"THE YAWNING HEIGHTS:" ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN POST-SOVIET DAGHESTAN AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL NETWORKS

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The reproduction and transfer of Islamic knowledge has moved to the fore in the context of the religious upsurge at the turn of the 21st century in Daghestan and other post-Soviet Muslim regions. Religious institutions that have mosques, communities, and schools associated with them are mushrooming within a very short period, their numbers increased ten- or even hundred-fold. Back in 1988, there were only two legal Islamic educational establishments in the Soviet Union: the Mir-i 'Arab Madrasah in Bukhara and the Islamic Institute in Tashkent. The number of registered Muslim communities (jamaats) in Daghestan increased from 27 to 599 between 1987 and 2006; there are 1,679 newly opened mosques. Scores of illegal Koranic study circles, which functioned in the private houses of alims, were replaced with 278 primary schools (maqtabs), 132 colleges (madrasahs), and 14 Islamic higher educational establishments with 43 branches at newly opened mosques.[1]

The upsurge of Islamic education across the republic (today 40 of the 42 districts of Daghestan have Muslim schools) is arousing interest as well as panic. The press accuses the madrasahs of spreading Islamic radicalism and aggression against the non-Muslim world and calls them "schools of jihad," a holy war by Muslims against the unfaithful; not infrequently those who talk about the "export of Islamic extremism" to the Caucasus accuse foreign anti-Russian agents.[2] The abundance of quasi-academic speculations on Islamic issues notwithstanding, in Daghestan, as well as across Russia, religion, its key practices, and its institutions largely remain terra incognita. This is especially true of the Islamic education system.

Little is known about the curricula, subjects, and teaching methods used by the formal and informal Islamic education system in Daghestan. We still lack reliable information about the teachers and students, the funding sources, and the careers graduates pursue. A first step in the right direction was made in 2002-2004 when an international project called Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States directed by Professor Dr. Raoul Motika of the University of Hamburg studied the Islamic and sociological aspects of the problem. As one of the participants, I gathered a wealth of sociological information about the republic's Islamic institutions, which I am presenting here.

[1] See: Archives of the Administration for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Nationalities, Information, and Foreign Relations of the Republic of Daghestan (hereinafter, A ARA), Islamic Educational Establishments folder. The author would like to thank the head of the Administration for Cooperation with Religious Organizations, K.M. Khanbabaev, and his employees, Murtuzali Iakubov and I.R. Shikhzadaeva, for the information used in the article.

[2] See, for example: A.A. Ignatenko, *Islam i politika,* Moscow, 2004, pp. 181-188.

The article consists of two parts: the first part gives us a detailed description, the first of its kind in Russian and foreign publications, of three of the most influential Islamic higher educational establishments—the Imam ash-Shafi'i Islamic University, the North Caucasian Islamic University of Sheikh Muhammad Arif (both functioning in Makhachkala), and the Imam al-Ash'ari Islamic University in Khasaviurt. They all have already acquired a certain amount of prestige inside and outside the republic. Some of the graduates have already gained recognition among the republic's spiritual elite, including those who went into teaching. The institutes have regular contacts with similar establishments in Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia. I intend to use these examples to demonstrate the highest level of Islamic education and the changes that occurred in it after the Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991 and the routing of the Wahhabi opposition in the fall of 1999, as well as to show the elements that post-Soviet higher education inherited from the madrasah and the Soviet higher school, and the extent to which it is influenced from abroad.

The second part of the article offers an overview of Daghestan's post-Soviet Islamic educational system. I compared the information related to the three higher educational establishments and field data gathered in Daghestan within the current revival and development of the post-Soviet Muslim school and its social component. I paid special attention to the social role Islamic knowledge is playing today, as well as to the problems of funding and graduate employment.

The first part offers a description of the three educational establishments based on the same criteria: the institute's name and its etymology, address, and brief history; its rules and state license, if any; its registration with the Main Administration of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Daghestan for the Russian Federation (MA MJ RF); its heads and teachers; the number of students and composition of the student body; the number of branches; curriculum; textbooks and teaching aids; the languages used for teaching; the length of study; contacts with the sheikhs and branches of the Sufi brotherhoods (Tariqahs) in Daghestan as well as other Islamic schools; careers pursued by graduates; and sources of funding. All the information was carefully collated with the statistics offered by the Administration for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Nationalities, Information, and Foreign Relations of the Republic of Daghestan.

