CHAPTER III

THEORY IN PRACTICE: THE USE OF POLITICAL POWER

It is now worth our while to begin focusing attention on the other main input of Soviet framework of secularisation of politics, as was applied in Uzbekistan, namely, the use of political power of the Soviets. In other words, we are dealing here with the theory in practice and thus attempting at identifying Soviet policy towards secularisation of politics in Uzbekistan. Drawing upon the armoury of concepts and ideas of Marxism-Leninism and being acutely conscious of historical legacy of Central Asia, a deliberate and programmatic use of political power of the Soviets, indeed the theory in action, comprised the totality of Soviet framework for secularisation of politics in Uzbekistan. In this framework, concepts and ideas clearly set the goals, historical legacy added specific dimensions, while the use of political power was programmed to achieve the goal, thus defined and set. The use of political power in a deliberate and programmatic manner became the determining factor of Soviet policy. Such a policy remained valid for the entire period with which our study is concerned, while its strategies and tactics underwent changes and modifications corresponding to the stages of development of socio-economic structure of Uzbek society. As a matter of fact, during the initial formative period, 1917-1927, it was the deliberate and programmatic use of Soviet political power, as conditioned by other inputs of Soviet framework, that emerged
as Soviet policy of secularisation of politics in Uzbekistan, while strategies and tactics came to the fore after 1927. Needless to add that these strategies and tactics were evolved and implemented in the light of experiences gained hitherto within the confines of Soviet policy of secularisation of politics, particularly in Uzbekistan.

In this chapter, we propose to investigate the use of political power by the Soviets during the formative period, 1917-1927.

Soon after the Bolshevik Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Government in November, 1917, the Soviet leadership showed no hesitation in demonstrating its newly achieved political power. The very first Constitutional measure, which the Soviet Government adopted on November 7, 1917, was the Deklaratsia prav narodov Rossii (Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia). It aimed at abolishing all national and religious privileges and discriminations and it provided for equal rights to all citizens irrespective of their creed and nationality. The declaration even sought to give equal status to all religious cults in Soviet Russia by abolishing the traditionally held status of the Orthodox Church.

Before the Bolshevik Revolution, religious and national minorities in the Tsarist Empire were denied the right of citizenship. Consequently, national and religious persecutions were common features. The Declaration of the Rights of peoples of Russia was meant to put an end to such discriminatory practices. It sought to create an order in which peoples of different nationalities and religious groups could live with a sense of honour and participate in the socio-political life of the country on the basis of equality.

The existence of educational institutions, controlled by different religious and sectarian organisations, was a traditional source of generating parochial feelings and divided loyalties. The Soviet leadership believed that in a socialist society such institutions had no place whatsoever and, it decided to cut off their very life-source as a pre-requisite for the strengthening of the new political system. Hence, there followed numerous legislations concerning religious and other institutions.

On December 11, 1917, an Ordinance was issued directing all religious organisations to hand over schools, seminaries, academies and lower secondary and higher schools and institutions managed and controlled by them, to the Commissariat of Education. More importantly, the decree on nationalisation of land, including that of the Church, liquidated the main source of sustenance of religious organisations. Issued on January 23, 1918 the decree

2. Ibid., p. 119.
"Ob otdeleni tserkvi ot gosudarstva i shkoly ot tserkvi"
(On Separation of Church from State and School from Church),
struck at the very roots of all-pervasive role of religion in
socio-political life, although it did grant every citizen the
right to profess any religion or no religion. Henceforth, all
religious associations/institutions lost the right of a legal
corporate character entity. In effect, it de-recognised the corporate/and institutionalised role of religion. Accordingly, in all official
documents any mention of religious affiliation or non-affiliation
was banned. In pursuance of this decree, religion was reduced
to an individual's affair. On the one hand, the religious
associations were prohibited to control any educational institu-
tions, while on the other, the teaching of religious belief and
dogma was prohibited in all state schools and private educational
institutions. The Decree on Separation of Church from State
and School from Church served as guidelines on religious policy.
The Degree was strictly enforced in the European parts of Soviet
Russia since the days of its declaration.

3. "Ob otdeleni tserkvi ot gosudarstva i shkoly ot tserkvi"
(On the Separation of Church from State and School from Church) in Sobranie uzakoneny i rasporiazheny raboche-kresti-
tianskogo pravitelstva RSFSR (Collection of Laws and decrees
of the government of workers and peasants of the RSFSR), no. 18, 26, January, 1918, reprinted in Q religii, no.1, p.96.
(See Appendix II).


5. See F. Garkavenko, no.1, pp.96-98.
This was a major step towards the Bolsheviks' ultimate goal of liquidation of religion. Lenin, for instance, declared that "we demand complete separation of church from the state in order to combat religious fog with purely ideological and solely ideological weapons, by means of press and by words of mouth... And to us the ideological struggle is not a private affair, but the affair of the whole party, of the whole proletariat."  

A few weeks before the proclamation of the Decree on the Separation of Church from State, the Council of People's Commissars had issued the decree on Civil marriages, children and civil Acts Registry. The aim of this measure was to grant legal validity to civil marriages alone. Secondly, it gave equal rights to both men and women and thus it gave recognition to the social role of marriage and equitable relations between men and women. As a result, the religious hierarchy lost another arena of activity, and in the long run, its influence on the masses was considerably curtailed.

The next moves were designed to overhaul the educational system. In February 1918, an ordinance was issued by the State Commission of Education in pursuance of the decree on Separation of Church and State and Schools from Church; and it declared that "the state is neutral in matters of religion... and hence

7. F. Garkavenko, no.1, p.119.
the government cannot take upon itself the obligation of religious education of children. Further, it reaffirmed that the teaching of religious beliefs in all state schools is prohibited. With a view to put an end to the political and social activities of the clergy, article 65(g) of the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, adopted by the Fifth Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918, did not give the full rights of Soviet citizenship to the clergy. Along with other social parasites, and anti-Soviet elements - capitalists, merchants, former members of the police, criminals, and imbeciles - the clergy was also denied opportunity to hold public office and to exercise the right to vote. To make freedom of conscience meaningful the Constitution recognised freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda as the right of every citizen.

On August 24, 1918, the Soviet People's Commissariat of Justice issued the Ordinance for implementing the Degree on the Separation of Church from State and School from Church.

