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Muslim Educational Institutions in Kazakhstan under the Anti-Religious Policy of the Soviet State in the 1920s

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Abstract

The given article presents the results of studying the system of Muslim education in Kazakhstan in the context of the anti-religious policy of the Soviet state and the struggle against ethno-confessional educational institutions in 1920s. The authors explore the features of state policy in the field of Muslim education, its impact on the quantitative growth of Muslim schools in the first half of the 1920s and their almost complete elimination by the end of the decade applying the methods of discursive analysis of previously unused archival sources and regulatory documents. The article considers the main methods of counteraction of the Soviet party and state bodies to the creation and expansion of the network of Muslim educational institutions, the teaching of the Muslim faith in Soviet schools.

Based on the results of the study, it was possible to establish that the loyal policy of the Soviet state in relation to Islamic education in 1917–1926 was due to the political tasks of strengthening the power of the Bolsheviks in the region. Its consequence was the growth of the Muslim movement in the republic, and the network of ethno-confessional educational institutions that had been formed before October 1917 not only grew in number, but also successfully competed with Soviet schools both in material and organizational terms. With the strengthening of the power of the Soviets and with the beginning of the formation of a totalitarian system in the country in the late 1920s, the struggle of the Soviet state with Islamic religious institutions acquired a tough and uncompromising character. Mass liquidation of Muslim religious worship objects began in the republic, mektebs and madrasahs were closed. Such a policy caused the natural resistance of Muslims, suppressed by the authorities with administrative and repressive measures.

Keywords: confessions, Muslim education, Soviet power, religious educational institutions, doctrine, mektebs.

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1. Introduction

Until October 1917, in the education system of the Kazakh Territory, in addition to government (ministerial) educational institutions of various types, there was an extensive network of ethno-confessional educational institutions: parish schools at churches and mosques, madrasas, religious schools, Orthodox missionary schools. The Muslim schools made up the vast majority, which had the character of religious educational institutions and these schools were referred to "native schools" in official documents. They were divided into two types: lower schools – mektebs, higher – madrasahs.

Mektebs functioned in almost every settlement; they were located in mosques and were popular among settled Kazakhs. The nomadic Kazakhs had mobile schools that wandered along with the aul, and temporary schools worked in the winter camps for 3-4 months a year. Children were taught in mektebs by mugallims – teachers from among the Kazakhs or Orenburg Tatars. The education was based on the Tatar literacy; the main subjects were the Koran, history and geography. With the advent of the Sarts, inhabitants of Central Asia, in the Kazakh steppes, the Arabic language and Arabic writing began to penetrate into schools. At the beginning of the 20th century, Muslim schools were widely spread in the south of Kazakhstan and in Central Asia. Therefore, in Syr-Darya region in 1911, 804 mektebs were registered, madrasas – 31, a total number of schools made up 835 (Bobrovnikov, 1913: 41). There were 2437 mektebs and 169 madrasahs in Ferghana region (GAZhO. F. 48. Op. 1. D. 72. L. 13).

Ishans, the preachers who studied in the madrasas of Bukhara, Tashkent, Samarkand, played an important role in the spread of Muslim education in South Kazakhstan. In the steppe part of Kazakhstan, the Tatars contributed to the development of Muslim education. Among the nomadic Kazakhs, the institution of wandering Mugallims became widespread. Hundreds of Mugallims from Orenburg, Troitsk and Kazan traveled across the Kazakh and Turkestan steppes, settled in wealthy families and taught literacy to Muslim children and the Tatar language as home teachers for a relatively small fee (Aziatskaya Rossiya, 1914: 257). "Registration of such schools has always presented great difficulties," wrote imperial officials (Obzor Semirechenskoi oblasti, 1913: 108).

Higher schools madrasahs, by the nature of the sciences taught in them, were exclusively spiritual and legal educational institutions, where mudarrises delivered the lectures, i.e. professors. Their number was insignificant and they were concentrated in the south of Kazakhstan. For example, in Syrdarya region, real madrasahs existed only in Tashkent and Khujand. Both the mektebs and the madrasahs were maintained exclusively at private expense.

