



THE SOVIET AUTHORITY'S PERMISSION TO OPERATE MOSQUES IN UZBEKISTAN AND PUTTING ARTIFICIAL BARRIERS AND RESTRICTIONS ON THEM

Yusupov Rasuljon Malikovich

*candidate of history, associate professor of the "Humanities" Department.
Andijan Institute of Agriculture and Agrotechnologies*

Article History Received: 29 July 2023 Revised: 28 October 2023 Accepted: 06 November 2023	Annotation: This article highlights and systematically analyzes the policy of the former Soviet government in Uzbekistan to allow Islam and mosques to operate, and in practice to impose artificial obstacles and restrictions on it. During the analysis, the laws and decisions adopted by the authoritarian regime in this field, the drastic measures taken, and the sources and archival documents were highlighted. Keywords: soviet, power, church, state, school, decree, mosque, worship, Muslim, government, law, mourning, weapon, poverty, material, shrine, spiritual, archive, council, ceremony, tradition, imam, eshan, sheikh, duakhan, parikhan, kadamjo
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From the first days when the covets established their power in Uzbekistan, they took drastic measures to work on the Islamic religion and mosques, which have become an integral part of the spirituality of our people. Especially the decree of the Soviet authorities on January 23, 1918 "On the separation of the Church from the state and the school from the Church" is a clear proof of our opinion. This decree was effective in stopping the operation of about 10,000 mosques in Uzbekistan. By the 1940s, Muslims performed their prayers in only 2-3 mosques in each province, and the rest were restricted by laws passed by the government.

The political situation in the 40s of the 20th century, especially the Second World War, created a turning point in the history of the nations of the world. That is, there was almost no house left where the tinka madori had dried up due to famine, starvation and other material shortages. In such conditions, not only those who are fighting with weapons in their hands, but also those who are toiling behind the front lines, suffering the agony of war, need mental comfort first of all. By 1943, the government, which was well aware of the role of religion as a source of spiritual and educational nourishment, paid attention to giving Islam a limited degree of freedom along with the opportunities given to representatives of other religions.

As a result, on October 20, 1943, the Religious Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan - Religious Control was established in Tashkent. Eshan Bobokhan ibn Abdulmajidkhan was elected to the position of chairman-mufti [1]. The board supervised the opening and operation of mosques. The position of the representative of the Council of Religious Affairs was established under the Council of People's Commissars of the Republic in order to exercise religious supervision, monitor the activities of mosques and priests in the territory of the Republic [2]. It is clear from the reasons given above that despite the fact that the government of the USSR officially allowed the opening of mosques, in practice it imposed artificial obstacles and restrictions on it. As an example, opening a single mosque required the recommendation of the USSR Central Committee and the decision of the USSR Central Committee, which made it difficult for believers to open a synagogue.

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From the fourth quarter of 1944 to the first quarter of 1945, the representative of the Council of Religious Affairs in Uzbekistan received 214 applications to open a mosque. Only 15 of them, i.e. 14.2%, were positively resolved, and the remaining 199 applications, i.e. 85.8%, were rejected. On December 31, 1946, there were 72 mosques authorized by the Council of Religious Affairs in Uzbekistan, most of which were opened in 1946. For example, according to the documents of the central Dalat archive, 4 out of 7 mosques in Andijan region, 2 out of 4 mosques in Namangan region, 4 out of 5 mosques in Bukhara region, 5 out of 6 mosques in Kashkadarya region were allowed to operate this year [3]. By November 1, 1947, the number of mosques in the Republic reached 90 [4]. The reason for the increase in the number of mosques is that, according to the existing regulations, mosques that have been operating for a long time were required to be registered with the state. Out of the 90 mosques operating in the republic, only 29 were established with the permission of the Council of Religious Affairs, while the remaining 61 were registered because they had been operating for a long time.

The Soviet government, not interested in the proliferation of mosques, took measures to stop this process. On November 20, 1947, the representative of the Council of Religious Affairs for Uzbekistan states in his information about the temples registered in Andijan region until November 1: "The registration of the temples that have been working for a long time has been stopped. After that, synagogues will be registered only with the permission of the Council of Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR" [5].

In the decision of the Council of Ministers of Uzbekistan dated June 20, 1953 "On the facts of violation of Soviet laws on religious ceremonies", the Ministry of Finance of Uzbekistan was tasked with the task of identifying and taxing priests who are operating illegally [6]. On August 26, 1953, the regional representatives of the Council of Religious Affairs appointed 138 from Andijan region, 111 from Namangan region, 50 from Samarkand region, 25 from Bukhara region, 30 from Tashkent region by the representative for Uzbekistan. A list of 16 priests from the Khorezm region was compiled and submitted to the Republican Finance Department for tax payment, and such measures are known from the content of the decision, which envisages desecration of priests and their exclusion from worship.

