

Islam in Russia: Crisis of Leadership

RAVIL BUKHARAEV

I

In August 1989 I participated in the celebrations of two events, both of which marked the apparent revival and rejuvenation of the Islamic faith in the Russian Federation. The first of these events was the 1100th (AH) anniversary of the official arrival of Islam on the banks of the Volga River in 922 AD when Almuş, king of the Volga Bulgars, accepted Islam as the state religion of his mighty and prosperous kingdom. This event was scrupulously recorded by the famous Arab traveller Ahmed ibn Abbas ibn Fadlan, then the secretary of the ambassadorial delegation of the Abbasid khalif Al-Muktadir, which arrived on the present-day territory of the Republic of Tatarstan on the invitation of King Almuş himself. Old though the history of Islam on the Volga River seems to appear, Islam was not a complete novelty in the area even as early as in 737 AD.¹

The second event of 1989, which conveniently coincided with the first, was the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Muslim Board of the European part of the Russian Federation and Siberia. After a series of stormy rebellions and mutinies by the Tatar and Bashkir Muslims culminated in the famed Pugachev uprising, the Empress Catherine II finally granted the Muslims a certain extent of religious freedom. The exercise of this freedom had nevertheless to be supervised from above through certain establishments answerable to the state authorities. In the city of Orenburg, a new religious body consisting of the mufti and three qadis was set up and named the 'Directorate of the Community of Muhammedan Faith'.² This marked the official beginning of the spiritual rule of the all-Russia mufti over the Muslim communities of Greater Russia.

The festivities dedicated to both events started in Ufa, the capital of the Republic of Bashkortostan, where the seat of the all-Russian mufti Talgat Tajutdin was situated,³ and then proceeded through the territories of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan to Kazan', the capital of the latter. Associated celebrations were also held in the city of Orenburg, the historic seat of the all-Russia muftis. The celebrations were quite impressive, given the fact that, as far as I know, this was the first occasion when the words 'Islam in Russia' had been spoken openly and widely not only by the participants in the events but also by the Russian media at large. There were many guests from abroad, many inspiring speeches and many wishful predictions as to how Islam would be developing and prospering in Russia from then on.

Since then, six years have passed. The USSR is no more and many new forecasts about the future of Russia are being made. The most noticeable event of these six

years has been the split of the all-Russia muftiate into a number of separate muftiates. The process of this split is, moreover, an ongoing phenomenon, which fact recently provoked a sarcastic note from one of the Islamic leaders who said: 'Soon we will have at least five muftis in every doorway'.⁴ On the territory once spiritually governed by the Central Muslim Board in Ufa, several Muslim bodies now bitterly conflict with one another. According to Russian statistics, there are today about 3000 officially registered local Muslim communities, out of which 2200 have their mosques and imams. Whom do they consider to be their supreme spiritual leaders?

The Central All-Russian Muftiate is still in place theoretically and by virtue of its unrevoked legal registration, and its supreme head Mufti Sheikh Talgat Tajutdin now claims it is supported by 1889 Muslim communities of Russia. His opponents, who brought about his apparent dismissal during the Muslim Congress of 1992, argue that in fact only 84 Muslim communities support him, and say that he has received neither recognition nor assistance even from the authorities of Bashkortostan who nevertheless tolerate his presence in their republic.⁵ During the 1992 Congress the supreme mufti was stripped of his title and responsibilities on the grounds of alleged mental illness and grave transgressions against the law of *sharia*. In fact his dismissal was brought about by his refusal to recognise the new system of independent muftiates, which was already coming into being. The supreme mufti himself proposed that every region of Russia should have its own mufti who would be answerable to the Muslim Board Ufa—that is to say, to Mufti Tajutdin personally. His opponents claimed that the proposed system would serve to promote and maintain the leading role of Sheikh Tajutdin, while the tiny muftiates of his dream would in reality remain the same parishes with imams who would change their title but not their role in the new order of things. Thus discharged, Sheikh Tajutdin nevertheless later succeeded in reestablishing himself as supreme mufti in the eyes of the state authorities; but his leading role is very much subject to doubt. The newly established Muslim Board of Bashkortostan, located in the same city of Ufa, rejects Sheikh Tajutdin's authority, as also does the recently founded Muslim Board of Tatarstan. Indeed, in opposition to the supreme mufti of Ufa there is nowadays another claimant, if not to the role of all-Russian Muslim spiritual leadership, then to that of a uniting and guiding centre and a think-tank for the Russian Muslims. This is the Muslim Board of the Russian Central European Region, which has its seat in Moscow. The head of this body, Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainetdin, is apparently supported by not very many local Muslim communities (about ten, his opponents claim), but enjoys the support of the president of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaimiyev, which is no small factor given that the secular authorities normally try to distance themselves from complicated religious matters and from religious leaders, whose good offices they require very seldom, if indeed at all.

The president of Tatarstan strongly disapproves of the activities of yet another Muslim organisation, the so-called Supreme Coordinating Centre of the Muslim Boards of Russia (SCC), which was founded in Kazan' under the chairmanship of the mufti of Tatarstan Sheikh Gabdullah Galiullah and which according to its leaders is supported by 413 local Muslim communities. It also claims to have united the Muslim Boards of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, the Middle Volga Region, Siberia, and even the North Caucasus, the Crimea and the Baltic States. One of the most prominent representatives of this body, imam of the Middle Volga Region Sheikh Mukaddes Bibarsov, is himself a well-known figure among the Russian Muslims. The idea behind the union was 'a refusal to maintain the old and outdated methods of leadership of the Muslim Boards'.⁶ The foundation of this body was another blow to

the Central Board in Ufa, which was and is being publicly accused of 'leniency and lack of activity'.⁷

Yet another Muslim organisation founded in Moscow is a political body called the Union of Muslims of Russia (UMR). It can be seen as incorporating the Islamic Cultural Centre of Russia due to the fact that the general director of the latter, Abdul-Vahed Niyazov, is the cochairman of the UMR and is supported by the SCC. The UMR was unable to take part in the Russian parliamentary elections in 1995 because it failed to obtain the necessary number of pre-electoral signatures required for official registration by the Central Electoral Committee of Russia. A rival Muslim political organisation, the All-Russian Muslim Public Movement (*Nur*), supported by the very dynamic and able mufti of the Central European Region Sheikh Ravil Gainetdin, succeeded in gaining access to the polling stations, though its parliamentary prospects are rather bleak.