A noticeable feature of Muslim education in the Kazakh region at the beginning of the 20th century was the emergence of new-method Jadid schools, which used new teaching methods in their educational practice. At these schools, in addition to subjects of spiritual content, general educational disciplines were taught like arithmetic, geography, pedagogy, literature. Mugallims who studied abroad were the main initiators and adherents of such schools. "The Mugallims who were educated abroad are the authors of the new method of teaching," officials wrote (Bobrovnikov, 1914: 58). The new system of education in Kazakhstan was not widespread, and the new method madrasah was opened in 1912 only in one city – Kostanai.

With the victory of the October Revolution of 1917 in Kazakhstan, as well as in the country as a whole, cardinal changes began in all spheres of public life, including the education system. It was during these years that the pre-revolutionary education system was liquidated and a new Soviet model was formed, which was based on ideological principles. First, confessional educational institutions were closed, Soviet schools, the so-called "schools of a new type", were created throughout the country. Despite the fight against religion declared by the Soviet authorities and the closure of confessional schools, Muslim educational institutions functioned in Kazakhstan until the end of the 1920s. In this context the task of our research is to study the features of state policy in the field of Muslim education, to identify and understand the reasons for its transformation – from a loyal attitude towards Muslim schools in the first half of 1920s to the application of strict legislative and administrative measures to them, prohibiting their activities, up to the liquidation in the late 1920s.

2. Materials and methods

As the main sources, mainly archival documents from the funds of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well

as regional archives of Kazakhstan were used. The regulatory documents of the state on issues of religion and education were studied: the resolutions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) and the Kazakh ASSR (KASSR). The paperwork materials of the central (union and republican) and local (provincial and district) educational bodies were analyzed: protocols of the meetings, correspondence with higher management structures on religious issues, reviews of officials on the state of religiosity and dogma in provinces and districts. The materials of current statistics were used as sources, characterizing the dynamics of the number of ethno-confessional educational institutions in the early and late 1920s. The difficulty of using this type of sources is that official statistics are practically absent, and current statistics are not always objective and reliable. To achieve the truth, the authors studied the entire range of statistical materials of management structures at various levels.

The study was carried out based on the theory of modernization used by researchers in the study of the history of state-confessional relations. This paradigm allows us to comprehend the problems of cultural transformation in the context of the modernization processes in society, which had a direct impact on the educational policy of the state. The modernization of the spiritual life of society initiated by the authorities and carried out by administrative, violent methods, caused desperate resistance from the religious part of society, which fought to preserve the objects of worship and confessional schools.

The application of the principles of objectivity, determinism, consistency and historicism made it possible to carry out a critical analysis of the studied processes in dynamics. While working with sources and texts, general scientific research methods were used: analysis and synthesis, generalization, a systematic approach that allows us to consider the studied phenomena in integrity and in interconnection. Special historical methods were applied: historical-systemic and problem-chronological. They made it possible to formulate the author's view on the processes of evolution of state policy towards Muslim educational institutions in Kazakhstan in 1920s. The comparative-historical method was used to compare the general and the specific in the anti-religious educational policy of the Soviet state in the national outskirts.

3. Discussion

The scientific problems of the activities of Muslim educational institutions in Kazakhstan in the first decade of Soviet power are relevant both from the point of view of the needs of an objective assessment of the Soviet state policy regarding ethno-confessional schools, and in the context of the importance of studying archival sources that were not previously used by researchers. Meanwhile, it was not the subject of independent study. Most of the research on the activities of Muslim educational institutions in Kazakhstan is devoted to the pre-revolutionary period. The scientific interests of the authors are focused on the study of the policy of the imperial authorities in relation to Muslim education. In the proceedings of Lysenko Yu.A. debatable issues about the departmental affiliation of Muslim schools in Turkestan, a region that at the beginning of the 20th century included the regions of Southern Kazakhstan are discussed ([Lysenko, 2018: 759-767](#)). In P.P. Litvinov's works, the problem of confessional educational institutions in the context of the general trends in the religious policy of the autocracy in Turkestan region is considered ([Litvinov, 1998: 319](#)). The history of Muslim education in Northern Kazakhstan in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries were revealed in the work of Zh.E. Nurbaev ([Nurbaev, 2016](#)). An analysis of the content of curricula in Muslim schools in Kazakhstan and the provision of their educational literature is presented in the works of Razdykova G.M. ([Razdykova, 2018](#)).

