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Muslims in the USSR

A Research Paper

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Muslims in the USSR (U)

A Research Paper

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Muslims in the USSR

Overview

There are 45 million to 50 million Muslims in the Soviet Union, making it the fifth largest Muslim country in the world. The Muslims are greatly outbreeding the Slavs, resulting in demographic trends disquieting to the Soviet leadership. By the year 2000, almost one in three Soviet citizens and more than one in three draft-age males will be Muslim. Beginning in the 1980s, Muslims will be responsible for nearly all of the net increase in the Soviet manpower pool.

Most of the Soviet Muslims live in a chain of six union republics that stretches across the entire strategic frontier from Turkey to Mongolia, although there are significant concentrations of Muslims in the Russian Republic and lesser concentrations elsewhere.

For decades Soviet leaders have tried with little success to foster the assimilation of the Muslims into the dominant Slavic culture. Tension between Muslim and Slav persists and may increase as Muslims, because of the growth in their numbers relative to Slavs, necessarily become more involved in industry and defense. Despite a long government campaign to make them bilingual, probably fewer than a quarter of the Muslims can speak or read Russian well, which limits their utility outside their own areas. This, coupled with their disinclination to leave their homelands, has led to a situation of labor surpluses in much of the Muslim area and labor shortages almost everywhere else.

The Islamic leadership establishment in the USSR has long been co-opted by the Soviet regime. There are fewer than 1,000 registered clerics and fewer than 500 working mosques in the whole country. Probably as a result, religious consciousness (as opposed to cultural consciousness) is relatively low among Soviet Muslims, and the tide of religious fundamentalism washing over the Muslim world has had little impact in the USSR. There is some evidence of rising interest in the religious aspects of Islam among Soviet Muslims, but none at all suggesting this is connected to events outside the country.

Soviet officials have displayed little overt concern that the unrest in the Islamic nations along its southern border might spill over into the Soviet Union. however, some Soviet diplomats have attempted to justify the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by alluding to such concern. Considering their self-serving nature, such comments have little credibility.

Muslims in the USSR (U)

The USSR is the fifth largest Muslim country in the world. Of the 104 nationalities enumerated in the 1970 census, 34 were of Islamic heritage. Together the Soviet Muslims number 45 million to 50 million, about 18 percent of the total population.

With a population exceeding 10 million, the Uzbeks are the most numerous of the Muslim peoples and the third largest nationality (after the Russians and Ukrainians) in the Soviet Union. Next are the Tatars, Kazakhs, and Azerbaijanis, each with more than 5 million; four other groups, the Tadzhiks, Turkmen, Kirgiz, and Bashkirs, number between 1.5 and 3 million each. None of the remaining 26 nationalities numbers as many as 1 million members; some count only a few thousand.

The Soviet Muslims are mainly of Turkic stock and speak closely related Turkic languages. The Tadzhiks, the largest non-Turkic people, and a number of smaller groups speak Iranian languages similar to those spoken in Iran and Afghanistan. The mountaineers of the Caucasus speak various languages and dialects unique to the area.

Soviet Muslim Homelands

Most of these Muslim peoples live in clearly defined homeland areas where they and their ancestors have held sway for centuries. Nearly all of these homelands have been accorded some degree of political recognition—as union republics (SSRs), autonomous republics (ASSRs), or autonomous oblasts. The homelands of the eight largest peoples are designated as follows:

Azerbaijan SSR	Bashkir ASSR
Kazakh SSR	Tatar ASSR (U)
Kirgiz SSR	
Tadzhik SSR	
Turkmen SSR	
Uzbek SSR	

¹ These figures are rough estimates, projected from 1970 census data. Nationality data from the January 1979 census are not yet available. Preliminary results were expected at the end of December but have not yet appeared; the final census results are to be published in 1981-82.

The homelands of six major Muslim peoples have been designated union republics, giving them political status formally equal to that of the Russian Republic (RSFSR). The homelands of the Bashkirs and Tatars lie within the Russian Republic; necessarily, they have been accorded the lower (but highest practicable) status of autonomous republic.

Muslims are in the majority in all of the Muslim union republics except the Kazakh SSR, and there the Muslim share of the population is rising, because of the high Kazakh birth rate and the steady out-migration of Russians that began in the mid-1970s. In the Kirgiz SSR the Kirgiz by themselves do not constitute a majority, but other Muslims make up the difference. In the other union republics the titular nationalities compose majorities by themselves.

