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The Relationship between the Soviet Authority and Religion (Based on Materials from the Periodical Press of Karakalpakstan in the 1930s)

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Abstract:

The article is devoted to the relationship between the Soviet government and religion, which was expressed on the pages of periodicals. Based on press materials, the evolution of the Bolsheviks' struggle with religion and the clergy is shown. It is indicated that the fight against religion was closely connected with the foundations of the traditional way of life and the introduction of new forms of social consciousness through the periodical press.

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Introduction. One of the first Decrees of the Soviet government was “On the separation of church from state, school from church,” adopted by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR on January 20, 1918. Although this did not mean declaring the new government's struggle against religion, simply, like any secular state, the document guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion, and legal equality of religions. However, in practice, a “cavalry attack” on religion soon began, although its echoes did not reach the Muslim outskirts of the former Russian Empire soon.

Despite the decisions of the Soviet state “on the separation of church and state” in relation to Islam, there were no attacks against Christianity. At the same time, the religious Muslim clergy was formally removed from government affairs, but they remained active participants in social processes. In the 1920s, the influence of the religious clergy on society in the region was strong; mosques and madrassas played a large role in socio-cultural life, and religion itself was closely intertwined in everyday life. M. Ozol, who arrived from the center, testified that the clergy plays an important role in the life of Karakalpak society: he points to the facts of the clergy's interference in Soviet-party work, “when the ishan enters the Ugorkom, all members of the latter stand up and give him reverence and respect.” The Muslim clergy had great influence not only on ordinary people, but also on responsible

officials in power. "There is information," he writes further, "that Karakum Ishan [1] summons responsible workers and proposes to cancel the decision of people's judges and generally influences responsible workers. In addition, the majority of party members are religious, so they are loyal to the performance of such religious customs, which have long been prohibited by the Soviet government (polygamy, bride price, etc.)" [2].

Materials and methods. In historiographical science, there is a variety of approaches to the study of periodicals, the most common of which are: 1) a comprehensive study of the history of the emergence and functioning of a particular press organ; 2) search and study of facts, materials and information in periodicals that make it possible to reveal a particular topic. They are interconnected and conditional on each other, and in general they underlie the traditional historical approach to the study of periodicals, which considers the press as a source of factual data and materials.

Among the main methodological concepts, the principles of historicism, science, and objectivity are highlighted. When studying materials from periodicals, methods of comparative and historical-retrospective analysis, interpretation, structural-semiotic method and problem-thematic approach were used.

Results and discussion. Several stages can be distinguished in the struggle against religion in Karakalpakstan: 1921-1928, 1929-1937 and 1938-1941. Each stage in the fight against religion is characterized by unique features of anti-religious propaganda, which characterize the entire course of this process. For example, in 1921-1929. anti-religious propaganda proceeded cautiously. At the initial stage, one of the first documents of an anti-religious nature was the Decree of the Central Committee of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of June 14, 1921 on the ban on polygamy and bride price. In Karakalpakia, they did not openly speak out against religion: this issue was raised in fragments, and during the formation of the Karakalpak Soviet autonomy (late 1924 - early 1925) it was even considered the most explosive and local authorities tried not to prematurely cause unwanted excesses. Thus, in February 1925, the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Karakalpak Autonomous Region, A. Kudabaev, pointed out that "provocative rumors began to spread among the population about the alleged impending closure of all Muslim mosques," that he even had to turn to the population "with categorical confirmation of the non-interference of local authorities in religious affairs of the population" [3]. The middle class - traders, entrepreneurs, peasants, industrialists, peasants, and naturally the clergy themselves - were especially aggressive against the anti-religious rhetoric of the authorities. The Soviet-party activists of the region could not compete in the aul and kishlak with the wealth and clergy, therefore they could not ignore them in their activities, but for the time being, did not interfere in their affairs. However, the wealth and the clergy began to actively participate in social processes, which was manifested in the election campaign for the elections of local councils in 1925/1926. Denying the Bolshevik policy in the field of land use (abolition of land sales), family relations (abolition of kalym), appealing to the traditional way of life, they pointed out that a Muslim cannot evade his laws, and no matter how they are dictated to, they will still remain with their customs [4]. The clergy even claimed representation in local government bodies.