The scope of research devoted directly to the study of the activities of Muslim educational institutions in Kazakhstan in the first decades of the victory of Soviet power is practically absent. However, it should be noted the works in which the issues of Muslim education are partially studied in the context of the general problems of the anti-Islamic policy of the Soviet government in the designated period. Z.T. Sadvokasova considers the history of the development of Muslim education in Kazakhstan in the 20th century through the prism of the colonization policy of both autocracy and the Soviet government, and characterizes their attitude towards Muslim schools as sharply negative and hostile. According to the author, despite the change in ideology after October 1917, russification policy was continued in the field of education under the protection of the

internationalist slogans (Sadvokasova, 2000: 76-81). Mustafaeva A.A. substantiates the point of view that the translation of the Kazakh alphabet from the Arabic script into the Latin alphabet was caused by the tasks of “destroying the influence of Islam” and Islamic education (Mustafaeva, 2012: 31-35). According to the authors S.M. Tumenova and B.A. Chakenova the problems of Soviet school construction in 1920s and significant differences in the number of Soviet schools in the southern and northern regions of Kazakhstan are explained by the high religiosity of the population of the south of the republic (Tumenova, Chakenova, 2014: 135-138).

4. Results

The beginning of changes in the system of Muslim education was laid by the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of January 20, 1918 "On the separation of the church from the state and the school from the church." The articles of the Decree said: “The school is excommunicated. The teaching of religious beliefs in all state, public and private educational institutions where general education subjects are taught is not allowed. Citizens can teach and learn religion in private” (TGA RK. F. 15. Op.1. D. 394. L. 7-8). With the publication of the Decree, the struggle for the ideological re-education of the people began, which determined the policy of the Soviet state in relation to confessional education. All religious groups and communities were subject to registration, and the clergy were registered in order to control their activities. For each clergyman, a questionnaire was drawn up, in which, in addition to general information, the attitude to the Decree and Soviet power was necessarily indicated. At the end of the questionnaire there was a postscript “For incorrect answers you will answer before the court of the Revtribunal” (GAPO. F. 17. Op.1. D. 2. L. 50).

The Decree was followed by several resolutions of the Soviet government agencies regarding the activities of theological educational institutions. The Decree of the State Commission for Education of February 18, 1918 "On the Soviet School" prohibited the teaching of religious beliefs in all state, public and private educational institutions run by the People's Commissariat for Education (PCE) for individuals under 18 years of age. A ban on the performance of religious rites in schools was introduced (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 21). By the decree of the same commission of August 24, 1918, “On Theological Educational Institutions,” all theological educational institutions were to be closed, no matter whose funds they were maintained, and the students of these schools could continue their education in Soviet general education schools (GAZhO. F. 48. Op. 1. D. 72. L. 88). The buildings of the former theological educational institutions with their equipment, libraries and inventory became the property of the state; they were under the jurisdiction of local government bodies and were used for educational purposes. For individuals over 18 years of age, special theological courses for the training of clergy were allowed, but on condition that the course programs would be significantly limited. Referring to the articles of the Constitution of the RSFSR of 1918, the authorities not only banned the teaching of all confessions in schools, but also, by a special circular order of the regional departments of public education, stopped paying salaries to teachers of the theology (TGA RK. F. 1398. Op.1. D. 216. L. 69). In the localities, the county governments massively dismissed ministers of religious cults from teaching positions and heads of educational institutions (Preodolevaya, 1990: 24).

On April 23, 1921, the NCE issued a resolution “On the Teaching of the Law of God to Children under 18”, according to which the teaching of religious beliefs was prohibited. The resolution obliged the provincial departments of public education (PDPE) to take local measures of control and detection of violations of the provisions of the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of January 20, 1918 (GAZhO. F. 48. Op. 1. D. 72. L. 89). However, the provisions of the decree did not apply to the indigenous population of the TASSR, which included the southern regions of Kazakhstan – Syr-Darya and Semirechensk. Moreover, the People's Commissariat of the RSFSR, taking into account the local national living conditions and the high degree of Muslim religiosity of the population, allowed the teaching of the faith in Soviet schools of indigenous peoples, including Kazakhs. The authorities explained their decision by the tasks of strengthening Soviet schools and involving the population of the national outskirts in these schools. “It is extremely important that the population get used to Soviet schools. The Soviet school will gradually take root in local life. In all Soviet schools of the indigenous peoples of Turkestan, additional classes in religion are allowed at the request of the population of the given region” (GAZhO. F. 48. Op. 1. D. 72. L. 13). The fourth hour of daily lessons was allotted

for doctrinal studies. A mullah or a teacher of this school, who was paid for these hours, taught the religion lesson. According to officials, this was supposed to inspire the confidence of the Muslim population in the Soviet school.