8. Ibid.


10. Ibid.

11. Voprosy istorii religii i ateizma (Problems of the history of religion and atheism) No.5, Moscow, 1958, p.11, (Hereafter VIRA).
It was a comprehensive document and it brought under the jurisdiction of the above mentioned decree the following religious groups: Russian Orthodox, Old Believers, Georgians, Catholics, Protestants of all denominations, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and others (which were not specifically listed). The Ordinance for implementing the Decree "On Separation of Church from State and School from Church" contained detailed instructions on the confiscation of properties of religious institutions and organisations. For the supervision and regulation of the confiscated properties a group of twenty persons was envisaged. The ordinance also enumerated the following provisions: (i) Religious instructions was forbidden in all public or private educational institutions excluding theological seminaries, (ii) all records of religious groups pertaining to births, marriages, deaths, etc., were to be handed over to the local soviets, (iii) religious processions in public could be held with the prior permission of the local Soviet authorities and (iv) all religious prayers and religious services were forbidden in public buildings.

Keeping in view the changing situation, various organs of the Soviet State issued periodical circulars to augment such fundamental legislative measures. For instance, the decree on Separation of Church from State had provided that religious doctrines could be taught privately. Taking advantage of it, a large number of religious institutions continued running their regular educational courses. To discourage this practice, a circular of March 3, 1919 was issued by the Commissariat of Public Education. It stated that "teaching of religious doctrines
to persons below the age of eighteen is not permissible."\(^{12}\) The Commissariat of Public Education further clarified this circular in April, 1921 and stated that religious teaching outside seminaries should not assume the form of regularly functioning educational institutions.\(^{13}\) In 1924, another order was issued explaining Soviet policy on religious instructions. It said that persons below the age of eighteen could receive instructions only at home.\(^{14}\) Apparently, this was done to assuage the feelings of a large number of people who were deeply religious.

But with the gradual consolidation of Soviet power, the new type of Soviet citizens, the practice of transmitting religious instructions was discouraged. The first Constitution of the RSFSR of 1918 (vide article 20 Chapter Five, Section 13) granted "Freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda." Similar provisions were enshrined in the Constitutions of other

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12. "Tsirkuliar po voprosyi ob otdeleni tserkvi ot gosudarstva" in VIRA no.11, (5), 1958, p.34.

13. P.V. Gidulianov (Ed.) Otdelenie tserkvi ot gosudarstva, polny sbornik dekreтов RSFSR i SSSR: instruksy, tsirkuliarov, i.t.d., s raziasnenilami V-ego ottdela NK jutsii, RSFSR. The Separation of Church from State; complete collection of decrees of the RSFSR and the USSR: instructions, circulars etc. with interpretations of the Vth department of the People's Commissariat of Justice of the RSFSR (2nd ed.), Moscow, 1924, pp.207-8.

Soviet republics. The second Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1936 vide article 124 granted "freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious activities." Thus, it made a significant departure from the earlier provision which had also granted right to religious propaganda.

The main purport of these Soviet legislative measures was to deny the religious institutions the role of political socialisation which was now meant to be an exclusive domain of the socialist state.

Moreover, the Russian Communist Party (later Communist Party of the Soviet Union) played a decisive role even here. The policy of the Party was not to leave the formal implementation of the programme of secularisation of politics to Soviet bureaucracy alone. Outlining the role of the Communist Party, Lenin had declared that the Party could not be neutral towards religion. At the Eighth Congress of the Party held in March, 1919, the Party categorically stated that it was not satisfied with mere constitutional provisions for the separation of church from state and school from church. It was pointed out that such provisions existed in the bourgeois democracies, as well, although these had never been realised in reality. Hence, it emphasised the need for a well planned anti-religious propaganda among the masses. The Congress, however, advised that while conducting

anti-religious propaganda, care should be taken to avoid offending the feelings of believers, as such a course was deemed to strengthen religious fanaticism.16

The Tenth Party Congress, held in March 1921, entrusted the Committee for Political Education of the Commissariat of Education with the task of organising and conducting anti-religious propaganda on a massive scale. The following steps were suggested for the purpose: publication of books and periodicals and organisation of public lectures by making use of modern technological facilities. Later, the Central Committee of the Party issued a directive on the organisation of anti-religious propaganda calling upon all the Party activists to participate in the Party programme of anti-religious activities. However, the directive also advised the members to be cautious in their approach and "avoid anything which would make any given nationality think and our enemies say that we are persecuting people because of their faith."17 In 1922, the Party issued another directive to the Soviets and Party organs on the question of attitude towards religious sects, in particular, and policy in relation to religious groups, in general. It again emphasised the need to be "especially thoughtful in executing all the Party programmes that touch upon the religious susceptibilities of


17. F. Garkavenko, no.1, pp.57-60.
the masses of the peasantry.\textsuperscript{18}

However, in 1923, when the Twelfth Party Congress was held, the Party expressed serious concern over the "resurgence of movements such as Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism". The Congress called upon the Communists among the nationalities to organise anti-religious programme aimed at the liquidation of those who were using religion for political purposes.\textsuperscript{19} But the Congress emphasised that anti-religious programme of the Party should be pursued in a manner which would not alienate the masses from the Party.\textsuperscript{20}

The problem again came up for discussion in the Thirteenth Party Congress, held in 1924. The Congress cautioned that administrative steps leading to closing of churches, mosques, synagogues and houses of prayers, particularly in the Eastern regions would be fraught with danger.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} "Direktivy Tsk RKP Sovetskim i Partynim organam po ob otноsheni k sektami i politiki v otноshenii religioznikh grup vobshche (The Directives of the Central Committee of RCP (B) to the Soviet on the policy in relation to religious groups in general), in Spravochnik Partynogo rabotnika (The Party Workers' Handbook), Moscow, 1922, pp.93-94.
\item \textsuperscript{19} KPSS Vol. 1, no.16, pp.741-42.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., pp.743-45.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., Vol.2, p.53.
\end{itemize}
In 1925, the Commissariat of Internal Affairs issued a directive on the question of private religious ceremonies of the believers. It decreed that religious ceremonies and functions could be performed in the homes of the believers in addition to those in churches and other religious places without special permission. 22

Since constitutionally, the Soviet Government was neutral in matters of religion, the use of the term "anti-religious" in official documents was changed to non-religious. Accordingly in 1929, the Commissariat of Education issued instructions to carry out required changes in the methods of instructions in schools and other educational institutions. However, in popular propaganda literature and political journals the term "anti-religious" continued to be widely used. In 1929, various measures regulating the religious life of the believers were enacted; a decree was issued in April 1929, and another in October, 1929 by the Commissariat of the Interior. 23 They contained comprehensive instructions on the rights and obligations of religious associations in the Soviet Union. In accordance

22. See Gidulianov, no. 13, pp. 55-6. The author observes that this provision remained in force throughout the period under review, though the Party enthusiasts not always respected it and therefore it led to numerous cases of litigation on religious matters.