One problem in assessing the implications of all these developments is that we have no accurate figures for the number of Muslims in Russia today. The figure usually quoted is 'about 20 million' on the basis of the 1989 census of so-called Muslim nationalities of the Russian Federation. An article in *Moskovskiye novosti* assessing the political prospects of the Russian Muslims in the 1995 Russian parliamentary elections gave the figure of between 12 and 20-million.⁸ Khalit Yakhin, Chairman of the All-Russian Muslim Public Movement *Nur*, also used a 20-million estimate during a televised party political broadcast in November 1995.⁹ It is of course impossible to say, however, to what extent these 20 million are actively concerned for Islam as a religion. My personal observations and the information I receive from the area suggest that only a fraction of this number are of real social significance in defining the immediate and long term future of Islam in Russia. According to Goul'nara Baltanova of Kazan' University, 'Today the number of Muslim communities in the Republic of Tatarstan is three hundred and thirty-three and the number of newly built mosques is growing daily ... Of course, this development is very positive'. She goes on to observe, however, that: 'We made a sociological study and found that, even though they call themselves Muslims, only ten to twelve per cent of the young Tatars are "believers"'.¹⁰ My personal view is that even this assessment looks overly optimistic as far as the younger people are concerned. In the course of recent ethno-political developments in Russia, identifying oneself as a 'Muslim' has at some stage been a political symbol; but there is a considerable difference between calling oneself a Muslim and acting like one.

Under the title 'Muslim population increases', *Central Asian Survey* notes that: 'Laishevo, not far from Kazan', the capital of Tatarstan has always been a Russian majority place since Ivan Grozny captured Kazan' about three centuries [*sic*] ago. The number of Tatar Muslims has increased and in 1994 the local Muslims founded their mosque.¹¹ The number of new mosques in Russia is indeed steadily growing. At the end of the 1980s the total number of mosques in Tatarstan was 17; by the beginning of 1994 there were 314.¹² Not only mosques are now topped with shining crescents: even bus stops in the countryside are being built in the shape of mosques, with a crescent on the top.¹³ The construction of mosques is being sponsored by local authorities and, to some extent, by the local people as well. Nevertheless, there is a striking difference between the past and present attitudes of Russian Muslims towards the actual construction of these mosques as well as towards the necessary sacrifices incumbent upon every Muslim in such matters. The following quotation from my own recent book on the history of the city of Kazan'¹⁴ concerns the construction of that city's most important historical mosque, the Marjani Mosque:

The mosque gets its name from the great Tatar religious reformer, the encyclopedist, scholar–historian Shigabetdin Mardzhani, who served as imam there from 1867 to 1881. Alongside the mosque stand the house of Mardzhani and his madrasa, in which he taught the students’ brains and souls a new religious consciousness, side by side with a scientific and realistic understanding of the world and structure of the world. It is to his zealous work and to the works of other Tatar educators that we owe the difficult confession of the Orthodox missionary N. Ilminsky, who was distressed that the Kazan Tatars when they were educated in the sciences not only did not go away from their religion, but, contrarily, were made more firm in it. The Mardzhani Mosque was built in the same style of Russian provincial barocco, but the Tatar master craftsmen who built it managed to harmoniously combine it with the old Bulgar¹⁵ motifs in the decoration of the mihrab and the capitals. Among other historical researches Mardzhani also left in his notes a history of the Kazan mosques. In this enumeration of the Kazan mosques,¹⁶ calling the Yunusov mosque ‘old great stone mosque’, Mardzhani wrote: ‘When in 1766 the Empress Catherine was in Kazan, the Muslims turned to her with a request to build a mosque. The Tsaritsa fulfilled their request. After this there began the gathering of the necessary materials and the construction itself. The place where this first area mosque stands lay close by to the houses of the mullah Abubakir son of Ibrahim, Yakup son of..., Murtaza son of Yusuf son of Kanysh and Muezzin Iskhak son of Ibrahim. This mosque was built from the funds not of one person, but from 5000 roubles, collected from 62 people. The people, who began the construction and expended a lot of effort in the building of it were: the mullah Gabdrashit son of Yusuf from Karghala, the mullah Abubakir son of Ibrahim, Murtaza son of Yusuf son of Kanysh, Ibrahim son of Yadkar son of Niyaz and others. The mullah Gabdrashit went as far as Astrakhan in the search of funds for the building of the mosque. Although the first mosque was built from the funds of many people, as time went by separate individuals voluntarily gave funds for necessary repairs and further building. At the beginning the roof of the mosque was covered in laths, but in 1795 Gabid son of Gabdelbaky, with one other person, got the roof covered with sawn planks. After the fire of 1797 they re-covered the mosque again. In 1833 Gubaydulla son of Mukhammedrahim covered the roof with tin. In 1860 his son Ibrahim surrounded the mosque with a stone wall in place of the former wooden railed fence. In 1863 when the mihrab was moved a little to the east, the mosque was expanded, made bigger and a window was put in... In 1885 by the efforts of haji Zaynulla son of Usman a minaret was joined to it and another building was built. In 1887, Haji Valiulla son of Gyzzatulla son of Tukhvatulla, who had come from the village of Atau, and Miftakhutdin son of Valishah, a native of the village of Kushlavych, having collected 250 roubles, surrounded the landing for the announcing of the azan on the minaret with an iron balcony.’ Mardzhani meticulously enumerates the names of those who gave funds to the mosque, as though he were giving a lesson in generosity and selflessness to the descendants in just that unintentional way that he taught in the madrasa by the mosque that bears his name.