Other circumstances forced the authorities to make concessions to the Muslim population of the southern regions of Kazakhstan. As early as at the beginning of the 1920s, it became completely clear that the Soviet schools opened in the TASSR could not compete with confessional ones, both in terms of material and ideological ones. Right after the October Revolution of 1917, confessional schools lost their material base – waqfs, lands bequeathed or donated by the nobility and merchants for religious purposes. Waqfs were the main source of existence for the clergy and Muslim educational institutions. However, during the years of the New Economic Policy (NEP), the material base of confessional schools was strengthened thanks to the government's policy of supporting waqfs. By a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the TASSR of March 17, 1923, the waqfs were considered as "having economic, cultural and educational significance" by the Soviet authorities (TGA RK. F. 30. Op. 1. D. 126. L. 69). Soviet schools, on the other hand, experienced financial difficulties, despite the fact that the NCP, local party and Soviet bodies dealt with the issues of their organizational strengthening. The material insecurity of Soviet schools and teachers undermined its authority and status.

Soviet schools were not popular among Kazakhs, especially in the Islamized southern regions of the republic, and the historical experience of past years affected here. Even pre-revolutionary officials wrote about the attitude of the Kazakhs towards government schools: "Muslims are accustomed to seeing missionary and Russification goals in almost all government activities, and especially in the educational part" (Bobrovnikov, 1913: 67). The Muslim clergy carried out intense agitation against Soviet schools. The main figure in the confessional school was an influential mullah, whose personality was associated with the traditions of the population. The basis of the Soviet school consisted of teachers who had undergone a short-term 2-6 month training, which was clearly not enough for them to obtain high qualifications. It took 4-5 years to train a qualified teacher, and in the conditions of the post-war economic devastation, the state did not have enough material resources, so they temporarily limited themselves to short-term teacher training (GAZhO. F. 48. Op. 1. D. 72. L. 13). Under these conditions, it was decided to introduce the teaching of the religion in Soviet schools and thereby strengthen it organizationally and economically as a measure to strengthen Soviet schools.

During the years of the New Economic Policy in the TASSR, the activities of mektebs and madrasahs were officially allowed. On February 21, 1923, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (PCIA) of the TASSR, which clarified the issues of teaching Islam (GAZhO. F. 50. Op. 1. D. 316. L. 13). The developers of the resolution referred to the fact that the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of January 20, 1918 "On the separation of church from state and school from church" and the instruction of the People's Commissariat of Justice (PCJ) of August 24, 1918 on this issue in the regions of the TASSR were interpreted by Muslims in different ways. In some regions, mullahs were repressed for teaching Islam in mosques. In others, on the contrary, the mullahs were given permission to teach Islam in their own schools. The decree noted that the activities of theological schools, which are supported by voluntary donations, are prohibited, and they must be closed. At the same time, it was especially emphasized that madrasahs and mektebs do not belong to theological schools. Therefore, repressions against mullahs teaching the dogma of Islam in mosques, at home or in private schools are unacceptable. Any attempts by the Soviet government to ban the teaching of the Muslim faith ended in a concession to the population. In April 1922, the collegium of the People's Commissariat of the KASSR banned the teaching of the Muslim faith in schools in the northern and central regions of Kazakhstan with a special circular. The circular noted the facts of violation of the articles of the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of January 20, 1918 by school workers who, under pressure from the local population, taught religious subjects in Soviet schools. The circular allowed local authorities to bring such teachers to the court of the Revolutionary Tribunal and remove them from their positions "as not standing on the platform of socialist construction" (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 53).

