

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

A SPLIT IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MUSLIMS OF RUSSIA: 1994-2004

Mikhail TULSKY

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Gainutdin Refuses to Obey Tadjuddin

In my previous article (*Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4, 2004), I wrote that in 1992 during the most serious split among the Russian Muslims, Moscow Mufti Ravil Gainutdin sided with Talgat Tadjuddin, who then headed the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the CIS European Part and Siberia. At that time, however, Gainutdin maintained contacts with the dissenters who tried to win him over to their cause. According to Nafigullah Ashirov, Ravil-khazrat was prepared to lead the split, yet refused to remain in the dissenters' crowd. Very soon he betrayed his intentions in concrete actions.

On 29 January, 1994, a meeting of the Moscow Muslims called by Ravil Gainutdin ruled: "Taking into account that the Islamic Center of Moscow and the Moscow Region enjoys high moral and political authority ... and in recognition of the fact that, thanks to the efforts of the Center's leaders, the capital of Russia has become an important spiritual center of the Muslims of the RF, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Central European Region of Russia (SAMCER) was set up... The Spiritual Administration will remain an inalienable part of the Islamic umma of Russia and plans to work in strict canonical harmony and together with the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the CIS European Part and Siberia (SAMES), other spiritual administrations of Russia, and religious organizations abroad." (Information of the SAMCER press service.)

Despite the plans to work "in strict canonical harmony and together with the SAMES" the new organization headed by Gainutdin withdrew from Tadjuddin's SAMES as soon as it was registered with the RF Ministry of Justice on 23 February, 1994. On 22 March Gainutdin gave a presentation of the new organization, the ceremony being attended by Tadjuddin, RF ministers Andrei Kozyrev and Sergei Sha-

khay, Metropolitan Pitirim and chief rabbi Arnold Shaeovich. Ivan Rybkin, as then speaker of the RF State Duma, and the heads of the spiritual administrations of the Muslims of Ukraine, Daghestan, and Ingushetia sent their greetings.¹

On 15 September, an enlarged plenary meeting of the Central Spiritual Administration of the Muslims (CSAM) of Russia and the CIS European Countries (the name SAMES acquired after being reregistered with the RF Ministry of Justice on 4 April, 1994) expressed its negative attitude about the fact that several regional administrations had left Tadjuddin. The plenary meeting ruled “to release Z. Shakirzianov from his duties of imam-muhtasib of the Muslims of the Omsk Region and Siberia ... and expel Z. Shakirzianov from the CSAM Presidium.” Z. Shakirzianov did not remain without a job for long: on 5 October, 1995 he registered an independent Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Siberia—the Omsk Muftiat—at the Ministry of Justice; other regional leaders of the Tadjuddin structure, however, were duly impressed by his dismissal.

Very soon, on 16 September, the Ministry of the Interior of Bashkortostan informed the SAMES presidium that the supporters of the republican Spiritual Administration planned to capture the building of the republic’s Central Spiritual Administration; Tadjuddin sent a letter to all his muftis and muhtasibs, in which he called on them “to defend the CSAM building complex” (on 18 September a copy was even sent to Patriarch Alexii II). Nearly all responded by dispatching their representatives to Ufa, the republic’s capital; the Moscow and Samara muftis did not react.

An extraordinary CSAM plenary meeting held on 21 September, 1994 ruled: “For his repeated failure to participate in the CSAM plenary meetings, as well as for not responding to the call of the Presidium to defend the CSAM complex, Mufti Ravil Gainutdin should be removed from all his posts, namely, member of the CSAM Presidium, Chairman of SAMCER, and second imam-hatyb of the main Moscow mosque. Shamil Iuneev will be appointed second imam-hatyb of the main Moscow mosque. Mufti Vagiz Iarullin will be removed from the CSAM Presidium and relieved from his post of Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Samara Region for his failure to respond to the Presidium’s to defend the CSAM complex.”

Immediately after that R. Valeev and the Iuneev brothers, who supported Tadjuddin in Moscow, made an attempt to remove Gainutdin from his post as the head of the main Moscow mosque (at that time it was the only mosque under his control) during his sermon. On 23 September, 1994 the SAMCER Presidium retaliated with “a unanimous decision to withdraw, in a canonical sense, from the CSAM.” To retain control over “his” mosque Gainutdin dismissed A. Bedretdinov, who was in charge of the mosque’s economic activities, and two imam-hatybs (R. Aliautdinov and Kh. Fekhretdinov), who even tried to “be reinstated in their jobs” by taking the case to court.²

Gainutdin established contacts with the Supreme Coordinating Center of the SAM of Russia (SCC), but did not join it. On 31 August, 1995 SCC Chairman Galiullin and SAMCER Chairman Gainutdin issued a joint statement that said in part: “In accordance with the RF Law on Freedom of Conscience, we have decided not to take part in the Duma elections of 1995.” Very soon, however, on 24 November, in violation of his earlier statement, Gainutdin at a meeting with A. Mikitaev and A. Chuev, two leaders of the Mezhnatsional’ny soiuz bloc, announced that the Muslims of Russia shared the bloc’s viewpoints.³ On 6 December SCC deputy chairmen Ashirov and Iskhakov (together with A.-V. Niazov and V. Iakupov), speaking in the name of the Union of Muslims of Russia (that had failed to gather enough signatures to run for the Duma), called on the Muslims to vote for the Russia—Our Home election bloc (which Ashirov described as “the most moderate and most reliable”).⁴ This effort brought Niazov the post of advisor to Sergei Beliaev, head of the Russia—Our

¹ “Prezentatsia novogo dukhovnogo upravlenia musul’man,” *RIA “Novosti,”* 22 March, 1994.