Therefore, even after the formation of the KAO and the formation of a more or less coherent structure of power both in the center and locally, there could be no talk of full-scale anti-religious propaganda. As part of this, there was a struggle for the abolition of bride price and polygamy, marriages with minors were mainly carried out among young people and women, however, this also caused rejection.

At the II Plenum of the Karakalpak regional committee of the CPSU (b) (1926), all delegates noted that “with regard to anti-religious propaganda among the population and youth, there were cases of confirmation from students about the non-existence of God, which had a negative phenomenon among the youth of the village, as well as dehkans. This forces us to conduct anti-religious propaganda carefully” [5].

In the mid-1920s, the periodical press played a large role in the agitation and propaganda struggle against religion. The Erkin Karakalpak newspaper began publishing in 1924 and was just getting on its feet. A network of wall newspapers at regional institutions was widely distributed, among which the newspaper “Bezbozhnik”, published in Turtkul and which was the organ of the regional department of the Union of Atheists, stood out. This organization was formed in 1925, which from June 1929 began to be called the Union of Militant Atheists (LUB). The main political goal of this organization and its printed organ was the fight against all religions and creeds, although due to the language and coverage of the reading audience in the conditions of Karakalpakstan, the influence of the newspaper on the masses was negligible.

The second stage of the struggle is characterized by an active attack on the nobles and clergy. After the Takhtakupyr events of 1929 [6], “purges” began in Karakalpak society among the Soviet party apparatus and the clergy. According to the directive of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of August 8, 1929, the clergy was assigned to category I, subject to liquidation as a class. After these events, 534 people were arrested in Karakalpakstan, of which 142 were shot, most of whom were representatives of the highest clergy [7].

In the early 1930s, a network of periodicals in Karakalpakstan began to form [8]. By that time, the Soviet-party activists of the KAO had become significantly stronger and had good administrative resources. Strengthening the material and technical base of the publishing industry has made it possible for new newspapers to appear and expand the scope of their distribution and influence. The leading publications in Karakalpakstan were the newspapers “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan” and “Soviet Karakalpakstan”.

In the 1930s, one of the main topics on the pages of these newspapers was the fight against religion and the religious clergy. It became obvious that the struggle was for mass consciousness and public opinion - the main levers of influence and control of society. Considering the interweaving of the religious and every day in the life of Karakalpak society, the Bolsheviks’ struggle with the clergy was a struggle against the decisive elements of social life (mosques-madrassas, schools, families, etc.), reproducing traditional cultural values. Thus, in 1927, the Karakum Ishana, Tas Madrassas, Arzymbet Ishana, Asamatdin Ishana and Yeshim Akhun madrassas in Kungrad, the Bes Ishan madrassas in Takhtakupyr, the Khan Meshit madrassas in Chimbay, and the Kum Ozek madrassas were closed. The total number of mosques and madrasahs on the territory of the KAO in 1930 was about 500, where 5236 people studied, who were mentored by 308 clergy [9].

On the pages of the press in the early 1930s there was no programmatic document or speech; only fragments of reports from the field were printed, indicating the presence of mullahs or the son of Ishan, “who should be shamefully expelled from the collective farm.” For example, “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan” published material about Serzhan Akhun’s son, Uzak, who worked as the secretary of the village council. This message is signed by a certain “Anykshyl” (literally “honest”). He writes that Uzak is the son of the famous Serzhan Akhun, who at one time was a Sufi of the Karakum Ishan himself, “in 1925-1930 he was a muadzin of Kamal Ishan. And today the son of Akhun is a member of the

collective farm,” while accusing them of preventing them from involving their children in school. The author also points out that due to such alien elements, 14 heads of livestock disappeared on this collective farm [10].

As part of anti-religious propaganda, there was a fight against bride price and the marriage of underage girls, mainly on the pages of “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan”. For example, on its pages there were constant messages like “Ugylzhan mal ornyna satyldy” (about a 12-year-old girl married to a bride price of 1 horse, 2 batpanas [11] of wheat, 300 rubles), “Kylysh uly kyzyn mal ornyna satty” (about an 11-year-old girl who was sold for 1800 rubles and 8 batpans of wheat), etc. This phenomenon was widespread and was especially widespread among the population of the southern part of Karakalpakstan. In these areas, the influence of the clergy on traditional everyday culture was strong, and accordingly the Soviet-party apparatus in the second half of the 1930s. attacked the mosque, traditional education, traditional family rituals as key elements of social life.