The decision of the board caused discontent among the Muslim population. In an attempt to prove their right to own school buildings, Muslims filed petitions and complaints with various authorities, demanding the release and return to believers of the previously confiscated buildings of the mektebs for teaching the religion. They referred to the decision of the Commissariat for

Nationalities of August 21, 1920, which stated, “the premises of individual Muslim schools can be returned if it is established that they really are only theological schools and were built exclusively at the expense of the Muslims themselves. ...” (AP RK. F. 140. Op. 1. D. 30. L. 5). The mufti of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly supported the claims of the believers, which was in charge of the Muslims of Kazakhstan. The emerging situation was not in favor of the state, since Soviet schools were already located in the buildings of former confessional schools. For example, out of 104 Soviet schools in the Pavlodar district, only 10 were located in state-owned premises, and the buildings of 94 schools belonged to local Muslim communities (TGA RK. F. 81. Op. 1. D. 785. L. 83). The authorities were forced to give in, and allowed the population to engage in dogma for an hour every day in the premises of Soviet schools after they had completed classes in general education disciplines. At the same time, teachers of the Soviet labor schools, as well as other educational workers, could not be teachers of the religion.

The issue of teaching the religion was one of the main points, on which the clergy focused, giving it maximum attention. Imperial officials tried to explain it at one time: “To understand the significance of educational institutions among Muslims of foreigners, it is enough to remember that according to the Muslim dogma, “every Muslim must study during his life, as Allah ordered to study.” Therefore, Muslims in every country and every village should have mektebs and madrasahs in which Muslims could study religion and science” (*Asiatskaya Rossiya, 1914: 257*). That is why the struggle against the Muslim faith formed the basis of all the anti-Islamic measures of the Soviet government.

The Decree of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee dated June 9, 1924 “On the Muslim Faith” became the legislative basis for the revival and expansion of the teaching of the Muslim faith in Kazakhstan. It constantly stated the inadmissibility of teaching the religion in state and private educational institutions of the country. Meanwhile taking into account the peculiarities of the life of the Turkic peoples, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee allowed the teaching of the Muslim religion in mosques to the individuals who had completed the full course of the first stage of the unified labor school, and to the people who had reached the age of 14. Before that, it was allowed to teach the religion to the individuals who had reached 18 years of age. Following the decree, the Instruction of the Central Executive Committee of the KASSR dated January 29, 1925 “On the teaching of the Muslim faith in the republic”, which determined the procedure for teaching in Muslim mosques on the territory of the KASSR was issued. The above-mentioned instruction included several points: 1. Teaching exclusively in the mosques, in which Muslim believers concluded the agreements with the Soviet authorities and observed their implementation; 2. Teaching only during those hours when classes and excursions are not conducted in labor schools of the first and second levels of the given locality; 3. Teaching other subjects are not allowed except the religion only; 4. Attending these classes was voluntary, the attender had the right to leave the course at any time; 5. Compliance with sanitary requirements; 6. Teaching only at the expense of voluntary donations; 7. People who were blameless in court and elected by the religious community could teach there (TGA RK. F. 81. OP. 4. D. 2. L. 83-84). To organize teaching, special permission from the provincial administrative department or the district police department was required. In case of violation of the instructions, the provincial authorities could not only warn, but also raise the issue of removing the teacher and terminating the contract, up to the initiation of a criminal case.

With the release of the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Central Spiritual Administration (CSA) of Muslims sent out instructions to all muhtasibats (muhtasibats are spiritual administrative associations of Muslims) on the procedure for teaching the religion and dozens of circulars on opening schools at each mosque. The process of Islamization of the education system covered almost the entire republic. In Kazakh auls and villages, according to reports from local officials, Muslim schools were established en masse. Wherein, the points of the resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of June 9, 1924 were often violated and ignored: “The doctrine of faith proceeds spontaneously, taking on a threatening character. In some areas, the religious schools are far superior in quantity and quality to the Soviet schools” (AP RK. F. 141. Op. 1. D. 1541. L. 29).

The Muslim clergy made efforts to popularize schools of faith: the mullahs campaigned to discredit Soviet schools, accepted children from the poor strata of the population to schools free, formed public contempt for people who send their children to Soviet schools, tried to subordinate

Soviet schools to their influence by combining faith with secular education. There were transfers of teachers from Soviet schools to religious ones due to material insecurity. Due to the lack of advanced Soviet schools in the republic, the graduates of the first grade Soviet schools were enrolled to study with the mullah.

According to the data of All-Union School Census, in these years girls were more actively attracted to Muslim schools of faith, which was not typical for traditional Muslim schools, where boys predominated. So, in the city of Aulie-Ata (now Taraz city), out of 514 students, there were 323 girls (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 155). Involving girls in religious schools, the clergy strove for greater influence on a woman, as the guardian of family, domestic and spiritual values, as a future educator.