Three Examples of Daghestan's Islamic Institutes

The Imam ash-Shafi'i Islamic University

1. 14 Lenin Prospect, Makhachkala; has no fax number, e-mail address, or website.
2. Opened in 1991 to replace a madrasah; at first was named after the first Daghestanian Naqshbandi Sheikh Muhammad-Effendi al-Yaraghi (died in 1838-1839) who took part in the Caucasian War of the 19th century. He brought the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya Sufi brotherhood to the Northern Caucasus. Later the school became an institute and still later a university named after Imam Shafi'i, the founder of one of the four religious and legal teachings (madhabs) of Sunni Islam that traditionally dominated in Daghestan (Muhammad ash-Shafi'i died in 820).
3. Its first license was issued by the RF Ministry of Education for 1994-2001; it was extended until 14 May, 2008 (license No. 24-0392); the Rules were registered with MA MJ RF on 29 October, 1999.

4. Murtuzali Karachaev is the rector; Mahomed-hajji Hajiev is the deputy rector, both are Naqshbandi sheikhs of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya trend; they were allowed to teach in the post-Soviet period. Since 2001, M. Karachaev has also represented well-known Naqshbandi Sheikh Muhammad Nazim of Cyprus in Daghestan.
5. The staff consists of 15 lecturers, seven of whom are the university's graduates, two are graduates of the famous Mir-i 'Arab Madrasah in Bukhara (Uzbekistan), one of the two legal Islamic educational establishments of the post-war Soviet Union. They are all Daghestanians and citizens of the Russian Federation; before 1998, however, there were citizens of Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Algeria in the teaching staff.
6. There are 250 students, one third of them girls. The university runs 17 branches in villages and towns, which educate 980 students (who belong to all the republic's major ethnic groups and come from various settlements and the countryside of the republic's north, south, and center).
7. The courses are taught in Russian and Arabic.
8. The curriculum drawn up by the Council of Alims of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Daghestan was approved by the rector's office. Its major disciplines are: Arabic, the Koran, at-tajwid (the rules of Koranic reading), at-tafsir (the Koranic exegetics), the hadith (Islamic tales about the Prophet Muhammad's pronouncements and deeds), as-siyar (the Prophet's biography), 'aqida (fundamentals of Islam), usul al-fiqh (Muslim law), and tasawwuf (Sufi religious practice, its methods and ethics). The subjects (particularly Islamic rites and law) are taught according to the Shafi'i madhab of Sunni Islam. Undergraduates attend seminars at which Wahhabism is criticized.

   There are no secular disciplines in the curriculum. According to the rector, the university has no money to pay for secular teachers. In fact, this is typical of most of the republic's Islamic educational establishments; time and again their heads confirm their willingness to teach secular subjects, but complain that there are no funds for this.
9. The seven-year course is free. Those who wish to enroll attend an interview; those found ill-prepared for immediate enrollment are invited to attend a two-year preparatory course at the madrasah, after which they become first-year students. In Makhachkala, the students study in two shifts; four- and five-year students do on-the-job training as imam assistants; senior students train by reading the Koran at cemeteries, participating in singing in honor of the Prophet Muhammad (mawlid) in the homes of the faithful, and giving private lessons in the fundamentals of Islam and Arabic.
10. The university follows the teaching of Daghestanian Sheikh 'Abd ar-Rakhman of Sogratl (as-Suguri, 1792-1882), hero of the 19th century Caucasian War. Like Muhammad al-Yaraghi, he belonged to Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya. There are murids of over ten contemporary Daghestanian sheikhs among the students, including Serajutdin Israfilov, Murtuzali Karachaev (the rector), Muhammad-hajji Hajiev, and Muhammad-Mukhtar Babatov. Enrollment does not require being affiliated with the Tariqat. According to the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya teaching, first-year university students should not be encouraged to join Sufi brotherhoods by taking on a task (vird) recommended by their spiritual teachers. They should first acquire enough knowledge of the fundamentals of religion and Islamic rituals. Normally, senior students take on a vird; there are no conflicts among the murids of different sheikhs.
11. The university trains the Muslim well-educated spiritual elite (ulema). Graduates major as Muslim clerics. During the six years of its existence the university has educated 120 people,

some of whom teach in madrasahs, and others work as mullahs or assistants of mullahs in the republic's mosques.