In May 1937, on the pages of the press of Karakalpakstan, an editorial of the Pravda newspaper was reprinted under the title “Anti-religious propaganda”, which indicated the widespread introduction of the fight against religion, while “this agitation and propaganda work cannot be limited to narrow educational goals, it must be closely linked with tasks of the class struggle at the current stage [12]. Soon, the first secretary of the Karakalpak regional party committee, D. Rizaev, speaking at the VII regional party conference, spoke about the strengthening of the anti-Soviet movements of local nationalists, coupled with the Karakalpak clergy, and pointed to a merciless fight against them [13].

The struggle against religion continued on the pages of the press with renewed vigor. Looking ahead, we point out that the struggle was not only against religious rituals and prejudices, at the heart of everything was the elimination of customs and rituals, traditions and way of life that determined the national mentality and worldview of Karakalpak society. The authorities fought against those who professed Islam and its precepts, but also against values (piety, mutual respect, worship of the spirits of ancestors (zyyarat), sacrifice (kurbanlyk, sadaka), etc.), which for representatives of the center were “religious prejudices.” For example, “Kyzyl Karakalpakstan” accused the mullahs from the Koshkar-ata sanctuary, in the Takhtakupyr district, of “collecting funds for the repair of the Kabakly-ata and Ayimbet Ishan mosques.” The same newspaper wrote that in the fall of 1937, residents of the village of Taza Amirabad, Turtkul district, built a house for the disgraced Khan Maksym (Ubaydulla Bakhauatdinov) [14]. Local authorities were also aware of this (who were later declared “enemies of the people”), and the actions of the collective farmers were regarded as political illiteracy, “a threat to their happy life.” Some materials criticized the usual image of a local activist, “who read namaz, complied with all the requirements of Islam,” while being a party member or Komsomol member [15].

Press materials show that even by the end of the 1930s the population still maintained the traditional basis of life. Muslim schools functioned in many remote villages and villages. For example, “Soviet Karakalpakstan wrote about the local school of Karabatyrov in the Shabbaz region, who organized a religious school at his home for 30 children and taught them the Koran, while teaching the children to write in Arabic script.” The newspaper writes that “similar facts occur in the Chimbay district,” in some districts (Muynak) even collective farms allocated money for the opening of mosques, where “the mullahs were engaged in healing the sick” [16].

On March 31, 1938, a republican meeting on the fight against religion and the clergy was convened in the city of Turtkul. Speaking at it, the secretary of the Karakalpak regional party committee, Pavlov,

pointed out the lack of due attention to this issue. “Our leaders, especially the grassroots apparatus, do not give due influence on issues of agitation and propaganda,” he said, “considering this issue as secondary.” Pavlov accused the previous leadership of the republic of having close ties with the clergy, pointed out the tasks facing the activists of the republic in the fight against religion and the clergy, opposing science to religion, and drawing the population’s attention to scientific thought. It is indicated here that this meeting opened the way for a decisive fight against religion in the republic [17]. By the way, at that meeting the Organizing Bureau of the Central Council of the Union of “Militant Atheists” of the KKASSR was formed, and A. Piskunov was elected its head.

Anti-religious hysteria began on the pages of the press in Karakalpakstan. The pages of newspapers are filled with the names of materials - “On anti-religious propaganda”, “Strengthen anti-religious propaganda”, “The fight against religion is the fight for communism”, “Anti-religious propaganda is the most important task of party organizations”, “Kopshiliktin’ dykkatyn usygan audaryý kerek”, “Dinge karsy propaganda kusheytilsin”, etc. For newly arrived representatives of the center, performing namaz, observing fasting, marrying on the basis of a religious wedding ceremony, or the ritual of giving alms in favor of the mosque were “religious prejudices,” as were respect for elders, memory of ancestors, worship of spiritual power, etc., with which need to be fought. At every meeting or meeting, the actions of responsible workers (inaction, complacency, complacency) and the population (for performing “ziarat” on the grave of their ancestors, collecting money for the improvement of cemeteries or for the construction of a mosque, etc.) were criticized from the pages of newspapers.

