

# Islam and Atheism in the North Caucasus

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During the winter of 1940-41, two small North Caucasian mountain tribes—the Chechens and Ingushes—staged a major rebellion against Soviet rule. The revolt was crushed and, by way of reprisal, the entire Muslim population of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic (over half a million people) was accused of treason—“collaboration” with the Germans—and on 23 February 1944 was deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan. The Republic itself was liquidated and its territory divided between the RSFSR and the Georgian SSR.<sup>1</sup> Only after Stalin’s death were the surviving Chechens and Ingushes rehabilitated. In 1957 the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Autonomous Republic) was restored by a decree of the Supreme Soviet and the Muslims were allowed to return to their homeland.

In February 1944 all the mosques in the territory of the Republic<sup>2</sup> were destroyed. After the rehabilitation of these two deported mountain tribes, the Soviet authorities embarked upon a novel experiment: an attempt to destroy religion by depriving the population of places of worship.<sup>3</sup> Between 1943 and 1978, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was the only Muslim territory in which no officially authorized mosques were allowed. However, in 1978 the journal of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, *Muslims of the Soviet East* (English edition) of Tashkent,<sup>4</sup> announced the opening of two mosques in the Chechen-Ingush Republic: one in Prigorodny, the suburban area of the capital Grozny, the other in the *aul* of Surohi, in the Ingush territory. The radical experiment had failed.

Soviet observers note that the Chechen-Ingush territory is more than ever a bastion of traditional Islam and one of the most “religious” Muslim territories of the USSR. Specialists agree that the survival—or revival—of religious feelings among the North Caucasian mountain tribes is mainly due to the intense activity of the two Sufi brotherhoods: the Naqshbandiya and the Qadiriya.\*

\* These were introduced into the North Caucasus in the late 18th century and at the end of the 19th century respectively. On the Sufi brotherhoods in the USSR see “Muslim

There is not one mosque left in the Republic and therefore no official clerics who could exercise any influence on the believers, but religious propaganda is being conducted by the *mürid* (= Sufi) brotherhoods.<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet authorities were obviously worried by the religious situation in the North Caucasus. Far from weakening religious feeling, the total destruction of all places of worship only exacerbated the conservative trend—Soviet sources mention “fanaticism”—and the xenophobia of the population. According to our information, the North Caucasus—especially the Chechen-Ingush ASSR—is the most violently anti-Russian territory of the entire USSR.

Several scholarly surveys were organized in the late '60s and '70s<sup>6</sup> to examine this apparent paradox. Their results have been summarized in *The Character of Religiosity and the Problems of Atheist Education*† (hereafter cited as *CRPAE*), a remarkable recent publication of the Chechen-Ingush Institute of History, Sociology and Philosophy, attached to the Council of Ministers of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. The following three chapters are especially important: Adam A. Karatayev (head of the Section of Sociology and Scientific Atheism of the Chechen-Ingush Institute of History, Sociology and Philosophy), “Party Direction in the Formation of the Atheistic Outlook” (“*Partiinoye rukovodstvo protsessom formirovaniya ateisticheskogo mneniya*”), pp. 6-23; Vakha Yu. Gadayev (Scientific Secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Institute of History, Sociology and Philosophy), “The Character of the Religiosity of Rural Youth” (“*O kharaktere religioznosti selskoi molodyozhi*”), pp. 40-57; Dzhemalda Dzh. Mezhidov (professor of philosophy in the same institute), “The Relationship between Religion and Nationalism” (“*Problemy vzaimosvyazi religii i natsionalizma*”), pp. 84-102. In these chapters we find, for the first time, factual, precise and apparently reliable data about the level of religious belief among young Muslims in the North Caucasus.