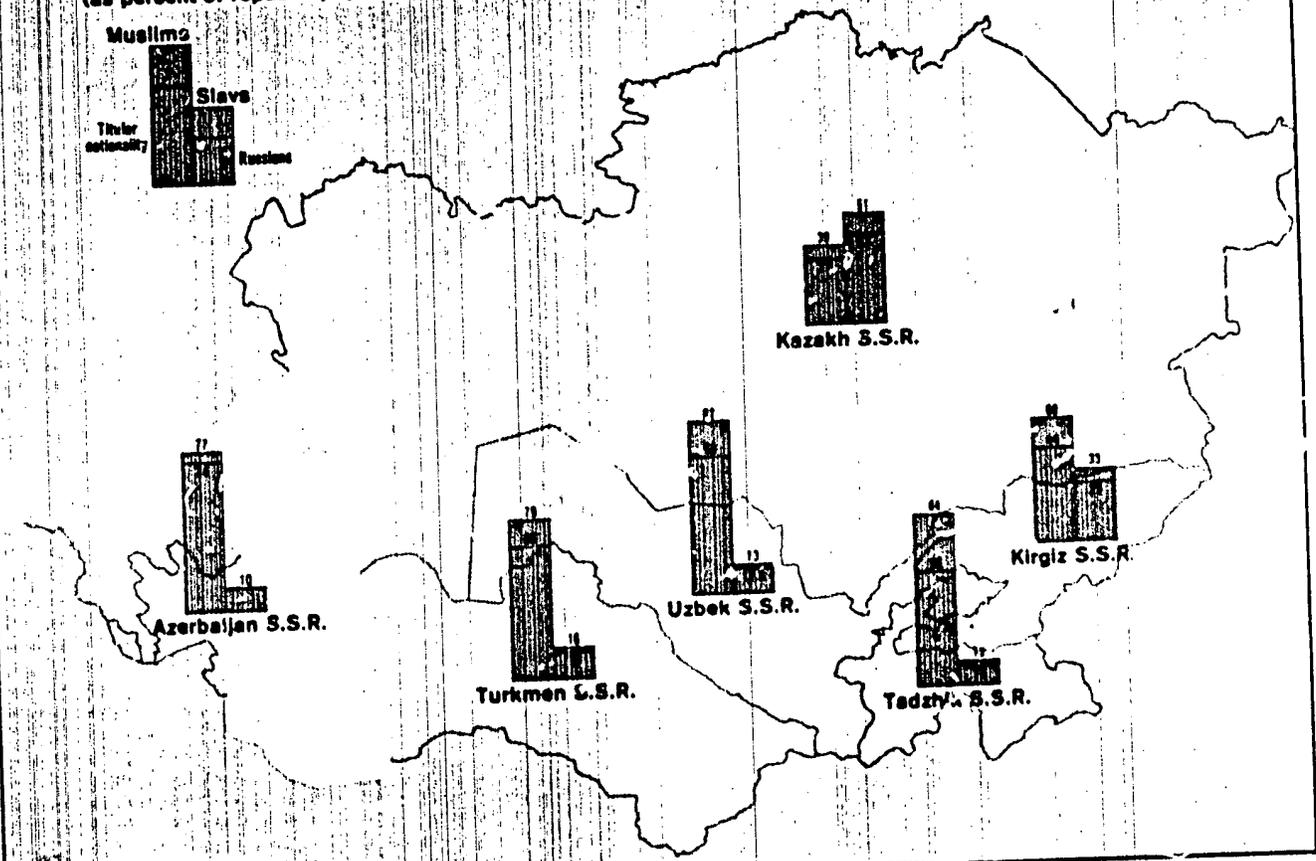
In 1970, only about a quarter of the Tatars lived in the Tatar ASSR, where they accounted for about half of the population; the rest were spread throughout the Russian Republic and the Muslim region to the south. About three-fourths of the Bashkirs lived in the Bashkir ASSR, but in 1970 they composed less than one-fourth of the population there. Tatars, however, numbered nearly another fourth; there were, in fact more Tatars than Bashkirs in the Bashkir ASSR.

The six Muslim union republics stretch across the Caucasus² and Central Asia. To the north a continuous arc of mountains and steppe separates them from the rest of the USSR. To the south lies the entire strategic frontier from Turkey to Mongolia. Across this border are the Islamic nations of Iran and Afghanistan and China's Muslim-dominated Xinjiang (Sinkiang) Autonomous Region.

Many of the Soviet Muslim nationalities have ethnic kin on the other side of the border. Azerbaijanis, Kurds, and Turkmen have ethnic relatives in Iran;

² Of the three union republics in the Caucasus—Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan—only the last named has a sizable Muslim population. There are, however, a number of smaller Muslim groups in the Dagestan ASSR, which—although it is also in the Caucasus—is administratively part of the Russian Republic.