In complete contrast to the above description, let me recall a recent conversation I

had with one of the new Tatar businessmen of Kazan' who is rich enough to have built a mosque in his native village. He complained that during the whole period of construction, which was undertaken solely out of his private means, the villagers not only did not participate in any of the building activities, but also refused to feed and lodge the workers he hired. They praised him for the undertaking, of course – and why not—but they declined to make a slightest sacrifice of time or money. The mosque is now completed, but it is always empty, except for Muslim festivals. The businessman complains, moreover, that those few who do attend the mosque on Fridays, including a muezzin, do not hesitate to appear drunk near the mosque on all the other days of the week. I have had corroborative experiences of my own. When the famous Azimov Mosque in Kazan' was returned to the believers, it underwent complete redecoration and general refurbishment. In 1992 I visited this mosque with a British friend. After we had offered our midday prayers we went to look at the continuing work in the basement. There we were confronted by the builders, who told us they were doing all the work almost voluntarily and that it was our religious duty to offer alms to them, which we readily did. They were in their sixties, claimed to be practising Muslims, quoting the Holy Quran, and they were all drunk. It was clear to me how our alms were going to be used after we left. It is possible, of course, to write off such phenomena as a legacy of the communist era, and many observers do indeed do so, expressing the hope that with the passage of time things will improve. It seems to me, however, that the cause is not so much the lack of Islamic enlightenment as cupidity and self-interest, which are likely to grow along with the development of capitalism in Russia and as a result of the increasing exposure of Russian Muslims to their counterparts abroad as travel opportunities increase.

The phenomenon of living Islam is very often confused with another phenomenon, namely, that of culture-based nationalism. Interwoven though these two phenomena are, they are not identical, nor are the driving forces behind them. The nationalistic drive of the ethnic groups whose culture is based on the Islamic legacy of their ancestors is a powerful force in present-day Russian politics, but for the most part it has very little or nothing to do with Islam as an active religion or a political and economic philosophy. Islam conceived simply as a culture plays a supportive role when it is needed for political ends, but there is no political leader of any significance in Russia today whose aim is to act on Islamic injunctions.¹⁷ In this article, then, I will be using the term 'Islam' to refer not simply to a cultural tradition, which can be used for political or economic purposes or just as easily neglected, but to a framework of fundamental principles for life and a basis for understanding, by which one abides to the best of one's abilities despite changing circumstances. Like any living phenomenon, Islam progresses along its own evolutionary lines and can take different forms in different environments: it can be peaceful, tolerant, universal and creative, or else extremely violent, perverted, narrow-minded and parochial,¹⁸ depending not only on historical circumstances but also on the leadership at any given time.

The subject of this article is a study of Islamic religious leadership in Russia from the dawn of Islam in the region to the present day. I will try to show to what extent this leadership follows the historical mainstream of the evolution of Islam in that part of the world and to what extent it is shaped by the particular local Islamic legacy. There is also a more fundamental question. Can it, in fact, be called a leadership at all? And if not, what are the main causes for the lack of universally recognised leaders among the Russian Muslims?¹⁹

II

The celebrations of 1989 to which I referred at the beginning of this article were also characterised by the appearance of the Muslim clergy on the social scene. Before that, local imams had never come *en masse* into the limelight. The imam-khatib of the Moscow mosque Ravil Gainetdin would from time to time appear on television in connection with his social and diplomatic duties in the Russian capital, but the only person who enjoyed real publicity was Mufti Talgat Tajutdin in his capacity as head of the Central All-Russian Muftiate. He would greet believers on religious occasions on the First Channel of Ostankino television,²⁰ answer questions from journalists or politicians, and represent the Muslim Umma of Russia on every appropriate occasion both within the country and abroad. Along with the other three supreme muftis of the USSR he would carry out official duties on behalf of the state, the government and the Communist Party. These would include leading Muslim religious delegations abroad, receiving and hosting foreign delegations from Muslim countries, participating in international religious conferences, and, last but not least, taking representative part in cultural and 'peace-and-friendship' activities.²¹ After consultation with, or on the direct orders of, the communist establishment, he would eventually decide every issue related to the Islamic faith in the area entrusted to him. He and only he was regarded as the ultimate religious authority, with powers to guide the faithful in all areas of common interest.

With the passage of time, and increasingly after the collapse of the USSR, the ultimate authority of the Supreme All-Russian Mufti was challenged by forces within the Muslim leadership of the Russian regions. There were many reasons for such challenges on the part of local imams. As I noted earlier, accusations of mental disorder led at one point to his temporary dismissal, but he survived this experience and, at least at present, is once again fulfilling his duties; as already mentioned, however, his authority is now very questionable. Fundamentally, however, it is not the personal qualities of Sheikh Tajutdin which are the real reason for the persistent attacks on his supreme authority. In Soviet times he was renowned as a learned and intelligent man well able to represent Russian Muslims abroad. His reputation as a true believer and a righteous individual was never in doubt.

With the start of *perestroika* control over Islam in Russia became more and more relaxed, and the necessity for the secular authorities to have official representatives of the Russian Muslims ready to hand faded. As the social disadvantages of being a practising believer began to disappear, in the world of the Russian Muslims, as in any other part of Soviet society, a whole range of questions started to be asked. Step by step, there began to emerge a type of rivalry among imams of the existing mosques, as many of them started to realise the benefits of leadership which had hitherto been barred to them. Beside benefits of a purely material kind, there were now apparently unlimited opportunities for establishing liaisons in the Muslim countries of the world abroad. To be sure of a welcome abroad, however, one had to hold some position of authority. Another temptation was that of fame and publicity, which brought not only spiritual satisfaction but material welfare as well. Except, perhaps, for young imams in the newly-founded mosques, the Russian Muslim clergy cannot nowadays be listed among the poorest members of society. Sheikh Gabbullah Galiullah, the mufti of Tatarstan, is now under investigation for embezzlement pending trial. It seems highly likely he will be relieved of his duties as mufti.²²

At the same time, the authority of the Supreme Muftiate was being increasingly challenged by forces beyond its direct control. Many Muslim groups, consisting mainly of younger people, started disputing with the Muslim establishment of the

day, accusing it of nothing short of apostasy. Groups like *Saf Islam* claimed that the ideology of the early days of Islam was being compromised for the sake of worldly gains and demanded restoration of the pristine purity of the Islam of the Prophet. They accused mullahs of collaborating with the state authorities as well as with the secret services.²³ Their activities attracted reprimands from the supreme mufti and from local imams alike. Nowadays, however, former members of such dissident groups are finding a place in the new hierarchy of Muslim clergy. The result of their demands may have been a split in the establishment; but they did not change the nature of this establishment. The idea of a muftiate as the only form of Muslim leadership in Russia has not been replaced by the concept of any other form of leadership. The number of muftis in Russia increases day by day and all attempts to bring some order into increasing chaos by introducing a new unification body have failed to strengthen the shaken authority of this particular form of Muslim self-government. Nobody has questioned the *status quo*, however, and nobody has asked whether this form of leadership has in fact at any time been beneficial for the Muslims of Russia. Everyone seems to have forgotten a simple fact of history, namely that throughout the development of Islam in Russia the official government-supervised and government-directed institution of the muftiate with its hierarchy of 'mullahs by decree'²⁴ has always been a major obstacle to the progress of Islamic thought and rejuvenation of Islam in the area. Later we will see how the official Muslim establishment has all too often come into conflict with the mainstream of Islamic progress, be it progress in philosophy, science, education, social life or any other field.

