CHAPTER FOURTH

Role of Religious Organizations
Role of Religious Organizations

The most significant aspect related to the expansion and propagation of Islam in Central Asia is the role of Islamist groups who managed to prove their existence and influence in spite of stern government action and restrictions. Historically speaking, the origin of Islamic organizations in the region can be traced back to the period of Tsarist colonization of Central Asia, during which Islam was considered a mortal enemy because of strong resistance involving several rebellions inspired and led by Muslim religious leaders. Although, the Russians succeeded in consolidating their domination, a section of Muslim devoted its attention to reforming its traditional system of education in order to mobilize the human resources to challenge the Russian domination. The movement, known as Jadidism from the Arabic word jadid (modern or new), was made up of mostly Muslim intellectuals who believed that only by modernizing existing education system Muslim could march ahead in competition with Russians. In the closing year of the nineteenth century a new Islamic educational trend inspired by the Jadid movement begun to make its appearance in Turkistan. The Russian strategy was to defeat the movement by supporting the traditional clergy who were against the reformist tendencies of Jadid movement. However, the Jadidists successfully resisted the

policy of Russification and the proselytisation of Muslims to Christianity. The jadidists, who received support from Tajiks, Tatars, and Uzbeks, were modernists and nationalists who deemed Central Asia as a whole entity. Soon after the October 1917 revolution, the foundation for an anti-Islamic strategy was laid out as the Bolshevik government implemented a radical programme separating religion from the state, and launched violent campaigns against all religious institution in general and Islam in particular. One of the most serious consequences of this campaign was the Basmachi revolt that began in 1918. The revolt involved the Mujahideen Sufis who fought fiercely to resist the establishment of Soviet rule. Tajik Basmachis sought refuge in Afghanistan rather than surrender. Moreover, during Soviet era, in reaction to "official" Islam, there has been a long tradition of some mosques and imams operating separately from the state-approved mustiates, this phenomenon commonly termed as "parallel" Islam. The "parallel" Islam kept the Islamic spirit alive throughout the Soviet era. Its representatives succeeded in frustrating the designs of the Soviet system of wiping out the influence of Islam from Central Asia. Because 'unofficial' Islam had the advantage of not being controlled by any of the spiritual directorates and was therefore free from Soviet influence. However, when Gorbachev came to power in 1985; one of the most striking outcome of his period was the emergence of political organizations reflecting Islamic interests. At the same time, Islamic organizations of the region got help and inspiration from beyond the border especially from Afghanistan and Iran. That is why, from the dawn of independence itself, several pro-religious

5 Culture, Society and Politics in Central Asia and India. p 265.
6 Ghonchch Tazmini, "Islamic Revival in Central Asia: A Potent Force or a Misconception?". Central Asian Survey. Vol.20, No 01. 2001. p 64
9 Culture, Society and Politics in Central Asia and India. p 267.
12 Central Asian Survey. vol 20, No 01. pp 80-81
organizations have been active in the region. In spite of, government suppression, these organizations, however, managed to mobilize public opinion with a view to unite Muslims of the region on a single platform. Prominent among them are the Islamic Renaissance Party (sometimes translated as the Islamic Revival or Rebirth Party), second, the *Hizb-ut- Tahrir*, and the third, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).

**The Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (Hizb-i- Nahzat-i- Islami).**

Among the religious associations of Tajikistan, the Islamic Revival Party is the most organized political force, and the most important Islamic organization that came into being at a time when the soviet rule was on its last legs. It was the first Islamic party to have emerged in the former Soviet Union, then known as, the all-Union Islamic Renaissance Party. The agenda of the party on the eve of its foundation duly authenticated by various Islamic leaders of the country was to unite all Muslims. The interaction and contacts between the leaders of various regions of the Former Soviet Union led to the congress of the all-Union IRP which met on 9 June, 1990 in south Russian city of Astrakhan. According to party leaders themselves, the party was created in 1972, and in those years the party was acting as a kind of a circle or club of thinkers. However for political security reasons, they tried to leave no traces of their activities. Therefore there is no fixed moment at

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13 Some of the less prominent groups have been known as *Tabligh*(Mission); *Uzaam Sokol*(long Beard); *Adolat Umashasi*(Justice Society); *Islam Lashkarlan* (*Warners of Islam*); *Tumha* (Repentance); and *Nur* (Ray of Light), "such groups are small by comparison with the much wider social base for the members of which Islamism is increasingly an ideology but not yet a battle cry." Central Asia; “Islamist Mobilization and Regional Security”. *International Crisis Group*. 2001, p.18.