On the eve of major traditional religious holidays, large articles were published that substantiated the groundlessness and harmfulness of its ideas for the common population, pointing out that religion is a weapon that oppresses people in the hands of the wealthy-ishans. To some extent, at that time religion became such, and the clergy became a conservative force, supporters of the medieval traditional way of life. In reality, many mullahs, for example, were against universal literacy, opposed the education of women and girls in Soviet schools, their participation in public life, and remained committed to marrying girls off at an early age and paying kalym. They opposed the mechanization of agriculture and treatment in medical institutions. In auls and villages, mullahs, taubas and florkhans were engaged in “treatment”, who maimed people, sometimes leading to the death of the patient. For example, in the Turtkul region, patients with malaria, on the advice of a healer, went to the cemetery, as a result of which there was a danger of the spread of this disease. In the Chimbay region, a healer treated a patient by “expelling evil spirits.” Moreover, at that time the republic had a relatively qualified network of medical institutions [18].

Anti-religious rhetoric in the press subsided somewhat after the adoption of the resolution of the Karakalpak regional party committee “On strengthening anti-religious propaganda work” dated June 14, 1939, which, in particular, indicated the strengthening of the work of the SSB. Back in May 1938, A. Piskunov was appointed to head this organization; by 1941, the regional council of the SVB counted 115 cells in Karakalpakstan with more than 6,000 members. Although before the outbreak of World War II, the press invariably published materials on anti-religious themes, now it was not so much about the fight against the clergy, but about those “who pretend to be activists, but in fact remain committed to religious institutions.” For example, the press testified that in 1940 the anti-religious struggle met passive resistance from the bulk, including local activists. In one of the meetings, the district leadership advocates banning ziyarats at the Sultan Baba and Shabbaz Ata cemeteries and their closure. The proposal was supported by the leaders of the local party and Komsomol organization, and

no one came out in their support, not even a meeting resolution on this issue was adopted. Or the press quotes the words of the head of the party cabinet of the Takhtakupyr district, Ayakeev, who asked: "Why intensify anti-religious propaganda, if Ayimbet Ishan has already died, the rest have been liquidated?!"

Publications in the Karakalpakstan press of this period indicate the deliberate assistance of the Soviet government in creating an ideological vacuum and filling public opinion with new content, thus creating loyal or government-controlled behavioral and social attitudes. Thus, on the pages of "Kyzyl Karakalpakstan", a certain E. Sultanov publishes the material "Dinnin' reactionlyk siyasyatyna karsy propaganda kusheytilsin", where the author indicates that 18 sheikhs from the Sultan Baba sanctuary preach that "Kuranda okydy besikten gorge shekem izlemek pariz dur, ilimy bolmak bir Gana erkek emes, gayal-kyzlarga da parizdur, sonlyktan Bolshevikler Kurannyn korsetpesin orynlau ushyn galaba baslavysh okydy, likbezdi doretti" (lit. "Studying the Koran from the cradle until the end of one's days is everyone's duty, being literate is not only the duty men, but also women Therefore, the Bolsheviks are fulfilling the will of the Koran by opening universal primary schools and educational programs." Firstly, this indicates a transformation of the clergy, and secondly, despite the desire of the Soviet government to eliminate illiteracy, it, through the mouth of the author of this article, considers these words of the sheikhs to be "counter-revolutionary agitation." That is, at this stage the authorities were struggling not with the teachings of Islam, but with the role of religion itself in social development. For example, Y. Sharipov writes in his article that "The rituals and customs of the religion of Islam are very harmful. Throughout the general history of the religion of Islam, these customs and rituals served only the interests of the exploiting classes. We know that today they serve their interests" [19]. Such propaganda materials became the basis of the "Help to the Propagandist" column, especially often in the newspaper "Kyzyl Karakalpakstan". For example, the history of the emergence of traditional religious holidays and their essence was explained to readers. Thus, in the article "Kurban Bayramy xam onyn' reactionlyk roles," the authors write that the holiday itself appeared even before the emergence of Islam among the tribes of western Arabia in the Hijaz region. The essence of the origin of the Hajj, the cult of worship in the Kaaba of the pre-Islamic period, the connection of some stories of the Koran with the Bible and other sacred scriptures are also explained. That is, the authors, with knowledge of the subject, reflect on the essence of religion, which is much deeper than previous press materials on anti-religious propaganda.

