
DOI: 10.31696/2618-7302-2024-1-030-043

SOVIET DIPLOMACY AND THE ALL-MUSLIM CONGRESS IN SAUDI ARABIA

© 2024

Vitaly V. Naumkin¹

The article presents little-known episodes of the history of all-Muslim congresses and the caliphate movement of the ninetieth — first third of the twentieth century. The author reveals the close relationship between the concept of the caliphate and the ideas of Muslim unity, as well as the reasons for the failure of attempts to implement such projects in practice in the Ottoman era. The historical picture of the preparation and holding of the first all-Muslim congresses in Cairo and Mecca in 1926 is presented in the context of the changing system of international relations and the process of formation of a new geopolitical space in the Middle East. The author comes to the conclusion that the Islamic factor became an effective tool in the foreign policy of the USSR, which allowed, in the 1920s, to strengthen Soviet positions in Arabia and the Islamic world.

Keywords: All-Muslim Congress, Muslim unity, the concept of the Caliphate, USSR, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud, diplomacy

For citation: Naumkin V. V. Soviet Diplomacy and the All-Muslim Congress in Saudi Arabia. *Vestnik Instituta vostokovedeniya RAN*. 2024. No. 2. Pp. 30–43. DOI: 10.31696/2618-7302-2024-2-030-043

СОВЕТСКАЯ ДИПЛОМАТИЯ И ВСЕМУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ КОНГРЕСС В САУДОВСКОЙ АРАВИИ

В. В. Наумкин

Статья представляет малоизвестные страницы истории Всемусульманских конгрессов и движения за халифат XIX — первой трети XX в. Автор раскрывает тесную взаимосвязь концепции халифата и идей мусульманского единства, а также причины неосуществимости подобных проектов в Османскую эпоху. Историческая картина подготовки и проведения Всемусульманских конгрессов в Каире и Мекке в 1926 г. помещена в контекст меняющейся системы международных отношений в процессе формирования нового геополитического пространства на Среднем Востоке. Автор приходит к заключению о том, что исламский фактор стал эффективным инструментом внешней политики СССР, что позволило в 1920-е годы укрепить советские позиции в Аравии и в мусульманском мире.

Ключевые слова: Всемусульманский конгресс, единство мусульман, концепция халифата, СССР, Великобритания, Саудовская Аравия, Ибн Сауд, дипломатия

Для цитирования: Наумкин В. В. Советская дипломатия и Всемусульманский конгресс в Саудовской Аравии. *Вестник Института востоковедения РАН*. 2024. № 2. С. 30–43. DOI: 10.31696/2618-7302-2024-2-030-043

¹ Vitaly V. Naumkin, Full Member of RAS, President, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences; director@ivran.ru

Наумкин Виталий Вячеславович, академик РАН, научный руководитель Института востоковедения РАН; director@ivran.ru
ORCID: 0000-0001-9644-9862

FROM THE HISTORY OF MUSLIM CONGRESSES AND THE CALIPHATE MOVEMENT

The idea of holding all-Muslim congresses appeared long before the liquidation of the Ottoman Caliphate, but was in one way or another went hand in hand with the concept of the Caliphate, which was extremely important for Islam. Although in 1516 the Ottoman Sultans simultaneously possessed the titles of Caliphs (the first to carry this title was Selim I), their right to supreme spiritual power in the Muslim world was not supported by all Muslims. Since they did not originate from the Qurayshi tribe, the Sultans always, and especially during the decline of the empire, needed to legitimize their claims to the Caliphate. Although, as Martin Kramer, a well-known American-Israeli researcher of the history of Muslim congresses, rightly noted, “the theory of the caliphate as circulated in the Ottoman Empire contained hardly any allusion to Qurayshi descendant election, and substituted the enforcement of the holy law and the militant defense of Islam as valid criteria for measurement of any claim to the Muslim Caliphate.” [Kramer, 1986, p. 3; Gibb, 1961, p. 141–150]

The Ottoman Sultans’ Caliphate, as well as the very idea of rallying all Muslims, undermined the sharp contradictions between Sunnis and Shiites, and this primarily concerned Turkey’s relation with its closest neighbor and rival, Persia. Speaking of hostility between these two main areas in Islam, English Orientalist E. G. Brown wrote how one Persian derwish at Khoi in northwestern Persia boasted to him that, along with his fellow derwishes, he accompanied the Russian army during the Russian-Turkish war, helping the Russians with their prayers. [Brown, 1904, p. 323]. Nevertheless, a point on which many Western Orientalists agreed, was that the expansion of the West into the Islamic world forced the Sunnis and Shiites, even for a short time, to reconcile, pushing their doctrinal differences away.

