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Fundamentalist Challenges to Local Islamic Traditions in Soviet and Post-Soviet Central Asia

The intense processes of an Islamic rebirth can be observed throughout the independent states of Central Asia. The great significance given to the topics of the role of international Islamic organizations and medieval Islamic (Hanafi and Sufi) traditions in research demonstrates the influence that these forces have had on these countries. However, the developmental tendencies and modification of Islam during the Soviet period, especially the formation of new theological forms and fundamentalist thought that appeared in this period somehow remains in the shadows.¹

The Historical Role of Ulama

Religious authorities can play a crucial role in the creation of stable rela-

¹ Recent publications related to this theme include: Achirbek Muminov, "Chami-damulla et son rôle dans la constitution d'un 'islam soviétiques'," in Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, eds., *Islam et politique en ex-URSS (Russie d'Europe et Asie centrale)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), pp. 241-261; Devin DeWeese, "Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: A Review Essay on Yaacov Ro'i's *Islam in the Soviet Union*," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2002), pp. 298-330; Allen J. Frank and Jahangir Mamatov, *Uzbek Islamic Debates: Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (Springfield: Dunwoody Press, 2006).

tions between the state and religious community (as equally as the role they can play in the destabilization of these relations). It has long been noted that the teachings of Islam have been cultivated and developed by generations of ulama – religiously educated people who retain the status of private individuals that simultaneously are leading representatives of civil society – at all stages of its development. In medieval Islamic societies the government, as is well known, did not have special prerogatives to develop their own religious themes to balance the power of the ulama. In time, the government accustomed itself to these conditions and sought to regulate intricate and complicated religious matters by using the ulama. Very often the discussion of questions of religious belief could turn into societal confrontation and cause social instability. A widespread method for overcoming social excesses in the early Islamic period was a declaration of a pro-governmental position by some popular theologian from a public place – in a cathedral or municipal mosque or in the bazaar. This often had the opposite effect than intended. Civil society turned on the ulama that lost his societal authority. However, conformism appeared repeatedly among the theologians.

As historical research has demonstrated, from the very beginning of Islamization of Central Asia in the first half of the eighth century the conducting of any religious event by the ulama had a dual context – a religious and a social one. In the latter case, a religious event could express the vital interests, especially against the government, of this or that group of the population. For these, Islam became a form for the furthering of their social and economic interests, and the expression of social protest. In this manner, the ulama in essence were social activists.

Another effective governmental method was their attempts to create something similar to a hierarchy and the targeted financing of Islamic networks and systems of confessional organization. Even in the years of “infidel” rule (by the Qara-Qitays and Mongols between 1137 to 1370) governmental activities retained this mechanism for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. A social dialogue that took account of multiple, mutual interests as well as tolerance served as a guarantee of social stability over an extended period of medieval history.

The appearance of the Russian Empire on the scene created a principally new situation in Central Asia and traditions created over centuries

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began to be violated. This appeared in a policy followed by Tsarist governor-generals and, through inertia, the early Soviet government that has been dubbed the “ignoring of Islam.”² However, such a “vagueness and indecisiveness” on the side of Orthodox and, then, atheist Russia did not mean the absence of repressive policies. It is enough to remember measures taken against confessional, Islamic education through the nationalization of the *waqfs*,³ of the ending of state finance for religious institutions, and the persecution of active Muslim clergy – Sufis and Sufism in the period following the Andijan uprising (1898). As a result of the insufficiently considered policies of Tsarist Russia, the historic chance for cooperation and dialogue with the local ulama was missed. All of the above mentioned measures of the government in the Turkestan Governor-Generalship, contradicting the logic of local traditions, earned the distrust of the ulama and even led a number into the hidden or open opposition.⁴

2 This seems like an imprecise assertion. The “ignoring of Islam” is not to be understood literally, as witnessed by the hundreds of secret documents related to the “Muhammadan question” produced by the authorities of the Governor-Generalship beginning with Vrevskii. It is possible and proper to speak of the ignoring of the social significance of Islam, the incorrect understanding of its role in the life of the local peoples, and therefore the rejection of methods of direct interference. Also, the destruction of the *waqf* system did not really happen during Tsarist times. Even in the areas of colonized Turkestan, the government limited itself to revisions of *waqf* property, which, as is obvious from surviving documents, were of strictly economic interest to the new government (roads, canals, new quarters for Russian settlement, etc.). Although in principle the Tsarist government damaged the interests of the confessional education system, only government sponsorship was really withdrawn. It was actually the Soviet government that began mass repressions, which, by the way, definitely did not “ignore” Islam, but, just the opposite, had a very fine understanding of the “competitive significance” of religion. Exactly for this reason, the blow was delivered to the economic basis of the religion (and it was in 1926–1928 that the *waqfs* were destroyed).