USSR: Ethnic Composition of the Muslim Republics, 1970 (as percent of republic population)



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Turkmen, Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, and Kirgiz have kin in Afghanistan; and Kirgiz, Kazakhs, and Uighurs have kin in Xinjiang. The Soviets deal with this situation in various ways:

- **Border Security.** [] have reported that Muslim families separated by the border often have well-established lines of communication, and that in some areas border guards close their eyes to a certain amount of family-related transborder visiting. Generally, however, the presence of strong physical security measures indicates clearly that the Soviets are very sensitive about unauthorized traffic back and forth across the border.
- **Propaganda.** Radiobroadcasts originating in Soviet Muslim areas can be received clearly in neighboring countries. This gives the Soviets chances to present their policies in a favorable light, to present their versions of issues and events, and to extol the benefits of being Muslim in the Soviet Union. In the Sino-Soviet war of nerves, for example, each side claims to treat its Uighurs better than the other. And immediately after the US Embassy in Teheran was captured, radiobroadcasts from Muslim areas north of the Iranian border stoked the fires of anti-American sentiment while assuring Iranian listeners of Soviet sympathy and understanding.
- **Diplomacy.** Muslims are well-represented in Soviet diplomatic missions to Islamic countries. For example, a Kazan' Tatar was appointed Soviet Ambassador to Afghanistan during the short-lived Amin regime; he remains in position today.
- **Cultural Exchanges.** Friendship societies have been organized among trade unions and industrial enterprises to encourage and sponsor exchanges with coethnics abroad. []

Demographic Trends

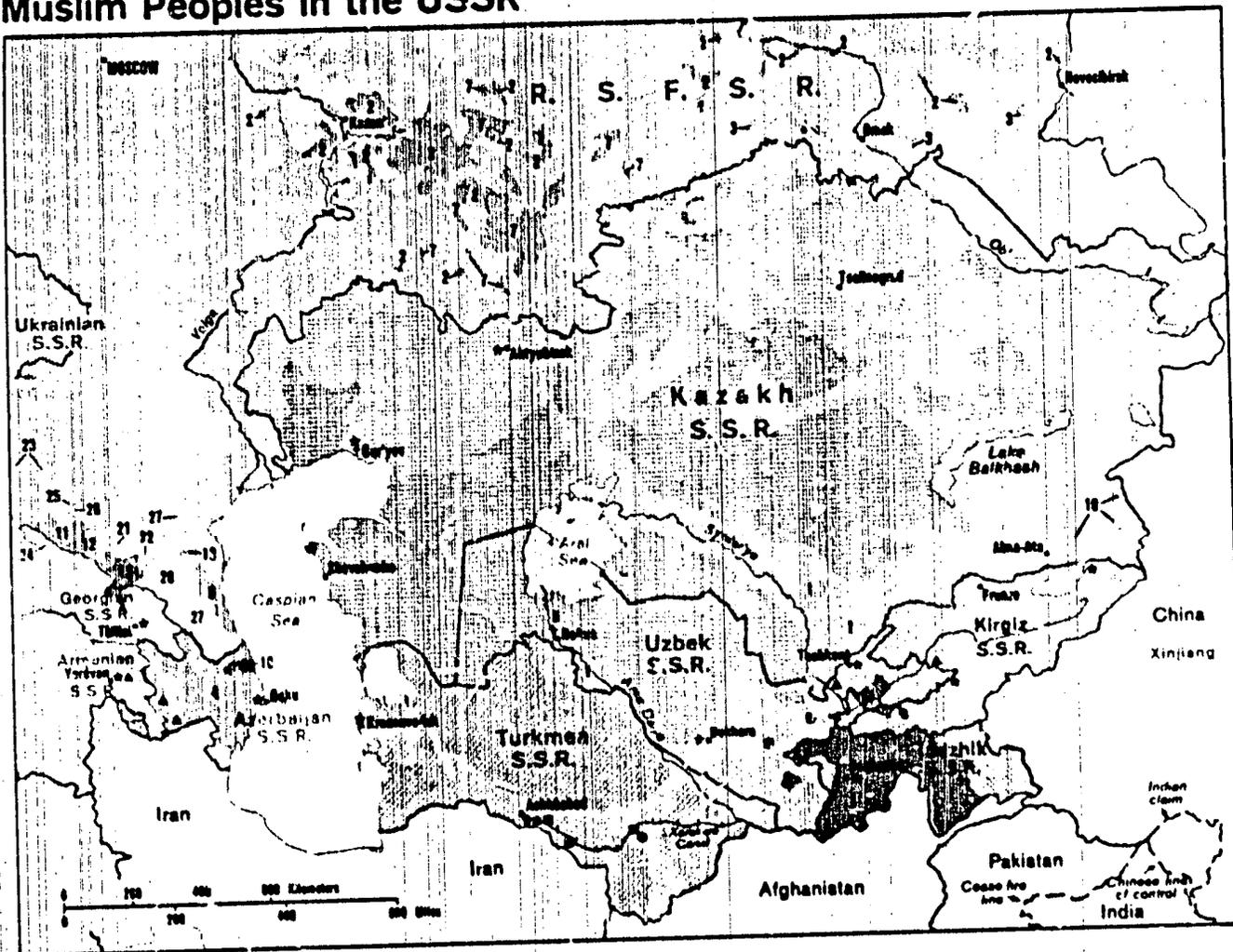
The Muslims are the fastest growing segment of the Soviet population. By the year 2000, nearly one-third of all Soviet citizens—some 100 million people—will be Muslims. During the last intercensal period for which nationality data are available (1959-70), the average annual crude birth rates among the six major Muslim peoples were 41 to 47 per thousand, compared with 16 to 19 per thousand among the Slavs. In 1970