23. See N. Orleansky, Zakon o religioznykh oobediniiakh RSFSR i deistvijushchih zakon instruktsii s otdelnymi kommentariami (The law on religious associations of the RSFSR and the laws and instructions in force with individual commentaries), Moscow, 1930.
with the provisions of these legal documents the citizens of the USSR were granted two kinds of religious rights: (i) They could be members of a cult, denomination, sect or doctrine, provided they were eighteen years of age and above; and they could form 'religious societies' or 'group of believers'; and (ii) the believers who formed a religious society or group could perform religious rites, arrange prayers or general meetings of the believers, manage property belonging to religious associations and could conclude civil transactions pertaining to the management of property of religious organisation and the performance of religious rites. On the other hand, these legal provisions enumerated numerous activities which the religious associations were prohibited to carry out. For example, the religious associations were prohibited to provide financial help to the poor or other religious associations, and to have their own libraries, reading rooms, etc. 24

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The Party was, however, against hasty enforcement of these legal provisions on those sections which were politically and culturally as well as economically not yet ready for far-reaching social transformation. This was precisely one of the reasons for Lenin and other prominent Soviet leaders to plead for caution in implementing these measures in Turkestan.

24. Ibid.
There were, indeed, many factors that demanded a cautious approach. First of all, the revolution had touched only the periphery of Central Asian society. The revolution took place only in the Provinces of Governor-Generalship of Turkestan; its vanguard was primarily the Russian proletariat.

As pointed out earlier, the native society was still extremely backward. Surrounded by parochial institutions, patriarchal-feudal social structures and a backward colonial economy, the Central Asian society comprised, on the eve of the Revolution, the following social classes and strata: industrial workers/artisans, 2.9 per cent, rural semi-proletariat 12.8 per cent, small peasants and craftsmen 28.4 per cent, middle peasants 28.1 per cent, exploiting classes (landlords and bourgeoisie) 19.5 per cent and others 3.3 per cent. An overwhelming majority of industrial workers comprised Russians and other Europeans. More than 90 per cent of the natives were illiterates and deeply religious. The Social Democratic movement in the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva was still

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weak. Moreover, politically these feudatories were still beyond the jurisdiction of the Soviet power, as in December 1917, the Soviet Government had recognised the sovereignty of the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva. Moreover, the traditional influences still held sway over the natives, while the rulers of these feudatories, with the collaboration of foreign powers were trying to contain the Soviet power, and they were also being encouraged by the 'White Guards' to oppose Soviet policies.27

Because of such a complex socio-economic situation arising out of Tsarist colonialism and the remnants of feudalism, the Soviet leadership was confronted with considerable problems to chalk out a uniform policy for the creation of viable conditions for the secularisation of politics in Soviet Central Asia. It had to adopt a very cautious approach to the characteristic socio-political problems of Central Asian regions, lest it would be construed that the new leadership was also pursuing the Tsarist policy of Russification of its Central Asian subjects by revolutionary phrase-mongering. As pointed out earlier, Lenin was averse to imposing hastily and in totality the programme of cultural transformation on Soviet Central Asia, unless the objective conditions, such as nativisation of politics, creation of a

27. R. Tuzmuhamedov, How the National Question was Solved in Soviet Central Asia, Moscow, 1973, pp.86-8.
native class of proletariat and uprooting of old colonial economic order and laying the material base for a socialist economy were accomplished. Thus desiring to build a society in Central Asia which could become a model for the East, Lenin advocated the necessity of building a multinational society on voluntary basis. With this end in view, the Soviet Government on November, 24, 1917, issued an appeal under the signature of V.I. Lenin to the All-Toiling Muslims of Russia and the East assuring them the inviolability of their faith and national and cultural institutions. It promised:

"Your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared henceforth free and inviolable - organise your national life freely and without hindrance. This is your right. Know that your rights... are protected by the entire might of the Revolution and its organs support this revolution and its Government."28

The idea behind this promise was not to antagonise the illiterate Muslims masses which were still under the influence of their religious elite. As Lenin himself explained in one of his speeches "such peoples as the Kirghizes, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmens" were "still under the influence of their mullahs". He further remarked, "... can we approach these people and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given

nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements which is inevitable, has taken place. As such, he suggested that the Central Asian peoples "must be handled with great care." This cautious approach signified a deep understanding of the social reality as it then existed in Central Asia. It was also intended to show that the new regime was different from the old one, and was not only sympathetic to the natives demand of self-rule but also it unequivocally condemned the exploitation of the natives by the old Tsarist Administration. For instance, the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in its resolutions declared that the colonial policy of the Tsarist regime was such that prevented the growth and development of industrialisation of the Russian colonies, particularly Turkestan.

Hence, to uproot the remnants of colonialism and thus to end unequal relations between the Russians and other nationalities the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) resolved to give full support to all the nationalities other than the Great Russians to enable them to catch up with the Central regions of the Soviet Russia.

30. Ibid.
It was also resolved to allow them to develop and strengthen the Soviet system in the forms which correspond to the national specifics and cultural requirements of various nationalities.33 For this purpose use of native languages in courts, offices, schools and press, was to be encouraged.34 Most important, the Party favoured the policy of progressive nativisation of socio-political system in the national republics and regions.

Notwithstanding the declarations and measures adopted by the Soviet leadership, the local Soviet leadership, mainly composed of Russians, pursued different policy. For instance, they pushed through such measures as denial of proper representations to the natives in the Soviet organs of power on the plea that the natives had no proletarian organisations, the confiscation of properties of Muslim Waqf (Trusts) and the closure of mosques. These measures adversely affected the relations between the Russians and the natives.35 For

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

instance, Trainin observed that the Soviet Power "has not brought any changes; instead of the former Russian official there now sits the Russian proletariat who, although talks about equality of all, cares for itself alone." More or less similar observations were made by Georgi Safarov, then a Russian Bolshevik specialising in Eastern affairs. Later, the Fifth Regional Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan admitted that certain mistakes were committed because of "absence of revolutionary traditions in the past, the chronic condition of colonial oppression and national inequality influenced the peculiar course which the revolution in Central Asia took. Having played a leading role in the revolution for the first time the small group of Russian workers... being widely separated from the proletarian centre and deprived of its ideological guidance, allowed the events to take their own course..." In short, in spite of the pious wishes of the Communist leaders and the well-intended declarations of the Russian Communist Party (B), the attitude of the Tashkent Government was far from satisfactory towards the interests of the natives.