which the existence of the party in those years can be proved. At the Astrakhan conference, the representatives of Muslim communities throughout the country declared the establishment of the all-Union IRP and adopted a platform and programme. During the Astrakhan meeting, the delegates reached an agreement on the formation of committees for the several functions of the party. In the same meeting, the delegates agreed to open branches of the party both at republic and district levels. At the beginning, the all-Union IRP, working out of Moscow, had three regional structures. The first was the Central Asian, the majority whose members were Tajik; the second and the third was the European regional structure basically for Muslims living in Russia and Siberia, mainly Tatars. According to the regulations of the all-Union IRP, the central committee had its own executive organ which dealt with different activities like information, education, finance, printing etc.

The all-Union IRP managed to mobilize the mass support exploiting the deep rooted religious structure prevailing in Central Asia and tried to use Islam in the region in its attempt to challenge and replace the Communist regime with Islamic ideology. According to the party manifesto, religion is the main identity of the Central Asian people, which shapes their daily life as well as their moral, cultural and social behaviour patterns. Islam, in fact, is the common historical bond that united the people regardless of all other identities, which were man-made, and therefore, artificial. Following its formation, the all-Union IRP presented itself as

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19 The June 1990 meeting also adopted the name of Islamic Renaissance Party (partyia Islamskovo vozrozdeniya). Soviet Muslims Brief. No.03. 1990. p.4
20 The regional organizations of the party were headed by elected chief (amir) and then elected an all-Union organization which in turn elected its secretary (amin). The supreme organ of the party was responsible for organizing congresses to meet at least once every two years. It was the prerogative of the party congress to elect the council of Ulama who were chosen from among the members of the Islamic institutions of Muslim regions. The council had the right to choose and remove the head of the party, to discharge incompetent members, and even approve the composition of the party's coordination committee. The coordination committee resembled the central committee of the Communist Party of the former Soviet Union. Pinar Akeali, Islam as a 'common bond' in Central Asia: Islamic Renaissance Party and the Afghan Mujahidin. Central Asian Survey. Vol 17. No 02. 1998. p 270.
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the only political organization working throughout the Former Soviet Union, presenting itself as a party for all Muslims. The stated objectives of the party are, to enable the Muslim population of the former Soviet Union to live in accordance with requirements of the Qur'an, and to advance humanistic ideals and equal rights for all nations.21

The IRP soon expanded its sphere of influence to all the Central Asian republics especially is Uzbekistan and Tajikistan by establishing regional branches and attracting members from all sections of the society, by held meetings, conferences, educational and training programmes all over the country. Most of the leaders of the all-Union IRP are of the view that initially they were subjected to the Tsarist and then the Soviet social and political environment, as such Muslims of the Former Soviet Union had almost ceased to be real Muslims. Consequently they need to be educated about the Islamic way of life, and its glorious past.22 The three methods to achieve these goals have been outlined in the party bylaws: "to spread Islam taking recourse to all communicative means; active participation by Muslims in the economic, political and spiritual life of the country; members of IRP are to live a life according to the precepts of Islam.23 According to office bearers of the party, the best way to protect the interests and rights of the Muslims is to unite them on a single platform. The all-Union party as such established itself as an organization open to all Muslims of the Former Soviet Union and with a view to unite all those who intend to live in accordance with the requirements of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The IRP stood for the revival of the ideals of Islam, restoration of Islamic culture and the maintenance of Islamic traditions.24 The first paragraph of the party manifesto stated that the party was a religious organization with a view

22 Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 31st January, 1992, p 05
23 The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic Encyclopedia, p 311
to unite Muslims who actively propagate Islam, observe its rules and take part in cultural, socio-political and economic life in accordance with the principles of Islam.  