between 50 and 53 percent of the population of each of the six major Muslim peoples was under 15 years of age, contrasted to 26 to 28 percent of the Slavic groups. As these young Muslims move into their childbearing years in the 1980s, they will assure continued rapid growth of the Muslim population. The Slavic groups will grow much more slowly, because of lower fertility and relatively fewer people at the reproductive ages. Consequently, the proportion of Muslim peoples in the Soviet population will increase throughout this century and beyond. []

Although welcoming the potential additions to the labor force, the Soviet leadership is concerned about the political and economic implications of the imbalance between Muslim and Slavic population growth. A lively, surprisingly open debate has arisen among Soviet planners and academics over the formulation of a comprehensive demographic policy. Two schools of thought have emerged: one favoring a uniform policy of incentives to raise birth rates throughout the country, the other advocating a regionally differentiated policy designed to equalize birth rates by stimulating birth rates in low-fertility areas and instituting disincentives in high-birthrate areas. Proponents of the uniform policy have criticized the ethnic discrimination implicit in a differentiated policy. There has been no decision yet, and the issue is likely to be raised at the 26th Party Congress, to be convened sometime in the early 1980s. []

Russian rulers have periodically promoted the migration of Slavs to the Muslim region, particularly to the sensitive border areas. In the recent past, large numbers of Slavs have settled along the Sino-Kazakh-Kirgiz border. Except in Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan, where agricultural land is more abundant, most Slavs have chosen to live in towns and cities. In contrast, most Muslims live in the countryside. Rural-urban migration is increasing somewhat, as more and more young Muslims seek opportunity and advancement in the cities, but preliminary data from the 1979 census show that the Muslim republics continue to be the least urbanized in the country. In Tadzhikistan, it appears that the proportion of urban dwellers actually declined from 37 percent in 1970 to 35 percent nine years later. []

Muslim Peoples in the USSR



Turkic Peoples

	1970 Population (in thousands)
1 Uzbeks	9,195
2 Tatars	5,931
3 Kazakhs	5,229
4 Azerbaidzhanis	4,380
5 Turkmen	1,528
6 Kirgiz	1,452
7 Bashkirs	1,240
8 Karakalpaks	236
9 Kumyks	189
10 Uighurs	173
11 Karachays	113
12 Balkars	60
13 Nogays	52

Iranian Peoples

	1970 Population (in thousands)
14 Tadzhiks	2,136
15 Ossetians	488
16 Kurds	89
17 Iranians	29
18 Tats	17
19 Dagestanis	13

Peoples of the Caucasus

	1970 Population (in thousands)
20 Chechens	613
21 Kabardians	280
22 Ingush	158
23 Adygeys	100
24 Abkhaz	83
25 Cherkess	40
26 Abaz	25
27 Dagestani peoples:	
Avars	398
Lezgins	324
Dargins	231
Laks	86
Tabasarans	55
Rutul's	12
Tsakhurs	11
Aguls	9

28 Slavic peoples (primarily Russian and Ukrainian)

Other non-Muslim peoples
Sparsely populated area

In general, Muslims receive poorer quality education and less technical education than the other nationalities in the Soviet Union. Since 1964, when general education through 10th grade was made compulsory throughout the USSR, young Muslims have not differed from other nationalities in progressing at least that far in school. In terms of educational attainment beyond 10th grade, however, the Muslims rank at the bottom of the list of USSR nationalities.³ Muslim youths lag behind especially in vocational and technical training, which normally does not begin until after 10th grade. One reason is that many Muslim girls still opt for early marriage (often under parental pressure) instead of continuing their education. Another, probably more important, reason is that vocational and technical schools are fewer in number and lower in quality in the rural areas, where most Muslims live, than in the cities. (The Azerbaijanis are both the most urbanized and the best educated among the major Muslim peoples.) Since 1970, the number of specialists graduating from higher schools in the Muslim regions has risen markedly, reflecting increased Soviet investment in technical education there, but the rapid growth in the numbers of school-age Muslims will require still greater investments in education to sustain, let alone raise, levels of educational attainment among the Muslim peoples.