37. Georgi Safarov, Kolonialnaia revoliutsiia:op'ye Turkestana (Colonial Revolution: Turkestan's Experience), Moscow, 1921.

38. See Rezoliutsii v Kraevogo no.35.
Thus, it was obvious that the political power, as was vested in the Tashkent Soviet was deemed to be exercised in its totality without faltering. Given the situation as it was in Turkestan immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution, when the Tashkent Soviet Government was compelled to act almost entirely on its own without clear directives on the strategy of implementation of social transformation programmes from the Central organs of the Party, an improvised approach of the Tashkent Soviet is thus, perhaps understandable. For instance, in tune with the Central decree on the separation of Church from State and School from Church, it lost no time in issuing ordinance on "Invalidation of the Shariat courts", and the confiscation of properties of Aqaf. It also ordered the closure of traditional religious educational institutions and mosques.39

These steps further alienated the natives from the new regime. The politicised sections from amongst the native population, which in Soviet literature is projected, as bourgeois-nationalists, raised a storm over the step-motherly high-handed attitude of the Tashkent Soviet Government and started a vigorous campaign against it. These sections were particularly very strong in the valley of Ferghana and Kokand where they had established autonomous government of Turkestan.

and staked their claim to the right to national self-determination. 40

As discussed in Chapter I, Lenin developed a flexible approach to the question of nationalities and self-determination and, thus, following him, the demand for autonomy and national self-determination staked by the autonomous government of Turkestan (Kokand), was neither rejected nor accepted by the Soviet Government. Stalin, as the People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs replied:

"The Soviets are autonomous in their internal affairs and discharge their duties relying upon their own actual resources. The native proletariat of Turkestan, therefore, should not appeal to the Central Soviet power with the request to dissolve the Turkestan Sovnarkom, which in their opinion is leaning upon the non-Muslim army elements, but should themselves dissolve it by force, if such a force is available to the native proletariat and peasants." 41

Likewise, the Central leadership continued to strive creating conditions for drawing the natives towards the Soviets. In November, 1918, in Moscow a conference of the Muslim Communists of Russia was organised to further pursue this very objective. 42 The conference decided to create a Muslim Bureau under the Turkestan Communist Party. The Muslim Bureau was

41. As cited in Chokaev, Ibid., p. 408.
42. Ocherki istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii Uzbekistana (History of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan), Tashkent, 1974, p. 83 (Hereafter OIKPU).
entrusted with the task of carrying out ideological propaganda among the Muslim masses. 43

There was, however, no appreciable change in the attitude of the Tashkent Soviet Government towards the problem of the natives. The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) - RCP (B) - reprimanded the leadership of the Turkestan Communist Party and the Tashkent Government for their apathetic behaviour towards the natives. In a telegram, the CC of RCP (B), criticised the local Communists for adopting a chauvinistic approach. 44 It advised them of enlisting the support of natives on the basis of proportional representation. While applying the principle of drawing nationalities to the Soviet political system on the basis of proportional representation, the class character of the natives must be borne in mind, the telegram emphasised. 45 It clarified that the members of the bourgeois nationalists, the old landlords and the Muslim clergy, should not be associated with the Soviet system of government. 46

The impact of such exhortation of the Central leadership was, however, marginal and the local Bolshevik faction under the leadership of Kobozov took up the cause of

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., pp. 86-7.
45. Leninskii Sbornik (Moscow) XXXV, p. 811.
46. OIKPU, no. 42, p. 88.
the indigenous population. The Bolshevik faction declared in the Fifth Regional Congress of Soviets that the immediate task of the Sovnarkom and the Central Executive Committee of Turkestan was to draw a wide strata of the Muslim proletariat into participation in the constructive work of the region; and, likewise, it stressed on the role of Muslim proletarian elements in the adoption of correct measures in the spheres of education, health, finance, justice, agriculture, industry, labour and in the creation of revolutionary cadres among the native population. On September 12, 1919, there began the work of the IV Extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan in which 211 delegates participated. Of these delegates 110 were natives. The Congress discussed the directives of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (B) on the proportional representation. The Congress had nothing to say about the induction of the native in the Turkestan Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the Regional Communist Party. It only resolved to take steps for drawing to the Soviets the working people and the poor from amongst the natives in various regions, cities and rural districts.

47. Ibid.


49. OIKPU, No.42, pp.88-9.
By the end of 1918, in their efforts to bring the natives into the Soviets, the local Bolsheviks had registered only a moderate success. One of the main reasons for this limited success was the fact that the Bolsheviks were still a minority in the Central Asian power-structure. The dominant groups consisting of the Social Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and other Russian elements were not only hostile to the natives but also wanted to pursue a different policy. They openly argued that there could be no question of extending the principle of equality to the natives. They further maintained that Russians, being the conquerors, must have an edge over the natives. Hence, they declared that "our relations with the natives could never be on the basis of equality." 51

With the beginning of the year 1919, the situation had somewhat improved. On the initiative of the local Bolsheviks a statue was published in February, 1919 which empowered the Turkomnats (The Turkestan Commissariat for Nationality Affairs) to take steps to popularise the ideas and ideals of the Soviet regime among the natives. Besides,

50. See S.B. Krylov, "Istoriceskii prototses razvitia Sovetskogo federalizma" (Historical process of the development of Soviet federalism), Sovetskoe Pravo No. 5, (1924), pp. 42-3.