### *Belief in God*

According to V. Yu. Gadayev (*CRPAE* pp. 40-1), “The idea of God among the young generation of Chechen and Ingush believers is strongly influenced by the Sufi doctrine . . . It is a blend of the abstract, pantheistic God of the mystics with the anthropomorphic pre-Islamic deity.” Gadayev divides the young believers into four categories as follows:

a) The less educated among the young believers with a very limited knowledge of the dogmas of Islam. Their idea of God is partly Religious Conservatism and Dissent in the USSR” by Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey in *RCL* Vol. 6, No. 3, 1978, pp. 155-9. *Ed.*

† *Kharakter religioznosti i problemy ateisticheskogo vospitaniya*, Grozny, 1979.

pantheistic and partly anthropomorphic. Their religious convictions seem rather unstable.

b) Those who think it is a sin to imagine God as a person. People in this category have generally little education, and their knowledge of Islamic dogmas is limited, but in contrast to the first category they possess a blind faith in God.

c) Young people of a high educational and cultural level who wish to justify their belief in God by theological knowledge. Their idea of God is a purely pantheistic one: "God is everywhere, the entire world, is His revelation."

d) "The most cultivated and the most modern" among the younger generation "for whom God is a pure abstraction."

Belief in the prophecy of Mohammed occupies a special and important place. In the popular view, the Prophet is a kind of "national ancestor" of the Chechens, "the defender of his Umma".\* Gadayev (CRPAE p. 43) remarks that the "emphasis of religious propaganda is placed on the role of the Prophet".

According to recent surveys, out of 265 young believers questioned, 40.5 per cent said that they believed in the immortality of the soul (Gadayevev, CRPAE p. 45) and 55.6 per cent said that they believed in the afterlife, in Heaven and Hell.

#### *The Five Pillars of Faith (usul ud-Din)*

Recent sociological surveys do not mention the *shahada* (profession of faith) which is performed in the secret of the heart and therefore escapes detection. The *hajj* (pilgrimage to the holy places of Arabia) is also never mentioned because of the small number of pilgrims: 30 to 60 yearly. The *zakat* (legal alms) is forbidden by Soviet law, but its substitute, the *sadaqa* (voluntary contribution to the mosque) is one of the most tenacious religious survivals (Gadayevev, CRPAE p. 55). Since all the Chechen mosques were closed in 1943 and only two of them re-opened in 1978, one may wonder to whom the *sadaqa* is paid. It is probably paid to the Sufi orders and their clandestine houses of prayer.

The extent of the survival of the last two pillars of faith may, on the other hand, be analysed statistically: the *namaz* (five prayers daily) remains "the main expression of faith" in Chechenia. According to a survey carried out in the *sovkhos* (state farm) "Rodina" (Lenin district) in 1976, 35.2 per cent of the young men prayed five times a day, though only 24.4 per cent did so systematically (Gadayevev, CRPAE p. 52).<sup>7</sup> The *Uraza* (the fast during Ramadhan) is still observed by believers in spite of its painful character. According to a recent survey, out of a group of 746 young people belonging to the villages of Goito and Kantyshevo and including both believers and unbelievers, 38.8

\* The community of believers. Ed.

per cent observed the *Uraza*. No less than 23.4 per cent fasted the whole month, which is an extraordinarily high proportion, whereas the others fasted only three to five days (Gadayev, *CRPAE* p. 52). Gadayev notes that "among the unbelievers, one frequently meets young people who observe the fast on the first, the fifteenth and the last days of Ramadhan". Quoting from the local press, he writes: "The non-believers often consider that it is inconvenient to eat in front of fasting believers." The proportion of young Chechens and Ingushes who pray five times a day (the *namaz*) and observe the fast of Ramadhan is remarkably high. It is certainly even higher among the adults.

### *Religious Festivals*

One of the great religious festivals, the *Uraza-Bairam* (or *Aid al-Fitr*), which marks the end of Ramadhan and lasts three days, is especially popular among the younger generation. According to Gadayev (*CRPAE* p. 52), 63.1 per cent of the young people (believers and non-believers) celebrate this festival.