² “Odin iz musul’manskikh liderov Rossii obviniaet muftia Moskovskoy sobornoy mecheti v uzurpatsii vlasti,” *Interfax,* 26 May, 1995.

³ “Lider bloka ‘Mezhnatsional’ny soiuz’ Mikitaev obeshchaet ukrepit prava veruiushchikh i natsmen’shinstv,” *Interfax,* 25 November, 1995.

⁴ “Soiuz musul’man Rossii prizval svoikh storonnikov podderzhat NDR,” *Partinform,* 21 December, 1995.

Home faction in the Duma, and the right to use an aircraft of one of Gazprom's subsidiaries for his travels across the country.

The Council of the Muftis of Russia is Set up and United with the SCC

On 1 July, 1996, the First Mejlis (Congress) of the heads of the Spiritual Administrations of the Muslims of Russia passed a decision on setting up a Council of the Muftis of Russia (CMR) that comprised SAMCER, Galiullin's SAM of Tatarstan, N. Nigmatullin's SAM of Bashkortostan, M. Bibarsov's SAM of the Volga Area, the Buguruslan and Ulianovsk muftiats of brothers Ismagil and Tagir Shangaareev, as well as the dwarf SAM of Chuvashia headed by M. Arkhipov (it disappeared in 2000). Ravil Gainutdin, who convened the congress in the first place, was elected CMR chairman. While the congress was still in session, it was renamed the international Democracy and the Future of Islam in Russia conference, at which the newly elected chairman said: "We want the reforms to continue; we want to preserve peace and harmony. Islam and democracy completely suit each other." Said two days before the second round of the presidential elections of 1996, these words were interpreted as being in support of Yeltsin.⁵ On the same day, Ravil-khazrat met Gennadi Ziuganov to assure him of his support and to ask the communist leader to support, in turn, in the name of the State Duma, the idea of the CMR as a single Muslim structure of Russia.

The majority of the collective members of the SCC joined the CMR (early in 1996, G. Galiullin transferred his post of SCC head to N. Ashirov); as a result the SCC gradually declined. Moscow Imam M. Velitov (who controlled the Historic Mosque of Moscow), the SAM of the Tiumen Region under G. Bismullin, several communities of Siberia, the Far East, and the Republic of Mari El refused to join the new structure. Formally, the North Caucasian SAMs were also members of the SCC, yet at all times they minded their own business and never interfered in conflicts among the Tartar muftis.

By that time, N. Ashirov had befriended A.-V. Niazov, President of the Islamic Cultural Center and founder of the Union of Muslims of Russia. The two men had many things in common: they both came from Siberia (Tobolsk and Omsk), and they both belonged to the ethnic group of the Siberian Bukhara people (their ancestors came to the Siberian Khanate from the Bukhara Emirate in the 15th-16th centuries). On 8-10 August, 1997, Ashirov convened the First Conference of the Muslims of Siberia and the Far East in Tobolsk, his native city, which set up an Interregional Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Siberia and the Far East. N. Ashirov (the Supreme Mufti of Siberia) was elected its chairman with two deputies, A.-V. Niazov and G. Bismullin.

Ashirov and Niazov still lived in Moscow, where they gradually drew closer to Gainutdin. On 28 January, 1998, on the invitation of the Union of the Muslims (Niazov, Ashirov, and Khachilaev), Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Afro-American Nation of Islam, came to Moscow. The next day, he, together with Ravil Gainutdin, celebrated Uraza-bayram in the main Moscow mosque.⁶ On 7-9 August, 1998, the CMR and SCC leaders attended the Second International Conference of Islamic Unity, which elected Aslan Maskhadov its honorary chairman. A month later, on 6 September, they visited Grozny on Maskhadov's invitation to celebrate the 7th anniversary of independent Ichkeria and the 238th anniversary of Sheikh Imam Mansur's birth.

⁵ "O podderzhke Borisa Yeltsina vo vtorom ture prezidentskikh vyborov zaiavili dukhovnye lidery musul'man Rossii," *ITAR-TASS*, 1 July, 1996.

⁶ "Odin iz glavnykh prazdnikov islama—Uraza-bayram—otmechaiut musul'mane Rossii," *ITAR-TASS*, 29 January, 1998.

Finally, Gainutdin and Ashirov unofficially divided the spheres of influence: Gainutdin was left in control of the Muslim communities of European Russia (with the exception of the autonomous republics), while Ashirov received the Asian part (the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East). In November-December, Ashirov's SAM became the SAM of the Asian Part of Russia (SAMAPR); and Gainutdin's SAMCER became known as the SAM of the European Part of Russia (SAMER). The SCC communities in the European part were transferred to the SAMER; those communities in the Asian part which used to apply to Gainutdin were directed to Ashirov. This union cost Ashirov some of his supporters. He first lost Velitov, who joined the SAM of Siberia headed by Baiazitov and received from him a newly built mosque in Otradnoe, in Moscow; on 15 October, 1999, Ashirov also lost the Tiumen SAM under Bikmullin. Neither Velitov nor Bikmullin have yet joined the CMR.