51. See, Urazaev, Turkestanskaia ASSR i ee gosudarstvenno-pravovye osobennosti (Turkestan ASSR and its governmental and legal features), Tashkent, 1959, pp. 96-7.
it entrusted the Turkomnats with the work of collecting vital data on the economic and educational conditions of the natives and empowered it to take steps for raising the cultural level and political consciousness of the population.\(^{52}\) A "Muslim National Section" was created to attract the Muslims to the Communist Party and to spread the Marxist-Leninist ideology among the masses. In March, 1919 the Second Regional Conference of the Communist Party of Turkestan resolved to create a Regional Bureau of the Muslim organisations of the Russian Party.\(^{53}\) However, in spite of all these efforts, the attitude of a large section of the local Russian Communists remained indifferent towards the indigenous masses. In fact, the local Bolsheviks were themselves divided in their approach towards the problems of the natives. There were two groups among them. One group, led by Kobozov, was in favour of giving due weightage to the natives in the organs of Soviet power in Central Asia, whereas the other group led by Kazakov and Uspenski was hostile to the natives and was critical of

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53. OIKFU, no.42, p.85. For a more detailed treatment of the subject also see G. Safarov, no.37.
Soviet policy on the plea that flexible approach would lead to infiltration of erstwhile Jadidists into Communist organisations. The Bolshevik Central leadership favoured the Kobosev group and its approach. The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) issued a directive which clearly stated that "in the interest of Workers-Peasants' government in the East, it was necessary to ensure a wide proportional participation of the indigenous population of Turkestan in the state activities even if the native participants did not belong to the Communist Party." The first priority was, thus, given to the process of nativisation of Soviet power. In the long run the policy of nativisation, as is evident from the writings of the native historians and social scientists, gave legitimacy to the emerging Soviet political institutions. It avoided political tensions which would have ensued in a multi-national society had the Soviet leadership pursued its social transformation programme without the concurrence of the native peoples. With this objective in view, the directive further demanded to "stop requisitioning

54. On the role of different factions of the Communists and their attitude towards the natives, see D.I. Manzhara, Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Srednei Azii (1905-1920) Vospomnania - (Revolutionary movement in Central Asia, 1905-1920 - Memoirs ), Tashkent, 1934, pp. 80-2, 134.

55. Leninskii sbornik (Moscow) XXXV, p. 811.
the properties of the Muslims without the consent of the regional Muslim organisations."\textsuperscript{56} In other words, whatever, changes were to be introduced they were to have the consent of the native leadership. However, it was expected that with the development of class consciousness "the Turkestan proletariat will take all measures to realise the objectives laid down by the Central Government."\textsuperscript{57}

To further accelerate the process of nativisation of the Soviet Central Asian political system, Lenin despatched a powerful Turkestan Commission. The task that the Turkestan Commission was entrusted to perform was outlined in the resolution of the All Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, the organ which appointed the Commission. The resolution stated:

"The self determination of the peoples of Turkestan and the abolition of all national inequality and all privileges of one national group over another constitute the foundation of all the policies of the Soviet Government of Russia and serve as a guiding principle in all the work of its organs, and it is only through such work that the mistrust of the native toiling masses of Turkestan for the workers and peasants of Russia bred by several years of domination of Tsarist Russia can be finally overcome."\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} As cited in Lenin and Stalin, \textit{Statei i rechi o Srednei Azii i Uzbekistana} (The Articles and speeches on Central Asia and Uzbekistan), Tashkent, 1940, pp.91-2.
The importance of the task of establishing correct relation between various nationalities was further emphasised by Lenin who wrote that "The establishment of correct relations with the peoples of Turkestan, has now, for the Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics, without exaggeration a gigantic and world-wide historical significance."59

He added that the Russian Communists by their deeds must show "the sincerity of our desire to root out all remnants of Great Russian imperialism."60

On its arrival in Tashkent in October, 1919 the Turkestan Commission immediately purged the hostile non-Bolshevik Russian elements from the Tashkent Soviet Government. Next it appropriately dealt with the bourgeois nationalists who were desirous of creating a regional Communist Party under the racial-cultural labels, such as, Turkic Communist Party of Turkestan, and Muslim Communist Party of Turkestan.61

Moreover, with the help of the Red Army, the Turkestan Soviet Government liquidated the Autonomous Government of Turkestan (Kokand). But this did not solve the knotty political problems of Central Asia. In fact, the aggressive

60. Ibid.
61. OIKPU., No. 42, pp. 92-6, See also Kh. T. Tursunov, Natsionalnaia politika Kommunisticheskoi Partii v Turkestane (1917-1924), (Nationality policy of the Communist Party in Turkestan (1917-1924), Tashkent, 1971, pp. 185-91.
postures of the local Soviet Government drove a significant section of Central Asian nationalists underground. The destruction of the Autonomous Turkestan Government of Kokand left its aftermath in the form of the Basmachis. The Basmachis revolt was a violent protest against the ill-conceived initial moves of the Tashkent Soviet Government. Although in certain pockets such as Shahrisabz and Kashkadarya, the Basmachis continued to operate sporadically, they could not turn the armed revolt into a mass movement. Arrival of the Turkestan Commission in October 1919 and its policy of drawing the natives into the Soviet system had a positive effect on the Central Asians and in no time they became disillusioned with the violent resistance waged by the Basmachis. The Commission arranged large scale distribution of food and seeds which were in an extreme short supply as a result of the communication disruption caused by the long-drawn civil war and the Basmachis activities. Such a policy went a long way in winning the confidence of the native working masses. Although the Basmachis who had adopted a hit and run tactics, continued to operate until 1931, their backbone had long been broken by the positive attitude of

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the Commission towards the interests of the natives.  

Later, Stalin pertinently remarked that "I have no doubt that if only our policies in Turkestan had been implemented as they are now done, there would not have been in our midst tens of thousands of Basmachis." In other words, Stalin clearly admitted the alienation of a large number of the natives from the Soviets as a result of discriminatory policies of the Tashkent Soviet Government.

In conformity with the Commission's flexible approach the local Bolsheviks took various steps to win over the confidence of the natives. These measures ranged from agrarian reforms to non-interference in the Muslim religious affairs. However, in order to check the penetration of the Pan-Islamists and other nationalists who were hostile to the Soviet system of government, Lenin, in July 1920, advised the Turkestan Commission to undertake special measures for combating manifestations of Pan-Islamism and bourgeois nationalist tendencies. Consequently, the Turkestan Commission abolished the denominational organisation within the Communist organisation which had become channel for the infiltration.

63. While on field trip to the Soviet Union the researcher attended a lecture on the theme of religion and nationality by Professor Bazarov of Samarkand State University, Samarkand on 16.5.1977. During the course of his lecture Professor Bazarov made this statement.

64. Leninskii Sbornik (Moscow) XXXIV, p.373.

65. Ibid., p. 326.
of the former Jadidists. Besides, the programme of nativisation of Soviet political power another significant development for consolidation of Soviet power in Central Asia that took place in the early twenties was the creation of one centralised structure of the Communist Party. These two political developments along with the spread of secular education in later years turned out to be crucial factors in legitimizing the process of secularisation of politics in Central Asia.