The *Mawlud* (the Prophet's birthday) is celebrated by 56.1 per cent of the young believers and non-believers. This particular festival has a strong "nationalist colouring" as the Prophet and his companions are closely associated with the *sheikhs* (wise old men) of the Sufi brotherhoods in the *Mawlud* ceremonies.

### *Religious Customs*

Three main family rites are observed by the vast majority of Muslims: circumcision, which is "complied with by the absolute majority of young parents" (Gadayev, *CRPAE* p. 55);<sup>8</sup> religious burial in exclusively Muslim cemeteries, which is observed by all Muslims, without exception, including members of the Communist Party and the Militant Godless; and religious marriage. Gadayev (*CRPAE* p. 55) supplies some interesting information about this last ceremony: according to a recent survey carried out by Dzh. Dzh. Mezhidov (professor of Philosophy at the University of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR), "the proportion of young couples married according to *Shariyat* law constitutes 92.7 per cent of the total number of Chechen and Ingush marriages".<sup>9</sup>

### *Activity of the Sufi "Tariqats"\**

Gadayev (*CRPAE* p. 50) states that the belief in the holiness of the *sheikhs-ustads* (spiritual masters)—this being the very basis of

\* These are secret societies. The word *tariqat* denotes the "path" leading to God. *Ed.*

Sufism—is “in the process of disappearing” thanks to active anti-religious work. Nevertheless, quoting recent sociological surveys, he adds that “50.9 per cent of young believers declared themselves to be adepts of a specific *wird*”.<sup>10</sup> Since Sufi brotherhoods are outlawed by the Soviet authorities, the percentage of 50.9 per cent is certainly a minimum. Many young adepts (*mürid*), especially those who are simultaneously members of the Communist Party or of the Komsomol, are certainly practising the *taqiya*<sup>11</sup> without acknowledging their connection with a Sufi order.

The percentage of Sufi adepts is obviously considerably higher among the older generation. We may therefore conclude that the percentage of Sufi members in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR is between 55 and 60 per cent.<sup>12</sup> The total Muslim population of the Republic amounts to a million.<sup>13</sup> According to recent sociological surveys, approximately 13 per cent are firm believers and 15 per cent are believers by tradition. Excluding the “waverers” and those who observe religious rites under compulsion from their relatives, the total percentage of “believers” would therefore amount to a minimum of 28 per cent of the total Muslim population in the North Caucasus. In the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, they would number some 280,000 individuals. The number of Sufi adepts may be estimated at 154,000 or 170,000, an extraordinarily high figure if we remember that before the October Revolution there were, on the territory of what is now the Chechen-Ingush Republic, only 60,000 *mürids* with 38 *sheikhs*.<sup>14</sup>

We may reasonably assume that before the Second World War this number was reduced to almost nothing. It was during the period of “the cult of personality” [Soviet euphemism for Stalin’s crimes. *Ed.*], when the mountain tribes were deported to Siberia and to Kazakhstan (1944-45) and after their return (1957-58), that Sufism made such an extraordinary advance. Gadayev (*CRPAE* p. 51) adds:

We must not imagine however that all young believers [as listed under this percentage of 50.9 per cent] are active adepts of some Sufi brotherhood. They do not honour a specific *ustad* (master) and do not strictly follow the rule of their *wird* [see note 10]. Many young believers consider themselves as *mürids* of a specific *wird* by virtue of tradition rather than belief in the holiness of its founder.