According to the officials, one of the reasons for the desire of the clergy to expand the network of schools of faith, in addition to the desire to preserve and strengthen the religiosity of the masses, was economic interest. In the 1920s, the income of the clergy was significantly reduced because they were removed from the performance of acts of civil status and did not participate in the work of the judiciary. The teaching of the religion became almost the only source of income. The reports of officials give the following figures: in the schools of the Turkestan district, the payment in cash and in kind for teaching the religion was 5 rubles per month. On average, the school had 20-25 students. Consequently, the mullah – religious teacher received 100 rubles a month and 499-450 rubles for the academic season. There were 177 schools in the county, their content, respectively, was 70-90 thousand rubles (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 155).

In 1923–1926, there was a noticeable growth of the Muslim movement and Muslim educational institutions in Kazakhstan. Therefore, in the Semirechensk province in 1925, there were 458 parish Muslim councils and 210 religious communities (Kazakh, Taranchin, Uzbek, Dungan, and Tatar) were registered, 28 Kazakh and 28 Taranchin Muslim schools were officially opened (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 110-111). The information report of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan for the first quarter of 1925, gives the following characterization of the religious movement among the Kazakh population: “In the Ural, Bukhara, partly Turgai and Aktobe provinces, there are tens of thousands of murids, hundreds of Muslim schools. Local authorities, with the help of the population, built premises for religious schools, houses of mullahs and new mosques in a number of nomadic regions, such as Adayevsky, Turgaysky and others, throughout 1924” (AP RK. F 139. Op. 1. D. 1229. L. 230).

Meanwhile, Muslim schools were active in the northern regions, where the number of Muslims was not dominant. Regional officials in their reports noted the strong influence of the Kazakh and Tatar clergy in the northern provinces of Kazakhstan. Therefore, in Akmola province there were three officially operated Muslim schools in 1926: 1 – in Akmolinsk, 2 – in Petropavlovsk. Totally, they trained 121 people. The imams of Akmola province considered this number insufficient and filed a petition to open seven more schools: five in Petropavlovsk, one school each in Akmolinsk and Kokshetau. They also repeatedly applied for the opening of a madrasah. One of the imams in Akmolinsk city taught at his parish 20 Muslims according to the madrasah program (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 121). In the city of Petropavlovsk, there were eight mosques and Muslim schools functioned at each mosque, 320 people studied in them (GASKO. F. 2376. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 16).

According to the official review of the activities of the Muslim clergy in 1927, the growth of Muslim education was due to several reasons. One of them was that the organizational formation of the Muslims of Kazakhstan took place. Until 1917, the Kazakh clergy did not belong to the CSA, and parishes in the steppe existed spontaneously, without any signs of organizational building. The organizational formation of the Kazakh clergy begins after the II All-Russian Congress of the Muslim clergy in Ufa in 1923, at which two members of the CSA were elected from the Kazakhs and the Kazakh branch was created under it. In 1925, there were 55 officially registered muhtasibats in the republic (AP RK. F. 141. Op. 1. D. 1541. L. 28-39).

In the period preceding the III All-Russian Congress of Muslims, held in October 1926 in Ufa, the Islamic movement in Kazakhstan was growing. Intensive preparations were underway for the congress, at regional and district congresses of Muslims the issues included in the instructions of the delegates to the congress were discussed. The main point of the mandates of the Kazakh Muslims was the requirement for the authorities to expand the scope of the religious study and provide the clergy with unlimited rights regarding the age of students and the place of study (AP RK. F. 141. Op. 1. D. 1541. L. 28). One hundred and thirty five delegates from Kazakhstan with

a decisive vote participated in the congress; it was the largest representation in comparison with other regions of the USSR.

Table 1. Muhtasibats in Kazakhstan in 1925

| No | Name of administrative entities | Number of muhtasibats |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Aktobe province | 11 |
| 2 | Ural province | 10 |
| 3 | Semipalatinsk province | 8 |
| 4 | Syr-Darya province | 5 |
| 5 | Semirechensk province | 5 |
| 6 | Akmolinsk province | 5 |
| 7 | Kustanai district | 6 |
| 8 | Kara-Kalpak region | 4 |
| 9 | Adayevsky district | 1 |
| | Total | 55 |

Note: The table is compiled based on data: Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. F. 141. Op. 1. D. 1541. L. 38-39.