Conclusions. The anti-religious struggle of the Soviet government was directed against the functioning of religion in society as an ideology and a set of norms that shape the everyday practices and way of thinking of people. Anti-religious practice in periodicals indicates that the content of this struggle was carried out to master public consciousness, establish a unified ideology, and on this basis to educate a completely new type of person - "homo sovietisms".

Recommendations. Today it is definitely clear that the Soviet government waged the fight against religion using all possible measures, forms and means, including through the periodical press. The end result of this activity is obvious, for our society has not become universally "spiritless," but it has not become completely atheistic. The evolution of propaganda rhetoric on the pages of newspapers shows that during periods of major transformations or turning points, it is difficult to find that "golden" mean and adequately comprehend reality. Despite the resistance (even passive) of part of the population, including the Soviet party activists, the Soviet government waged an active struggle to eradicate religious dogmas, otherwise it would have been impossible to build a "bright future." In the

historiography of the problem of the Soviet period, we find pictures of the clergy's resistance to the new order, and in modern history we calculate the damage from the "cavalry attack" of the Soviet regime on religion. Today it is difficult to draw parallels in this aspect, but as a result of scientific understanding of the problem, we gain important experience in the formation of a new society, a new reality, a new system of community life and interaction.

Sources and Literature.

1. Karakum ishan (Kutly Khoja ishan) is one of the major representatives of Sufism of the 19th century. in Karakalpakstan. His name is associated with the fact that he built mosques (the latter on sandy terrain, hence the name Karakum), formed a large educational center (madrasah), which became famous and popular during the time of his sons and grandsons. The madrasah was liquidated at the end of the 1920s. For more details, see: Karlybaev M. Madrasah in Karakalpakstan in the 19th - early 20th centuries. – N., 2002.
2. CSA of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (CSA RK), f. R-551, op. 1, d. 147, l. 38.
3. Central State Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. 13, op. 1, d. 38, l. 4.
4. Central State Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. 5, op. 6, d. 70b, l. 18.
5. Central State Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. R-551, op. 1, d. 342, l. 7.
6. In 1929, the anti-Soviet movement intensified on the territory of Karakalpakstan, the apogee of which was the Takhtakupir uprising in September 1929. This movement was led by representatives of the Muslim clergy. For more details, see: Allaniyazov T. "Counter-revolution" in Kazakhstan: Chimbay variant. – Almaty, 1999; Dauletova G. Takhtakupir uprising of 1929. Author's abstract. diss. Ph.D. Sci. – Nukus, 2001.
7. Babashev Sh. Dəxmet degishi. – Nukus, 2009. P. 3.
8. Nurzhanov S. The press of Karakalpakstan in the 30s of the twentieth century and mass consciousness. //O'zbekiston tarixi, 2016, No. 1, p. 38.
9. Central State Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. R-551, op. 2, d. 378, l. 15.
10. Qizil Qaraqalpaqstan, 1935, January 2.
11. Batpan is a measure of weight equal to 131 kg.
12. Soviet Karakalpakstan. 1937, May 9.
13. Soviet Karakalpakstan. 1937, May 26.
14. Ubaydulla Bakhauatdinov (Khan Maksym) is one of the leaders of the people's liberation movement of the 1917-1920s. in the Chimbaysky district. He was arrested several times by the Soviet authorities for "counter-revolutionary activities" (1921, 1929), returned from exile (1934) and lived for some time with his family in the Turtkul region. Due to constant persecution and threats from the authorities, he fled to the territory of Turkmenistan. Died in 1956.
15. Qizil Qaraqalpaqstan, 1938, April 5.
16. Soviet Karakalpakstan, 1937, May 4.
17. Soviet Karakalpakstan, 1938, April 2.
18. Elmuratova A. – Nukus, 1994. pp. 33-35.
19. Qizil Qaraqalpaqstan, 1939, October 11.