Doubts about the legitimacy of the Ottoman Caliphate were already being expressed in the 1870s. One of the first to publicly question the Caliphate was the not-very-well-known English poet of the Victorian era, Wilfrid Blunt [Blunt, 1920]², who spoke in favor of the liberation of Egypt from colonial dependence, whom Kramer calls “social non-conformist and political romantic.” We know that such idealistic romanticists, who found charm in the harsh life of Hijaz at that time, which they contrasted with the luxury and splendor of Constantinople, and often inspired by Islamic values, could be found among the English. With all this, most of them faithfully served the imperial interests of Britain. After returning to England in 1879, Blunt developed his idealistic constructions, blaming the Turks for the decline of Islam, which, he argued, could only be reformed under the auspices of the Arabs, and advocating the transfer of the Caliphate from Istanbul to Mecca, from Othman’s house to Arab Qurayshites. [Kramer, 1986, p. 10] Blunt’s ideas on Islamic reform and the Caliphate found support from the famous Egyptian Muslim thinker and reformer, who in 1899 became the Supreme Mufti of Egypt, Muhammad Abdo³, whom the British poet met in 1881 [Kramer, 1986, p. 26], Another reformer close to Abdo, Rashid Rida⁴, in 1898 began to publish the religious-political magazine «Manar», in the first issue of which was set out the idea of convening a congress, which the Sultan-Caliph Abdul Hamid did not support.

Formerly worked in the British India Office, George Birdwood (1832–1917), in a series of letters to the Times, back in 1877, called the Ottoman Caliphate “usurpation”, arguing that he should belong

² See more on him: [Longfold, 1979]

³ Abdo, Muhammad (1849–1905) — famous Egyptian public and religious figure, enlightened reformer of Islam, the supreme mufti of Egypt in 1899–1905, student and colleague of another popular reformer and ideologue of Pan-Islamism, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897), with whom he founded the Al-Uruwwa al-Wuthqa Society in Paris (“The Tightest Connection”) and the well-known newspaper under the same name.

⁴ Rida, Muhammad Rashid (1865–1935) — Syrian-Egyptian social and religious leader, Islam reformer, who is close to the Salafis, considered the forerunner of the Muslim Brotherhood, the author of Tafsir (the interpretation of the Quran). Born in Ottoman Syria, in the city of Kalamuna near Tripoli, he moved to Egypt, advocated the revival of the Arab Caliphate, a state that would live according to Sharia law.

to the Meccan Sharif and Muslims “should begin their rebirth from the election of the Sharif of Mecca as the Caliph of Islam.” [*The Times*, 1877]

Like-minded to Blunt and on friendly terms with him, was the British diplomat, James Zohrab, who was appointed consul to Jeddah in 1878 [Kramer, 1986, p. 13–17]. Zohrab, in January 1880 in one of his dispatches, convinced the Foreign Office that the Meccan Sharif, as a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, had more weight in the Islamic world, than the Ottoman Caliph [FO 78/3131, 1880]. The Consul even advocated the “separation of the Hijaz from the Ottoman Empire and its affiliation with Great Britain, which would be an enviable position to influence Muslims in India and elsewhere.” [Kramer, 1986, p. 13]. In addition, he claimed that he had found some “extensive underground organization of Muslims of all nationalities in the Hijaz, the purpose of which was to restore the Caliphate of the Arabs of the Hijaz, [FO 78/3314, 1881] and the Sharif of Mecca“ is as good for Muslims as the pope is for the Roman Catholic Church.” [FO 78/3131, 1880] However, these appeals, at a time when the Ottomans strengthened their positions in Hijaz, whose well-being depended on financial assistance from Constantinople, and the Sharif, being appointed by the Sultans, had no real power, was not held in high esteem in the Muslim world, were very distanced from reality. At the same time, this insight into history makes it possible to better understand the ambitions of Sharif Hussein during the First World War: his dream of restoring the Hashemite Caliphate, based on the conviction of his sacred right to power as a descendant of the Prophet, lay at the heart of his plans. It can be assumed that getting recognition as a Caliph for Hussein was no less important than becoming King in a part of the Arab world.

