CONCLUSION

Our purpose was to study Soviet policy of secularisation of politics and its implementation in Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan. At the very beginning we have pointed out that the Soviet framework of secularisation of politics is fundamentally different from all others. Derived from the concepts and ideas of Marxism-Leninism the Soviet framework of secularisation of politics involved a deliberate and programmatic use of political power for transforming both the base and the superstructure simultaneously; it was an integral part of the overall process of change and creation of a new society. In the specific conditions of Uzbekistan, historical legacy was an additional input in this framework. Such a framework determined Soviet policy towards secularisation of politics, while a cautious and flexible programme of action was adopted to cope with the specifics of the situation in Uzbekistan. For instance, it sought to uproot the all-pervasive role of religion from the socio-political institutions and processes and to replace it with new social consciousness and cultural ethos in harmony with the emerging contours of a socialist society. Establishment of a multinational socialist state on the basis of equal rights and opportunities of different nationalities was an important objective of Soviet policy of secularisation of politics.

Although we have studied the problem in a well-defined historical period, namely 1917-1938, Soviet framework
of secularisation remained valid and relevant for the subsequent stages of development of Soviet society. Needless to emphasise that the foundation of a Soviet type of secular society was laid down precisely during the period of our study.

Succinctly, we have identified the following main elements of the programme of action of Soviet policy of secularisation of politics in Uzbekistan: (i) a deliberate and programmatic use of political power for the consolidation and nativisation of Soviet political system, (ii) creation of a uniform pattern of socialisation, (iii) liquidation of traditional pattern of socialisation and (iv) promotion of social mobility.

The implementation of Soviet policy of secularisation of politics in Soviet Central Asia involved an unusually complex process. A pre-capitalist socio-economic formation, a backward agrarian economy subjected to colonial exploitation and the prevalence of all-pervasive role of religion in socio-political life of the natives - these were some of the specific features of Russian Turkestan that militated against the Soviet objectives of socialist transformation. It was, therefore, not surprising that the October Revolution in Russian Turkestan was largely, notwithstanding the influence of the Social-Democratic movement on a small section of native intelligentsia and the embryonic rise of the native proletariat, an affair of the Russian proletariat, while the native society was hardly poised for it.
The Soviet leadership recognised the gravity of the problem. It adopted a cautious and flexible approach to the legitimisation of Soviets and the realisation of their objectives of socio-cultural transformation in Soviet Central Asia. To avoid a direct and ill-prepared confrontation with the religiously oriented native society, the Soviets adjusted their priorities and devised two-phased interlinked multi-level strategy and tactics.

During the first phase (1917-1927) the Soviets were largely pre-occupied with the objectives of legitimisation and consolidation of Soviet political system. Induction of the natives into the Communist Party, creation of new bases of political power in the form of Koshchi, and other youth organisations of the Party, such as, Komsomol, legal measures for the separation of religion from State and School from religion and, above all, land and water reforms and initial moves for industrialisation, were the main pre-occupation of the Soviets. Besides, as a supportive measure, the Soviets reorganised Soviet Central Asia into separate national republics. Whereas the reorganisation of Soviet Central Asia was considered to be the implementation of the Bolshevik theory of national self-determination, land and water reforms were directed to strike at the privileged position of the Russian and the native landlords, on the one hand, and to create a new strata of native peasantry, on the other. A widespread network of Soviet
pre-schools, primary, middle and secondary schools, with curricula devised to promote a new social consciousness conducive to the strengthening of the Soviet system, constituted another important step in the direction of secularisation of politics in Soviet Uzbekistan. Persuasion, incentives and caution were distinct features of the Soviet strategy and tactics of socio-cultural change during this phase.

The Second phase, 1927-1938, was characterised by far-reaching changes both in the base and various levels of superstructure of Uzbek society. After consolidating their political power, the Soviets introduced collectivisation of land and confiscated properties of religious trusts (Waquf). These measures totally incapacitated the native religious elite to resist Soviet policy of secularisation of politics. In quick successions the Soviets uprooted the traditional educational institutions (maktabs and madressehs) and closed down the traditional Kazi courts. These were followed by the programme of totally changing the traditional pattern of socialisation which involved emancipation of native women, a long drawn-out anti-religious movement and a campaign for the liquidation of illiteracy. Directed and organised by the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and the Society of Militant Atheists, anti-religious campaign led to the closing down of places of worship and militated against the transmission of
religious values, teachings, rituals, and festivals. The objective conditions for the efficacy of such measures were being created by an increasing attention to the industrialisation of Uzbek economy. However, such factors as the increasing influx of Russians generating rivalry and social tensions between the Russians and the native nationalities and the slow growth of higher and technical education continued to worry the Soviet leadership.

These problems notwithstanding, by 1938, the Soviets had achieved a remarkable success in changing the Uzbek society. Political institutions and political processes had been completely freed from all-pervasive influence of religion, while the new culture that had begun to emerge appeared to have been characterised by a syncretisation of Marxian world outlook and the great national traditions of the Uzbeks. A powerfully organised political movement as well as one party state-structure ideologically committed to create a new society, thus emerges as essentials.

Soviet model of secularisation is, no doubt, of far-reaching importance. It not only poses a challenge to other hitherto known models of secularisation, but it also raises the question of its relevance to other societies aspiring to create a secular polity.