On 23-25 November, 1998, SMR and SCC met in Moscow for a joint meeting at which the SCC joined the CMR (legally, the Ministry of Justice liquidated the SCC in the summer of 2002); the two structures issued a joint statement "about the unjustified claims of Talgat Tadjuddin ... who usurped the title of the 'Supreme Mufti of Russia'." The statement was signed by Gainutdin, Ashirov, Nigmatullin, Bibarsov, Arkhipov, the Shangareev brothers, the new mufti of Tatarstan G. Iskhakov, muftis of Adigey (E. Shumafov), Ingushetia (M. Albogachiev), Kabardino-Balkaria (Sh. Pshikhachev), Karachaevo-Cherkessia (I. Berdiev), North Ossetia (D. Khekelaev), deputy mufti of Daghestan Kh. Batsarov, as well as the muftis of Penza, Nizhni Novgorod and Rostov SAMs (DUMER members). On 24 November, all those present at the joint meeting met Gennady Ziuganov, leader of the Narodno-Patrioticheskiy Soiuz Rossii (People's Patriotic Union of Russia) and the Communist Party of the RF, and V. Zorkaltsev, Chairman of the Union's Executive Committee.⁷ The meeting took place at a time when the liberal media was subjecting the communist party to scathing criticism for General Makashov's anti-Semitic statements, while Boris Berezovskiy and Egor Gaidar demanded that the Communist Party of the RF be outlawed.

Mintimir Shaimiev Sets Up a SAM of "His Own" in Tatarstan and Subordinates All the Mosques of the Republic to It

After an independent SAM of Tatarstan was set up, the President of Tatarstan continued his friendly contacts with Tadjuddin, even though he was pleased that his independent republic had acquired an independent SAM and that the capital of Russian Islam had been moved from Ufa to Kazan, where a SCC under the mufti of Tatarstan was set up.

Mufti G. Galiullin proved to be an active and even aggressive man, while the Tadjuddin people—Kazan muhtasib G. Samatov and mufti of the SAM of Tatarstan (within CSAM) G. Zinnatullin—are described as his exact opposites. F. Salman (Khaidarov), one of the Tadjuddin men, who replaced Zinnatullin on 19 November, 1997 as the republic's mufti described his predecessor as a "passive and even infantile person" even though "he could read well and had a beautiful voice." No wonder that in 1993-1994, the number of communities under Galiullin nearly doubled, while the number of those under Tadjuddin remained the same.

Having found no new leader outside Tatarstan, Shaimiev's administration set its sights on G. Iskhakov, Galiullin's first deputy, a milder and more moderate man. His mother knew Kh. Nizamov very well (who in 1991-1997 headed the administration of President Shaimiev). It was more logical to look for a

⁷ "Lider Narodno-patrioticheskogo soiuza Rossii i Kompartii Gennady Ziuganov provedet zavtra vstrechu s predstavitelemi islamskogo dukhovenstva," *RIA "Novosti"*, 23 November, 1998.

new leader in the SAM of the Republic of Tatarstan since, according to the Council for the Religious Affairs, in December 1997, out of the 769 Muslim communities of Tatarstan, 599 supported the SAM of the RT; 60 sided with the CSAM; and 110 were independent (in actual fact, however, some of them belonged to the CSAM). (The total figure probably included the communities that had failed to register by that time: late in 1997 there were 695 registered communities in the republic.⁸)

On Shaimiev's initiative, a Unifying Congress of the Muslims of Tatarstan was held in Kazan. The president himself opened it on 14 February, 1998. The heads of local administrations explained to the congress deputies (brought to Kazan in buses hired by the republic's administration) that they should vote for Gusman Iskhakov. He received 430 votes (there were 718 delegates at the congress instead of the expected 762); G. Galiullin got 111 votes; F. Salman, 53; M. Zalialetdinov (muhtasib of Kazan who belonged to the SAM of the RT), 35; K. Bikchentaev (CSAM), 34; and G. Zinatullin, 27.

On 4 March, 1998, in full accordance with the new Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations of the RF, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tatarstan registered the republic's SAM headed by Iskhakov, thus de jure depriving Galiullin of the status of mufti and head of the republic's SAM. On 18 March, at the first plenary meeting of the new SAM muftis Farid Salman and Gabdullah Galiullin transferred all the property and other rights of their spiritual administrations to Iskhakov's United Administration: Gabdullah-khazrat was elected chairman of the Council of the Ulemas, while Farid-khazrat became head of the Commission for Publishing Religious Literature at the united SAM RT. "They accepted me as a mufti, transferred the stamps and the charters. A year later they withdrew from the SAM RT, without the stamps and without the charters," says Gusman-hazrat with a great deal of irony. As soon as Galiullin and Salman withdrew from the administration, a new RT Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations was drafted. President Shaimiev signed it on 21 July, 1999. Art 10.5 of the law says: "The Muslim organizations of the RT are represented and administered by one centralized religious organization—the SAM RT." Salman first applied to the local courts, then to the Constitutional Court of Russia, which in July 2001 annulled this and other points of the law as contradicting the RF Constitution. This did not help the CSAM branches to register in Tatarstan; the CSAM-SAM RT confrontation ended on 19 October, 2001 when F. Salman was removed from the mosque of Bulgar. He had to go to Moscow; in September 2002 Tadjuddin appointed him to the Yamalo-Nenetskiy Okrug. According to the recent law, all the mosques of Tatarstan were reregistered within Iskhakov's SAM RT. The normal procedure was a simple one: the local administration head took the relevant documents from the local mullah and sent them to Kazan to be reregistered. Earlier, before the law was adopted, Deputy of the State Council of Tatarstan F. Shaimardanov registered its SAM of the Hanafis with four communities in Naberezhnye Chelny. Under the present law no Muslim communities were registered outside the SAM RT. All of them (with the exception of four communities in Naberezhnye Chelny) belong to Iskhakov's SAM.