According to the 1970 census, the six major Muslim peoples accounted for 10 percent of the population but only 4 percent of the recent internal migrants in the USSR.⁴ Although traditionally loath to leave their Islamic homelands, modern Muslims may have practical as well as cultural reasons for staying put. The climate is equable, the cost of living reasonable, and the opportunities for additional income from private agriculture relatively more available in this, the Soviet sunbelt. Moreover, most Muslims are still culturally, linguistically, and educationally ill-prepared for life outside the Muslim regions.

³ Among the 15 titular nationalities enumerated in the 1970 census, in terms of the percentages of persons above age 10 who had attended school beyond 10th grade, the six Muslim peoples ranked from ninth to 15th; only the Moldavians (12th) kept them from monopolizing the bottom of the list.

⁴ Recent internal migrants are people who moved to new residences across oblast or kray boundaries during the two years preceding the census.

Cultural Barriers

The presence of large Slavic communities in each of the Muslim republics has not led to extensive intermarriage or social interaction between the two groups. In rural areas, Muslims and Slavs are likely to live and work on separate state and collective farms. In urban areas the workplaces are integrated, but even when Slavs and Muslims live in the same neighborhoods self-imposed segregation of social activities is common.

Aside from historical animosity, certain values and traditions commonly held among Muslim peoples perpetuate barriers between Muslim and Slav. Traditional Muslim rituals for major life events such as weddings, circumcisions, and funerals are widely observed, even though other religious practices are not widespread except among older Muslims. Muslim attitudes about the family and the role of women, and their attachment to the land differ considerably from those of Slavs, as demonstrated by the diverging demographic trends of the two groups.

There is a major language barrier between Slavs and Muslims. Few Slavs know any of the Muslim tongues; as for the Muslims, only among the Kazakhs is Russian widely spoken. In 1970 less than 20 percent of any other major Muslim people claimed fluency in Russian; virtually all of them considered their national tongues as their first language. The Soviet regime has been campaigning for a long time to improve the quality of Russian-language instruction in the "national" (native language) schools in the Muslim region; in recent years school administrators have been urged to expand the amount of time devoted to the teaching of Russian at the expense of other subjects. This effort has borne some fruit: a high proportion of the Muslims who claimed fluency in Russian in the 1970 census were under 30 years old. Data on bilingualism from the 1979 census—if released—will provide a further measure of the success of this campaign.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Although the regime denies it, anti-Muslim prejudice is widespread among the Slavs, and anti-Slav prejudice

is equally—if not more—widespread among the Muslims. Such prejudice inevitably leads to discriminatory practices at the individual level—a Slavic industrial supervisor may try to hire and promote Slavs; a Muslim university admissions officer may give preference to Muslim applicants. Pejorative ethnic epithets are used by both sides. Many Soviet officials, for example, privately refer to the burgeoning growth of the Muslim peoples as a “yellowing” of the Soviet population.

Nonetheless, the current ruling elite is not discernibly racist in its outlook or composition, and the law of the land forbids racial and ethnic discrimination. Some Slavs complain that Soviet authorities bend over backwards (engage in reverse discrimination) to provide opportunities for Muslims at the expense of Russians or other Slavs. It is worth noting, however, that Muslims are relatively less often in a position where they could, if they wished, reciprocate.

Muslim Manpower

Only in the Muslim region is the labor pool expected to grow during the 1980s because only among Muslims were there more births in the 1960s than workers who will retire in the 1980s. But the nature of Muslim manpower—relatively immobile, largely rural, often poorly skilled—confounds Moscow's efforts to cope with the worsening labor crunch in European USSR and Siberia. Most Muslims are reluctant to forsake the traditional lifestyle and relatively good wages of the countryside even to fill local industrial jobs, much less to migrate to labor-hungry areas in the eastern regions where the climate is cold and the culture Slavic. Those who do move to cities often lack the vocational skills needed by industry. As a result, spot labor “reserves” are reported in rural areas throughout the Muslim regions, while major cities—in the Muslim republics as well as the rest of the USSR—are experiencing shortages of skilled labor.

