

Traditions in Islam and Orthodox Education under Soviet Ideology (On the Example of Tatarstan)

Ruslan R. Ibragimov and Mariam A. Galeeva
Kazan Federal University, Kremlevskaya St. 18, 420008 Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

Abstract: The study presents the study of factors that helped preserve Islam and Orthodox traditions in education at the time of the dominating atheist ideology in the Soviet Tatarstan. Based on the archive documental findings the researchers explored such conservation mechanisms as: the continuity of tradition among clergy, the role of women in children's religious upbringing and possibilities in retranslation of religious knowledge and values offered by the political conditions. The territorial borders of the research encompass the study of religious education within the traditions of two co-existing regional confessions; Islam and Orthodoxy. The material is presented in chronological order, the structure shaped by the causal principle. This allows showing the development in the condition of the religious education in Tatarstan throughout the Soviet era, from its onset marked by the Bolsheviks coming to power until the collapse of the Soviet political system in the late 1980s.

Key words: Religious education, clergy, believers, Islam, Orthodoxy, religion and belief legislature, mosque, madrasah, divinity schools

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors in the socio-cultural stability and evolutionary development of society is the presence of spiritual value succession mechanisms in it developed for centuries. A fundamental role in this belongs to the religious traditions of education and upbringing. The effectiveness of religious functions implementation in society is largely driven by the political and ideological conditions prevailing in a state. In this context, a considerable scientific interest is presented by the study of the forms and mechanisms of survival and existence of Islamic and Orthodox traditions of education in the framework of hostile political and legal environment of the Soviet State.

The urgency of this problem is confirmed by steady interest in it among domestic and Foreign researchers over many years. Among them, one should mention the studies by Odintsov (2013), Konyukhov (2011), Bennigsen and Wimbush (1986), Devlet (1991), Rorlich (1986) and Usmanova (2010), etc., In the researches of these scholars the problem, we are interested in is considered separately in Muslim or Orthodox aspects or in a close relationship with the national problem.

The scientific novelty of the presented study is determined by the object of study, the traditional for Tatarstan Islamic and Orthodox education system under the Soviet socio-political reality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the preparation of the researches, the materials of periodicals at supreme bodies of the USSR and RSFSR State power were used as well as special legal collections, which contain information relating to the whole Soviet legislation on cults and religious education in particular. The bulk of sources related to the record keeping documents, statistical data, case studies, contained in the collections of the National Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan where the documents stored in the funds of the authorised Council for Religious Affairs under the USSR Council of Ministers of the Tatar ASSR (NA RT. F. P-873), the Central Executive Committee of the Council of Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies of Tatarstan (the inventory of the commission on the issues of cults in the Central Executive Committee TASSR (NA RT. F.R.-732. Op. 6) and in the Central Archive funds of Historical and Political Documentation of the Republic of Tatarstan (TSGA IPD RT). In the latter case, the documents on the issue interested to us are concentrated mainly in the fund of the Tatar Regional Communist Party Committee (F. 15) where the materials of propaganda and agitation are directly related to the subject of study.

The methodological basis of this research is the civilizational approach which allows to study, the subject of research in multidimensional format, after its

consideration in its social, political, cultural and legal sectors. Ultimately, this should help to present the most complete picture of the socio-cultural, political and ideological conditions of Muslim and Orthodox traditions preservation in Tatarstan during the Soviet period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ideological postulates of the Bolshevik party determined a very negative attitude towards religion which saw its rival in it in terms of impact on the population minds. So, almost immediately after coming to power, the Bolsheviks started to struggle with its influence. At that a great importance was given to the destruction of religious education system developed for centuries which resulted in the closure of country religious schools vast majority and the clergy, the carriers of religious knowledge, were subjected to harassments and repressions. Thus, according to the words of the Abbot Damascene (Orlovsky), "The first practical result of the decree "On the separation of church from a state "was the closure of theological schools in 1918, including the diocesan schools and churches among these institutions" (Anonymous, 2014).

During the first decade of Soviet power, its relation to the religions was differentiated to some extent. For example, the majority of Russian Muslims met with enthusiasm, the establishment of Soviet power, hoping to improve their position during a new regime. Indeed, in the early 1920s, the situation of Muslims was relatively strong. Muslim primary schools were operated, in some places, Sharia courts operated. But in the late 1920s with the beginning of the "Great Break" all religions of the country were subjected to harassment.