12. The university functions on private donations (sadaqa), has its own bank account as a legal entity; part of the money comes from renting out premises to shops and cafes. It has no hostel, but it owns a building transferred to it under a government decision. The main library contains about 500 textbooks and works of 19th century Daghestanian Sufis Jamal ad-din of Kazi-Kumukh, 'Abd ar-Rakhman of Sogratl, and Ilyas of Tsudakhar.

The North Caucasian Islamic University of Sheikh Muhammad Arif

1. 136 Dakhadaev St., Makhachkala; it has no fax or e-mail; with no Internet resource of its own, the university actively uses that of the SAMD.
2. It was set up in 1999 and was named after Muhammad Arif-afandi al-Kakhi (died in 1977), son of Khasan Khilmi of Kahib (died in 1937), one of the most popular Naqshbandiyya and Shaziliyya sheikhs. The SAMD is controlled by the murids of Said-afandi (Atsaev) of Chirkey (born in 1937), who is a spiritual follower of the brotherhood (silsilah).
3. The university is registered with MA MJ RF on 5 January, 2000; its state license No. 24-0669 was issued on 24 January, 2002; the SAMD approved its Statute on 20 December, 1999.
4. Its rector, Ahmad-hajji Abdullaev, is also a mufti and the SAMD chairman. The building is close to the residence (2 Aliev St., Makhachkala) of the muftiat, the university's patron.
5. The staff consists of 17 teachers; there are also non-staff lecturers.
6. There are 600 young men studying at the day department. Unlike other Islamic educational establishments, the university has no village branches. It runs a madrasah of about 150 students and an evening department of about 100. There is a female branch that educates 70 young women in the village of Separatorov outside Makhachkala. This brings the total number of students to 800. The university attracts students from all corners of the republic, Chechnia, the Zakataly District of Azerbaijan, and Tatarstan. In Soviet times, the level of Islamic education in these places was lower than in Daghestan, which explains the attraction.
7. The courses are taught in Russian and Avar.
8. The SAMD curriculum of two educational levels was approved by the muftiat's Council of Alims.

   The preparatory course offers tutoring in nine disciplines: the fundamentals of Islam and its morphology; Arabic grammar and syntax; the rules of Koranic reading; learning the Koran by heart; calligraphy; the Prophet's Life (as-siyar), ethics, and Russian.

   The main program consists of 30 subjects: Arabic syntax and morphology, learning the Koran by heart, Koranic commentaries (at-tafsir), Koranic sciences; the Prophet's Life; the hadith; Muslim law and its foundations (usul al-fiqh); legal studies; the dogmas (al-qalam); logic (al-mantiq); rhetoric (al-ma'an); lunar chronology; Sufi ethics (as-suluq); Sufism; Sufism in Daghestan; history of Islamic law; geography of the Arab countries; history of Daghestan; political science; sociology; oratory; Russian and English; standards of speech; social pedagogy; methods of teaching Arabic in school; astronomy; and information technology.

The university was the first in the republic to use new teaching methods; it has a reading room, an assembly hall, gymnasium, and a computer class. Since 2004, it has a fairly wide set of secular disciplines in its curriculum taught by lecturers from the State University of Daghestan and other secular institutes invited to join a specially organized department of the humanities. So far, however, few of the republic's Islamic educational establishments have followed suite.

The curriculum differs little from the standards the RF Ministry of Education established for higher and secondary schools. The female department offers training in skills inherited from the Soviet vocational schools and secondary special schools, such as manual jobs, sewing, and cooking.

