituals. To mark in a new way such very important events as birth and marriage in the life of each man means to gradually narrow and then reduce to nothing the sphere of the clergy's activity. However, certain party organisations underestimate the importance of propaganda and the introduction of new traditions, and individual party and Young Communist League leaders do not participate in the realisation of new rites and rituals, frequently reserving the last word for the cult adherents.

It is necessary to constantly reveal the reactionary essence and role of religious rites and holidays and to cleanse progressive popular traditions of religious-mystical terrors. Here we must not forget that people who are captives of religious customs and harmful traditions frequently deny themselves everything necessary (the amenities of housing, the acquiring of modern household utensils and clothes, nutrition, and cultural leisure) for the sake of having abundant entertainment and gifts at the time of religious holidays and weddings. This situation seriously impedes the development of the people's cultural life. New holidays and rites must embrace both

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

the public and private life of man and stir him to active participation in Communist construction.

The goals of intensifying atheistic propaganda require an expansion of the training of atheist personnel. This requires broader utilisation of the means which have proved themselves: universities of Marxism-Leninism, theoretical conferences and seminars on problems of scientific atheism, continuously operating schools for lecturers and schools for agitator-atheists.

We must strive for philosophers and historians, biologists and physicists, doctors and educators, and other representatives of our glorious intelligentsia to take a very active part in the atheistic training of the population. Their sphere of activity is wherever they meet people: in the brigade and in the shop, in the field camp and on the livestock farm, on the construction site and in the dormitory, in the institution and in the academic setting. They must not be indifferent to the fact that individual Soviet persons are still in the grip of religious prejudices.

The struggle for the soul of man, the possession of his mind and heart, is a very complex and difficult, but a very important and honourable, segment of all our ideological work. And it requires the closest attention of all party organisations.

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8

Approved For Release 1999/08/24 : CIA-RDP78-02646R000600120001-8



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