If we move forward to our time, it should be noted that, according to the author of this book, some members of the Hashemite family are still remorse, although they do not demonstrate it publicly, over the loss of control of Hijaz, which happened about a hundred years ago. Even tens of years after the events described, the British were afraid of “Hashemite revanchist intent.”

Rereading the dispatches of the aforementioned officials stored in the National Archives of Great Britain in London’s Kew Gardens, it is difficult rid yourself of the thought that this was a somewhat unusual practice, when people with formal diplomatic status allowed themselves in the official correspondence (and not only) to come up with rather risky proposals regarding London’s regional policies. It is not difficult to assume that their position was inspired by conversations with the most vivid, extraordinary representatives of the Arab intellectual elite and could not help but affect their daily work. Official stamps, which the department heads placed on their dispatches, were far from always being favorable. This is very similar to the situation in the Soviet diplomatic and other departments of that time.

As for the idea of convening an all-Muslim Congress, according to Kramer, it first reached the masses in writing thanks to the same Blunt, who actively distributed it among influential Muslims.

The concept of an all-Muslim congress was combined with a Caliphate project and the concept of a well-known Arabian thinker of Syrian origin, Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854–1902), who, as is commonly believed, described for the first time such an imaginary congress in his popular in the Arab world treatise *Umm al-Qura*⁵, which he published under the pseudonym “al-Sayid al-Furati” (“Master from the Euphrates”) in Cairo in 1900. Al-Kawakibi demanded that the existing Ottoman Caliphate be replaced by the Arabian Qurayshi one, which was centered in Mecca “in close alliance with the Great Muslim congress.” [Kramer, 1986, p. 30] Can we call this concept Pan-Islamic? Of course — with some reservations.

⁵ *Umm al-Qura* (Arabic) — “Mother of all Cities,” the well-known name of Mecca in the Islamic world.

SULTAN-CALIPH

It is also necessary to recall the attempt to convene an all-Muslim Congress that was undertaken by the leaders of the “Unity and Progress” Committee⁶. After the Kemalists soundly defeated the Young Turks in Turkey in 1918, those leaders and party activists who maintained their freedom departed for Europe and created the League of Islamic Revolutionary Societies (another common translation of the name is the “Society for the Unity of Revolution with Islam”) led by the apologist of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism Enver Pasha⁷ (1881–1922), who in 1921 managed to gather a small number (a little more than a dozen) of Islamic representatives in Moscow. While at modest-sized event, the participants agreed to hold such congresses regularly in the future and to establish League branches. The Charter of the League said: “The aim of the Society is to make the Muslims — who are used like slaves, enslaved and dominated by the imperialists and capitalists — masters of their own fate under the leadership of Turkey; to ensure their free and independent organization within their national culture and to liberate them from captivity. The aim of the Society is to create an organization necessary to realize the aforementioned goal, by uplifting and uniting the Muslims spiritually. In places where Muslims are in the minority, the Society shall try to safeguard their civil rights.” [Karabekir, 1967, p. 123–125]. The leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) and the NKID naively believed that, because of the popularity of the ideas of Pan-Turkism, which Enver Pasha had been preaching, and which at that stage worked closely with the Bolsheviks, the movement could be used in the struggle against the Basmachis in Turkestan.