The situation becomes somewhat better for those who believe only in the Great Patriotic War when the government was forced to respond to the patriotic activities of religious organizations. At this time, the Theological Institute and pastoral courses were opened, converted in 1946 in the Theological Academy and Seminary (Orlovsky, 2014) and the madrassas "Mir-Arab" (Bukhara) started to work after nearly a 20 year break in 1945.

Officially active religious institutions could not cope with the task of ensuring all religious associations of the country by clergy. For example, for many years USSR Soviet had only one madrasa ("Mir-Arab"). In this context, the religious life of Muslims was concentrated in a family. The continuity of knowledge and philosophical values of Islam from the generation which got a good Muslim education during the pre-revolutionary period to the generations whose mentality is formed in a massive propaganda of atheist ideology.

End of 1950s, the first half of 1960s was marked by a new on slaught of power in religion. In this regard, Saratov, Stavropol, Kiev, Lutsk and Minsk Seminaries were closed during 1960-1963. In those who were allowed to operate, the Synod under the pressure from the authorities, initiated the resolutions, which greatly weakened their capabilities. So, on July 17, 1959 at the meeting of the Synod Training Committee, it was decided to close the Correspondence department of the Leningrad Theological Academy and Seminary; it was allowed to admit to academies and seminaries only the persons who passed military service in the Soviet Army; to recommended to all reverend not to make donations for the maintenance of academies and seminaries along with the usual church contributions to the Patriarchate.

For a long time, unregistered Muslim communities were provided with so-called mullahs without mosque who received religious education until 1917, being well versed in the tenets of Islam and its rituals. At the all, union scale in the 1960s, the Council for Religious Affairs was registered 2346 unofficially acting mullahs (Roy,1998) in the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, their number amounted to 366. You can say that until the 1960s almost every Tatar Village had a man or a group of people who were able to hold a vigil to perform the rites to all the canons of Islam and to explain properly the allegorical meaning of individual suras and verses.

However, in those years, due to natural mortality, the number of such mullahs significantly reduced. This inevitable process on the background of the destroyed centuries-old system of Islamic education conditioned, the fact that, the leadership of the religious life of the Tatars passed into the hands of the mullahs who basically had weak knowledge in matters of religious dogma. In this regard, since the 1960s, the main criterion by which the Tatars define themselves as believers became the performance of the rites of Islam while its ideological aspect withdrew into the background. In such circumstances, according to Mukhametshin (2007) Islam became an "archaic" one lost a lot of positions developed over the centuries".

The importance of familiarizing, the youth to religion for the further survival of the first one was understood by Orthodox clergy, so, the head of the Kazan diocese, Archbishop Michael constantly conducted the activities among youth to bring them into the church. For example, in 1968 when the bishop's duties during episcopal service were performed by A.I. Novozemtsev born on 1949. Among 28 priests who served the religious needs of the faithful people of the republic at the end of the 1960s, 13 priests were older than 60 m were 13, 8 priests were under 60, 7 priests were under 40.

At the turn of the 1970-1980s, the situation in training for Muslim clergy in the country was greatly improved. In many ways, this was due to the activities of Talgat Tadzhuddin (in 1973-1980, Imam Khatib at the Mosque Marjani) who managed to build a constructive relationship with the authorities and use this fact for the benefit of the faithful people. At the end of the 1970s in Bukhara Mir-Arab Madrassah 4, shakirdy trained from Tatar Autonomous Republic (compared to the same period only one shakird from Bashkiria educated there).

In 1970s, a part of the Soviet State citizens realized obvious declarative nature of values proclaimed by communist party, the utopian goals and objectives planned by it. Communist ideology and atheistic worldview promoted by it failed to solve many issues faced by a person at different stages of his life. In this regard, religion appeared to many as an alternative to the official ideology, as a system of moral and ethical values able to fill the spiritual vacuum of many people after the disappointment in the ideas of communism.