III

Let us now look at the roots of the problem and find out how the institution of the Russian muftiate came into being. Who were the leaders of Muslims in the area long before anyone ever heard of the Russian supreme mufti? It is well known²⁵ that the spread of Islam in Russia throughout its thousand-year history owes much to the religious, missionary, cultural and educational activities of the Kazan' Tatars and their ancestors the Volga Bulgars. I will not go into detail about the Islamic establishment of the earlier period from 922 to 1552, when the Kazan' Khanate fell victim to the geopolitical expansion of the Moscow principedom and lost its sovereignty. The form of Islamic leadership which existed in the Kazan' Khanate has been described at length by Russian historian Mikhail Khudyakov. He writes:

The person elected to the high office of the head of the clergy was always a *seyid*, that is to say, one of the progeny of the Prophet Muhammed (from his daughter Fatima and Khalif Ali)... . In the Russian sources, several names of these heads of the clergy are recorded: Burash (1491–1507), Shah-Hussein (1512–16), Beyurgan (1546), Mansur (1546) and his son Kul-Sherif (1552). The head of the clergy was deemed the second person in the khanate after the khan himself and because of his high standing he would act as a head of any provisional government during times of troubles. The above-listed heads of the clergy, except for the last one, the son of Mansur, formally bore the office of head of state, and Burash and Shah-Hussein were also active in the capacity of ambassadors undertaking trips abroad to Moscow. These diplomatic missions demanded from them outstanding education, deep intelligence and vast experience.²⁶

Other representatives of the religious establishment of the Kazan' Khanate included

sheikhs, mullahs, imams of the mosques, dervishes, hajis, khafizes and danishmends (religious teachers). All of them had the right to participate in the sittings of the Kurultay, which was a representative public body endowed with some legislative functions as well.²⁷ At the same time, the religious life of the khanate was deeply influenced by the teachings of Sufism, especially by those of Haji Ahmed Yassavi. Sufi thought served as a driving force in the progress of science and literature. The work of one of the greatest poets of the Muslim world, Kukhammedyar of Kazan', is characterised by those Sufi influences. Later, this 'parallel Islam', as Alexandre Bennigsen calls it, became the mainstream of Islamic development in the area under Russian Orthodox domination.

The fall of Kazan' in 1552 was in part a consequence of the fact that by the sixteenth century the system of Government bequeathed by the first khans of Kazan' of the early fifteenth century had become a brake on the social, economic and political development of the khanate. Based on the aristocratic and military hierarchy of the rulers, it no longer corresponded to the requirements of rapid progress in trade and culture. In fact, the entrepreneurial classes – the traders and manufacturers – were not represented in the upper circles of power; as Khudyakov puts it, 'The outdated system of government did not correspond with the nature of the population, prevented public development and impeded the use of all the forces of the country for the benefit of the state.'²⁸ In his great poems *Nuri Sodur* and *Tuhfai Mardan*²⁹ the poet Muhammedyar complains about the present state of affairs in his country. At the time he was reduced to the position of guardian of the khan's tomb, while the Kurultay was peopled not only by distant descendants of the Prophet but also by sheikh-zades and mullah-zades – the sons of sheikhs and mullahs.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the popular attitude towards mullahs as bearers of religious offices was not one of automatic approval of their deeds and opinions. Even the heroic resistance offered by the last head of the clergy of Kazan', Kul Sharif son of Mansur, to the Russian troops seizing the city in 1552 did not result in greater esteem for the clergy in times to come, as can easily be seen in the surviving records of the history and literature of Kazan'. All the outstanding poets and scholars of the Kazan' Tatars, including Gabelrahim Utyz Imani al-Bulgari (1754–1834), Gabeljabbar Kandalyi (1797–1860) and Gabdullah Tukay (1886–1913) amongst many others, were highly critical of the official religious establishment of the day, despite themselves being imams or sons of imams and, as a rule, coming from religious backgrounds.

The religious persecution of Muslims in the khanates of Kazan', Astrakhan' and Siberia under Russian domination in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries has been well recorded.³⁰ Immediately after conquest the Russian authorities would start the process of christianisation, a process which meant extensive suffering for Muslims who would not trade their faith for certain economic and political privileges offered by the oppressors. Heavy taxes were introduced for Muslims, they were drafted as soldiers for life while their newly baptised neighbours were exempt, they were physically tortured, kept in ice-cold cellars, deprived of their homes in the cities and banished to remote villages, and the Muslim villagers themselves had their fertile plots taken away and distributed among Russian newcomers.

The profession of Islam was effectively banned in the emerging Greater Russia for almost two centuries. The demolition of mosques, which started after the fall of Kazan', continued in waves throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Just two examples speak volumes about the Muscovite attitude towards Islam. In 1593, according to Archbishop Germogen of Kazan', a decree of Tsar

Fedor Ivanovich ordered that all Tatar mosques and schools be destroyed: 'All Tatar mosques shall be demolished, the Tatars shall be prohibited from privately erecting new ones and all mosques shall thus eventually be destroyed'.³¹ The process of religious persecution continued through the seventeenth century, and resulted in mass participation by Russian Muslims in the rebellion of Stepan Razin.

Under Peter the Great new repressive and punitive measures were introduced. Until his reign the Kazan' area continued to be called the Kazan' Khanate, and although it was governed by a governor-general from Moscow it retained a semblance of independence. Under Peter it became Kazan' province, a renaming which resulted in a serious revolt, cruelly put down by Peter's troops in 1708. After this revolt government persecution of the Kazan' Tatars was renewed with greater intensity. A decree of 1713 stated:

The tsar orders the basurmans of Muhammedan faith in the province of Kazan' and Azov who have estates and lands and house serfs and employees of Christian faith... to be baptised with six months. When they accept baptism they will own their estates and lands as before, but if they do not accept baptism within six months then those estates and lands, with their people and peasants, will be confiscated by the tsar and will not be given back to anyone without a decree.