In 1956, there were 74 unofficial mosques in Tashkent region alone. 42 of them were closed in 1959, and 15 in 1960 [7]. The buildings of the decommissioned mosque were immediately given to cultural-educational and economic organizations such as a library, a medical center, a house of pioneers. It was known that such urgent measures were intended to prevent Muslim believers from coming to the mosque to perform worship.

About 20 mosques and shrines were closed in Bukhara region in 1959-1960, including the popular shrines of Bahauddin Naqshband and Abdulkholiq Gijduvani. Another important goal of reducing the number of shrines and stopping their activity is to avoid bringing tourists as much as possible, and to exclude the population from serving such tourists, if negative attitudes towards the Soviet ideology are not aroused in the process of communication with the pilgrims, and in the matter of foreign relations, local leaders are religious. We can understand that it is aimed at not increasing the activity of the leaders.

On January 13, 1960, the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a decision [8] "On measures to end violations of Soviet laws on religious rites by priests", and according to this decision, on February 4, 1960, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan "On facts of violations of Soviet laws on religious rites", which criticized the clergy for overstaffing, expanding and renovating synagogues. For example, based on archival documents, for example, on June 20, 1961, the Ordzhonikidze district executive committee of the "Unkurgan" mosque built 2 porches without the permission of the local authorities and expanded the capacity of the prayer area. [9]

As a result, on the basis of the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan on February 4, 1960 "On facts of violation of Soviet laws on religious ceremonies" [10], the local Party Soviet offices started a sharp struggle against mosques and priests. Prior to these decisions, mosques were still being opened, albeit to a limited extent. After these decisions, the

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mosques opened with the permission of the Council of Religious Affairs began to be closed. According to the information of the representative of the Council of Religious Affairs for Uzbekistan on September 1, 1962, "Kyzil Sukuk", "Chigatoy", "Chakir", "Sarichopon" in Tashkent city, "Khovast", "Kumkurgan", Andijan in the Tashkent region, operating with the permission of the Soviet authorities. "Goyib Berdi", "Sufi Domla" in the region, "Mitan" mosques in the Samarkand region were stopped and closed [11].

Also, mosques continued to be closed under the pretext of construction of new mosques without permission, construction of new prayer rooms, porches, mosque administration building, hotel, etc., and expansion of the prayer area in official mosques. For example, at the end of the 1950s, 2 new mosques were built in Tashkent city and 4 new mosques in Tashkent region.

In 1944-1945, 11 registered mosques in "Oktyabr" (now "Shaikhontohur") district of Tashkent city have a prayer area of 2141 m. sq. has been On January 1, 1961, their area was 9347 sq.m. extended[12]. Despite the fact that the believers did not harm the state by carrying out these constructions at their own expense, they were punished. Some of the official mosques were destroyed due to the construction of additional buildings without the permission of the Soviet authorities. Newly built and renovated informal mosques are not registered.

Under the pressure of the Soviet authorities, the Board of Religious Control of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan made a decision to reduce the number of mosques on February 17, 1961[13]. Based on this decision, the number of worshipers and technical staff serving in mosques in the regions was also reduced. According to the information provided by the Religious Control of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, on January 1, 1960, 493 employees worked in the mosques of the Republic, and by July 1, 1961, their number was 247[14]. That is, it is clearly known based on the evidence that the staff of the mosque has been reduced by 50%. It is known that these actions of the Soviet authorities were considered to be measures taken in connection with the separation of the ideas of religious concepts from society, with the intention of reducing and weakening the activities of existing mosques and believers, instilling negative attitudes towards religion in the minds of people, and ultimately strengthening atheistic propaganda.

In general, at all stages of this Mustabid regime, he fought against Islam and the mosques that were its support. During the war and in the following years, he made limited concessions to Islam and other religions only when circumstances demanded. While the government allowed the opening of mosques and synagogues in order to reduce people's hatred of the authoritarian regime and provide spiritual support to war-torn people, in order to control this process and reduce the influence of religion and religious people on the life of society, it limited their activities with various obstacles and excuses, and closed some of them. Instead, cultural-educational and economic warehouses such as a library, a medical center, and a house of pioneers were established. No matter how much the adopted Soviet laws fought against the spirituality and enlightenment of Islam, closed mosques and persecuted believers, they could not squeeze Islam from the minds and hearts of the Uzbek people.

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