In 1920, the first agrarian reforms were introduced. They involved the transference of land to the natives peasants from the Russian settlers who had earlier forcibly seized these lands from the native farmers.66 By the decree of 1922, the Central Executive Committee of Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic67 restored the properties of Waqf and mosques to the religious bodies for places of worship. The traditional schools and mosques were reopened.68 These measures led to the increasing popularity of the Bolsheviks and the natives in a large number joined the Communist Party and other organisations of the Soviet power; so much so that

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67. On April, 11, 1922, the Constitution of Turkestan ASSR was adopted by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic comprising of Syr-Semirechie, Ferghana, Samarkand, Transcaspia and Amu-Darya Divisions.

the representation of the natives reached 48 per cent at
the time of formation of Uzbek Communist Party.69 At the
XIIth Congress of Turkestan Soviets held in January, 1924,
out of 356 delegates, 226 were natives. About the same
time, out of 12,500 full members and about 9,000 candidate-
members of Turkestan Communist Party, 5,843 were Uzbeks,
5,436 Kazakhs and Kirghis, 835 Tajiks and 11 Turkmens - a
total of 12,225 natives as against 9,275 non natives.70

Thus steadily increasing political participation
by the natives in Soviet political institutions clearly
showed that the psychological barriers that had existed
between the natives and the Russians were steadily crumbling
down. Having seen through the policies and practical pro-
grammes of the Bolsheviks a large number of natives
increasingly cooperated with them. The Young Bukharans and
the Young Khivans, who stood for modernisation and change,
totally aligned themselves with the Bolsheviks. The
Bolsheviks too were quick to help them in their struggle
against the tyrannical rule of the Emir of Bukhara and the
Khan of Khiva. Having captured the political power in
these Khanates, the Bolsheviks allowed the Young Bukharans
and the Young Khivans to form their own governments.71

69. Kh.T. Turasunov, Obrazovanie Uzbekskoi Sotsialisticheskoi
respublika (formation of the Uzbek Socialist Republic),


71. See OIKFU, no.42, pp.159-78.
The text of the constitutions promulgated in 1922-23 in these former Khanates of Central Asia clearly reflected that the Bolsheviks did not impose their will on the Young Bukharans and the Young Khivans. For instance, the constitutions of the Bukhara and Khorezm Republics recognised (article 8 and article 9 respectively) the right to religious freedom of their citizens and the right to observe Muslim rituals, subject to the condition that these must not prejudice the civil rights of other citizens.72

Moreover, within the Young Bukharans and the Young Khivans there had emerged leftist factions which demanded the introduction of more radical socio-economic measures. It was, however, clear that with the consolidation of the new system, further changes in harmony with the emerging socio-political structure would soon necessarily follow.

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Some Western authors maintain that these developments were merely tactical moves which the Soviet regime introduced for its own ulterior motives. According to Professor Alexandra Benningsen, these were all temporary and tactical moves and "it should not be forgotten that the instant the Civil war was over, the Soviet Government had

72. See Alexandra Bennigsen and Ch. Lemercier-Quelquejay, No. 68, p. 144.
set out to bring Islam down by undermining the basic institutions on which it rested: the properties in **mainmort** (Waqfs) which guaranteed the clergy's economic power; the courts both of 'adat (customary law) and of the Shariat (Quranic law), which enabled Islam to keep its hold on the private life of the believers; the confessional instructions.**\(^73\)** In the same vein, Robert Conquest writes that "with the end of the Civil War the need for tolerance passed"**\(^74\)** and the Soviets embarked on the policy of liquidation of Islam in Soviet Russia.

The fact of the matter is that the entire approach of these authors appears to be tendentious because the socio-political processes, as they were unleashed during the early phase of Soviet rule, are not seen in a correct perspective. First of all, these measures were adopted at a time when the Civil War was already nearly over in Soviet Russia. Secondly, the institutions of organised clergy and their hold over economic power is alien to Islam. These are never deemed to be the basic institutionalised tenets of Islam; on the contrary, they, in the specific reality of Central Asian situation prevailing in the pre-revolutionary years, were turned into instruments of exploitation, legitimised in the name of Islam, and thus they had become fetters in the way of socio-economic development.

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**73.** Ibid., pp.144-45.

Moreover, the Soviet regime was not the first government to abolish these archaic institutions which had been turned into the bastion of parasitic feudal elites. The Bolsheviks, rather adopted an integrated approach in Central Asia towards creating objective condition for secularisation of politics. Their approach took into account the interests of workers and peasants, an overwhelming majority of Central Asians. Hence, the process of secularisation of politics was essentially linked with the creation of class consciousness, nativisation of Soviet political system in Central Asia and economic development, and consequently, adoption of programmatic policies, like popularisation of secular education.

A straight-forward enunciation of this strategy is found in Stalin's framework for the solution of national question in non-Slav regions of Soviet Russia. He emphasised that for the transformation of Soviet society into "national

75. The young Turk Government of Turkey (1908-18) took the first step to initiate the process of secularisation of politics. Later, in 1923-24 the Republican Government of Turkey not only put an end to the institution of Caliphate, but also abolished the Ministries of Sharia and Auqaf (Muslim religious foundations) besides suppressing the traditional educational institutions and religious courts. See Dogu Ergil, "Secularisation as a class conflict: The Turkish Example", Asian Affairs, Vol.62, New Series Vol.VI Part I, February, 1975, pp.69-80; See also Feroz Ahmad, "The Secularisation of Politics: The Turkish Example", in Zafar Imam (Ed.), Muslims in India, New Delhi, 1975, pp.277-94.
in form but socialist in content", the following pre-
requisites were necessary:

"To create industrial centres - as bases on
which peasants can be rallied around the
working class.

To advance agriculture, and above all,
irrigation;

To improve and advance: cooperative
organisations among the broad masses of
peasants and handi-craftsmen as the most
reliable way of bringing the Soviet
Republic of the East into the general
system of Soviet economic development;

To bring the Soviets into close touch with
the masses; to make them national in compo-
sition and in this way to implant a national
Soviet state organisation that will be close
and comprehensive to the working masses; and

To develop national culture; to build up a
wide system of courses and schools for both
general education and vocational and techni-
cal training in native tongues with the
purpose of training Soviet Party, Trade Union,
and economic cadres among the native peoples."76

In its drive for consolidating and developing the
base of Soviet power in Central Asia, the Soviet Government
drew a plan of action for creating national republics in
Soviet Central Asia. Initially known as the National
Territorial Delimitation Plan, it was officially declared
to have implemented the Bolshevik policy of national self-
determination.