9. Students take a seven-year course, including two years in the preparatory department. The day department students start their day at 8:00 a.m. and end at 12:30; evening classes start at 18:00. After the lunch break, the day department students engage in sports and other educational pursuits. There is a three-year postgraduate course. Enrollment is based on interviews; all freshmen have to attend a two-month course at the preparatory department before becoming first-year students in November. According to the administrator, those without a secondary education certificate have no chance of being enrolled at the university.
10. The university follows the Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya-Shaziliyya trend of Sheikh Said-afandi of Chirkey.
11. It specializes in educating mullahs, Shari'a judges (qadi), mudarris teachers, and other members of the Muslim spiritual elite.
12. In full accordance with the Statute, the university functions on monetary donations (sadaqa), voluntary donations (nazr), and the money earned by teaching services, business activities, bank credits, money transferred by legal and physical entities (from Russia and other countries), and other means not prohibited by Russian law. The library contains 870 copies of textbooks, including 40 audio and 25 video records. Each student receives the necessary textbooks and other literature free of charge.

The Imam al-Ash'ari Islamic University

1. 115 Buynakskiy St., Khasaviurt; it has no fax, e-mail address, or website.
2. The university is based on the madrasah opened in 1991 in the private house of the highly respected imam of the Friday mosque of Khasaviurt, Muhammad-Seyyid Abakarov, from the village of Khushtad (died in 2004). The university is named after a prominent medieval lawyer of the very popular Shafi'i School.
3. The university is registered with the MA MJ RF; state license No. 24-0259 of 21 July, 2002.
4. Rector—Mahomed-Dibir Omargadjiev.
5. The staff comprises 11 lecturers, all of them Daghestanians between the ages of 28 and 64. Nearly all of them are murids of recently deceased Naqshbandi Sheikh Tajutdin of Ashalya (died on 11 September, 2001) along the Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya and Shaziliyya.
6. There are 200 male students; only 2 surviving branches out of the initial five opened in the 1990s with 40 students. The students are mainly Avars; even though the original madrasah

was transformed into a university, it continues to enroll schoolchildren and teenagers of 14 and older; the preparatory department is open to even younger children—from 7 years up.

7. The courses are taught in Avar and Arabic.

8. The curriculum is divided into three levels: the first includes disciplines and works that were part of the madrasah teaching program before the 1930s. The second-level students study disciplines that have already been tested by the lecturers and found instructive and comprehensible to beginners. They rely on pre-revolutionary textbooks and teaching aids of the 1990s. The third level, also based on pre-revolutionary and post-Soviet textbooks, offers training in 15 subjects traditional for the Daghestanian madrasahs of the 19th and first third of the 20th centuries: Arabic grammar, morphology (as-sarf) and syntax (an-nahv), Koranic recitations (al-kira'a, at-tajwid), exegetics (at-tafsir), hadith studies, arithmetic, rhetoric, metrics of Arabic verse (al-'arud), Muslim law subdivided into family law, etc; fundamentals of Muslim law (usul al-fiqh), theology (al-qalam), the ethics of Sufism (adab), and Islamic philosophy (falsafa).

   All capable students attend two, three, or more lessons every day and work at two or three levels. Less talented students have to limit themselves to one lesson at the first level; and after completing the first level, they proceed on to the second and then the third level. The three levels offer training according to the students' personal abilities. On the whole, the curriculum of the Imam al-Ash'ari University is typical of the republic's higher educational establishments and madrasahs; the set of disciplines and methods are borrowed from the traditional madrasah curriculum of the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet periods.

9. According to a decision by the Academic Council, the university takes fee-paying students as well as offers free education; there is no fixed study term.

10. The university follows the trends of Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya and Shaziliyya approved by the SAMD. There are murids of still living Daghestanian sheikhs among the students. Even though it is not controlled by the muftiat, the university maintains close relations with it. It does not teach Sufism and its ritual practices as obligatory subjects and offers no courses in the works of the Daghestanian Sufi sheikhs.

11. The university sees its aim as providing both higher religious and general secular secondary education to all who need them. The students graduate either as imam-hatybs at Friday mosques or teachers of the Islamic sciences. Those who wish have the chance to continue their studies and on-the-job training abroad: the Khasaviurt religious Muslim community sent 8 university students to Egypt to study at the famous Cairo Al-Azkhar University.