Early in 2002, Galiullin, one of Iskhakov's opponents (married to his sister) patched up the quarrel. On 2 February, 2002, at the Second Congress of the Muslims of the RT he was presidium member and voted for Iskhakov. Voting deserves special mention: in contrast to 1998, it was conducted by a show of hands. Five hundred and seventy-eight delegates out of the expected 625 all voted for Iskhakov. The alternative candidates of Kh. Salikhjan and K. Bikchentaev were not even offered for the vote. On 7 February, however, a repeated viewing of the video recording of the voting procedure revealed one hand raised against Iskhakov. The delegates were elected in a very strange way: 2 representatives from 3 communities. V. Iakupov, Iskhakov's first deputy, explained this by the fact that the Tartar Dramatic Theater could seat only 744. There is another possible explanation: to avoid deputies from the communities that in 1998 voted the "wrong way."

⁸ See: R. Abdrakhmanov, E. Mavrina, *Respublika Tatarstan. Model etnologicheskogo monitoringa*, Moscow, 1999, pp. 85-87.

Trying to Get Close to Vladimir Putin

When on 9 August, 1999 Boris Yeltsin made public the name of his preferred successor, the muftis fought for a place as close as possible to the future president. Gainutdin was the first to meet Putin: the meeting at which they discussed “the ways and means for achieving peace and harmony in the Northern Caucasus” took place on 21 August. “The Islamic clerics of Russia will support the Muslims of Dagestan fighting the aggressors. The people who entered the republic with arms have nothing to do with Islam,” said Gainutdin to journalists.⁹

On 27 August in Chuvashia, Tadjuddin said: “Despite the increased influence of some foreign Muslim and Arab states in the Northern Caucasus, where religious extremism is planted using their money, the faithful Muslims of Russia do not accept religious extremism, especially Wahhabism as its most dangerous version. The 400-odd years of good-neighborly relations with members of other traditional confessions in Russia are helping us to find a golden axis of mutual respect, which will keep Wahhabism in its place.”¹⁰ The difference is obvious: while Gainutdin “simply supported” the Muslims of Dagestan, Tadjuddin revealed the “roots of evil.”

On 9 September, Gainutdin organized an extended CMR sitting at his residence attended by the muftis of Chechnia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Adigey, and Dagestan. It turned out that Gainutdin’s supporters and the North Caucasian muftis looked differently at certain things: “We wanted negotiations to stop the bloodshed, while, unfortunately, certain North Caucasian muftis spoke resolutely against this. They are convinced that the war should be fought to the end.” This was how Iskhakov described these contradictions and added: “When did these 15-16-year-old boys [Chechen fighters.—*M.T.*] become bandits? They should not be called bandits—they should be merely shown the right way.”¹¹ At the meeting of the CMR muftis and the muftis of the Northern Caucasus with Vladimir Putin, which took place on the same day, no one paid attention to these contradictions.

Gainutdin and his entourage were the first to support Putin’s candidacy for the president. On 26 January, 2000 A.-V. Niazov’s Refakh movement drafted a statement that called on the Muslims, Buddhists, and members of other confessions to vote for Putin on 26 March. The statement said, in particular, that Putin would be able to defend the right of all Russia’s nationalities to live according to their spiritual values and national traditions, and would achieve stable and lasting peace in the Caucasus.¹²

On 15 March Putin received Gainutdin for the third time. The mufti presented him with a dagger, while the presidential candidate pointed out that the culture of Russia was “as varied as its economy” and added that he had invited Muslim F. Gazizulin, head of the Ministry of State Property of the RF, to join them.¹³

Gainutdin, Tadjuddin, Iskhakov¹⁴ and Ashirov supported Putin on the eve of the elections; the latter two do not like to recall this, while Tadjuddin was the first of them to congratulate Putin on his victory: on 27 March at 10:42 a.m. ITAR-TASS informed: “The Supreme Mufti of Russia congratulated Vladimir Putin on his victory at the presidential elections in the name of the millions of Russian Muslims” and quoted from his message: “We voted for you with faith and hope because your deeds rather than your words are the best proof of your determination and love of the Fatherland.”

⁹ “Muftii Severnogo Kavkaza v blizhayshie dni namereny obsudit puty dostizhenia mira i soglasia na iuge Rossii,” *RIA “Novosti”*, 22 August, 1999.

¹⁰ “‘Pravovernye musul’mane strany ne vosprinimaiut religiozny ekstremizm,’—zaiavil Verkhovny mufti Rossii Talgat Tadjuddin,” *ITAR-TASS*, 27 August, 1999.