There were very few who wanted to be baptised, but the Tatar aristocracy, the murzes, were forced by this decree either to unite themselves with the Russian gentry or to condemn themselves to impoverishment and deprivation of all privileges. This is why Tatar family names are so often to be found in Russian gentry genealogies. The baptism of the Kazan' lands proceeded with such difficulty and so unsuccessfully that in 1731 a new decree ordered that 'the newly baptised are to have control over all the taxes and collections of the unbaptised'.³²

Policies of this kind reached their climax during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, when on the orders of the newly established 'Office for the Newly Baptised' in 1742, 418 out of the 546 mosques in Kazan' district were demolished.

The Office for the Newly Baptised, which had armed regiments at its disposal, committed numerous crimes against the rights of Muslims, such as banishing them from those villages where a few people had accepted Christianity (in order to safeguard these newly baptised from the influence of Muslims or pagans), transferring the taxes of the newly baptised to those who refused baptism, taking away Muslim children in order to bring them up as Orthodox and so forth.³³

Little wonder, then, that so many Muslims participated in the series of revolts and uprisings culminating in the Pugachev rebellion in the second half of the eighteenth century, which spread from the steppes of Orenburg and swept huge areas of the Urals and Middle Volga, capturing Ufa and Kazan'. It is estimated that about 90,000 Muslims took part in this rebellion. 'From 1735 to 1740, in the Kazan' region, at least 40,000 Tatars and Bashkirs gave their lives in this struggle for freedom'.³⁴

What was the position of the Muslim clergy during this period? The famous Tatar writer and politician Gayaz Ishkhaki, describing the suffering of the Volga-Urals Muslim peoples, observes that 'the Muslim clergy were subjected to severe punishments' (p. 25), and that 'the Muslim clergy were deprived of all rights in the country'. (p 28).³⁵ In fact, however, due to the conditions imposed on the Muslim population, there were no Muslim clergy as such. The terms 'mullah' and 'akhun', which

are often encountered in the historical records of the time, should be understood in their true meaning of 'learned men' and not 'appointed clergymen'. In his account, written in 1783, of his journey to India and the Middle East in 1751, one Ismagil Aga of the Sayid Settlement near Orenburg says that: 'According to the will of Allah written in our fate (*taqdir*), mullah Nadir and mullah Yakub, and Ismagil, and Gabderahman, and one of the servants of Nadir, all five of us were sent by Sayid the Elder to the city of Bukhara for trade purposes.'³⁶ Here the word 'mullah' is used in its habitual sense in the Tatar language, meaning 'a learned person well versed in religion'. The word 'elder' in the above quotation is even more significant in the light of our investigation. Sayid the Elder, on permission of the authorities and together with some other Tatars who were weary of religious and economic restrictions, came to Orenburg from the Kazan' district in 1745 and founded a settlement, from which he then expanded his trade to Bukhara, Khiva, Kashgar and other Asian areas. With the passage of time, the Sayid Settlement, known also as Kargala, became one of the most enlightened centres of Islam in the area. The word in the Tatar language translated as 'elder' is '*abyz*', which includes the connotation of 'religious leader'. This was a peculiar form of leadership evolved in the conditions of constant restraint, limitation and outright persecution of Islam in the area under Russian control. The Tatar abyzes were the real leaders of their respective communities, on the one hand fulfilling the duties of the supreme religious authority, and on the other undertaking a representative role when dealing with Russian governmental structures. The authority of such leaders was based on several factors, the most important of these being their faithfulness to Islamic traditions, religious knowledge and righteousness. Wealth earned through worldly enterprise and charisma also played an important role in the process of their rise to positions of prominence within their respective communities. Such people undertook not only the immense task of safeguarding Islam in the face of all the onslaughts of the time, but also, and even more significantly, the duty of further propagating Islam in Russia.

A report by two Russian military commanders given the job of suppressing Muslim revolts in the area between the Volga and Ural mountains includes the following observations:

In all those villages, the Tatars who moved from Kazan' district live in the capacity of mullahs and abyzes. All of them are learned and intelligent men. Their word is received by the population as the word of a prophet. Tatar mullahs and abyzes should be expelled from the Ufa district, their religious schools (madrassahs) should be closed...'³⁷

The commanders' report also advises that the term of elders should be limited to one year only, that Russian Orthodox settlements should be placed alongside the Muslim villages and that procreation among Muslims should be impeded. The activities of mullahs as religious teachers and abyzes as religious leaders did indeed bring about results highly unwelcome to the Russians. 'In the period before 1719, the overall number of christened Tatars in Kazan' district was 13,322, but in the twelve years thereafter this number fell to 2995.'³⁸

The missionary drive behind this phenomenon of a natural Islamic religious leadership laid the grounds for further development of Russian Islam in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Charismatic Muslim leaders like Sayid of Kargala travelled all over Greater Russia, establishing communal settlements with prayer houses and religious schools which in the years to come were to develop into the world-famous madrassahs 'Hussainiya' in Orenburg, 'Muhammadiya' in Kazan',

'Galiya' in Ufa and others in Izh Bobi, Troitsk, Kargala and elsewhere, which at the beginning of the twentieth century, until the Bolsheviks took power in Russia, were among the most, if not the most, prominent, innovative and visionary centres of Islamic studies in the whole of the Muslim world.³⁹ From the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries most Russian Muslims received their higher religious education in Bukhara. An entirely new vision of Islam came into being among them. This new vision of rejuvenation and renaissance embodied itself in the *Jadid* movement at the end of the nineteenth century and brought about a real blooming of Islam in Russia, making this part of the Islamic world a leader in the field of Islamic studies, literature, sciences and politics.⁴⁰

At each stage, however, developments were hindered and achievements blocked by the official clergy who were appointed after 1789 and served as tools in the hands of the Russian officials whose policy was to keep the Muslims in dogmatic medieval ignorance rather than allow them to tread the path of Islamic enlightenment. The father of Tatar Jadidism Ismail Gasprinsky, says Jacob M. Landau, 'fought simultaneously against two powerful adversaries: the Russian government and the Muslim mullahs'.⁴¹ 'Reactionary mullahs... exposed the supporters of "Jadidism" as transgressors against the pillars of Islam, enemies of faith and rebels undermining not just religion, but the government as well.'⁴²