Kramer writes about a meeting organized in Germany in 1918 by German mediators consisting of Committee leaders and the Secretary of the Comintern, Karl Radek, who had decided that after the organization was defeated, they all could “serve the goals of Soviet politics in Muslim lands. The task was not very noticeably different from the one that the ‘Unity and Progress’ Committee set for itself: the spread of anti-imperialist and, in particular, anti-British propaganda, but served in an Islamic context, on the territory of Anatolia, the Fertile Crescent, Iran, Afghanistan and India. Few at that time thought about the paradox of the existence of a purely Islamic movement, directed from Moscow under the auspices of the Soviets.” [Karabekir, 1967, p. 70]. In fact, there was nothing paradoxical in the fact that Muslims sympathized with Soviet Russia, whose leaders published the secret treaties of the Entente, declared war on the imperialists and supported the Muslim people’s slogans of self-determination [Karabekir, 1967, p. 2]. Radek invited two Committee leaders to Russia, one of whom — Talaat — refused to come, and the other — Enver Pasha — who along with several of his like-minded associates arrived in 1920.

In British India, the Caliphate movement emerged during the First World War in order to protect the Turkish Sultan-Caliph, as well as within the framework of solving the problems facing Indian Muslims

⁶ İttihat ve Terakki — created in 1889, first as a society, then as the party of the Young Turks, which advocated the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and the return to the 1867 Constitution, which in 1908 staged an armed coup in Turkey.

⁷ Enver, Ismail, known as Enver Pasha (1881–1922), was a Turkish military and political figure, one of the leaders of the Young Turkish Revolution of 1908, a military minister the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, an ideologist of Pan-Turkism, one of the leaders of the Basmachis movement in Central Asia. In 1903 graduated from the Military Academy of the General Staff, after the victory the Young Turks proclaimed the restoration of the Constitution in 1876, in 1909–1911 was military attaché in Germany, admired the German army. In 1913, organized a coup, after which the country began to actually rule the triumvirate of Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha and Jemal Pasha, during the First World War he served as Deputy Commander to the Sultan himself. He was one of the organizers of the Armenian genocide. In 1918 he fled to Germany. In 1920 he came to Moscow, made statements on an alliance with Bolshevism, in 1921 was sent by the Soviet authorities to Bukhara to participate in negotiations with the local clergy, but soon decided to raise an anti-Bolshevik pan-Islamist uprising, after uniting with the Basmachis he became Commander-in-Chief of all Basmachis groups, in 1922 he was killed in battle with the Red Brigade Army near Baldzhuan (present-day Tajikistan, Khatlon region), his burial place became the Mazar of Hazrati Shah. In 1996, his ashes were handed over to the President of Turkey Demirel by the former Prime Minister of Tajikistan, a native of Kulob, Izatullo Khayoyev.

in local politics⁸. The sympathies of the Caliphists to the Turks were associated with widespread anti-British sentiment, its very existence spoke of the possibility of liberation from colonial dependence. In addition, according to the American researcher Gail Minault, “the Caliphate symbolized the eternal superiority of Islamic law in the world. For moderately educated [figures], he embodied the principles of freedom and self-determination of peoples. For the radicals, he was the embodiment of the impossibility of borrowing Western culture and political institutions.” [Minault, 182, p. 209–210] At the All India Muslim Conference held in Lucknow in July 1919, which opposed the colonial division of the Ottoman Empire and for the preservation of the power of the Turkish Sultan-Caliph, Indian Caliphists created the Caliphate Committee, in which two wings stood out – one radical and the other moderate.

It was not unreasonable for the Soviet leadership to believe that Great Britain wanted to use the Caliphate movement and, having supported it, to acquire additional levers for spreading its influence on the Islamic world. Documents from the British archives confirm that such calculations really existed. There were several contenders for the title of Caliph of the faithful, including the ousted Ottoman Sultan, Meccan Sharif Hussein bin Ali, the loser of the war with Ibn Saud for control of Hijaz, as well as the King of Egypt and Sudan, Fuad I⁹. The discredited Hussein, however, could not get the support of key Muslim states. A number of leaders came up with the idea of convening a new world Muslim congress, during which they would raise the question of the fate of the Caliphate and, perhaps, elect a new Caliph. The already-mentioned Indian Caliphate Committee was very vocal in support of this particular option. The Egyptians, who campaigned for holding the congress in Cairo, also actively called for this. Led by the ulama of the Al-Azhar University, an organizing committee for such a congress was organized in the Egyptian capital back in 1924, and was originally to be held in March 1925. It was then postponed for a year [*Revue du monde musulmane*, 1926].