¹¹ “Soveshchanie u Putina: rezul’tatov net, no mnenia vyskazany,” *Tatar-inform*, 13 September, 1999.

¹² “Dvizhenie ‘Refakh’ obratilos s prizyvom k musul’manam, buddistam i predstaviteliam drugikh religioznykh konfessiy Rossii progolosovat 26 marta za Vladimira Putina,” *ITAR-TASS*, 26 January, 2000.

¹³ “Rossia—eto obshchiy dom dlia musul’man i khristian, podcherknul Vladimir Putin, otkryvaia vstrechu s predstavitelemi muftiata Rossii,” *ITAR-TASS*, 15 March, 2000.

¹⁴ “Musul’mane Tatarstana otmechaiut segodnia prazdnik Kurban-bayram,” *RIA “Novosti”*, 16 March, 2000.

Discussion on Wahhabism

On 16 September, 1999, the Popular Assembly (parliament) of Daghestan passed a Law on Banning Wahhabi and Other Types of Extremist Activity on the Territory of the Republic of Daghestan (RD), which M. Magomedov, Chairman of the republic's State Council, signed on 22 September. Arts 2-3 of the document say: "Education of the citizens of the RD in religious educational establishments outside the RD and RF is allowed on permission from the administering structures of the republic's religious organization agreed upon with the state structure for religious affairs of the RD" and only "according to the curricular approved by the administering structure of the republic's religious organization. People who teach religious disciplines in religious educational organizations or are engaged in private teaching should have religious education and carry out their activity with the permission of the administering structures of the republic's religious organization." Art 5 says: "People responsible for violating Arts 1-4 of this Law shall be called to administrative account in the form of administrative arrest for 15 days or a fine ranging from 100 to 500 minimum wages, if their actions do not entail criminal liability under the current laws."

On 2 October the muftis of the CSAM met for their plenary meeting (council) in Ufa. Its statement stirred up a wide response: "Supported by the Spiritual Administrations of the European Part of Russia and of the Asian Part, the so-called Buguruslan muftiat, and the SAM of the Republic of Tatarstan, foreign missionaries are opposing traditionally moderate and enlightened Islam by preaching and introducing non-traditional forms and trends. They are causing conflicts and clashes among their followers... The long-term social and political prospects of the relations between the Muslim community and the state depend on the outcome of this confrontation between the clerics and communities of the CSAM and the new quasi-religious structures." The statement was signed by T. Tadjuddin, the CSAM muftis of the republics of Chuvashia, Udmurtia, Tatarstan, Mari El, and the Ulianovsk, Kurgan, Sverdlovsk, Astrakhan, Samara, Perm, Volgograd, Orenburg, Penza, Rostov, Moscow, and Kirov regions; St. Petersburg, the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug; Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and even by the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Siberia, independent of the CSAM. Significantly, in 1992-1994 A. Kharrasov, head of the Muslims of Estonia, was an active SCC member.

It was after this attack that Gainutdin (who in August had been insisting on an "absolutely peaceful settlement of this acute conflict"¹⁵ and on 1 October spoke "against air raids on Chechnia"¹⁶) said on 16 October in Volgograd that he completely supported Russia's armed actions in Daghestan: "We shall fight against radical 'Islam' so as not to let it penetrate deep into Russia, and we call on the faithful Muslims to follow traditional Islam, the main postulates of which condemn wars, fratricidal conflicts, and violence."¹⁷

On 20 October, before the Council on Cooperation with the Religious Organizations under the Russian President opened its sitting, Tadjuddin pointed out: "Religious extremists come to Russia to sow intolerance under the guise of charity foundations... Some of the foreign students studying in Russia's Islamic institutes take part in these movements."¹⁸

As the struggle between the two structures (the CMR and the CSAM) gained momentum, the "fellow-travelers" of both leaders changed their stance. On 15 October, the SAM of the Tiumen Region un-

¹⁵ "Islamskie lidery Rossii prizvali musul'man Daghestana nayti mirny vykhod iz slozhivsheisia v respublike situatsii," *ITAR-TASS*, 12 August, 1999.

¹⁶ "Dukhovnye lidery musul'man Rossii vseselo podderzhivaiut bor'bu gosudarstva s terrorismom, odnako vystupaiut protiv nanesenia aviadarov po territorii Chechni," *RIA "Novosti"*, 1 October, 1999.

¹⁷ "Predsedatel Dukhovnogo upravlenia musul'man evropeyskoy chasti Rossii mufti sheikh Ravil Gainutdin zaiavil o podderzhke voennykh deystviy Rossii v Daghestane," *ITAR-TASS*, 16 October, 1999.

¹⁸ "Pod vidom blagotvoritel'nykh musul'manskikh fondov v Rossiiu pronikaiut vsevozmozhnye religioznye ekstremisty, zaiavil Verkhovny mufti Talgat Tadjuddin," *ITAR-TASS*, 20 October, 1999.

der G. Bikmullin withdrew from the SAM of the Muslims of the Asian Part of Russia and from the CMR; on 11 November Bikmullin signed an agreement of cooperation with mufti of Khanty-Mansiisk T. Samatov, who belonged to the CSAM (later he signed a similar agreement with the SAMAPR). According to Samatov, by the spring of 2002 Bikmullin had established close friendly relations with Iskhakov's Kazan muftiat.