The most faithful supporter of the government was perhaps the Orenburg Muslim Board and thousands of its imams scattered by decree about the cities and numerous Tatar villages. The mufti – the head of the Board – was appointed by the decree of the tsar from amongst individuals well known to the government, politically correct and faithful to the current political regime. The mufti was subordinate to the minister of the interior and fulfilled his commands. Institutes of muftiates and imams by decree served as convenient tools for influencing the Tatar populations in ways most suitable to the Russian tsarist government.⁴³

The archives of the Third Department of the Russian Ministry of the Interior abound with reports both open and secret by mullahs trying to stop any developments in the field of Islam undesirable to them. First priority was given to any attempts to broaden the horizons of Islamic education to match the Russian or even European standards of the day. I have found many such reports in the archives of the Police Directorate (Zhandarmnskoye Upravleniye) of Orenburg. The servile style and characteristic illiteracy of these reports expose their writers as self-seeking and ignorant. No wonder that the voice of the Tatar people, the great poet Gabdullah Tukay, is so bitter and sarcastic about mullahs and ishans in his poems.⁴⁴ Interestingly, his attitude towards the official clergy displeases some mullahs even now. Some of these in Russia do not air their aversion to Tukay's works openly so that they will not be accused of being lukewarm in their Tatar nationalist feelings, but their counterparts in the Tatar emigration, who are not bound by current political trends, reveal their dislike quite openly, as did a Tatar mullah from Turkey, otherwise a very learned and open-minded person, in conversation with me recently in Australia.

The system of the Supreme Muftiate of Russia, so alien to the natural system of Islamic leadership evolved through the centuries of oppression and described above, was designed by the Russian government precisely with the aim of countering this natural leadership. The system was copied from the Ottoman Empire. Marjani writes:

In the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) there are learned people at the level of

the military qadi of Greece, Anatolia and Iran and, above them, there is one sheikh ul-Islam and one mufti. Similarly, in this country, three qadis were appointed out of the members of the Muslim Board and, above them, the chairman-mufti was placed.⁴⁵

At first, the qadis were appointed on the recommendation of the mufti, but after the Crimean War even they were elected with the participation of the local Russian authorities, including the chief of police. Marjani notes that from the very beginning the Muslim Board was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. Quite soon this body was moved from Orenburg to Ufa, which in Marjani's opinion was at the time an 'obscure corner' of the earth.⁴⁶

Marjani, usually so mild and constrained in his writings on politically dangerous subjects, is severe and outspoken when he presents short biographies of the successive Orenburg muftis. Especially the first of them, Muhammejan son of Al-Husein son of Mansur son of Gabderrahim son of Anas Al Jabali Al-Borunduki, comes in for his criticism. This person's origin was apparently very similar to that of many other Tatar religious scholars. His father Mansur was the first of the Volga Muslims to receive education in Bukhara, Marjani claims, and the mufti-to-be was schooled in his native village of Borunduki and then moved to the village of Kargala, from where he was expelled by the Russian authorities. He obtained further education from a well-known Caucasian mullah, Mukhammad son of Ali Ad-Dagestani, called 'Qadi Aka Akhun', and then worked among Kazakhs, Bashkirs and other tribes still unwilling to accept unconditional Russian rule.

On his return to this country the mufti Mullah Mukhammejan succeeds in convincing the Russian authorities of his loyalty and scholarly knowledge. He takes part in subduing Kazakhs, Bashkirs and others who would decline to live among the Russians or under Russian rule by means of exciting their curiosity or by threats, and gets some impressive results. Finally, having returned to his homeland at the end of 1191 AH (1777 AD), he attains prominent positions and receives state decorations. His achievements on behalf of Russia are recognised, and he receives a sword; there are even rumours that he becomes a Russian general. After that, on his advice, or because the Russian state found it necessary, or for some other reason, the Muslim Board is set up, and he is put in charge of this body as mufti of all Muslims.⁴⁷

Remarkably, Marjani never mentions any need for such a body amongst the Muslims themselves. He says that the prestige of the mufti among the religious ulema of Russia rapidly went down, because 'using his position of mufti, and betraying his title of "mullah", he amasses great wealth. People say that he possessed a fortune of some 50,000 roubles at the hour of his death, and actually passed away with this money under his bed.' Marjani is also highly critical of the first mufti's religious erudition. He says that his knowledge was even poorer than that of the second All-Russia Mufti, of whom he otherwise finds very little to say.

This was the beginning of the official religious establishment in Russia. Its evolution proceeded very much along the lines thus established, serving the purpose of supervising the activities of the Russian Muslims and hindering their natural development. Any individual who posed a threat not only to the established Russian order of things but to the institutions of muftiate and 'mullah by decree' as products of the former was an object of suspicion and investigation and was restrained as much as

possible. Such was the fate of the greatest representatives of Russian Islam: Gabdennasr Kursavi, Qayum Nasiri, Galimjan Barudi, Gataullah Bayazidov, Abdullah Bobi, Ziautdin Kemali, Riza Fakhretdinov, Musa Bigiyev; even Marjani himself, despite all his discretion and prudence in the face of the Russian authorities and the official clergy of whom he was actually one.⁴⁸ Almost all the above-mentioned people at some stage held religious office, but this was exceptional rather than the rule.

The institution of muftiate, then, was conceived and established by the Russian state in order to safeguard its interests within the Islamic communities of the country, with the cooperation of the official clergy who were interested in safeguarding their own position and earnings. From the very beginning the progress and evolution of Islam and Islamic thought in Russia had very little or nothing to do with activities of the muftiate.

The Russian authorities – tsarist, communist and present-day reformist alike – made use of the institution of the Muslim Board as an inexpensive tool in order to reach their goal of total control over Islamic developments within the country and to persuade the Islamic forces of the Third World of their good intentions. The muftiate was revived by Lenin who was dreaming of attracting the Muslim world to the side of world revolution. The instrument then fell into abeyance, but was reinstated by Stalin during the Second World War in order to gain support from the Muslims within the country and abroad.⁴⁹ Since then it has been used for political ends and as a tool for maintaining the *status quo* in the Muslim umma of Russia.