In view of the unpalatability of trying to solve manpower maldistribution by coercive administrative measures, a number of Soviet economic planners have suggested (in the tradition of the mountain coming to Mohammed) that industrial jobs be brought to the Muslims so their labor potential may be exploited.

Such a program, however, could not be implemented overnight. Furthermore, it would require major regional shifts in scarce capital investment that rival claimants for such investment, particularly in the European USSR, would stoutly resist.

For these reasons, rapid industrialization of the Muslim republics is unlikely. More probable is the expansion of irrigated agriculture and the introduction of a few labor-intensive light industries that would draw upon the large reserves of female labor in the Muslim region but would not require an extensive (and expensive) upgrading of the linguistic and technical skills of the labor force.³

Muslims will account for an ever-increasing share of military manpower as well. By the year 2000, Muslim males will compose well more than a third of the draft-age population. As a matter of policy, Muslim draftees are assigned to units throughout the USSR as a means of Sovietizing them; there are no totally Muslim military units. Because many Muslim conscripts cannot speak or read Russian very well, disproportionate numbers of them are assigned to menial tasks and the simpler specialties such as infantryman. Although pick-and-shovel jobs abound in the Soviet armed forces (especially in construction battalions), the military may have trouble absorbing the increasing number of Muslim draftees and filling technical positions unless the linguistic skills of Muslim conscripts improve considerably.

At present, there seems to be little ethnic friction in the Soviet armed forces. The use of Muslim troops and reservists in the Afghanistan invasion and occupation, however, may be giving rise to some disciplinary problems. Not since World War II, when the Soviet Union occupied northern Iran, have Muslim troops been involved in the occupation of a devoutly Muslim country. At least a few Muslim soldiers have apparently found the experience emotionally and politically unsettling. A number of desertions have been reported.

³ Increased female participation in the labor force would reduce birth rates in the Muslim republics, a development some government leaders and planners would welcome.

and some Muslim soldiers have begun openly observing Islamic practices, such as praying at mosques. Any ideological contamination of Soviet Muslim soldiers resulting from the confrontation with their Muslim brothers in Afghanistan will be carried back to the USSR, with potentially troublesome consequences for the Soviet regime.

Muslim Participation in the Soviet System

Muslims are underrepresented in the Soviet managerial, political, and military elites, although the proportion of Muslims in industrial management and civil administration has been rising. Members of the titular nationalities hold positions of genuine responsibility at all administrative levels in their respective republics, but they tend to be concentrated in some areas and all but absent from others. Muslims make a strong showing, for example, in positions concerned with culture and propaganda. From the regime's viewpoint, politically reliable Muslims are among the most credible spokesmen for Moscow in the ideological arena. Because of past differentials in engineering and technical education, however, non-Muslim leaders predominate in industry, even in agricultural supervisory positions.

Muslims are also underrepresented in the Communist Party (CPSU) in terms of their share of the total population, but demographic factors account for most of the discrepancy, since fewer than half of the Muslims are old enough to join the party. According to 1973 data, when only persons aged 20 or older are considered, Kazakhs and Azerbaijanis were actually overrepresented. Among the titular nationalities, only the Georgians and Armenians ranked higher; the Russians ranked fifth. All of the other nationalities were somewhat underrepresented, but the other four Muslim peoples all ranked higher than the Baltic peoples and the Moldavians.

Muslims are well represented at all levels of the party hierarchy; there are, for example, three Muslim members of the CPSU Politburo. Muslim party leaders, however, rarely serve outside their own republics—except, occasionally, in the Russian Republic. In the six Muslim union republics the party first secretary is usually a native Muslim, the second secretary usually a Russian.

Most officers in the Soviet armed forces are Slavs, although in recent years the proportion of non-Slavs, especially Muslims, has apparently been increasing. Much of this increase probably results from an effort to appoint more Muslim political officers, whose duty is to indoctrinate the troops in political ideology. Moscow believes that they relate better to Muslim conscripts. Inadequate education and a lack of fluency in Russian bar many Muslim aspirants from becoming line officers, for officer candidates must pass a rigorous oral and written examination in Russian, the language of command. Although the number of Muslim officers will undoubtedly continue to increase, these problems will make it difficult for the regime to accomplish full Muslim representation in the officer corps.