But at this time, Ibn Saud became one of the important players in the Islamic world. He created a state that was gaining strength in Arabia. In 1926, the Soviet Union was the first of all the states in the world to officially recognize Ibn Saud as the king of Hejaz, the Sultan of Najd and the annexed regions — that was the name of the future Saudi Arabia. The capital of this dual state was then located in Mecca, and the Soviet diplomatic mission headed by the Consul General and diplomatic agent Kerim Hakimov operated in Jeddah.

Statements made by the leaders of the Indian Caliphate Committee Abdul Kalam and Shaukat Ali in made in February 1926 were indicative¹⁰. Referring to the attitude of Muslims of India toward Ibn Saud after he declared himself Sultan, Abdul Kalam said that most of the Indian Muslims will support the policy of the committee, which seeks to hold an All-Muslim Congress in Hijaz, which would decide the future form of government in the country. Shaukat Ali, in turn, stressed that the purpose of the congress should be to free Arabia from the influence of non-Muslims, and explained further what Kalam had

⁸ On the Caliphate Movement in British India in 2007 under the leadership of A. L. Safronova, student M. V. Petrushina of the Institute of Asian and African countries of Lomonosov Moscow State University wrote a term paper from which some facts from the history of this movement were taken. This paper cites interesting works of the Indian ideologues of Caliphatism.

⁹ Fuad I, Ahmed (1968–1936) — the seventh son of Ismail Pasha, the first Egyptian Khedive (the title Khedive was given to those Egyptian Vice-Sultans who were dependent on the Ottomans, from 1867 to 1914), who ruled from 1867–1879. In 1914, the occupying British forces overthrew the third Khedive of Egypt and Sudan, Abbas II Helmy and declared the Sultanate established in Egypt as a British protectorate, in which power really belonged to the head of British administration, the High Commissioner. In 1917, after the death of his brother Hussein Camille, Ahmed Fuad was proclaimed the new Sultan, who established contacts with Egyptian nationalists. From the moment of the formal proclamation of independence of the country by the British in February 1922 until his death, he was King of Egypt and Sudan.

¹⁰ These statements were made during a conversation between the heads of the committee and a representative of the Burmese newspaper Rangoon Daily News and reprinted by the Indian newspaper Hamdard on February 18, 1926 (hereafter in the Information Bureau of the Middle East NKID: [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1926, p. 75–78]). Caliphists traveled to Burma to familiarize themselves with the situation of the Muslim population.

meant, saying that the Caliphatisers want to turn Hijaz into a republic: "Maybe Ibn Saud is a good person, but that does not mean that his son will be anything like him, and even more likely that his grandson would be completely useless. And in the Holy Hijaz there is no place for such people. Therefore, there should be a republic, a president who should be elected and should be under the control of the Muslim world." Abdul Kalam argued that the military force of Ibn Saud is not enough to protect Hijaz. A future congress might decide to ask Ibn Saud to take over the protection of the Hijaz until the population "will be to defend itself. Of course, it would be better for this decision to pass through the World Muslim Congress. Hijaz's population has been too hasty."

And when asked about the possibility of electing Ibn Saud as Caliph, Abdul Kalam replied: "In my opinion, Sultan Ibn Saud cannot be proclaimed Caliph; the Muslim world is also not going to recognize him as such. Shaukat Ali put it quite definitively: "As for my personal opinion, I recognize the deposed Sultan Abdul Mejid as Caliph, although he is no longer in Turkey, but rather lives as an emigrant abroad." Here the anti-Kemal line of Indian Caliphatisers was closely followed. The complete opposite of this were statements Soviet Muslims made. Mufti Zuhridin Alam, on behalf of the Tashkent Spiritual Administration, responded about the former Ottoman Caliph in the following manner: "When Turkish troops, Anatolian peasants and Egyptian and Syrian Arabs under Sevastopol and Balaclava died 'for their homeland, religion and Caliph,' and when wives, mothers of their children were dying of cold and hunger, on these bloody days the Sultan Abdul Mejid sat in his palace and gave into debauchery with Circassian women." [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1926, p. 78]