IV

The institution of the muftiate in Russia, then, has always functioned only in cooperation with the state.⁵⁰ Artificial in its origins, it has no other source of inspiration and no roots in the history of Russian Islam. Now, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the need for such a body is less obvious to the rather improvident and short-sighted Russian authorities. The muftiate has therefore suffered a major crisis and has split into several bodies, which in their turn will split even further, because, as we saw at the beginning of this article, there is a conflict of interests, not so much between different Muslim communities⁵¹ as between new muftis, all of who are aspiring to fulfil the almost obsolete political duties of the one original mufti. The members of this new Islamic *nomenklatura* may be eager to uproot the Supreme Mufti from his seat in Ufa; his persistence in his position shows, however, that no Muslim assembly in Russia is yet powerful enough to dismiss a person once appointed by the Russian state. Interestingly, the opponents of the former Supreme Mufti Sheikh Talgat Tajutdin blame him for provoking the split. 'In 1992,' says the mufti of the Central European region of Russia Sheikh Ravil Gainetdin,

... the Supreme Mufti pointed out that Turkey has a system of regional muftiates, which was to be implemented in Russia as well. This idea of regionalisation triggered the split within the Muslim Board of European Russia and Siberia. You know our people, they are all dreaming of getting a mufti's turban for themselves, everyone is aspiring to be a prince in his own principedom. We know the split is a mistake; but then, the Supreme Muftiate has no roots in Russian history.

Rising nationalism is also playing a key role in the process of the split. Even under communist rule the authorities failed to bring the Muslims of European Russia and

Siberia under one roof with the Muslims of the North Caucasus, and had to establish two separate Muslim Boards for these regions. Nationalistic aspirations in the North Caucasus have brought about the division of the Supreme Directorate in Dagestan into a number of national and regional muftiates. The consequences of nationalistic aspirations are sometimes ironic in the context of attempts somehow to unite the Muslims of Russia. For instance, the muftiate of the Republic of Tatarstan recently applied for a subordinate position under the auspices of the muftiate of the Central European region of Russia. With the latter being situated in Moscow, however, the Central European mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainetdin, himself a Tatar from Kazan', has turned down the application out of political caution, believing that the subordination of a Kazan' body to a Moscow body may impede the struggle for greater sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan.

How can the current fracturing process be halted? Some Islamic leaders, mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainetdin among them, are now trying to form and register with the authorities an Islamic High Council of Russia based on regional representation and rotation of chairmanship. The roots of the split are so deep and tangled, however, that it is difficult to believe that a council of regional muftis will be able to solve the problem of Islamic leadership in Russia, not least because they are so bound up politically with the national aspirations of their respective regions. From this point of view, the split in the Islamic leadership simply mirrors the phenomenon of decentralisation and regionalisation in the Russian Federation itself, and only time will show where the limits to this dramatic process will be set.

Notes and References

- ¹ M. Usmanov, 'Boek tarihi vakyiga' ('The great historical event'), Utkennen-Kilechekke (*From the Past into the Future*) (Kazan' State Publishing House, Kazan', 1990), p.179.
- ² Shihabetdin Marjani, 'Tatarlarnyn uzydara organnary' ('The bodies of Tatar self-government'), *Mustafadel-Akhbar Fi Ahwali Kazan Wa Bolgar* (Kazan' State Publishing House, Kazan', 1989), p.209.
- ³ The seat of the supreme mufti of Russia is *de jure* still in Ufa, but *de facto* his position is nowadays unclear.
- ⁴ S. Ivanenko, 'Islamskiye perspektivy', *Moskovskiy novosti*, no. 75, 29 October–5 November 1995.
- ⁵ His position is still supported by existing religious legislation and the Russian authorities say that they have to take him into account whatever his position and reputation in the eyes of the Muslims themselves.
- ⁶ Y. Shikhov, 'Musul'mane Rossii ob''yedinyayutsya', *Obshchaya gazeta*, 6–12 May 1994.
- ⁷ 'Imanli jigit' ('Believing young man') (an interview with the rector of the 'Mukhammadiya' madrassah in Kazan', the editor-in-chief of the 'Iman' Publishing House and the imam-khatib of the Apanai Mosque in Kazan' Venerullah Yakub), *Vatany Tatarstan* (a daily Tatar-language newspaper), (Sunday supplement *Allyuiki*), 25 February 1994.
- ⁸ S. Ivanenko, *op. cit.*
- ⁹ 'Rossiya' TV Channel, Moscow, in Russian, 1540 GMT, 17 November 1995.
- ¹⁰ Goulnara Baltanova, 'Muslims in Tatarstan: voices from afar', *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 14, nos. 1–2, January and July 1994, pp. 249–60.
- ¹¹ *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 11, no. 6, June 1995. The fall of Kazan' occurred in 1552, which in 1995 was 443 years ago. We should also note that the Tatar population of Laishevo was always comparatively large, and did not need to increase particularly in order for it to be feasible to found a mosque.
- ¹² 'Al-Islah – tunganlarcha yashau ('Al-Islah – living in kinship'), *Vatany Tatarstan*, 12 February 1994.