Meanwhile, the result of a loyal policy towards Islamic education was the growth of illegal Muslim schools. In a review of the state of the religious movement in Kazakhstan for 1927–1928 years the following figures are given. The Soviet authorities recorded 276 illegal religious schools in Syr-Darya province with a total number of students 5155 people aged from seven to forty-five in 1928: 160 Uzbek, 115 Kazakh and one Tatar schools. It is noteworthy that 80 % of the schools in this province opened in the post-revolutionary period, and only 20 % in the pre-revolutionary period (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 154). In Semirechensk province, 20 illegal schools were liquidated, in which children from 8 to 15 years old studied. On average, each school had from 15 to 75 students (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 111). Even after the official closure, three schools continued to teach children. There were 18 schools in Ural province, each of which taught from 20 to 50 people. In Akmola province, 11 schools functioned illegally, where 109 people studied (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990). In other provinces and districts of the republic, 20 schools were identified, where 1946 students studied (Preodolevaya religioznoe..., 1990: 154).

Schools of faith also worked in separated villages, as reported by the information reports of the authorized representatives of the Department of State and Political Administration (DSPA) for the KASSR: "In village No. 4 of the Dombarovskiy volost, a mullah teaches religious doctrine to students" (OGASPI. F. 1. Op. 1. D. 441. L. 81). Mullahs of 8 and 10 auls of Bukhtarma district of Semipalatinsk province in their sermons urged believers to collect funds for the benefit of the mosque and open Muslim schools (AP RK. F. 718. Op. 1. D. 434. L. 37).

Naturally, in conditions of increased religiosity of the population, it was not easy to resist religious education. In the texts of officials' reports, there is a lot of information that "the struggle of administrative, judicial and educational bodies with illegal beliefs in Kazakhstan took place with great difficulties" (AP RK. F. 141. Op. 1. D. 1541. L. 32). Aul councils and volost executive committees often supplied the clergy with all sorts of fictitious documents about the age of students. The facts of violations of the law by the clergy that fell into the bodies of inquiry and investigation did not receive proper movement and registration, and in most cases were reduced to nothing.

The activity of the "Islamic factor" aroused serious fears in the authorities, who seemed to be losing their ideological influence among the masses. In 1926, "Theses on anti-religious propaganda among the Muslims of the KASSR" were published, in which the growth of Islam and the Muslim clergy was noted (AP RK. F. 141. Op. 1. D. 980. L. 103). For the first time, the thesis about the "anti-Soviet nature" of Islam appears in official documents. Accordingly, it was instructed to act appropriately to suppress religious activity – "to expose Islam as an instrument of class enslavement. "The decisive role in carrying out ideological work and instilling an atheistic worldview among the population was assigned to Soviet schools, in which anti-religious events were held, communities of atheists were founded (GAPO. F. 17. Op. 1. D. 2. L. 119). The anti-

religious campaign in the education system was carried out by the Bolsheviks with harsh methods, offering communist ideology with its own deities as an alternative to religion and proclaiming the goal of anti-religious education to be “replacing faith in God with faith in science and machine” (Pipes, 2005: 221).

By the end of the 1920s, government policy towards Islam is tightened. It is no longer so much about “anti-religious agitation and propaganda”, but about “measures to combat Islam” (TGA RK. F. 81. Op. 4. D. 15. L. 102). It becomes obvious that the Soviet government aimed to bring society to a single worldview – an atheistic one, and the Muslim education system was an obstacle on this path. The first document that marked the beginning of the fight against Islamic education was the decision of the bureau of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks “On measures to combat the Muslim religious movement” of June 8, 1927. The above-mentioned decree forbade the Muslim clergy to create religious schools of the reformist Soviet type in mosques, in which, in addition to religious ones, general subjects were also taught. Soviet teachers and employees of state institutions were forbidden to teach the religious subjects. The procedure for obtaining permission for mullahs to teach the religion was complicated; provincial governments with the obligatory sanction of the presidium of the provincial executive committee could only carry out permission (TGA RK. F. 81. Op. 4. D. 3. L. 277-284).