This statement may be compared to a recent Soviet analysis of the structure of Sufi brotherhoods by another Chechen specialist:

During the last 20 to 30 years, *müridism* [from *mürid*: adept] underwent important changes in Chechenia-Ingushetia and we may assume that it has finally reached its ideal form—the form best fitted to contemporary conditions: that of a small *mürid* community composed of some families, living in the same village (and also of

members of the same families living in other villages). The religious leader of the community is the mullah or in the absence of a mullah, the most active member among the *mürids*. Each community is attached to a *tariqat* and refers to the spiritual authority of its founder, but the ties between different groups originating from the same *tariqat* are only superficial. At present the religious life of the Chechen-Ingush Muslims is confined within a small *mürid* community . . . All members of the family take part in the activity of the community, including the unbelievers. At any moment the community may intervene in the private life of its younger members and their reaction is impossible to foresee. Even when a young man is indifferent to "God's punishment" he would find it difficult to oppose public opinion within his community.<sup>15</sup>

The ceremony of the *zikr*,<sup>16</sup> which is the central element of Sufi ritual, is performed at every possible opportunity. As a rule, it is mainly the older members of the community who participate in the *zikr*, but according to Gadayev (*CRPAE* p. 53), 19.3 per cent out of a total of 746 young people surveyed—both believers and unbelievers—declared that it is their practice to assist at the *zikr* ceremonies. Gadayev stresses the "dangerous", highly emotional, "theatrical" quality of the *zikr*, especially of the "loud" *zikr* of the Qadiris.<sup>17</sup>

Pilgrimage to the *ziarat* (tomb of a saint) holy places, generally tombs of Sufi saints—a substitute for the almost impossible *hajj* to Mecca and Medina—mainly involves members of the older generation, women and small children, but Gadayev estimates that 12.7 per cent of the younger generation participate regularly in the pilgrimage.<sup>18</sup>

The article by Dzh. Dzh. Mezhidov (*CRPAE* pp. 96 and 98) throws some light on the "political" implications of Sufi activity:

The "religious authorities" [an expression used to designate the *sheikhs* of the *tariqats*] claim that religious rites, customs and traditions, as well as religious festivals are the national traditions of their ancestors, a spiritual legacy of the past. This legacy confers upon the Chechens and the Ingushes a special nobility, which enriches them spiritually and serves to distinguish them from all other nations. The process of secularization and internationalism, on the other hand, are seen as a decline in morality, as spiritual misery and treason towards the traditions of their ancestors . . . "Religious authorities" are opposed to mixed marriages and invite their *mürids* to fight against the russification of the young Chechen and Ingush.

Quoting the newspaper *Groznensky rabochi* (3 April 1973), Mezhidov writes (*CRPAE* p. 86):

Numerous *mürid* groups propagate the idea of the exclusiveness of the Muslims, who are supposed to be different from nations of another faith. By doing that, they create a dangerous obstacle in the way of friendship among Soviet nations.

#### *Anti-religious Propaganda*

Adam A. Karatayev devotes an article to the weakness of anti-religious propaganda. He denounces the "brutal character and the inefficiency" of anti-religious measures, as advocated by the plenary meetings of the *obkom* (regional committee of the Communist Party) in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR held in December 1964 and on 26 April 1967. Too often the authorities believe that it is possible to liquidate religion in one stroke and for ever. This frontal assault against Islam takes place during the month of Ramadhan and the great Muslim festivals (*Kurban Bairam, Uraza Bairam, Mawlud . . .*). "The religious authorities then proclaim openly, in the local press, that they are breaking away for ever from religion. But as soon as the anti-religious campaign is over, they revert to their faith, and believers do not blame them. On the contrary, they approve of this manoeuvre, which they consider to be the right way to counter an atheist campaign" (Karatayev, *CRPAE* p. 15). Instead of the frontal drive against religion, which proves counterproductive, Karatayev advocates the use of "reasonable" (*razumnye*) administrative measures against religious leaders "who, under the cover of religion, lead an anti-social life and transgress Soviet legislation" (*CRPAE* p. 15). He stresses the need "to create an atheistic public opinion which would isolate the religious authorities from the masses" and notes that up to now there has been no such trend in public opinion. In the following table Karatayev (*CRPAE* p. 21) summarizes the isolation of atheists in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR:

<i>Attitude towards atheists</i>	<i>Among Chechens</i>	<i>Among Ingushes</i>	<i>Among Russians living in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR</i>
Positive	20%	21.8%	38%
Indifferent	34%	33.8%	22.5%
Ignoring	25%	22.6%	22.7%
Hostile	11%	7%	2.8%
No reply	8%	15.8%	14%

Karatayev (*CRPAE* p. 16) recognizes that too many communists tolerate religion and refuse to get involved openly in the struggle against Islam.