At The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) USSR led by Georgy Chicherin they considered it less than accidental that most of the active supporters of the All-Muslim Caliphate Congress in Cairo were representatives of the clergy of countries under British control. Despite the reluctance of the Muslim clergy of many states to participate in this event, the Cairo Congress did take place, from May 13 to 19, 1926. A charter was adopted at the meeting of the preparatory committee, the first chapter of which said confirmed that the Chairman of the Congress meetings would be Shaykh al-Azhar, and his deputy, appointed by the administrative committee of the congress, will replace him during his absence [Sekaly, 1926, p. 42–45]. The organizers of the event believed that under the patronage of Shaykh al-Azhar the Congress would receive needed legitimacy. However, due to the absence of delegations from a number of influential Islamic states (Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan etc.) and sharp disagreements between the participants, the organizers had to stop its work after four sessions, not having achieved any results.

This gave rise to satisfaction in Moscow. Even before the convocation of the congress in Cairo, the report to the head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), V. G. Kornin, prepared on the basis of special materials and other sources of foreign press, the Eastern Department of the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU), in regards this event noted that "after the liquidation of the Caliphate in Turkey, the British developed enhanced activities, which were targeting the recreation of the Caliphate, but one that would be under their full influence and control... The appointees in Arabia, as is known, ended in failure, forcing them to transfer their activities to Egypt. A whole series of data indicated that this time the candidate for Caliph was King of Egypt Fuad. The formal initiators of the issue of restoring the Caliphate in Egypt were the ulama from Al-Azhar [*Russian State Archive*, 1926, p. 85–94]. The report mentioned the acute dissatisfaction that the campaign for the Caliphate gave rise to in Turkey, and the Indian Caliphate Committee and the Indian Nationalists joined the opposition to the Cairo Congress, because "mock independence will be a great humiliation for Muslims if the future Caliph is under foreign influence." The Syrians criticized the actual idea of having the Congress, the Persians refused to participate in it at all, and the Soviet Muslim

clergy, represented by the Central Muslim Spiritual Board leadership, published their protest against the Congress's convocation. As a result, the question of electing a Caliph was removed from the agenda.

DELEGATION OF SOVIET MUFTIS AT THE ALL-MUSLIM CONGRESS IN MECCA

In opposition to the plans of the pro-English Caliphats, Ibn Saud in 1925, even before taking over Medina, intended to hold a congress under his aegis in Mecca, but the situation then did not allow him to realize his plan. Now however, in the new conditions, he returned to this idea. Now, he had almost already achieved recognition from the Islamic world as the guardian of Islamic shrines, although there were still many supporters of their transfer from his control to that of an international Islamic committee. It was necessary only to consolidate the successes he had achieved and at the same time reassure Muslim public opinion of other countries who were concerned about aggressive Wahhabi puritanism (as mentioned above, Indian Muslims were particularly displeased). In addition, Ibn Saud developed a completely different agenda for his congress, which corresponded to his purely public interests. Having received support from representatives of the Muslim clergy in many countries, he decided to hold an All-Muslim Congress in the summer of 1926.

The attitude of the Soviet leadership toward the concept of a Caliphate, as already noted, was not decisively negative. The Caliphate was unconditionally rejected only if pro-British forces were the one promoting it (and this was the case with the Cairo Congress). The Comintern Executive Committee even came up with the utopian idea of "a Caliphate indirectly influenced by the Comintern," which, as stated in a document prepared in the Eastern Department of the same Executive Committee in September 1921 and sent to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) signed by the head of Department, C. Brike-Bestuzhev [Brike-Bestuzhev, 1921], would be "in today's current situation of outstanding revolutionary significance." It is not clear how this could have happened if the same document stated that "the Caliphate, generally, is a reactionary factor." But, apparently, any movement, even "reactionary" especially if it was directed against Britain, could be interpreted as "revolutionary." The task was to "yank the Caliphate out of Britain's grasp." This would be "a victory for the Comintern in the East." However, there is reason to believe that the naive enthusiasm of the authors of the document was still not shared in the top leadership of the USSR.