3 The Tsarist government tried to keep to the letter of the law in conducting its revisions. A *waqf* was suspended in certain cases—when there were violations of all of the conditions of the *waqf*'s documents themselves and when no money, harvest, or goods from the *waqf* flowed into the madrasa or mosques; when the true heirs of the first *mutawalli* (manager) were already dead; when the land or other property, belonging to the *waqf*, was discarded (the land was not being worked, or nothing was sold in the stores), and the like.

4 All the same, the position of the ulama in relations to the colonizers was disparate, see Bakhtiar Babadzhanov, “Russian Colonial Power in Central Asia As Seen by Local Muslim

Islam under the Soviet Regime

The majority of researchers find the religious policies of the Soviet states repressive, and this evaluation is more or less correct.⁵ The constant pressure on religion and its carriers (ulama and believers) was the main constituent constant in the totally anti-religious policy during the existence of the Soviet regime.⁶ Significant studies of Islam in Central Asia during the Soviet period that have been published to date are (see footnote 5), with a few exceptions, based upon a very limited amount of material stored in official archives. In addition, most researchers did not have an Islamic studies background or any experience of researching the peculiarities of religion in Central Asia. Maybe for these reasons the researchers cited examine only the political context of the problem, which can hardly be called proper approach.

New research and rediscovered materials demonstrate that the issues of religious (including repressive) policies in the Soviet period are much more diverse and profound. For example, aspects of the problem, such as official measures directed at the destruction of “national,” “local” and “popular” Islam from within deserve special focus. As far as the early Islamic period in the region is concerned, little studied problems, such as the birth and evolution of ideas of Islamic socialism and Jadidism, are developing a special salience in modern times.⁷ The former idea proved

Intellectuals,” in Beate Eschment and Hans Harder, eds., *Looking at the Coloniser: Cross-Cultural Perceptions in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Bengal, and Related Areas* (Berlin: Ergon Verlag, 2004), pp. 75–90.

5 Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917–1941* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001); Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983); Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

6 The era of Gorbachev’s reforms when it is more appropriate to speak of the pressure that the ulama exerted on government organs is an exception (the author is currently studying relevant documents, ultimatums, and information with B. Babadzhanov). Such a transformation of the position from forced-subordinate to impatient can be viewed as a result of the reaction of Islamic theologians to the previous repressive policies of the states as well as to the international context—as part of general political processes affecting the Muslim world.

7 Bakhtiyar M. Babadjanov, “From Colonization to Bolshevization: Some Political and

useful in overcoming civil society's internal opposition to Soviet rule after the abolishment of the quasi-independent, state-like institutions/protectorates on the territory of the Bukhara khanate/emirate and the Khiva khanate in 1920. The idea of Jadid intellectuals, treated as "suspicious" by the Tsarist authorities, also played a positive role, initially in the weakening and then the complete liquidation of the network of Islamic confessional institutions. The activities of Munavvar-Qari Abdurrashidkhanov (killed in 1931) and the Main Waqf Directorate (1923–1926) of the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) is especially demonstrative in this regard. It should be pointed out that both ideas were born as by-products of such ideas as "useful, progressive Islam" (*taraqqiparvar*), the implementation of secular discipline in the system of confessional education, and the like.

However, those are topics for separate research. This paper concentrates on the appearance and spread of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism in the region during the Soviet period. This topic is tied to the name and activities of Shami-Damulla, an important scholar and immigrant theologian from the Arabian provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

Shami-Damulla

Shami-Damulla's full name was Sa'id ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahid ibn 'Ali al-'Asali al-Tarablusi al-Shami al-Dimashqi and he was born between 1867 and 1870 in the Lebanese city of Tarablus, dying around the age of 65 in Khorezm in 1932.⁸ Born in an Arab province of the Ottoman Empire and having studied at the Egyptian religious university of Al-Azhar, he had visited Iran, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. The rich events of that epoch and the theological circles he associated with

Legislative Aspects of Molding a 'Soviet Islam' in Central Asia," in Wallace Johnson and Irina F. Popova, eds., *Central Asian Law: An Historical Overview; A Festschrift for the Ninetieth Birthday of Herbert Franke* (Lawrence, KS: Society for Asian Legal History, The University of Kansas, 2004), pp. 153–171.