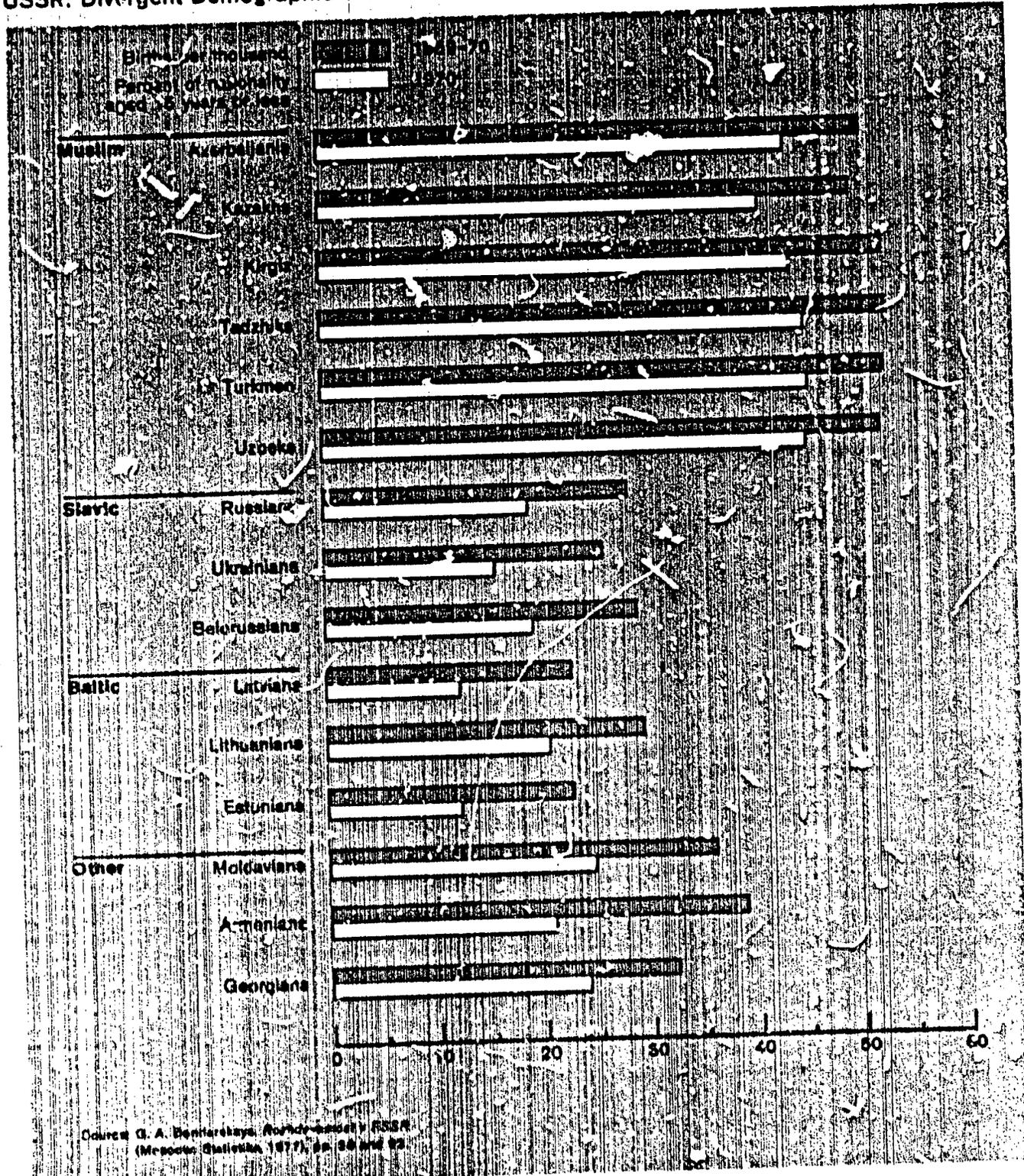
Religious Trends and Prospects

Most Soviet Muslims are Sunnis; among the major peoples, only the Azerbaijanis are predominantly Shia. In the Soviet Union, however, the distinction between the two groups has blurred, and over the years, Muslim solidarity against the Slav has taken precedence over sectarian differences.

From its inception, the Soviet Government has pursued generally repressive policies against the Muslim clergy and against religious practices among Muslim believers. In recent years, however, Moscow has become increasingly sensitive to the costs of trying to extirpate Islam and aware of the advantages of adopting a somewhat more tolerant attitude.

The official Islamic establishment in the Soviet Union is organized into four regional Spiritual Directorates (Muftiats), a structure that can be traced back to the time of Catherine the Great. The Ufa Directorate controls the Sunni Muslims of European Russia and Siberia; the Buynaksk Directorate oversees the Sunni Muslims of the North Caucasus and Dagestan; the Baku Directorate guides the Sunni and Shia Muslims of the Transcaucasus; and the Tashkent Directorate controls the large Sunni Muslim population of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The once-vital Islamic establishment now consists of some 1,000 registered clerics, fewer than 500 working mosques (half of them in

USSR: Divergent Demographic Trends Among Major Nationalities



Source: G. A. Donskaya, *Rochnye otcheti SSSR* (Moscow: Statizdat, 1977), pp. 28 and 29.