Too often in rural areas teachers are under the influence of their relatives and the "religious authorities" and must hide their atheist opinions even from their own pupils, for fear that they will denounce them to their parents (*CRPAE* p. 21).

Unfortunately the author does not explain what reprisals are feared, whether bullying, ostracism or something else.

A Chechen journalist writing in *Groznensky rabochi* (24 June 1973) states "that teachers do not dare to unfold their atheist views to their students; that a doctor or an engineer is afraid of popular censure by his relatives and the religious authorities . . . that a Party or Komsomol leader, a Minister . . . avoid openly expressing anti-religious opinions" (quoted by Karatayev, *CRPAE* p. 22). A. Yevloyeva, an Ingush journalist, states in *Serdalo* (18 August 1973. Published in Ingush in Grozny):

Many educated intellectuals secretly agree with the religious propagandists who claim that Islam and its servants are the wardens of the national spirit of the Chechens and Ingushes . . . Some of the intellectuals perform religious rites (religious burial, fast . . .) and even defend the religious authorities on moral and material grounds (quoted by Karatayev, *CRPAE* p. 22).

To sum up, in view of the inefficiency of anti-religious propaganda and the intense counter-propaganda of the Sufi *tariqats*, Gadayevev (*CRPAE* p. 55) notes the existence of the following three categories among the young Chechens and Ingushes who practise their religion:<sup>19</sup> first, those who actively participate in the religious cult by personal conviction; second, those who observe religious rites by tradition, without any deep religious belief; third, those who observe religious rites under pressure from their "religious micro-environment".

Gadayevev (*CRPAE* p. 55) also attempts to classify various religious rites and customs according to the degree of their "viability". The least "viable" rites and customs, those that are more or less rapidly disappearing, are those that imply a certain level of knowledge of Islam, such as participation in the *zikr* ceremonies,<sup>20</sup> pilgrimage to holy places and the reading of religious literature. Religious rites and customs such as the daily prayers (*namaz*), voluntary contributions to the mosques (*sadaqa*) and religious burials have fared better and continue to be observed to some extent. The great Muslim festivals, on the other hand, are attended by the majority of the population as a rule, because they are considered to be part of national tradition. The most "viable" rites are circumcision and marriage.



Chechen-Ingush society according to recent Soviet surveys is a deeply traditional community which—after over half a century of violent anti-religious campaigns, several uprisings (in 1920-25, 1928-36, 1940-43) followed by ruthless reprisals and an attempted genocide (1943-44)—is probably more attached to Islam and to its traditions than it was 60 years ago. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR, as well as Dagestan, is certainly the most religious and conservative area of the entire USSR<sup>21</sup> although Ingushetia was only converted to Islam by the Qadiriya *Tariqat* around 1860-70, although it is a highly industrialized province which has been closely in touch with Russians for the last two centuries and where a high proportion of Russians now live (34 per cent Russians as opposed to 61.1 per cent Muslims—Chechens, Ingushes and Dagestanis—according to the 1970 census). It is a small, isolated and mountainous territory but it has played—and continues to play—a vital part in preserving the Islamic faith in the Soviet Union.

<sup>1</sup>On the 1940-43 rebellion and on the attempted genocide of the North Caucasian mountain tribes, see Abdurrahman Avtorkhanov, *Narodoubiistvo v SSSR—Ubiistvo Chechenskogo naroda*, Munich, "Svobodny Kavkaz", 1952 and Patrik von zur Mühlen, *Zwischen Hakenkreuz und Sowjetstern—Der Nationalismus der Sowjetischen Orientvölker im Zweiten Krieg*, Dusseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1971. This last work is based on German archive materials. Other North Caucasian nationalities deported with the Chechens (418,756 in 1959) and the Ingushes (105,980 in 1959) were: the Karachais (81,403 in 1959), the Balkars (42,408 in 1959) and an unknown number of Muslim Ossetians (of the Digor tribe), also, it would seem, some Avars from Northern Dagestan.