⁸ On him, see Ashirbek Muminov, "Shami-damulla i ego rol' v formirovanii 'sovetskogo islama'," in "Materialy mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii 'Islam, identichnost' i politika v postsovotskom prostranstve: sravnitel'nyi analiz Tsentral'noi Azii i evropeiskoi chasti Rossii,' 1-2 apreliia 2004 g., Kazan'," special issue, *Kazanskii federalist* 1 (2005), pp. 231–247.

had a certain influence on the formation of his political and theological views. This theological traveler is famous for his long (about 15–20 years) puritanical activities in Eastern Turkestan. This was an attempt to reorient “local Islam” to the traditional cannon; that is, keeping closer to the *hadiths*.⁹ Shami-Damulla arrived in Tashkent from Beijing on February 13, 1919. Evidently, his arrival in the capital of Western Turkestan was facilitated by his good relations with the Russian consul in Kashgar.¹⁰

Publicly defeating the leading local theologian Shah-Maqsud-Qari in a public dispute, Shami-Damulla became the leading theologian and religious authority in Tashkent in 1919.¹¹ He found support, foremostly, among citizens involved in commerce. Now Shami-Damulla could move from a secondary mosque in the Uzbek quarter (*mahalla*) where he initially settled to the Dasturkhanchi madrassa, which was located in the central quarter of Degrez (on the old town square of Hadra). This quarter was located in the area of Tashkent’s central market (*Eski shahar bazari*), where the population would naturally come from all over the city. Shami-Damulla knowledgeable criticized the teachings of the Hanafi *madhhab* and Sufism, as well as different local manifestations of popular Islam (various hallowed sites, funeral rites, and the conducting of weddings, ceremonies, and the like). His positions in relation to local Islam impressed the Soviet government for a long time and were successfully

9 Qurban’Ali Khalidi, *An Islamic Biographical Dictionary of the Eastern Kazakh Steppe: 1770–1912*, ed. Allen J. Frank and Mirkasyim A. Usmanov (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 70; Mulla Musa ibn Mulla ‘Isa-Khwaja Sayrami, *Ta’rikh-i hamidi* (Beijing: Millatlar Nashriyati, 1986), pp. 669–702.

10 The articles in the newspaper of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan *Qizil O‘zbekiston* written in 1925 to discredit Shami-Damulla hinted at such cooperation. “Shami-domulaning oq salla tashviqotchilari,” *Qizil O‘zbekiston*, April 16, 1925; Bobir, “Qay yerga borsa tinch turmaydilar,” *Qizil O‘zbekiston*, May 17, 1925, p. 4.

11 The topic of their debate was the *hadiths*. According to surviving accounts, Shah-Maqsud-Qari (by Shami-Damulla’s demand) was not able to quote from a single *hadith* by the classical method; that is, did not call upon the full chain of transmitters (*isnad*) and *hadith* texts from the “authentic” series (*sahih*). After this, Shami-Damulla publicly ridiculed him, knocking the turban—a symbol of erudition—off his head with a stick. From this day onward, all of the scholars attending Shami-Damulla’s courses left their turbans at home and went to class in their skull-caps (oral information collected in 2003 from ‘Abd al-Jabbar ‘Azimov, born in 1933 in Tashkent).

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utilized in the struggle against religion and local religious figures. Shami-Damulla's thought flowed in a fundamentalist manner. He completely rejected the inheritance of the medieval ulama, called for the development of new judgments returning to the roots of Islam—the Qur'an and the authentic *hadiths* of the Prophet. He announced his own *fatwas* on modern issues. Shami-Damulla's main weapon in the struggle against local Islam was the topic of the *hadiths*.

A quote from one of Shami-Damulla's own compositions clearly demonstrates this:

. . . It will be enough for us to mention from them his sublime words directed to honorable spouses and true believing mothers—may Allah be please with them—where he¹² said, “Remember what is read in your homes from the *ayas* [verses] of Allah, the sign of wisdom;” that is, from the Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the Prophet, as well as his words from the *hadith*—may Allah bless welcome him: “The Heaven sent the book and together with it that which is similar to it,” that is, the Qur'an and the *hadith*. That which is not mentioned in the Qur'an is put into the *hadith*.¹³ . . . And from thence his (that is, the Prophet's) words, may Allah bless him and greet: “O God! Take pity upon my successors.” And it was asked: “Who are your successors, o Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “Those who follow me, who tell my *hadiths*, and explain them to new people.” Or, as he said, may Allah bless him and greet him, and he also called in his *hadiths* to bless the *muhaddithes*, named them his successors (*khulafa'*), his amirs and deputies (*nuwwab*) in communicating the knowledge of the Shar'iah and saving her from deviation, change, and replacement, and showed them greater respect than caliphs, amirs, and governors.¹⁴