In line with these processes, more people were turning to religion. According to sociological research conducted in the country during the mid-1980s, 80% of Muslims received a religious education in a family (Fayezova, 1895). The visits of mosques by believers from among workers and intellectuals at the age of 30-40 year ceased to be a unique phenomenon, there were even the members of Komsomol and the Communists among them. So, during the period of 1981-1984, 6 communists and 19 members of the Komsomol were there. They received various penalties.

In the first half of the 1980s, the composition of the clergy was rejuvenated considerably. So, if in 1980, an average age of the Russian Orthodox Church clergy was 51 years in 1984, it was 48 years. The fact that, this trend was characterized mainly for the main figures of the church-priests should be taken into account: their average age made just 41.8 years. Quite young people were among them. Thus, the rector of the church in the Village Rzhavets of the Kuibyshev region was V.N. Kozlov who was 27 year old (Fayezova, 1895).

Similar trends were characteristic of many religious groups, regardless of their religious affiliation. At the end of the 1980s, the pressing problems of ideological and social nature were exposed in Soviet Society instantly and showed the failure of official government agencies to offer their constructive solution that caused the need for extensive participation of the forces in public life of the country which were almost at a semi-legal status until now. Among those were religious associations. Basically, they filled the vacuum in the educational system. At the

end of the 1980s, the activists of the faithful and clergy organized everywhere Sunday schools for children and adults which taught the basics of ritual systems and dogmatics. Despite the lack of a legislative base, this practice took place from the second half of the 1980s. Thus, the presence of such facts in the regions was reported to the Council for Religious Affairs under the USSR Council of Ministers by 65 of its authorized members in 1986 (Odintsov, 1997).

Summary: Thus, the authorities were forced to admit the ineffectiveness of repressive and administrative control measures applied in regard to religion. Indeed, despite a certain simplification of the religious education, its preservation mainly at a household level made possible the survival and preservation of religious values under the domination of atheistic ideology in many ways.

CONCLUSION

During the Soviet period because of the environment hostility, the center of gravity in the system of religious education was shifted. In the context of the forced closure of most traditional religious schools, the process of religious training and education has shifted to a family and a household level where it was virtually inaccessible for control and an influence of a state and party authorities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

- Anonymous, 2014. The abbot Damaskin (Orlovsky) Persecutions on Russian Orthodox Church during the Soviet period. Regional public fund "Memory of Martyrs and Confessors of Russian Orthodox Church", Russia. http://www.fond.ru/index.php?menu_id=374&menu_parent_id=358&show_date=1&category_id=14&article_page_content=0&show_preview_img=0&show_file_list=1&flag=ajax&page=1&ime=site&content_id=48.
- Bennigsen, A. and S.E. Wimbush, 1986. Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), pp: 294.
- Devlet, N., 1991. "Islamic Revival in the Volga-Ural Region", Notebooks World Russian and Soviet, 32 (1): 107-116.

- Fayezova, G., 1895. Central state archive of historical and political documentation of the Republic of Tatarstan (CGAIPD), d. 15. Inv. 14, d. 401. pp: 13.
- Konyukhov, D.A., 2011. Orthodox education in Russia after 1917 and in USSR. D.A. Konyukhov (Eds.), *Person and Education, Russia*, 2: 50-54.
- Mukhametshin, R.M., 2007. *Islam in Tatarstan*. Moscow: Logos, Russia, pp: 104.
- Odintsov, M.I., 1997. A state policy of separation of school from church in the USSR: the historical analysis and political and legal aspect. *Religion, church in Russia and abroad. Information and analytical bulletin*, Moscow, Russia, 9-10. RAGS Publishing House, pp: 171.
- Odintsov, M.I., 2013. "A school question" in Russia: The church and the state often became competitors in the field of education. <http://www.rusoir.ru/president/works/169/>. All-Russian public organization Russian society of researchers of religion, Russia.
- Rorlich, A., 1986. *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience*. Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, pp: 288.
- Roy, Y., 1998. *Islam in the Soviet Union after World War II. Islam and ethnic mobilization: the national movements in the Turkic world*. Moscow, Russia, pp: 129-141.
- Usmanova, D., 2010. *Islamic Education in Soviet and Post-Soviet Tatarstan*. D. Usmanova, I. Minnullin and R. Mukhametshin (Eds.), *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and Successor States*. London: Routledge, pp: 46-47.