12. The university functions on material and monetary support from the founders and the faithful; partly or completely paid training; business activities; bank and other credits; voluntary donations (sadaqa) as well as donations for specific purposes from legal and physical entities (Russian and foreign). Its building is new; the library contains about 1,000 Arabic textbooks.

Past and Present Challenges Faced by the Muslim Schools

What does the above suggest? What place do the Islamic higher educational establishments occupy in Daghestanian society? What can be said about their attitude toward the foreign Islamic influences

of the post-Soviet period and the Soviet and pre-revolutionary heritage? In the past there were no Islamic higher educational establishments. The name (university or institute), the language classes are taught in, the division into year groups and arrangement of the teaching process into classes, the five-year study course, exams, and diplomas, as well as the age limit, were borrowed from the secular (and Soviet) state school of the latter half of the 20th century. At the same time, as I have pointed out above, the curricula of the Islamic institutes preserved the priorities of the madrasahs of the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet period in Daghestan, together with some of the subjects and textbooks of these periods. According to 'Abd ar-Rakhman Gazi of Kumukh (Kazi-Kumukh), Imam Shamil's son-in-law, and Shamil's secretary Hajji-Ali of Chokh, in the first third of the 19th century, the madrasahs taught the same subjects using the same books and commentaries.[3]

At the same time, the system of Islamic education became much more fragmented and formal. Prior to the 1930s, there were two or three main levels—home Koranic classes (1); primary school, which taught reading and writing (maqtab, 2), and small specialized colleges (madrasahs, 3). Today, there are five levels: (1) short-term primary courses, which teach the fundamentals of religion and the Arabic language; (2) primary schools (maqtabs) at the mosques; (3) madrasahs, which became very close to state secondary schools; (4) Islamic universities and institutes, and (5) village branches. In a way, the contemporary hierarchical system of non-state Islamic education imitates the earlier Soviet one with specific features of its own.

The first two stages of Islamic education are of limited duration with no permanent student body; their tasks and nature bring to mind the elimination-of-illiteracy courses of the early Soviet period. The maqtabs teach the fundamentals of Arabic grammar (as-sarf); Islamic ritual practices (usul ad-din); and the rules for reading the Koran. The madrasahs mostly function at large Friday cathedrals (juma) and neighborhood mosques in which imams and their assistants (mu'azzin/budun) serve as teachers. The longer (3 to 5 years) study course and much more fundamental knowledge they provide make them different from the primary courses and maqtabs. The level of tutoring in the village branches is closer to that in an average madrasah. The relations between most of these branches and the central structures are largely formal: the branches receive neither money, nor textbooks, nor teachers from them. Enrollment and graduation require no exams; the teaching staff normally consists of graduates of the central institutions and the imams of the mosques at which the branches operate.

It is next to impossible to calculate the number of primary courses; according to the Administration for Religious Affairs, Daghestan has 453 Islamic educational establishments of other types that provide tutoring for about 14,000 students. K. Khanbabaev has distributed them according to the four higher levels of Islamic education as 27.4, 34.4, 19.1, and 19.1 percent.[4] These figures do not take into account the curriculum of the Muslim schools, so they cannot be regarded as exact. Some of the higher educational establishments that call themselves institutes or universities are in fact mere madrasahs; some of them belong to an even lower, maqtab, level. The Imam al-Ash'ari Islamic University, for example, slipped from the heights it occupied while its founder was still alive to the madrasah level. Only four higher educational establishments out of 14 can be placed at the highest level: the Imam ash-Shafi'i and the Muhammad Arif universities in Makhachkala, the Saypula-Qadi University in Buynaksk, and the Imam an-Navavi University in Novoserebriakovka.

In the first half of the 2000s, the pace at which Islamic educational establishments appeared in Daghestan slowed down; the number of maqtabs and Islamic higher education establishments dropped: the number of the former decreased from 670 to 278 in the last ten years; the number of the latter, from

[3] See: *Hajji-Ali. Skazanie ochevidtsa o Shamile,* Makhachkala, 1990, p. 80; *Abdurakhman from Gazikumukh. Kniga vospominaniy,* Makhachkala, 1997, p. 85.