<sup>2</sup>In 1920, according to *Istoriko-ekonomicheskoy ocherk Chechenskoi Avtonomnoi Oblasti*, Grozny, 1930, p. 11, there were 2,675 mosques on the territory of the present-day republic and 140 religious schools (*mektep* and *medresseh*).

<sup>3</sup>The only comparable experiment was attempted in the Turkmen SSR where only four village mosques were "working" in 1979, two in the oasis of Mary and two in the Kunia Urgench area.

<sup>4</sup>No. 2, Tashkent, 1978, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Yu. A. Aidayev and V. G. Pivovarov, "Problemy konkretnykh issledovaniy religii" in *Sotsiologiya, Ateizm, Religiya*, Grozny, 1972, pp. 12-13. The mechanism of Sufi activity is described in an article of S. Umarov, "Müridizm s bliskogo rasstoyaniya", in *Nauka i religiya*, Moscow, No. 10, 1979, pp. 30-2. This fascinating testimony is analysed in an article, "L'Islam Parallèle en Union Soviétique. Les organisations soufies dans la République tchéchéno-ingouche" by Professor A. Bennigsen and C. Lemerrier-Quellejay, in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, January-February 1980, pp. 49-63.

<sup>6</sup>Among the most important works concerning the Chechen-Ingush ASSR published in the 1970s are: L. A. Basirov, *Puti preodoleniya religioznykh i patriarkhalnykh perezhivkov*, Grozny, 1975; M. A. Mamakayev, *Chechensky taip v period ego razlozheniya*, Grozny, 1973; Kh. B. Mamleyev, *Nekotorye osobennosti Islama v Checheno-Ingushetii*, Grozny, 1970; M. M. Mustafinov, *Zikrizm i ego sotsialnaya sushchnost*, Grozny, 1971 [in Soviet literature "zikrizm" designates the Qadiri *tariqat*]; V. G. Pivovarov, *Byt, kultura, natsionalnye traditsii i verovaniya naseleniya Checheno-Ingushskoi ASSR*, Grozny, 1971; V. G. Pivovarov, *Na etapakh sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya*, Grozny, 1974; V. G. Pivovarov, *Struktura religioznoi obshchiny*, Grozny, 1970; *Sotsiologiya, Ateizm, Religiya*, Grozny, 1972.



*Above* Three Charter 77 spokesmen: Dr Václav Benda (*centre*), author of "Catholicism and Politics" (pp. 60-5) with Jiří Dienstbier (*left*) and Zdena Tominová (wife of Julius Tomin, the philosopher). Jiří Dienstbier is in prison with Václav Benda after their trial in October 1979.

*Below* The Russian Orthodox church of St Peter and St Paul, Moscow, destroyed in 1964 by the communist authorities. The effect on the Russian Orthodox Church of Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign (1959-1964) is examined by Michael Bourdeaux in "The Black Quinquennium", pp. 18-23. (© Keston College)





*Above* A Russian Orthodox church in Chernovtsy (Ukraine) which is now used as a winestore. Of the 20,000 or so churches which were open before Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign, half or even two thirds had been closed by 1964. See "The Black Quinquennium" p. 21.  
(© Keston College)



A Russian Orthodox church in Chernovtsy (Ukraine) now closed and used as a store for shoes. (© Keston College)

<sup>7</sup>Quotation from *Groznensky rabochni*, 15 April 1976, cited by V. Yu. Gadayev in "O kharaktere religioznosti selskoi molodyozhi"; *Kharakter religioznosti i problemy ateisticheskogo vospitaniya*, Chechen-Ingush Institute of History, Sociology and Philosophy, Grozny, 1979, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup>We know from other recent surveys in Central Asian Republics that circumcision is performed by almost 100 per cent of the Muslim population. "A non-circumcised cannot be an Uzbek (or a Tadzhik, a Turkmen)", as the saying goes.