On 14 November, Tadjuddin took part in the Itogi TV program (shown on the NTV Channel), in which he accused the CMR of aiding and abetting Wahhabism. His contribution to the scientific-practical conference, "The Wars of the Future and the Ways They Can be Prevented," which took place late in November, was the most eloquent one. After outlining the ways Wahhabism penetrated Russia he said: "Today, there are many supporters of Wahhabism in Russia, the Moscow muftiat, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Asian Part of Russia, the Buguruslan muftiat, and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Tatarstan among them. For example, the Moscow muftiat recently received humanitarian aid from abroad in the sum of \$1 million for summer Wahhabi camps and Wahhabi clerics."¹⁹

On 30 June, 2000, the CMR met to discuss a possible ban on Wahhabism in Russia; the final document described Tadjuddin as a dissenter who had been the first to open doors wide to pseudo-Islamic missionaries when in January 1992 he signed an agreement with the Islamic Development Bank to the sum of \$1.5 million. (In fact, the sum was \$1.4 million, of which Tadjuddin's structure received only \$0.4 million in the first half of 1992 when his opponents were still his subordinates.) The same statement protested against a ban on Wahhabism.

Soon after that Gainutdin sent to the media a statement that indirectly justified Wahhabism in the following way: "Wahhabism is the official ideology of Saudi Arabia that knows neither terrorism nor extremism. Wahhabism is based on the teaching of the Koran and the Sunnah. Any legal ban of Wahhabism in Russia will infringe on the rights and constitutional freedoms of our Muslim citizens. Early in the 1990s several hundreds of our young men studied in the institutes and universities of Saudi Arabia because it was ready to pay for them. It trained them."²⁰ "Wahhabism is described in negative terms, while the truth is much more complicated. Wahhabism is a teaching based on the Koran and the Sunnah. It has nothing in common with extremism and terrorism. What is more it condemns them."²¹

The War on Iraq and "Jihad" of Tadjuddin

At a meeting organized by the Edinaia Rossia Party on 3 April, 2003 in Ufa in protest against the war on Iraq, T. Tadjuddin said: "You know what 'bush' means? Bush means 'empty' (as translated from the Arabic.—*M.T.*), empty, empty Bush! And empty bits of nothing don't last long! God will sweep them away, history will sweep them away, let there never ever be such empty leaders in this world!.. The people of Iraq have stood and will go on standing!.. We have but one God, and we call Him God, or Allah, we will always worship Him. We are sick of this green dollar, exchanging it one way, then exchanging it back—to hell with this dollar and with Bush too! I don't mean to swear, it is God bringing these words to my lips!.. Americans in those striped overalls, the same as their flag, they're prisoners from all over the world who've been living in America for over 200 years now. And today these

¹⁹ "Talгат Tadjuddin obviniaet Moskovskiy muftiat v posobnichestve vahhabitam," *Bashinform*, 2 December, 1999.

²⁰ "O neobkhodimosti tochnykh opredeleniy." Interview M. Shevchenko s R. Gainutdinom," *NG-religia*, 29 November, 2000.

²¹ "Narodny mufti. Islam v Rossii bol'she, chem Islam," *Moskovskiy komsomolets*, 12 July, 2001.

marauders have broken loose, let's get them back in their cage, let's drive these Americans back into their cage! We are glad our president has been elected, chosen by God and the people, that he understands everything and does everything right, for since 19 March of this year, the Third Rome is Moscow! There will be no Fourth Rome! Because it would not be right to join up with these jailers in their striped pants with stars on their behinds, and you know, they even wear the same striped trunks, but I have no idea where the star goes, at the back or at the front, people who go around like this can never be guarantors of peace! One ruler, Alexander II, sold Alaska to America for 7 million dollars in gold, so now they have a big appetite. From Iraq they want to go on and check out Iran, then Azerbaijan and Armenia, then they'll stop by and see their prostitute Shevardnadze. After that they will want to go and check on the results of the referendum in Chechnia and then take a look and see how much oil, how much gold, how much timber we have, and while they're about it they'll help cut up all our missiles. Excuse me again, but I have to say it, to hell with them! Tonight the Central Spiritual Administration declared a holy war to liberate Iraq and the world, will you support it? Everyone who wants to fight for God, for Iraq, for peace and freedom, sign up and join the forces. For those who want to remain neutral, we can organize forces at home, we'll grab every American, every Englishman, and all their hangers-on, hand them over to the police as spies and sell them to America for 1.5 million dollars each. With this money we can raise student grants, build a bigger sports stadium, and train kung fu wrestlers."

The student part of the audience enthusiastically hailed the speaker. After hearing this, Aiup Bibarsov, deputy chairman of the SAM of Bashkortostan, who planned to speak at the meeting, preferred to step aside. Accompanied by "Mufti, we love you!" coming from the delighted students, Tadjuddin spoke to the journalists: "*Tonight, the Central Islamic Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia, the Muslims of Holy Russia, unanimously approved of a fetwah that announced a holy war for the freedom of Iraq and the whole world.*"

Answering the question: "What specific forms will the jihad take?" Tadjuddin said: "*I shall not go into details here—this is classified information, yet we have our instruments for putting pressure on the United States, Great Britain, and their hangers-on, because this is Antichrist, against which all the world should rise. We, the Muslims and Orthodox Christians, are looking forward to the Second Coming of Christ; Antichrist should appear before that—this is what is going on.*"

"Do you expect any results?"