Central Asia), two religious schools (in Bukhara and Tashkent) and a number of largely propagandistic publications, including *Muslims of the Soviet East* (which appears in English, French, Arabic, and Uzbek editions). []

The Soviet regime has become acutely cognizant of the importance of Islam in its foreign affairs, and has used the Soviet Islamic hierarchy in pursuit of its foreign policy goals. Soviet Islamic leaders have received delegations from a number of Muslim countries, and Mufti Babakhanov of the Tashkent Directorate frequently attends international Islamic meetings.⁴ In September 1979, Dushanbe, the capital of the Tadzhik SSR, was the site of a major event in the Islamic world—a symposium dedicated to the beginning of the 15th century since the *Hegira* (Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina). This year Tashkent will host another major international Islamic meeting. Contacts between Soviet and foreign Muslims, however, are limited and strictly controlled. Iran's postrevolutionary request for permission to establish cultural institutes in Ashkhabad and Tashkent, for example, was flatly turned down. []

In many parts of the Soviet Muslim region, over the past few years there has been a revival of interest in the religious aspects of Islam. Unofficial seminaries are turning out unofficial mullahs who teach the tenets of Islam to children in unofficial mosques. All of this is taking place informally and locally, outside the framework of the Soviet-controlled Muftiats, and all of it is illegal. In response, Soviet authorities have repeatedly inveighed against these practices in public media and intensified the teaching of atheism in schools. This relatively mild reaction suggests that although the revival is widespread it is not catching on with the Muslim masses as a whole. []

⁴ Saudi Arabia, the leading Muslim nation (by virtue of its protection of Islam's holiest places), has not succumbed to this campaign. It maintains no diplomatic relations with the USSR and permits only a few formal contacts between Saudi and Soviet Muslim religious figures. The Saudis place no restrictions on Soviet Muslims who wish to perform the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca or Medina), but Soviet authorities treat this as a privilege to be accorded only to a handful of especially favored Muslims each year. []

There also seems to have been a minor resurgence of membership in secret Muslim brotherhoods, particularly Sufi orders, especially in the North Caucasus. Judging from disapproving editorials in Soviet newspapers, the Soviet leadership is taking this much more seriously. Such clandestine brotherhoods, which combine religious fanaticism with nationalism, were instrumental in leading the great Muslim revolts against the tsarist and early Soviet regimes. The current regime obviously fears that if such groups are allowed to proliferate, in time they could spark serious popular unrest. []

This resurgence of interest in Islam began taking place in the Soviet Union well before the revival of Islamic fundamentalism began taking place in the Muslim countries to the south. There appears to be no relationship between the two phenomena. The nominally Shia Azerbaijanis, from whom the strongest reaction might have been expected, do not appear to have been affected by the events in Iran at all. In contrast to Soviet Jews and Catholics, the Muslims have not engaged in large-scaled agitation for religious freedom. There are active protest organizations among two of the smaller Muslim groups, the Meskhetian Turks and the Crimean Tatars, but these peoples have basically limited aims—they merely want to return to their ancestral homelands from which Stalin deported them. []

To date, there is no evidence of a pan-Muslim movement in the USSR, no network of dissident Muslim intellectuals, no Muslim equivalent of *samizdat*. Without question there is a strong sense of community among Muslims, and there is evidence of widespread but diffuse anti-Russian sentiment, which occasionally erupts in violent—but localized—incidents. Although some observers interpret these incidents as indications of a rising tide of Muslim nationalism—and cite historical events to support their view—their arguments are not convincing, compared to the vast array of Soviet power that stands ready to smite any Soviet Muslims who get too far out of line. []

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Soviet officials have displayed little overt concern that the unrest in the Islamic nations along its southern border might spill over into the Soviet Union. In private comments, however, some Soviet diplomats have attempted to justify the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by alluding to such concern. Considering their self-serving nature, such comments have little credibility.

Inchoate Concern

Soviet nationalities' policies have generally aimed at building a supranational socialist consciousness among all Soviet peoples. Nationwide programs to standardize education and promote Russian as a lingua franca were to reduce and eventually eliminate cultural distinctions among the nationalities. These programs, however, have not worked anywhere as well as was hoped, and they have hardly made a dent in the ethnic consciousness of the Muslims, most of whom still think of themselves first as Muslims, second as Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, or whatever, and only third as Soviets. The large mass of unassimilated Muslims in the belly of the Soviet body politic is making Soviet leaders increasingly uneasy. Like a large and growing but still benign tumor, it is not causing them any harm but neither, they fear, will it do them any good.

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