<sup>9</sup>It is worth comparing these figures with Afghanistan, one of the most conservative Islamic countries: in the villages approximately 50 per cent of young people perform the *namaz*; the fast during Ramadhan is observed by approximately 60 per cent of young people in Kabul and 85 per cent in the villages; 85 per cent of all young people celebrate *Aid al-Fitr* and 60 per cent the *Mawlut*.

<sup>10</sup>In the North Caucasus, the expression *wird* is used to designate a specific branch of a Sufi *tariqat*. It is more often applied to the different branches of the Qadiriya: *Bammal Giray Hoja*, *Battal Hoja*, *Chim Mirza* and *Vis Hoja*.

<sup>11</sup>A Shia custom, but adopted more and more by Soviet Sunni Muslims, which gives the believer the right to disclaim his faith.

<sup>12</sup>Another Soviet specialist, V. G. Pivovarov, confirms this percentage when he writes: "In the North Caucasus more than half of the believers are adepts of a Sufi brotherhood", *Na etapakh sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya*, Grozny, 1974, p. 316.

<sup>13</sup>In 1979, the Chechens and the Ingushes numbered 942,000 individuals. To this total must be added an unknown number of Dagestanis, Kabardians and Muslim Ossetians living in the republic.

<sup>14</sup>*Istoriko-ekonomicheskoy ocherk Chechenskoi Avtonomnoi Oblasti*, Grozny, 1939, p. 11, quoted by M. A. Karatayeva, "Deyatelnost Checheno-Ingushskoi oblastnoi partiinoi organizatsii po ateisticheskomu vospitaniyu trudyashchikh v 1920-1940 godakh" in *Kharakter religioznosti i problemy ateisticheskogo vospitaniya*, Grozny, 1979, p. 24.

<sup>15</sup>S. Umarov, "Müridizm s bliskogo rasstoyaniya", *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup>In Arabic "mention", "remembrance" (of God), glorification of God by sentences repeated in a ritual progression, either aloud (*zikh al-jahriya*) or silently (*zikh al-khufiya*). The Naqshbandis observe the silent *zikh*, the Qadiris—more numerous in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR—the spoken *zikh*, which is generally accompanied by dances and music. The *Chim Mirza wird* uses drums and the *Vis Hoja* violins.

<sup>17</sup>The Qadiris are members of the Qadiriya, a Sufi order founded by Abd al-Qadir al-Dzhailani who died in Baghdad in the 12th century.

<sup>18</sup>According to a Dagestani specialist of anti-religious propaganda, in 1967 there were more than a hundred "important" (*krupnye*) holy places of pilgrimage in Dagestan and in the Chechen-Ingush republics. I. A. Makatov, "Kult svyatykh v Islame", *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, Moscow, No. 3, 1967, p. 164.

<sup>19</sup>This group represents *grosso-modo* between 70 and 80 per cent of the younger generation. The "atheists" (who, however, perform as a rule the three essential rites—circumcision, religious marriage and religious burial) represent the remaining 30 to 20 per cent. In Muslim lands there are no absolute atheists. For a Muslim, absolute atheism is synonymous with absolute stupidity.

<sup>20</sup>This statement is contradicted by the growing influence of the Sufi brotherhoods.

<sup>21</sup>It is now possible to compare the level of belief and atheism in the North Caucasus with that of other Muslim territories of the USSR, because several surveys have been published in Central Asia. The most interesting one is that of Zhumanazar Bazarbayev, *Sekulyarizatsiya naseleniya sotsialisticheskoi Karakalpakii*, Nukhus, "Karakalpakistan", 1973.