"Absolutely; you will see them in the next two or three days, God willing.

"What results do you expect?"

"*I expect one of the aircraft carriers to sink. And then they all will go away. And there will be no America. It will fall apart into 50 states.*"²²

Tadjuddin himself never pronounced the word "jihad"; it was the journalists who used it. On 3 April at 3:00 p.m., Interfax reported: "The CSAM passed a decision to announce a jihad (holy war) against the U.S. Tadjuddin pointed out that it was the second time in the history of Russia of the 20th-21st centuries that a *fath* (resolution) about a jihad against any country had been passed. This happened the first time in 1941 when the Muslims of Russia announced a jihad against Germany, said Tadjuddin. 'The Muslims of Russia have effective instruments for bringing pressure on the U.S. We shall institute a fund to invite donations for buying weapons to be used against America, as well as foodstuffs for the people of Iraq,' said the mufti. He pointed out that the first results of the Muslims' holy war could be expected within 2 or 3 days. The jihad was supported by the meeting in Ufa." This information lumped together quotes from the speech and Tadjuddin's answers to the journalists; it also contained some words about weapons, which were not in the audio- and video recordings. On the same day, at 4:52 p.m., ITAR-TASS copied the Interfax information and added: "The Islamic Spiritual Administration in Ufa, of which Talgat Tadjuddin is head, issued a statement that 'there were no official statements in the name of the Islamic Spiritual Administration related to this issue'."

²² Quoted from audio and video recordings "KP in Bashkortostan" and "REN-TV."

On 4 April, after a warning issued by the General Public Prosecutor's Office, the leaders of the Bashkirian branch of Edinaia Rossia and the republican SAM (part of Gainutdin's CMR), who had hailed Tadjuddin, hastened to distance themselves from what he said. All CMR muftis condemned "Tadjuddin's jihad" and nearly called the Supreme Mufti a madman; yet they agreed with the jihad announced by Saddam Hussein and supported the "struggle of the Iraqi people." Aiup Bibarsov quoted from Vladimir Putin: "America is our strategic partner." When I asked him whether he wanted to see America as Russia's partner, Aiup-khazrat answered: "I personally would prefer France and Germany as Russia's partners, rather than America." Mufti Iskhakov said with a great deal of cynicism: "There is no point in declaring a jihad on America—in a couple of days Iraq will be defeated." Ashirov, who likes Tadjuddin least of anyone, remarked: "A bad man spoiled a good idea."

On 4 April, Gainutdin signed an official CMR's statement: "The plan for the Muslims of Russia to buy weapons for a war on the U.S. mentioned by mufti Talgat Tadjuddin is the first clear demonstration that the federal Law on Opposing Extremism appeared in good time. In the past, religious extremism in our country manifested itself in private, whereas today an entire spiritual administration of Muslims has refused to obey the Russian laws. The Council of the Muftis of Russia completely supports the efforts of President Vladimir Putin."²³ At no time before or after that did Gainutdin betray his delight about the Law on Opposing Extremism.

On the same eventful day of 4 April, M. Khuzin, Tadjuddin's deputy, met Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad Kirill and Alexander Voloshin, head of the presidential administration (Tadjuddin had "caught flu" and disconnected his phones). After the meeting Khuzin said: "Tadjuddin announced a spiritual jihad that consists of four aspects: condemnation of U.S. aggression against a sovereign state; support of the efforts of the RF president to settle the Iraqi crisis peacefully; money gathering to extend humanitarian aid to Iraq; and a call to stop watching American, British, and Canadian films on TV."²⁴

On 14 April, an extended meeting of the CMR in its office passed a fetwah which condemned Tadjuddin; it was attended by R. Gainutdin, N. Ashirov, M. Bibarsov, I. Shangareev, muftis of the Ulianovsk Region (F. Aliullov) and Mordovia (R. Khalikov); and deputies mufti of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and the Nizhni Novgorod Region (V. Iakupov, A. Bibarsov, and D. Mukhetdinov). The muftiats independent of the CMR were only represented by Chairman of the Komi SAM V. Gaiazov, and mufti of Chechnia A. Shamaev. The other six North Caucasian muftis refused to support Ravil Gainutdin. The fetwah called Tadjuddin a "false prophet" because, the document said: "his prophecies about an American aircraft carrier sinking in a couple of days and America disappearing by falling apart into 50 states were false... It is duly announced that no Muslim has the right to perform namaz with Talgat Tadjuddin or to follow his instructions and advice."²⁵ Tadjuddin issued the following comment: "This is like one janitor replacing another," and even distributed a leaflet showing a thumb making a rude gesture against the background of the CMR fetwah. The picture reached all newspapers.

The seriousness of "Tadjuddin's excommunication" was put to the test on 12 May in the *Captain Nemo* restaurant in Moscow where I. Berdiev, the newly appointed Chairman of the Coordinating Council of the Muslims of the Northern Caucasus, celebrated his appointment. Before the meal all the Muslims prayed together: Tadjuddin and Khuzin, Ashirov, Shamaev, and Niazov were also present.²⁶

²³ Zaiavlenie Soveta muftiev Rossii po povodu prizyvov k sozdaniu nezakonnykh vooruzhennykh formirovaniy dlia voyny s SShA [http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&id=9156&topic=101].