In his words we see an uncompromising emphasis on the *hadiths* as the basis for regulating all aspects of the life of the community. Exactly this

12 That is the Prophet.

13 Sa'id ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahid ibn 'Ali al-'Asali al-Tarablusi al-Shami al-Dimashqi, *Al-Jumal al-mufida fi sharh al-Jawhara al-farida* [A Useful Statement in the Commentary to “The Only Treasure”] (manuscript), p. 13. This manuscript was translated by Asal Abbasova and published in B. M. Babadzhanov, A. K. Muminov, and A. fon Kiugel'gen [von Kugelgen], eds., *Disputy musul'manskikh religioznykh avtoritetov v Tsentral'noi Azii v XX veke: kriticheskie izdaniia i issledovaniia istochnikov* (Almaty, 2007), pp. 72-95 (citation from pp. 81-82).

14 al-Shami al-Dimashqi, *Al-Jumal al-mufida*, p. 14.

position lifted Shami-Damulla into the ranks of leaders of the so-called "Ahl al-Hadith" (local: Ahl-i Hadith).

Ahl al-Hadith

The authority of Shami-Damulla in Tashkent, a city that had traditionally been of secondary importance as a religious center, but that was soon to play the role of the religious capital of all of Central Asia, was exceptionally high. Shami-Damulla's influence on future events was based on the fact that he created a strong following. Among his followers were Jamal-Khwaja Ishan (killed in 1937), Sayyid Abu Nasr Mubashshir al-Tarazi (1896–1977), Mulla Yunus Hakimjanov (1893–1974), 'Abd al-Qadir Muradov (1893–1976), Ziyautdin Babakhanov (1908–1982; deputy *mufti*, and then *mufti* [1957–1982] of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan [SADUM]),¹⁵ Ibrahim-Qari (Shaykhim-Qari) Ishaqov, Shah-Ikram Shah-Islamov, Mulla 'Abd al-Samad (killed in 1937 at the age of 26), Zayn al-Din-Qari (died in 1983), and others.

There were many members of the intelligentsia, wealthy individuals of Tashkent, and workers from the Afghan consulate in Tashkent among the admirers of Shami-Damulla. Among his disciples, al-Tarazi and Z. Babakhanov were politically active. After the government turned against him in 1925, the circle of young local ulama, the merchant class, and the simple believers among the citizenry stayed with him. They were the first generations of the "Ahl al-Hadith."

The Ahl al-Hadith community continued Shami-Damulla's activities after he was arrested and sent from Tashkent into exile in 1932. They espoused their fundamentalist ideas, ignoring the existence of the *madhabs*. This community later indirectly influenced the development of the strategy of SADUM (through Z. Babakhanov and Shah-Ikram Shah-Islamov),¹⁶ especially in the following manner: 1) the struggle

15 On him, see B. Babadzhanov, "Babakhanovy," in S. M. Prozorov, ed., *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii: Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, vyp. 4 (Moscow, 2003), pp. 12–14; B. Babadzhanov and M. Olcott [Olcott], "SADUM," *ibid.*, pp. 69–72.

16 This fact, by the way, is not noted by many Western researchers who deal with the

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against local traditions and rituals, which were declared “non-Islamic”;¹⁷ 2) the propagation of the ideas of Ahl al-Hadith with new publications of the Qur’an (in both original and translation) and collections of the *hadiths*, celebration of the anniversaries of such traditionalists as Imam Al-Bukhari, the organization of public talks, and the like; and 3) the weakening of the traditionally strong position of the Hanafi *madhhab*, in particular, through the re-orientation of specialists studying in the system of confessional schools that had in effect been redesigned along Ahl al-Hadith lines.

A group of Ahl al-Hadith, more than 3,000 members, exists in the city of Tashkent in the present day as well. The traditional form of their meetings is the *gap*—an all-male meeting. The place of a member who has taken seriously ill or had passed away is taken by his son. After the arrest of Jamal-Khwaja Ishan, the leadership of the group passed to Mulla Nafiq, Mulla Ghaybullah, and Muhammad-Amin-Damulla. Now the group is lead by Mash-Tabib (‘Abd al-Jabbar ‘Azimov).