[4] See: K.M. Khanbabaev, "Religioznoe obrazovanie v Daghestane," *Problemy politkul'turnogo obrazovania v Daghestane,* Makhachkala, 2002, p. 129.

16 to 14 in the last two years. The system has obviously reached a level of status quo. The students, mainly male, of the five levels are between the ages of 12 and 23; in towns and townships girls account for 25 to 30 percent of the student body of madrasahs and higher educational establishments, but are practically absent from the mountain schools, especially in the Avar and Darghin regions.[5] Before the revolution and in the early years of Soviet power, the madrasahs were mainly limited to the mountain and piedmont regions; today they, together with the Islamic institutes, have moved to the cities. The majority of them are found in nine out of ten large cities in the valley and piedmont areas, as well as in the republic's central and southern regions.

While the students and graduates of the Islamic educational establishments belong to the post-Soviet generation, two-thirds, or 58 percent, of their teachers grew up in the late Soviet, otherwise known as stagnation, period. According to information supplied by the Administration for Religious Affairs, 42 percent of the teachers and lecturers are men of 30 and younger; 41 percent are between 30 and 45; 14 percent between 45 and 60, while 3 percent are older than that. Ninety-three percent of the madrasah and Islamic university teachers have secular secondary or incomplete secondary education; and 7 percent are graduates of secular institutes and universities. The majority, or 78 percent, obtained higher local Muslim education either studying in illegal Koranic circles or with alims of the late Soviet period or at post-Soviet madrasahs and Islamic institutes and universities (the latter group is fairly large: 45 people out of a total 178 teachers and lecturers). Twenty-two percent described their educational level as "secondary."[6]

The very fact that the republic's Muslim spiritual elite is dominated by people who grew up and received an informal Islamic education locally during the Cold War period explains why the local alims remain prejudiced about "foreign Islam." Most are convinced that Islamic knowledge and rituals have been preserved in their purest form in Daghestan. The teachers of all higher educational establishments covered by the study program are convinced that the curricula of their institutions are much better and more Islamic than those in the Middle East and North Africa. The Daghestanian mudarrises reject in principle any novelties either in education content or in the teaching methods. The Muhammad Arif Islamic University is a happy exception to the rule.

Young people do not share the conservatism of the older generation because the real educational level of nearly all Islamic educational establishments of Daghestan is very low. Prof. A. Shikhsaidov, an Islamic lawyer, has aptly called them "the shadow of the famous madrasahs of the 17th-first third of the 20th century."[7] This is confirmed by Ilyas-hajji Ilyasov, one of the most respected alims and Sufis, who said that none of the rectors of Islamic universities or institutes has higher or at least secondary theological education.[8] I heard many complaints about the teaching programs from the students and mudarrises. The persecution of the Soviet times destroyed the high level of religious education in Daghestan and narrowed down the worldview of both the students and their teachers. The curricula are limited to a small number of legal Shafi'ite works. The graduates find it hard to orientate themselves in the key fiqh schools, they know nothing of the most prominent Muslim lawyers of the 20th century, which explains why in the mid-1990s Wahhabi ideologists were invariably the victors in discussions with the traditionalist local alims.

It stood to reason that, as a result, the local youth learned to mistrust the local traditional school of Islamic knowledge. In the 1990s, when the Iron Curtain was finally lifted, scores of Daghestanian boys and girls went abroad to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Iraq, Qatar, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Malaysia, and Pakistan in search of Islamic university education and spoken Arabic, the tutoring in which was very poor at home. The Administration for Religious Affairs sup-

[5] See: *Religii i religioznye organizatsii v Daghestane,* Compiled by K.M. Khanbabaev, Makhachkala, 2001, pp. 101-107.
[6] See: A ARA, Islamic Educational Establishments folder.
[7] A.R. Shikhsaidov, "Islam v Daghestane," *Tsentral'naia Azia i Kavkaz,* No. 4, 1999, p. 110.
[8] Quoted from: A. Savateev, " 'Wahhabit' 'Wahhabitu' rozn'," *Azia i Afrika segodnia,* No. 2, 2002, p. 6.

plied the following figures: there are 913 Daghestanians studying abroad; 400 came back after completing their education. In fact, the first figure is at least 150 percent higher: Khanbabaev has quoted a figure of 1,200.[9] A great number of young people left the country on tourist visas or on the pretence of going on hajj, which means that they had no official permission to go abroad to study.