According to the leaders of the IRP, most of the concepts used by the European intellectuals - such as the dictatorship of the proletariat and class struggle, nationalism and racial exclusion, democracy and anarchism - were in accordance with their own traditions and have always been unacceptable in the Eastern West. Western democracy, for example, emerged in Europe as a result of the struggle between serfs and aristocrats. These political concepts were man-made and alien to the Muslim world. The programme of the IRP stated that 'invented schemes of social development have brought mankind to complete crisis in all spheres of life, on the contrary, complete salvation is in the obedience of Allah.' To the leaders of the all-Union IRP, nationalism in fact is an alien concept to the Muslim world; consequently they rejected the Western connotation of nationalism. The programme of the party stated that it was against national isolation and that all Muslims are part of 'Ummah, not party of different nations.' According to IRP leaders, unfortunately, at present the Muslims throughout the world are fragmented, ignorant and 'infected with nationalist and democratic ideals' which contradict Islamic norms. One prominent party leader stated, for example, Pan-Arabism, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Iranism were the fragmentations; the all-Union IRP therefore, strongly favour the unification of all Muslims within the Former Soviet Union. The, party therefore, appealed to all Muslims of the country (Former USSR)

28 Central Asian Survey. Vol 17. No 02. p 272. Since the foundation of Islam was the tradition of the Prophet Ibrahim, that is, the principle of monotheism, the difference of nation, language, and colour of skin were unimportant and irrelevant. In Islamic terminology nations has a different meaning; referring to the gathering of people together by the bonds of blood, all belong to the greater community of believers, the Ummah. In a more general sense, Ummah also included the Christians and Jews, Den. No 21. 8 November. 1991. p 07.
regardless of their ethnic, regional or national background for their support and participation. The party even aimed at forming a federation of Muslim governments within the body of common wealth of independent states (CIS), which in future could also include other Muslim governments in the region. The Islamic Revival Party believes that, all moral, legal, economic, and political principles are subservient to the will of Allah, therefore it is necessary to turn to Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, free of innovations and modernization. Fundamentalism therefore, is not fanaticism or reactions but to follow the principles as followed by the Prophet himself. In an article published in IRP newspaper Al-vakhdad entitled 'Demokratia-demokratam, islarn-musul’ manam' [Democracy for Democrats, Islam for Muslims] asked the following questions; 'Can we Muslims follow a system which is all about the dictatorship of the proletariat and class welfare or about nationalism and racial exclusivity or about western democracy and absolute freedom, undermining the teachings of Allah which alone raised us to the heights of civilization?' One of the spokesmen of the IRP explained in April 1992 that their goals were similar to those of the Iranian revolution. Like the regime in Iran, they emphasized the importance of 'tradition' and aimed at outlawing alcohol, drugs and prostitution. In short, the all-Union IRP supported traditionalism as a political doctrine based on Islamic values and ideals, and purification of the Muslim practice from all alien and borrowed elements.

31 Cited From; Russia's Muslim Frontiers. p 74
32 Time, 27 April 1992, p 46.
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In Tajikistan, the IRP had become active long before its formation, drawing support from universities, polytechnics, pedagogical institutions, and from the skilled workers at factories and state farms. Its semi-clandestine newspaper, Najot (salvation), appeared sporadically during the spring of 1991. However, on October 26, 1991, the IRP got the official recognition and declared its independence from the all-Union IRP in Dushanbe 1992 under the name of Nehzat-e-Islami-ye Tajikistan. By 1991 the party had succeeded in developing an elaborate countrywide organizational network, expanding its membership through active involvement in mosques and prayer houses whose numbers had expanded significantly since 1989. Although the extent of the membership of the Tajik IRP has not been determined, a 1990 report in Izvestia, however, put the figure at 10000 and in 1992 according to a report that some 30000 members had joined the party. The actual numbers may be as high as 40000, excluding the party sympathizers. The majority of the IRP members seem to be of rural socioeconomic background and much of its urban support comes from youth and elder clergymen and women. It has publicly denied of working toward the creation of an Islamic state. Its leaders have frequently stated that the creation of an Islamic republic is an unattainable goal in the foreseeable future. They argued that it is currently impossible to create an Islamic state in Tajikistan, as it will take decades to undo the atheist legacy of Soviet rule. As Qazi Turajonzoda, declared, ‘even if all mullahs want to establish an Islamic state, it is simply an eyewash and next to impossible in the present scenario. The republic has travelled far down the secular path and people would not give up their habits and way of life easily’. To conclude, Tajik Muslim leaders although aspire for the revival of Islam in the newly independent country, but are against the immediate imposition of Shariah laws.