In addition to Ahl al-Hadith, another group of similar beliefs, Ahl al-Qur’an, was also formed. Ahl al-Qur’an has another names as well, the “Uzun Saqallilar (“The Long Beards”), because its group members, following in the tradition of the Prophet, wear long beards. The founder of this group is considered to be Mulla Sabircha-Damulla, who came from the village of Qaunchi in Tashkent province. Sabircha-Damulla was educated by such leading lights as Hasan-Hazrat,¹⁸ Mulla ‘Abd

history of “Soviet Islam.” See, for example, Yaacov Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev* (London: C. Hurst, 2000).

17 See the special article: Bakhttiar Babadzhanov, “O fetvakh SADUM protiv ‘neislamskikh obychaev’,” in A. Malashenko and M. Brill Olcott, eds., *Islam na postsovetском prostranstve: vzgliad iznutri* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 170–184.

18 The Tatar theologian Hasan-Hazrat Ahmadiarovich Ponomarev al-Qiziljari (died in 1937 in the prison hospital in Tashkent) was born in Siberia (Kazakhstan) in the city of Petropavlovsk (Qizil-Jar) and was exiled to Tashkent in 1933. Hasan-Hazrat was a follower of Shihab al-Din Marjani (1818–1889) and, as his teacher, was against the scholarly legacy of the medieval Hanafi ulama of Central Asia. He allowed himself an insulting attack against Abu Hanifa (died in 767), stated that there was nothing said about Khwaja Baha’ al-Din Naqshband (died in 1389) in the Qur’an or *hadiths*. He earned his reputation for his knowledge of the interpretation of the Qur’an. He became close with the members of the group of Ahl al-Hadith and became the companion of Jamal-Khwaja Ishan. Mulla ‘Abd al-Samad had an especially close relationship with him (Oral account provided in 2003 by

al-Samad, and Wadud-Hazrat in Tashkent in the 1930s and 1940s. He had very close relations with Ziyautdin Babakhanov, for many years serving as muezzin in his mosque. Discord between them grew at the initiative of Sabircha-Damulla, when Z. Babakhanov took a post in the hierarchy created by the Soviets. Sabircha-Damulla left Ahl al-Hadith on the basis of his extreme ascetic views (his asceticism included a renunciation of the "Soviet way of life" and a non-recognition of religious officialdom). However, Z. Babakhanov supported Sabircha-Damulla's group until the end of his official activities.

The puritanical propensities of this group were such that they began to doubt the trustworthiness of the majority of *hadiths*. They began to consider the Qur'an the only trustworthy text. Because most of them did not know Arabic well, if at all, the Uzbek translation of the Qur'an became their main source of interpretation. Their sole reliance on the Qur'an, their Islamic practices, and the speculative conclusions that they drew without reference to other sources and texts shocked other Muslims with their unusualness, strangeness and, even, "wildness." Ahl al-Qur'an completely disregarded all teachings of the *madhhabs*, but their teachings found support among the citizens of Tashkent region active in agriculture.

Dissension among Central Asian Theologians

After the liquidation of confessional education in the 1920s, a network of illegal religious education, the *hujra*,¹⁹ was founded and was especially widespread in the Ferghana valley. This network retained the traditions of the old confessional schools. The form and content of education in the

¹⁹ Abd al-Malik Ishmuhamedov [1912–2003], Tashkent).

¹⁹ The dictionary definition of *hujra* is "cell" or "classroom." This network was the continuation of the traditional forms of religious education (*maktab*, *madrassa*, *qari-khana*). It began to form during Tsarist times, accompanied by a policy of ignoring local educational institutions and takes its beginnings from private schools for religious teaching. In the Soviet period, it could only survive on the territory of the former Turkestan Governor-Generalship, and especially in the Ferghana valley, due to its ability to accommodate Russian forms of government and control.

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hujra system remained traditional and had a conservative character.²⁰ They trained experts in religion (ulama) of a relatively high level in comparison with the official educational institutions of SADUM (1943–1992). In fact, the normal education of the ulama took place in the *hujra* network and was legalized through the awarding of a diploma by official schools.