- ¹³ Photograph of a bus stop in the Oktyabr'sky region of Tatarstan, *Vatanyim Tatarstan*, 16 February 1994.
- ¹⁴ R. Bukharaev, *Kazan: The Enchanted Capital* (Flint River Press, London, 1995).
- ¹⁵ Meaning the Volga Bulgars, the ancestors of the Kazan' Tatars.
- ¹⁶ Shihabetdin Marjani, *Mustafadel Akhbar Fi Ahwali Kazan Wa Bolgar*, (Kazan' State Publishing House, Kazan', 1989), p. 366–68.
- ¹⁷ The charismatic and defiant figure of the former Chechen president Dzhokar Dudayev, who apparently tried to portray himself as the Imam Shamil of the twentieth century, is only the latest of a long list of Russian politicians playing the Islamic card at different stages of their career. The question of the Islamic split in the North Caucasus is not dealt with in this paper, though a number of the reasons for it are very similar to the reasons being expounded here.
- ¹⁸ Even the mainly peaceful and tragically long-suffering history of the Volga Tatar Muslims has its own page of violent Islamic extremism, that of the Vaisi sect, which still has its followers, though they are not many in number. On this sect, see the principal works on the Volga Muslims in the Selected Bibliography at the end of this article.
- ¹⁹ From now on, when I call someone a Muslim I mean a practising Muslim who tries to abide by the sharia in the multinational and multiconfessional situation of Russia. By 'Russia', 'Russian' I mean the European and Siberian part of the Russian Federation and those citizens of Russia who may not be ethnically Russian but who live within the geographical and political borders of the Russian Federation (excluding the North Caucasus).
- ²⁰ He continues to do so even today in his reduced capacity. It is, in fact, hard to see who might replace him.
- ²¹ Alexandre Bennigsen, Paul Henze, George K. Tanham, S. Enders Wimbush, *Soviet Strategy and Islam* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1989).
- ²² 'V teni minareta', *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 27 March 1996.
- ²³ It is clear that there was extensive collaboration of this kind in Soviet times.
- ²⁴ 'Ukaznoi mulla' in Russian.
- ²⁵ See, for instance, Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (Pall Mall Press, London, 1967); Alexandre Bennigsen, S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Indiana University Press, 1986); Mikhail Khudyakov, *Ocherki po istorii Kazanskogo Khanstva* (Kazan', 1923; reprint edn, Fond Tatarskogo yazyka i kul'tury, Kazan', 1990).
- ²⁶ Khudyakov, *op. cit.*
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 190.
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 243.
- ²⁹ Muhammedyar, *Tuhfai Mardan, Nuri Sodur: Shigyrler Hem Poemalar* (Kazan', 1966).
- ³⁰ See the Selected Bibliography at the end of this article.
- ³¹ Gayaz Iskhaki, *Idel-Ural* (Paris, 1933; Society for Central Asian Studies Reprint Series no. 14, 1988).
- ³² Bukharaev, *op. cit.*
- ³³ N. I. Vorob'yev, *Kazanskiye tatory: etnograficheskoye issledovaniye material'noi kul'tury dooktyabr'skogo perioda* (Kazan', 1953), p. 32.
- ³⁴ I. Akmanov, *Bashkirskoye vosstaniye 1735–1736 gg.* (Ufa, 1977); V. Imamov, 'Akay-Kilmek fetnese', *Idel*, no. 10–11, 1991, Kazan'.
- ³⁵ G. Iskhaki, *op. cit.*
- ³⁶ A. Aleyeva, 'Ismagil Aga sayanhaty' ('The sojourn of Ismagil Aga') in *Ezlenuler, Uylanular, Tabyshlar (Quests, Thoughts, Discoveries)* (Kazan', 1989); the word 'elder' is rendered by the writer in Russian as 'starshina'.
- ³⁷ Imamov, *op. cit.*
- ³⁸ T. Davletshin, 'Kazanny algach ...' ('After the fall of Kazan'...'), *Sotsialist Tatarstan*, 14 October 1990.
- ³⁹ Interestingly, the same pattern of communal development was shown by Tatar refugees after the October Revolution and during the Russian Civil War of 1918–1920. Fleeing chaos and

repression, they established their mosques and schools in southern Siberia, the Russian Far East, China (Haylar, Mukden, Manchuria, Shanghai, Harbin), Japan (Kobe) and other places all over the world, including Australia, the USA and Germany. The Tatar community in Finland, though established earlier at the end of the nineteenth century, followed the very same pattern. See, for example, Lowell Bizanis; 'Volga-Ural, Volga Tatars in emigration', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 11, no. 4, December 1992.

- ⁴⁰ A. Bennigsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Les Mouvements Nationaux chez les Mussulmans de Russie: Le 'Sutangalievisme' en Tatarstan* (Paris 1960); *id.*, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York, 1967). See also books in the Reprint Series of the Society for Central Asian Studies, especially no. 6: Ismail-bei Gasprinsky, *Russkoye musul'manstvo*; and no. 18: A. Arsharuni and Kh. Gabidullin, *Ocherki panyurkizma i panislamizma v Rossii*.
- ⁴¹ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: from Irredentism to Cooperation* (Hurst, London, 1995). The author refers to the Kazan' Tatars as 'quintessential Kulturtraeger for the other Turkic groups'.
- ⁴² Arsharuni and Gabidullin, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 33.
- ⁴⁴ Gabdulla Tukay, *Eserler: Bish Tomda (Complete Works in 5 vols.)* (Kazan', 1985).
- ⁴⁵ Marjani, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 211.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 212–13.
- ⁴⁸ See the Selected Bibliography at the end of this article.
- ⁴⁹ Bennigsen *et al.*, *Soviet Strategy and Islam*, p. 26.
- ⁵⁰ This cooperation was vital from an economic point of view as well, as is now evident from the poor economic state of the newly-born smaller muftiates.
- ⁵¹ Conflict between local Muslim communities is not dealt with in this article. The reasons for such conflict are manifold and increasing in number, and require extensive research.

Selected Bibliography

The number of related works in various languages being so vast, I had to select some principal works only. A number of works and mass-media reports referred to in the footnotes section are not included in this short bibliography.

- S. Akiner, *Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union* (Kegan Paul, London, 1993).
- A. Benningsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union*: (New York, 1967).
- A. Benningsen and S. E. Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago, 1979).
- A. Benningsen and S. E. Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Union: A Guide* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1986).
- A. Benningsen, P. B. Henze, G. K. Tanham and S. E. Wimbush, *Soviet Strategy and Islam* (Macmillan, London, 1989).
- R. Bukharaev, *Azan: Volga Tatar Islamic Poetry* (Islam International Publications Ltd., 1992).
- R. Bukharaev, *Tatars in the Alien Lands* (Kazan', 1993).
- R. Bukharaev, *Kazan': The Enchanted Capital* (Flint River Press, London, 1995).
- M. Khudyakov, *Ocherki po istorii Kazanskogo Khanstva* (Kazan', 1990).
- M. J. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Hurst, 1995).
- S. Marjani, *Mustafadel Ahbar Fi Ahwali Kazan wa Bolgar* (Kazan', 1989).
- A. Rorlich, *Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 1987).
- G. Tukay, *Eserler: Bish Tomda (Complete Works in 5 vols.)* (Kazan', 1985).
- M. Usmanov, *Utkennen – Kilechekke (From the Past into the Future)* (Kazan', 1990).