34 The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, p.311
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**Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami (Islamic Party of Liberation)**

*Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami* (Islamic Party of Liberation) is a religio-political Organization, which is widely spread in Central Asia. Organised in Jerusalem (Israel) in 1953 and having headquarters in London, with its branches (called *amirats*) in Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and other Arab countries as well as in Turkey and several European countries. *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* aims at establishing a single Islamic Caliphate incorporating all Central Asian republics of the common wealth of independent states, along with the Muslim regions of Russia, China, and the Northern Caucasus, proclaiming a non-violent way to a theocratic state. The basic political doctrine of the *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* consists of the idea of the founding of the religio-political structure called Caliphate of the times of the Prophet and his first four successors. The party believes that during this period of history Islam succeeded in founding an egalitarian state based on the principle of equitable distribution of social production, under a society where in the Muslim community lived according to divine instructions, electing the Caliph from among the most worthy and noble ones. The later Islamic states Umayyads, Abbassids and Ottoman Caliphas deviated from many of the early principles of Islam. According to the ideologues of the *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* it is necessary to change the way of life and thinking of every Muslim followed by the entire community before a new caliphate is born. In the early stage the main method of the *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* would be in the field of culture and enlightenment. Side by side it also highlights the importance of

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40 Hizb-ut-Tahrir was organised in 1952 from the members of the Palestinian branch of the other famous religio-political parties *Al-ikhwan-al-muslimin* (Muslim Brotherhood). The initiator of the Palestinian branch and the first leader of the party was Taka Tdin Nabhani al-Falahini (1909-1979) *Contemporary Central Asia*, Vol 04, No 1-2, p 10
41 *Central Asia- Caucasus Analyst*, p.01
the task of forming the “correct political consciousness” of the Muslim community and the non-Muslims (the participation of latter in the activities of Hizb-ut-Tahrir is permitted in view of their acknowledging and endorsing the principles and programmes of the party). In the early theoretical postulates of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir, the ultimate goals were to be achieved in three stages;

- The struggle for inducing Islamic way of thinking in the society. With special reference to the culture, enlightenment and religious propaganda.
- To revolutionize the thinking by gaining a firm foothold in the field of politics and culture.
- Seizure of power (possibly in some individual country) so as to create conditions for establishing a truly Islamic form of rule.  

Although, party aims at to achieve the unification of Muslims world under a single Caliphate, given the socio-political set up, such a step “would become a farce, like the so-called European democracy. The decision to form an Islamic state needs to be taken by the most” influential people” (i.e. powerful politicians and businessmen). Hizb-ut-Tahrir is of the view (which is based on mere idealism), that the countries of the world join the Caliphate with a restriction to non-Muslim countries, like United States and United Kingdom, provided they pay Sharia tax. By which their interests could be defended. Non payment of taxes would amount to military campaign against them. Christians and Jews by virtue of being the ‘people of the Book’ would be exempted from such taxes. To Hizb-ut-Tahrir manifesto, Buddhism and Hinduism, would be considered pagan sects and would not be allowed to join the fold. It would oppose with in Islam tooth and nail sects like, Ahmadiyya, Bahai’ism and Ismailism. To Hizb-ut-Tahrir such Muslims who adhere to any of the four schools of thought are true Muslims and those who depart would

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42 Contemporary Central Asia, Vol.04, No 1-2, p 11
be considered as apostates' and liable to punishment according to Islamic law. Although all citizens of the Caliphate would be subject to Shariah law, Christians and Jews could administer justice according to their own laws in what were described as internal matters (i.e. marriage, divorce and the assignment of possessions).

The activities of the members of Hizb-ut-Tahrir are to remain confined to semi-legal and peaceful propaganda of their stand through distribution of literature and organization of conferences etc. However suspecting reactions has led to inclusion in the party constitution, computational ways of functioning and secrecy about location of its leadership. But the propagandist work among the Muslim community is conducted openly through discussions with opponents and distribution (more often illegally) of the relevant literature which is the first priority in the activities of the party. However, by 1970 there arose among the ranks of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir supporters of radical methods of struggle. The abstract doctrine about the natural, peaceful transition of complete Islamisation of society leading to rule by the Caliphate did not suit the new generation of ideologues of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir who introduced new changes in its programme. In particular a dogmatic renewal based on salafi doctrine took place which called for armed struggle against those rulers who were openly non-believers and do not conduct the affairs of the state according to the laws of the Shariah and who have oriented themselves to the Western principles of democracy, Communist ideology of ethnocratic principles of national integration. The new stand of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir was adopted in the statement approved by the international conference on "International Links of the