²⁴ "Talgat Tadjuddin ne ob'iavliai Amerike 'sviashchennuiu voynu,' a prizyval vesti 'dukhovny jihad,' utverzhaet zamestitel verkhovnogo muftia" [http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&id=9199&topic=101].

²⁵ "Na zasedanii Soveta muftiev Rossii, ob'iavivshem Tadjuddina 'Izheprorokom,' Severny Kavkaz predstavliai tol'ko mufti Chechni" [http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=9436&type=view]; "Da upaset Allah Rossiiu ot Izheprorokov," *Vse ob islame*, No. 6-7 (14-15), April 2003.

²⁶ See: "Dva predstavitelia Soveta muftiev Rossii pomolilis vmeste s 'otluchennym' Talgatom Tadjuddinom" [http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=10441&type=view].

On 17 April, deputy head of the presidential administration V. Surkov invited the muftis of the Northern Caucasus and the CMR to a meeting in the Kremlin to discuss religious education, from which he excluded the CSAM muftis. According to Ashirov, Surkov said for everyone to hear that after Tadjuddin had announced a jihad “it was essentially impossible to deal with him.” SAMER officials confirmed this and added that those present at the meeting on 17 April “divided up the money” for religious education. Surkov (whose father was a Chechen and who uses his mother’s family name) completely agreed with Gainutdin’s scathing criticism of Tadjuddin.²⁷

On 22 April, the Council of the Ulemas of the CSAM headed by Tadjuddin condemned the CMR fetwah and concluded that by declaring Tadjuddin a renegade, the CMR had called for his murder: “We all know that the Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) said: ‘Kill those who change their religion’ (that is, abandon Islam). The CSAM leaders are not afraid of threats: we have already received similar messages from the notorious Shamil Basaev.” The statement pointed out: “The position of the young and promising imam of the Memorial Mosque in Moscow, Shamil Aliautdinov, deserves respect: he not only refused to accept the ‘fetwah’ of Gainutdin, but also left the ‘extended’ meeting.”²⁸

On 30 April, at the plenary meeting of the CSAM in Ufa, the muftis completely supported Tadjuddin: “In connection with the document issued by the ‘Council of the Muftis of Russia’ that declared the head of the CSAM a renegade, we confirm that there is a real threat to the life of Sheikh-ul-Islam Talgat Safa Tadjuddin.” Mukhammat Tadjuddinov (son of the Supreme Mufti appointed mufti of Bashkortostan within the CSAM) and Khuzin addressed the heads of the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Security Service of Russia and Bashkortostan with a statement. Tadjuddin also attended this plenary meeting together with 16 muftis of the CSAM, leaders of the CSAM regional branches in Tiumen and Latvia, all 14 imam-muhtasibs of the CSAM in Bashkortostan, as well as members of the Public Council of CSAM and heads of the Islamic Institute. The muftis of the Sverdlovsk and Samara regions and Udmurtia dispatched their deputies: A. Mukhamadiev, R. Badrukshin, and Kh. Shakirov. Deputy Chairman of the CSAM, mufti of Yamalo-Nenetskiy Okrug F. Salman, commissioned Khuzin to represent his spiritual administration. The Astrakhan and Orenburg regions, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine limited themselves to congratulatory statements (the Astrakhan mufti is one of the two CSAM deputy chairmen). Gaiizov, head of the independent SAM of Komi, who attended the CMR meeting of 14 April, sent his deputy F. Maksutov, who endorsed all the CSAM decisions (in the same way as his superior had endorsed CMR’s decisions). Anvar Muratshin, Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Bashkortostan, was also present and signed the final document together with another 47 participants.²⁹

A Step Toward Unification?

The situation in which Gainutdin was transformed from a “defender of Wahhabism” into a “fighter against extremism,” while Tadjuddin, a “fighter against Wahhabism,” suddenly became a “proponent of jihad” made an ideological struggle between the Gainutdin and Tadjuddin groups impossible: mutual accusations lost their meaning.

²⁷ See: “Na soveshchaniy rukovoditeley musul’ manskikh organizatsiy v Tiumeni mufti Nafigulla Ashirov zaiavil o svoem sblizhenii s Kremlem” [<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=11039&type=view>].

²⁸ Zaiavlenie Soveta ulemov Tsentral’nogo dukhovnogo upravleniya musul’ man Rossii [<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=9976&type=view>].

²⁹ See: “Talgat Tadjuddin poluchil podderzhku plenuma TsDUM i naznachil muftiem Bashkortostana svoego syna” [<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&id=10075&topic=101>].

This probably showed the leaders of the Russian Muslims that they should unite. The Kremlin remained loyal to both conflicting sides: Tadjuddin and Gainutdin were both invited to Putin's inauguration ceremony on 7 May, 2004 and were asked to unite.

On 20 May, 2004, as a result of the Kremlin's efforts, Berdiev, Gainutdin, and Tadjuddin signed a joint statement on setting up a United Council of Spiritual Administrations of the Muslims of Russia to Oppose Extremism and Terrorism. They also resolutely supported what the state and President Putin were doing. It was the first time in the history of the schism that the leaders of the three main groups of Russian Muslims united into a single Union...