After routing the Wahhabis and closing the foreign Islamic missions and schools in the republic, the authorities tightened control over trips abroad. Under the Law on Banning Wahhabi and Other Extremist Activities in the Republic of Daghestan of 16 September, 1999, those wishing to study abroad had to apply to the SAMD, which in turn consulted with the Committee (since 2006, Administration) for Religious Affairs under the RD Government. This discouraged many of those wishing to study abroad, but there is any number of Daghestanian students still living and studying in other countries. The border cannot be closed after all; it was the disappointing results of Islamic education abroad rather than the official bans that slowed down the outflow of potential students.

After more than 15 years, it became obvious that most Muslim students found the results disappointing. Those who went abroad on their own, without a preliminary agreement with one of the Arabic universities, had to enroll in four-year preparatory courses (irrespective of their command of Arabic and level of Islamic knowledge) before becoming university students. This extended the study period to nine years or even longer. Many students had to repeat the course several times. Without money or good training, young men found employment with local businesses (including work with tourists from Russia) or returned home. Many of them came back because they had no money and could not master the language. Most of those who stayed found themselves repeating the preparatory course or the first year indefinitely.

A large number of young Daghestanians educated in the Arab Middle East preferred to stay: they feared persecution at home as "Wahhabis and extremists," which they were regarded as by their fellow villagers. This is particularly true of the graduates of the Mecca and Medina universities of Saudi Arabia, yet, according to my field information, those who studied in Damascus were also flatly dismissed as Wahhabis. Many of the former students never went back home, where there was no work for them. Russia does not accept Arabian university diplomas, which means that graduates have no chance of finding employment at state higher educational structures of Daghestan or xenophobic Islamic higher educational establishments. Recently, the problem triggered a heated discussion in the press.[10]

Employment prospects are also one of the worst headaches for those who study at home; 5 or even 7 classes have already graduated from some of the universities; the graduates normally major in one of three disciplines: Koranic reading (kari'); imam-hatyb; and alim, or specialist in Arabic and Muslim sciences. Jobs are few and far between even for those who graduate from the best SAMD-controlled universities (the Muhammad Arif in Makhachkala and the Saypula-Qadi in Buynaksk): the majority of the republic's Muslim communities (especially in the south and north) do not recognize the muftiat. Graduates have a better chance of becoming mudarrises at their alma mater's branches and at associated village madrasahs. Many of those who remained jobless enrolled in the republic's secular higher educational establishments.

As a teacher, I know from personal experience that there are many graduates and former students of Islamic institutes and universities among the students of the Department of Oriental Studies of the State University of Daghestan in Makhachkala, which has been functioning since 2001. Recently, the lecturers and students of the state and Islamic institutes have established close and mutually advantageous relations. In 2004, Ia. Khanmagomedov, Ph.D. (Philos.), assistant professor at the Department of Oriental Studies of the State University of Daghestan, became head of the Department

[9] See: A ARA, Islam folder; K.M. Khanbabaev, op. cit., p. 134.
[10] See: Ia. Rasulov, "Problemy i perspektivy islamskogo obrazovania v Daghestane," *Novoe delo,* No. 19, 2003, p. 12.

of the Humanities at the Muhammad Arif Islamic University. It is hard to find work in a secular state that does not recognize the diplomas of the Islamic institutions because their curricula do not correspond to the state standards established by the Ministry of Education of Russia. It is much easier for a secular Oriental scholar to find employment at an Islamic institution, as Ia. Khanmagomedov's example has shown.