44 All citizens in the Caliphate would have to abide by Shariah law when outside their homes. For example, all women would have to wear long dresses and scarves when in public places. However, Jewish and Christian women could wear clothes permitted by the laws of their own religion. Christians and Jews would also be allowed to drink alcohol within their own communities, if that was required for religious rituals. Forum 18 news Service
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Muslim Students’ held in the state of Missouri on 22 December, 1989, under the title “Method for renewing Hizb-ut-Tahrir”. As a part of new technique during recent years, activities of Hizb-ut-Tahrir are concentrated upon propaganda and from new numbers of the party only a superficial observance of religious code and rituals is expected. For example members of Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan considered that presently it is not necessary to deeply assimilate the Shariah yet the efforts are to be made to publicize the ideas to achieve the main goal, i.e., the creation of atmosphere for the rebirth of Caliphate. Consequently a fatwa has been issued declaring the distribution of literature and pamphlets, open discussions and recruitment of new members as the first stage of jihad. Those members of Hizb-ut-Tahrir who are arrested for such activities will be automatically recognized as martyrs. Leaders of Hizb-ut-Tahrir issue other fatwas denouncing a number of traditional rituals and dogmatic conditions and prescriptions which has been opposed by the Sunni traditionalist. For example, fatwas of Hizb-ut-Tahrir have lifted the ban on participation of women in the parliament and men permitted to shake hands with them. Compulsory offering of nimaz has been waived under certain conditions.

The present amir of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Abdat -Kadim- Zallum was born in Palestinian city of Al-Khalil. On his initiative the party activated it’s functioning in the Muslim countries of the Former USSR where they are known as Wahabis. In Central Asia, this transnational movement has had some success at gross root level, not only because of a well-organised underground activity and external support in finances and training, but also because of the perceived political exclusion of youth, increasing poverty, and unemployment in the region. Their cells are actively functioning in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, disseminating anti-Western

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47 Contemporary Central Asia, Vol 04, No 1-2, p 13
48 A.A. Ignatenko, “Endogeneity Radicalism Islamic”, Profi, No 02, 2000, p 33
and anti-government propaganda in local languages and Russian, calling for disobedience to authorities and boycotting of elections. At present the theoretical writings and periodicals of Hizb-ut-Tahrir including its journal Al-Bai and Al-Khadra are widely circulated among the population particularly in the mosques, higher educational institutions and in public transport. Pamphlets and leaflets are being published regularly, audio cassettes their electronic version and their circulation on the website known as Hizb-ut-Tahrir is also used to mobilize the public support. Hizb-ut-Tahrir has several arguments that attract common people. It claims to represent the interest of all Muslims regardless of their national identity and educate post-Soviet Muslims in the right way. All Central Asian countries lack proper literature on Islam in the vernacular, consequently many young people eager to learn and to know about Islam, pay attention to the teachings of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir. One of the most powerful arguments of Hizb-ut-Tahrir is advocacy of regional cooperation across borders. Supporters of the Islamic Caliphate advocate free trade and no borders between Muslim states. The idea of a unified state, reminiscent of the Soviet era with no national borders between Central Asian states is supported by traders, customers and many others involved in cross-border trade, which supplies the livelihood of a significant part of Central Asia’s population. Since the anti-government agenda and the use of corruption, inequality and religious intolerance has become popular, especially in the areas where political parties are banned. In such regions, Hizb-ut-Tahrir has effectively substituted political parties. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Hizb-ut-Tahrir has the most favorable conditions to grow as opposition political parties are muzzled and unable to operate. Another issue is that as a rule, many secular political parties except the Islamic Revival party of Tajikistan close their eyes to the religious peculiarities of the region. The simplicity of Hizb-ut-Tahrir’s ideology, including in its conceptualization of the concept of the Caliphate and its simple Islamic

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49 Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst. p 01.
prescriptions for the present socio-cultural ethos attract the attention of the young and less educated population. To sum up, in the words of party leaders, 'Hizb-ut-Tahrir presents a moderate concept of life; the aim is simply, to create a heaven on the earth and also to prepare people for heaven (Janat) in the life hereafter.' Further party, although' advocates a peaceful jihad yet it could be inevitable given the repression of Central Asian states.'