During his life, Shami-Damulla was greeted in an unfriendly, even hostile, manner in both the Ferghana valley and on the territory of the Bukhara Khanate. His travels to Kokand (twice), Andijan, and Samarkand were unsuccessful. Later, through the activities of SADUM and his followers, the ideas of Shami-Damulla entered the Ferghana valley and began to have an influence on the thoughts of at least a part of the clergy there. One of Shami-Damulla's followers, Shah-Rahim-Qari Shah-Kamalov (died in 1963 at the age of 68) eventually returned to Kokand. Although his activities were not outstanding, he raised a few followers in his turn. In Kokand, there was also another clergyman who was close to the schools of Ahl al-Hadith and Ahl al-Qur'an, Yunus-Qari. At the same time, the working of SADUM for many years and its openly traditionalist and fundamentalist methods of thinking had a certain influence on the re-Islamization of a new generation of the population and clergy in a later Soviet period.

In time, a group of young ulama began to form from the *hujra* network that aimed to a greater independence from the network's conservatives and for greater self-expression. These talented and active young theologians would become the leaders of separate religious groups that would eventually grow into an entire movement.

These young clergy needed to criticize the conformist position of the conservatives as they developed their own positions. As in a chain reaction, this critique began to use the already worked out theological clichés and religious-ideological positions of the fundamentalist ideas of Ahl al-Hadith and Ahl al-Qur'an. The new fundamentalist movements in the "Ferghana soil" were dubbed "Wahhabist."²¹

20 B. M. Babadzhanov, A. K. Muminov, and M. B. Olkott, "Mukhammadzhan Khindustani (1892–1989) i religioznaia sreda ego epokhi (predvaritel'nye razmyshleniia o formirovani 'sovetskogo islama' v Srednei Azii)," *Vostok* 5 (2004), pp. 43–59.

21 In the Ferghana valley, all of those who studied or study the *hadith* are called

Fundamentalist ideas proved very useful for expressing the discontentment of a group of theologians against the official clergy as well as for revealing the social protest of broad layers of wider society. With the entrance of one of the leading Hanafi conservatives, Mulla Hindustani (1892–1989) into this argument against his young opponents headed by Rahmatullah ‘Allama ibn Rasuljan (died in 1981), the positions of each side became more sharply divided and the discussions of both sides took on an increasingly intolerant character.²² From then on, the disagreements of the different sides in the Ferghana valley have been more harsh than amongst the Tashkent groups. Contradictions between “local” and “Arabic,” “religious” and “secular,” “old” and “new,” and “conformist” and “oppositional” reached their apogee.

The development of events along these lines resulted in the creation of fertile ground for the propagation of the ideas of Islamic parties from different parts of the Muslim world, especially from Arabic countries. The classical period of the modern history of Islam in Central Asia (in the so-called post-Soviet region) closes with the beginning of the penetration of elements of the teachings of political Islam.

The further logical development of fundamentalist tendencies can be seen in the teachings of the Akramiya, who appeared in the Ferghana valley in 1998 (see table 9.1). They began to claim that the modern, “unfavorable” period for Muslims corresponds to the Mecca period of the history of Islam (610–622). Therefore, only those regulations laid down in the *ayas* of the Qur’an from the pre-Medina period – that is, from the so-called Mecca *ayas* – are relevant to the lives of modern believers.²³

Thus, the actions of the Soviet state regarding the “religious question” had a certain influence on the appearance and development of Islamic fundamentalism on the territory of Central Asia. Serious factors that allowed for fundamentalism’s strengthening included the weakening of

“Wahhabists” (Oral account provided in 2003 by Hakimjan-Qari Vasiev, born in 1895, in the city of Margelan).

22 Bakhtiyar Babadjanov and Muzaffar Kamilov, “Muhammadjan Hindustani (1892–1989) and the Beginning of the ‘Great Schism’ among the Muslims of Uzbekistan,” in Stéphane A. Dudoignon and KOMATSU Hisao, eds., *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)* (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), pp. 195–219.

23 *Islom: Entsiklopediya* (Tashkent, 2004), pp. 22–23.

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the position of “local Islam” and the growth in the influence of “foreign Islam.”

(Translated from Russian by Kevin Krogmann
and edited by Uyama Tomohiko)

Table 9.1. The Development of Islamic Fundamentalism

Shami-Damulla (1867-1932)	Ahl al-Hadith (1920s to the present)	Ahl al-Qur'an (1930s to the present)	Akramiya (1998 to the present)
Ijtihad			
Hadiths	Hadiths		
Qur'an	Qur'an	Qur'an	The Mecca <i>ayas</i> of the Qur'an