The decisive step in the fight against Muslim schools was the decision of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the USSR of June 18, 1928 on the abolition of all previously adopted resolutions that allowed the teaching of the Muslim religion: "On the Muslim religion" of June 9, 1924, "On the permission to teach the Muslim religion to the Turkic peoples origin" dated July 24, 1924, "On the approval of the instructions of the people's commissariat of internal affairs PCIA and the people's committee of education PCE on the teaching of the Muslim religion among the Eastern peoples confessing the Muslim religion" dated July 27, 1925 (TGA RK. F. 81. Op. 4. D. 8. L. 317). Based on the decision of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, on May 11, 1929, the Central Executive Committee of the KASSR adopted a resolution “On the termination of teaching of the Muslim religion in all mosques and schools” (TGA RK. F. 81, Op. 4. D. 15. L. 102).

Several administrative structures were involved in the implementation of the resolution on the places. From July 1, 1929, the public education authorities banned the teaching of faith, religious schools were closed, and the vacated buildings were used for cultural purposes (GAPO. F. 22. Op. 1. D. 25. L. 49). District executive committees stopped issuing permits for the opening of theological schools and controlled that the clergy did not reopen them under the guise of Soviet-type general education schools (GAPO. F. 844. Op. 1. D. 2. L. 34). The bodies of the PCIA of the KASSR were also involved in the control of the educational activities of the Muslim clergy. Through organizations subordinate to the PCE, they collected information about the mood of the population, about the facts of illegal teaching of faith, the quantitative and ethnic composition of students, and training programs (TGA. F. 81. Op. 2. D. 8. L. 181). George Orwell was right when he wrote, “a totalitarian state necessarily tries to control the thoughts and feelings of its nationals, at least as effectively as it controls their actions...” (Orwell, 1989: 245). All information regarding spiritual education was submitted under the heading "secret". Both the republican and district presidiums, which considered the issue of Muslim education, were held behind closed doors. In the materials of the secret correspondence of the PCIA and the PCE of the KASSR, in the reports of the administrative departments of the district police for 1929-1930 there is information about bringing clerics to criminal responsibility for teaching the doctrine of faith (GAPO. F. 22. Op. 1. D. 25. L. 16). In the late 1920s local officials in the messages to the republican ministries reported on the mass liquidation of mosques and Muslim schools. Here is an excerpt from the report of the officials of Aulie Ata city dated January 20, 1930: “We inform you that there are no functioning mosques and religious schools in Mirzoyan city (Auliye-Ata)” (GAZhO. F. 7. Op. 1. D. 87. L. 3). In one of the districts of the South-Kazakhstan region, all 30 mosques of the district and the mektebs and madrasahs functioning with them were closed (TGA RK. F. 789. Op. 1. D. 29. L. 52). In the first quarter of 1928I in Dzhambeitinsky district of the Bukeev province, 9 mosques and 11 mektebs were closed, and the mullahs were put on trial (AP RK. F. 789. Op. 1. D. 13. L. 28). By 1931 in the regions of western Kazakhstan, all religious buildings, including mosques and madrasahs, were liquidated (TGA RK. F. 789. Op. 1. D. 29. L. 53). Such statistics are typical for all regions of Kazakhstan.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the policy of the Soviet government in relation to Muslim education in the 1920s was complex and ambiguous. Moreover, here we should agree with J. Hosking's opinion that "the relationship between Bolshevism and Islam was contradictory. The atheism of the Marxists is incompatible with the strict monotheism of Islam in principle" (Hosking, 1994: 112). In the first half of the 1920s. The Soviet state pursued a loyal policy towards Islam, allowed the activities of Muslim educational institutions and the teaching of the Muslim faith in Soviet schools, referring to the peculiarities of the cultural and historical traditions of the Kazakhs. This "democratic" was due to the political tasks of the Bolsheviks to strengthen their power on the national outskirts of the country. To a certain extent, it contributed to the growth in the number of ethno-confessional schools. In the conditions of the underdevelopment of the educational infrastructure, the lack of school buildings and teachers, the use of intellectual resources and the material base of confessional schools would contribute to the elimination of illiteracy and the development of education. With all the shortcomings of confessional schools (outdated methods of memorizing texts, the use of corporal punishment), one cannot detract from such advantages as closeness to the people, focus on moral issues in educational programs. However, due to ideological reasons, the Bolsheviks launched a struggle against ethno-confessional schools. With the strengthening of Soviet power in the second half of the 1920s, the policy of the state acquired the character of a cruel and uncompromising struggle against religion and the clergy. Due to it, a complete ban on religious education was introduced, and theological schools were closed. In the early 1930s, Muslim educational institutions were almost completely ousted from the educational space of the republic.

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