76. J. Stalin, Marxism and the National Question, Selected
Writings and Speeches, New York, 1942, pp.193-94.
However, the national delimitation plan has been subjected to scathing criticism by non-Soviet scholars. For instance, Geoffrey Wheeler believes that it was a masterly Bolsheviks' "stroke of imperialist policy of divide and rule". He further remarks that the Bolsheviks by "creating a whole set of new administrative terms strove to give the impression that colonialism has disappeared."77 Mustafa Chokaev, the former President of the short-lived Autonomous Government of Turkestan (Kokand), described it as the "division of Turkestan into tribal states", which the Russian Bolsheviks contrived to thwart the plan of the 'Mussalman Communists' to secure the unification of all the Turkic tribes around the nucleus of Soviet Turkestan."78 Prince Labanoff-Rostovsky, a Russian émigré scholar, holds the view that the national delimitation plan "was less concerned with solving the ethnographical puzzle than with the political aspect arising from the problem" and that it was merely the Bolsheviks' reply to the Basmachi uprising."79 Hugh Seton-Watson considers it a neo-imperialist device contrived by the Russian Bolsheviks to remove "any danger of a common front of the Central Asian Muslims."80

78. Mustafa Chošaev, no.40, p.414.
Refuting these and such other 'anti-Soviet' views of the Western authors, Soviet scholars claim that the national territorial delimitation plan was a step forward in the nation-building activities of the Bolsheviks. Indeed, it was described by Soviet authors as nothing less than a "second revolution",\(^{81}\) in Central Asia. R. Tuzmuhamedov, an Uzbek author, maintains that the formation of "national territories" was an essential pre-requisite for the development of the Central Asian peoples into socialist nations.\(^{82}\)

Notwithstanding these conflicting views, there can be no gainsaying that the national territorial delimitation plan was an important landmark which proved crucial in the political developments in Central Asia.

A close scrutiny of the socio-political processes taking place in the early twenties reveals that the process of national differentiation had already set in motion towards the turn of the century. During the pre-revolution period even some native leaders had recognised the need of re-drawing the boundaries of the territories of the emerging nationalities on ethnographic and linguistic considerations.\(^{83}\)

\(^{81}\) Turkestanskaia Pravda, 141 (48), 27 June, 1924.

\(^{82}\) R. Tuzmuhamedov, no.27, p.91.

\(^{83}\) For instance, Zaki Validov Togan, then an important Muslim leader in Tsarist Russia was an ardent supporter of re-drawing the boundaries of Central Asia on ethnographic and linguistic considerations even before the October Revolution. But later he changed his views, see Serge A. Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, Cambridge-Mass., 1960, 149; see also D.I. Hanzhara, no.54, pp.82-3.
In the post-revolution period the public opinion, as reflected in the Party congresses and conferences and the news media, despite the efforts of influential native communist leaders to the contrary, was mounting pressure in favour of the creation of nation-state system in Soviet Central Asia. Towards the end of August, 1924, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Khorezm, who was one of the arch-opponents of the idea of formation of nation-state system in Soviet Central Asia was persuaded to realise the importance of the national state delimitation scheme. As he stated: "The great economic significance of the delimitation of Khorezm did not strike us until comrade Karklin two weeks before made a fresh report. Only then we understood that we do not have a better way than to incorporate ourselves with Uzbekistan." Likewise, Faizulla Khojaev, who later became the first Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Uzbekistan, considered that there were considerable differences among the Kazakh-Kirghizes, Uzbeks, Turkmens and others which justified the creation of national-state systems. About the process of national differentiation, that was emerging, Faizulla Khojaev observed:

"In all cities and villages now inhabited by Turkic peoples there is national isolation and national discord."

84. Turkestanskaia Pravda, 186 (463), 24 August, 1924.
In the light of these developments, Faizulla Khojaev maintained that "the idea of the Pan-Turkists will remain a figment of imagination. It is not fated to be translated into practice." 

Faizulla Khojaev, thus realistically, held that the concrete socio-economic conditions and political considerations that favoured the national territorial delimitation of the Soviet Central Asia, had more weightage than the factors emanating from religious beliefs and racial consciousness. In other words, it was a step in right direction. From the developmental point of view, the implementation of the national state delimitation plan was seen as the culmination of the process of decolonisation and de-feudalisation unleashed by the October Revolution. Addressing the second session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR on October 27, 1924, Faizulla Khojaev declared that the realisation of the national territorial delimitation plan would remove the last vestiges of the rule of the emir and of Russia's imperialism, as "all artificial boundaries which had been defined neither on the basis of economic nor national features will be abolished." 

86. Ibid., pp.360-61.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid., p.366.
Although, the Soviet Government was doing its best to accelerate the process of socio-economic change, until the mid-twenties there had been little progress in this respect in Central Asia. Both economically and educationally, Soviet Central Asia continued to lag far behind and the native communists were naturally sore about the slow rate of progress. More than anything else, the slow rate of development, in spite of the massive aid from the RSFSR, revealed that unless the old socio-political structures were reorganised in Central Asia, no radical breakthrough was possible. Another important motivation behind the idea of national delimitation which was closely related to the secularisation of politics, was to quicken the process of class stratification and sharpen the class struggle in the native society. It was felt that through smaller units organised on the principles of national self-determination as expressed by the working people, the political power could be used more effectively to promote in a record time, these trends which had hitherto remained dormant because of deep religious consciousness.


90. Turkestanskaia Pravda, 194 (471), September, 1924.
It was generally recognised in Central Asia that the existing political units were no more conducive for a systematic planned development. By bringing the nationally homogeneous social groups in separate political units, the national territorial delimitation plan was designed to accelerate the process of economic development and thus to force the pace of socio-cultural transformation in Central Asia.

The formation of national republics in Central Asia, in fact, proved to be a crucial step for creating favourable conditions for the eventual secularisation of politics in Uzbekistan as it shattered, once for all, the hopes of Pan-Islamists turned 'national-communists' for continuing the traditional socio-political structures even after the Revolution.

Towards a Secular Superstructure

Soon after its formation in 1925, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan launched its own systematic drive for helping in the creation of favourable conditions for the secularisation of politics.