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

Tajikistan is the nerve centre of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a militant Islamist organization which seeks to topple the existing regimes in the region. The IMU is based in the mountainous regions of Tajikistan, which gives it a strategic advantage in striking the Ferghana Valley that is located within the countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has been one of the established movements of Uzbekistan in the 1990s with an aim to promote Islamic doctrines. By 2000 it got currency in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The leaders of the IMU like Yuldeshev Tahir and Juma Namangani are well known and very popular in Central Asia. IMU explicitly called for the establishment of an Islamic state and the overthrow of Uzbekistan's President, Islam Karimov. IMU says it is initially fighting only to overthrow President Karimov and bring Islam to Uzbekistan, later

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51 Central Asia- Caucasus Analyst, pp 1-2.
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on whole Central Asia would be its consideration. The origins of the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan can be traced back to the activities of Adalot (justice) and IRP of Uzbekistan. When the Uzbek forces started retaliatory operations towards the end of 1992, most of the leaders belonging to the IRP of Uzbekistan fled to Tajikistan and participated actively in the Tajik civil war as members of the United Tajik Opposition between 1992 and 1997 against the Communist government of Tajikistan. During the course of Tajik civil war, these fighters also came into contact with Afghan groups and received military training in Afghanistan. Thus the IMU forged relationships with various and sometimes opposing Afghan groups, including the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Two key leaders of this group, Tahir Yuldeshev and Juma Namangani, shifted their base camp to Afghanistan where they renamed their organization as IMU and used this location between 1997 and November 2001. It worked their as a magnet drawing hundreds of militants to its camps throughout Central Asia. It is now widely assumed that Juma Namangani was killed in northern Afghanistan during US bombing raids in

58 The IRP in Uzbekistan was established on January 26, 1992, in Tashkent. The party has been denied official recognition and its activities were banned under Uzbek law on Public Associations that went into effect in February of 1991. Ever since, the party has been conducting its affairs underground. The party’s initial platform, which was made public on December 16, 1990, clearly demonstrates its comprehensively religious orientation and its similarities with the Tajikistan IRP Mehrdad Haghayeghi. Islam and Politics in Central Asia, Saint Martin Press. New York, 1995, p.89.
59 Tamara Makarenko, "Terrorism and Religion Mask Drug Trafficking in Central Asia," Jane's Intelligence Review 12, no. 11 (November 1, 2000).
61 Jihad: The rise of militant Islam in Central Asia. p 149
November 2001. While, Tahir Yuldeshev, its ideological leader, supposed to be residing in the Afghan–Pakistan border areas, is still alive.

In 1991, just before the official demise of the Soviet Union and under the pressure of protests in the Namangan region of the Uzbekistan, President Karimov was forced to meet with Islamist leaders. In this meeting, he agreed that the idea of an Islamic state should be discussed in the parliament and that any decision on the issue be made in the context of the constitution. Shortly after the independence, the Uzbek government crackdown on Islamist movements, notably Adalot ((Justice) and Islam Lashkari(The army of Islam), both militant groups desire to establish an Islamic state and the enforcement of Shariah law, leaders like Tahir Yuldeshev and Juma Namangani were formerly affiliated with these groups. Initially the leaders of these groups preferred to legalize their political status through legitimate means. The efforts of some Muslim leaders from Fargana valley (which include the territories of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) to create a party, as a legitimate opposition, immediately put the government on alert, since officials in Uzbekistan still bear the strong imprint of the traditional Soviet mentality that assumes single party system. Amongst the members of these organizations (mostly consisting of young people) groups of an Islamic police force were framed (with five to ten people in each unit), who, on their own authority, flogged petty thieves at the city bazaars, stopped women not wearing scarf on their heads with a strict warning, persecuted people who missed prayer services and so forth. State organs, fearing a direct confrontation with the spiritual leaders and lacking

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63 Central Asia–Caucasus Analyst, September 04, 2003, p 01
65 Shireen T. Hunter. *SAMS Review*, vol 21, No 02, p.73.
experience in conducting religious policy, at first did not intervene directly in the conflict. But officials began to issue declarations about the illegality of the actions of Islamists, especially when it attempted to establish a party. With this, in Uzbekistan the first manifestations of Islamism were rapidly suppressed, and an all-out campaign against any Muslim political activity was initiated.