The above should not be taken to mean that post-Soviet society rejects Islamic education; in fact, the opposite is true: its prestige is very high. Even those who failed to find jobs are proud of graduating from an Islamic higher educational establishment. It seems that many of the social problems of the Islamic institutes and universities are caused by their heads' futile attempts to return to the pre-revolutionary past and their failure to take the specifics of secular society into account; meanwhile the institutes themselves bear traces of the Soviet past. More than that, they are exact copies of the Soviet higher educational school with certain elements of traditional madrasahs. As a result of the reforms in the ethnic sphere that took place in the 20th century, the Islamic institutes and universities offer tutoring in the national tongues of Daghestan, while the Imam ash-Shafi'i, the Saypula-Qadi, and Muhammad Arif universities teach in Russian—something that was impossible even in the Soviet prewar madrasahs.

The funding system has also changed: in the past it relied on public donations in the form of zakat (alms) and charity funds (waqf) from the jamaats. The Islamic educational system was restored on the money of private charities (sadaqa, nazr): the Mesed commercial bank, the Kirgu trade house, enterprises of Dagenergo, the Marine Trade Port, Sulakenergo, Dagvodokanal and Chirkeygesstroy companies, as well as the heads of district administrations who appropriated former state or collective property, being the most lavish donors. Director of the marine port murid Said-afandi Kharkharov from Chokh is the most generous among those who support the Islamic institutes of Makhachkala. Some of the money goes through charity funds named after S.-M. Abubakarov, Said-afandi of Chirkey and Khasan Khilmi. In the 1990s, the waqf property nationalized in 1927 and plundered was partly restored, but never regained its legal or social importance.

Unlike their predecessors, the Islamic educational establishments of Daghestan are much more closely connected with Sufism, as the above description has demonstrated. It is no accident that many of them bear the names of Daghestanian Sufis of the 19th and 20th centuries. In many of them, Saypula-Qadi, Said-Muhammad Abubakarov, and Yusuf-hajji in Buynaksk and Khasaviurt, in the villages of Komsomolskoe and Ghergebil, and in the settlement of Novy Chirkey, Sufism (tasawwuf) is studied as a discipline in its own right. The final-year students are expected to become murids of Said-afandi of Chirkey. There are murids of the recently deceased Sheikh Badrudin of Botlikh (1919-2002) and Said-afandi who belonged to the Mahmudiyya-Shaziliyya branch in the Saypula-Qadi University (the village of Komsomolskoe). I have calculated that about 30 percent of the students at the eponymous Buynaksk University belong to the murids of Said-afandi, while 70 percent are murids of his successor within the Shaziliyya Arslanali Gamzatov (born in 1954) trend. The Imam an-Navavi Institute is the only place that does not patronize any of the present Tariqah trends.

On the one hand, the Sufi component of the higher Muslim school creates a bias toward monopolization of Islamic education in the hands of the sheikh of Chirkey, who dominates the republic's north and center. On the other hand, this is a source of numerous conflicts. Post-Soviet Muslim society is torn apart by people who carry weight in the Islamic sphere and have adequate Islamic knowledge. In the latter half of the 1990s, those who closed ranks around the local Sufi tradition and the dissident Wahhabis who tried to purify the local variant of Islam from unacceptable novelties (bida') introduced by the Sufis were locked in heated discussions. Today, the relations among the Sufi sheikhs themselves have grown tense: they refuse to recognize one another and dismiss their rivals as false sheikhs (mutashayyikhun) and impostors. The followers of Said-afandi are es-

pecially intolerant—they recognize only four sheikhs in the Khalidiyya-Mahmudiyya-Shaziliyya trend (Arslanali included).

The above provides a background for the post-Soviet Islamic education of Daghestan. The very strange combination of Soviet and traditional madrasah elements is another sign that it is hard to move toward true Islamic knowledge in the republic. This suggests certain general observations. In the near future the Muslim school is unlikely to push the secular school aside. The prospects for Muslim education in the republic are determined by the blend of secular and religious educational elements and the clash between the local, general Russian and foreign influences. It is impossible to seal off the borders to separate the republic from the Mid-Eastern Islamic centers. We should learn that madrasahs do not necessarily export terrorism. In fact, the squabble over power and resources, as well as domination in the educational sphere that is unfolding before our eyes among the Muslim traditionalists, the 1999 winners, is much more dangerous.