Constitutionally, it sought to grant equal rights to all its citizens irrespective of their religious beliefs. The Revolutionary Committee of the Uzbek Republic issued a
proclamation which assured the inhabitant of the Republic that the interests of all, irrespective of their national and religious affiliation, would be safeguarded. The proclamation, for instance, *inter alia* declared:

"Henceforth there is no place for national antagonisms. All national minorities irrespective of their religious beliefs, included within the Uzbek SSR are guaranteed all necessary facilities for their cultural and economic development." 91

In pursuance of this proclamation some institutional arrangements were made for the protection of the rights of national minorities. Foremost among these was the creation of the National Minorities Commission which was charged with the task of studying the problems of the national minorities and recommending appropriate measures for their solution. It can be argued that the national territorial delimitation plan by itself could not have solved the national discord. The solution of national discord still required constitutional protection of the interests of the national minorities. The magnitude of the nationality problems before and after the formation of the national republics in Soviet Central Asia as well as the socio-economic objectives of the national delimitation plan, both sanctioned such guaranteed protection. Such a measure not only reflected a cautious approach of

91. The text of the Proclamation was published in *Pravda Vostoka*, 10, December 5, 1924.

the new government but it also eventually brought about quick economic transformation of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{92}

Of the other early constitutional arrangements, which the Uzbek SSR made for secularisation of politics, an important one was the creation of a unified system of administration and law. A network of organs was established at different levels of administration. Legislative provisions were made for the enactment of uniform system of laws. For instance the Uzbekistan SSR had inherited three distinct administrative and legal systems from the erstwhile republics of Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khorezm. In 1929, uniform administrative structure on the pattern of the former Republic of Turkestan was introduced throughout the republic. The Uzbek SSR was divided into 7 o\textit{b}lasts, 23 Uezds, 241 Volosts and 1163 selsovets. The newly formed o\textit{b}lasts were Tashkent, Samarkand, Ferghana, Kashka-Darya, Zerfshan, Surkhan-Darya and Khorezm. In the following year, the administrative structure of Uzbek Republic was again reorganised. Three new o\textit{b}lasts Andijan, Bukhara and Khodjent were carved out. The number of s\textit{e}l-s\textit{o}v\textit{e}ts (rural Soviets) rose to 1,730. A network of Soviet Educational institutions and propaganda

\textsuperscript{93} M. Faiziev, Uzbekskaja SSR - suverennoe gosudarstvo (The Uzbek SSR - A Sovereign State), Tashkent, 1961, pp.10-25; See also Kh. Tursunov, no.69, pp.168-70.
centres, the account of which will be given in the following chapters, was established.

In addition to these administrative changes, the domination of religion over judicial process was put to an end. The process of disintegration of the Shariat courts had begun as early as in 1923 when the Central Executive Committee of Turkestan Republic made provision for transfer of civil suits from the religious and customary courts to the Soviet judicial organs, in the event of such a demand made by one of the litigants. The position of the traditional courts was further undermined by withdrawal of financial support to them. In 1923, they were, thus, reduced to voluntary agencies. In February, 1924, their jurisdiction was further restricted. They were now competent to adjudicate only in those cases (both civil and criminal) where the sum involved did not exceed 25 rubles. By the end of twenties, the Shariat courts virtually disappeared from the Uzbek Republic.94 Explaining the gradual approach towards the liquidation of the traditional religious courts a Soviet sociologist comments:

"The overcoming of blind devotion to the courts of Bais and Kazis and the abandonment of obsolete norms in the common law and Shariat had to begin in a process of socio-cultural transformation with a change in the social interests and system of values of the individual on the basis of his own experience."95

94. Alexandra Bennigsen and Ch. Lermercier-Quelquejay, no. 68, pp. 138-52.

95. U.S. Djekebaev, "The Overcoming of Social Alienation and Problems of rooting out criminal behaviour under the conditions of the Transition of formerly backward peoples Conld..."
In other words, as the religious consciousness of peoples of Central Asia was deeply rooted, the liquidation of the religious institutions was, therefore, linked with the economic growth, on the one hand, and the socio-cultural changes, on the other. Nowhere this approach is more discernible than in the process of liquidation of the traditional religious educational institutions. The Uzbek SSR did not embark on a frontal attack on the religious educational institutions which were the primary socialisation agencies for *internalisation* of religious values. Instead, it adopted an indirect, yet an effective, way to eliminate them. As their survival was largely dependent on the financial support, largely from the income of *Waqf*, the Uzbek SSR decided to liquidate the *Waqf*. The expropriation of properties of *Waqf*, however, came as a sequence of the process of the agrarian reforms rather than as a direct assault on the existence of the religious educational institutions. Here again the Uzbek SSR adopted a cautious step by step approach. In the first instance, the Uzbek Republic expropriated the rural *waqf* properties where there were large tracts of land owned by the mosques and religious bodies that were actually controlled by the upper stratum of Muslim clerics. Within a few years the properties of the urban *waqf* too were confiscated.

(Footnote 95 continued)
by the state. The expropriation of waqf properties quickly accomplished four objectives simultaneously; it destroyed the economic power of the conservative Muslim clerics who largely controlled the waqf properties; it released the large tracts of land for redistribution among the landless peasants; it signalled the liquidation of the religious educational institutions; and, it paved the way for the penetration of secular education even to the rural areas.

All these were accomplished with the least resistance, and thus the process of secularisation of politics was accelerated. It is interesting to note that these objectives were pursued precisely at a time when the share of all the natives in the Communist Party of Uzbekistan had reached 52 per cent. The upward trend of nativization was also discernible in the composition of the delegates who attended the first Constituent Congress of Soviets of Uzbek SSR, held on February 13, 1925. Of the 588 delegates who attended the Congress, 404 were Uzbeks, 66 Tajiks, 65 Russians, 5 Kirghizes and 48 from other national minorities of the Uzbek SSR. Though there had been some sharp fluctuations during the Stalinist period, such an upward trend of nativization of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan had never gone down to the pre-1925 level of 52 per cent except for the year 1943 when the percentage of the native (total Central

96. Alexandra Bennigsen, no. 68, pp. 150-52.
Asian's) communists in the Party dropped to 46 per cent. (See Table I):

**TABLE I**

| Year | Uzbek(a) | Central Asian(b) | Total Central Asian | Percentage of Party Membership | %age of Population in Uzbekistan | Year | Uz-Russ-Other
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(a) Including Karakalpaks

(b) Including Kazakhs and Tatars.


By 1927 the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic had freed by and large the socio-political institutions from the domination of religion. Moreover, the Bolsheviks had by then created a social base in the native soil as a result of their programmatic policy of nativization of the
political system. The consolidation of the political power was followed by a cautious yet deliberate use of political power so as to create favourable conditions for secularisation of politics. As shown above, during this period, agrarian reforms, and mass mobilisation programmes, conducted by the Bolsheviks to rouse class consciousness in the Uzbek society, were such examples. The stage was then set for further leap forward.

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