IMU activities came to the notice of the international community when it tried to assassinate Uzbek President Islam Karimov in February, 1999 by exploding bombs in Tashkent city. However, IMU came to the surface when it organised large scale incursions into the Kyrgyz and Uzbek territories in the summers 1999 and 2000 from Afghanistan and Tajikistan. When the first incursion of August 1999 in Batken region of Kyrgyzstan took place, the Uzbek authorities claimed that the exiled leader of the secular Erk Party, Muhammad Salih, was involved in this operation alongside Islamists Tahir Yuldeshev and Juma Namangani. It shows that, in the absence of democratic and participatory politics, militant Islamists and secular-minded groups can form coalitions against the established authorities. The intentions of the IMU in carrying out these incursions were not clear, while the Uzbek security officials put forth the theory that those were meant to push the cadre of IMU into Uzbek territory to carry out its activities. The intentions of the IMU suffered a major setback when the US attacked the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan after the 9/11 incident. Not only were the Taliban, the main supporters of the IMU, defeated, but the IMU also lost number of fighters.

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67 Central Asia, A Gathering Storm?, p 315
68 International Crisis Group, Asia Report No 59, p 01
71 Shireen T. Hunter, SAIS Review, vol. 21, No 02, p 75

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including its leader Juma Namangani. However, a number of violent incidents in Central Asia, since late 2002, indicates sign of resurgence of the IMU. In Tajikistan also, despite government assertions, the activities of IMU are on rise, as Islamic opposition in Tajikistan gained positions in the country’s government in a 1997 peace deal that ended the civil war, the IMU now has contacts in Tajikistan’s highest echelons of power. Complicating the situation, the weak postwar Tajik government is incapable of effectively controlling the territory outside the capital Dushanbe, enabling the IMU to operate within the country with relative freedom. Indications suggest that the IMU's relationships with Tajik government officials, the Taliban, and the other Afghan groups have aided the IMU in fulfilling their important commercial objectives.

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73 In November 2001, northern alliance commander Abdurrashid Dostum announced that Juma Namangani, the head of the IMU, was killed in heavy fighting around the northern Afghan city of Kunduz. Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, November 21, 2001, p.01

74 Institute of War and Peace Reporting, Reporting Central Asia No 70, September 5, 2001. Even US has admitted that its anti-terror operations in Afghanistan have failed to eliminate the threat to Uzbekistan from the IMU, speaking in Tashkent in February 2002. General Tommy Franks, commander-in-chief of the central command of the US army, informed that though, the IMU had lost its effectiveness with killing of Juma Namangani, this terrorist group still could cause tension and danger. Franks added that remnants of Osama bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda and the IMU remained on Afghan territory and that the US was working with the new Afghan government to neutralize them. Galima Bukharbaeva, “US fails to curb IMU threat”. Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Reporting Central Asia No 103, February 8, 2002. Available at http://www.iwpr.net

To sum up, the establishment of an Islamic state and society is the ultimate goal of all religious organizations and parties in Central Asia. For which they adopted different ways and means to achieve these stated goals. Although, the IRP party advocate for an Islamic state in Tajikistan to be ruled by the Shariah, at the same time, they understand the difficulties for the establishment of an Islamic state in the present political scenario of the region. Consequently, they believed in a gradualist approach of working under a democratic system. For this purpose, the party will engage only in constitutional methods to achieve its goal. It rejects extremism and terrorism, and the party seeks co-operation of like-minded political parties and movements. On the other hand, Hizb-ut-Talirir also advocates a Caliphate that will reunite all the Central Asian states, to be operated according to the Shariah, which it proposes to accomplish with out the use of violence. Hizb-ut-Tahrir wants a peaceful jihad that will be spread by explanation and conversion not by war. While denouncing physical violence, its rhetoric is nevertheless extremely violent. Just like, IRP and Hizb-ut-Tahrir, IMU also aims at establishing a single theocratic state, to promote Islamic doctrines and to overthrow President of Uzbekistan's. In view of state repression in Central Asia, the party has opted for extremism as a means to advance its cause. Further, one of the fundamental themes of all religious organization has been the concept of Ummah, the community of believers. In which the attachments and considerations like nationality, ethnicity, and regionalism are irrelevant and less important. Islam forms a common bond which is above these attachments and simultaneously transcends them.