Naturally, the sympathies of Moscow were on the side of the Mecca, rather than the holding the Congress in Cairo, since Egypt was under British control.

In this context, several theses contained in one of the Chicherin's letters to Hakimov from his archive, dated April 3, 1926 and marked "top secret", are worth noting [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1926, p. 1–7]. The People's Commissar writes: The most recent events on the Arabian Peninsula largely confirm our assessment of the relationship between Ibn Saud and the British. In spite of the conciliatory line apparently taken by Saud towards Britain, and despite the attempt the British press to present Saud as a friend of Britain's, it becoming increasingly clear that these relationships are based on mutual fear. Britain fears that Ibn Saud will be able to mobilize around them the opinion of anti-British Muslims and, having strengthened their position in Hijaz, will begin an expansion towards Palestine".

Premised on the above, a task was set: "Saud, based on a whole series of recent facts, must become convinced the British will not only obstruct his further gains in power, but will also try to deprive him of the fruits of his most recent victories. An extremely illustrative document is an article in the Times of Mesopotamia, dated February 21 of this year the cover story, written about the rumors of Saud's invasion of Transjordan, states that Saud's attack on Transjordan were not unexpected for people familiar with

the situation in Hijaz and the justification for it was Ibn Saud's fear of Transjordan and Iraq's plotting against him. The story exposes Britain's distrust of Saud and their hostility towards his success."

Further: "The flair-up in relations between the British and Ibn Saud must have an effect on the latter in the sense that of his tendency, which we've seen before, to find a counterbalance to Britain's pressure on him by seeking rapprochement with other countries. His signing a treaty with France and his rapid and very friendly response to our note on recognizing him prove this point. Saud's position and the tendencies he reveals make it possible to build our policy in Arabia by helping to strengthen Ibn Saud, by concentrating on his aspirations for all elements of the neighboring countries of Syria, Palestine, and Iraq that are dissatisfied with the imperialist states. The situation is favorable for increasing our influence with Ibn Saud, and we must try to make full use of this circumstance."

It is likely that the People's Commissar was right that the situation had really dictated the Soviet Union's rapprochement with Ibn Saud, who at the time needed Moscow's support. But Chicherin understood that in order to achieve this, several tasks had to be solved, and that the Soviet Muslim clergy could play its part at the Muslim Congress in Mecca: "Both to strengthen our relations with Ibn Saud and to counter Britain's plans in Arabia, our sending a delegation to Hijaz to display our Islamism is of serious importance. In sending along a delegation, we have two main goals:

- 1) Opposition to the Britain's plans for supporting a candidate at the All-Muslim Congress;
- 2) Ensuring the participation of our Muslims in those international Muslim bodies that may be created to exercise control over the "Holy Sites." It goes without saying that with this second goal, our main objective is the possibility, thanks to the participation of our Muslims in Hijaz government bodies, of our having constant influence on the Muslim world."

To achieve these goals, the Commissar concocted an interesting plan consisting of two delegations: "Based on invitations from Saud, we will send a delegation from our Muslims, or rather two delegations, to Saud's Congress. Several influential people from the Muslim world will be added to our official Muslim Congress delegation in Mecca to serve on the issues concerning the protection of the 'Holy Sites' and pilgrimages. These persons will not have official mandates, i. e. they will be just pilgrims. The personal weight of persons making up our delegation, it will be able to have serious influence on the formation of sentiment among pilgrims, without being bound at the same time by some official quality, as will be the case with the first delegation. We will try to send both of these delegations as early as possible so that during the Cairo Congress, which is to be held on May 13, representatives of our Muslims were already in Mecca, and if the Cairo Congress is postponed, delegations can be sent a little later."

This plan was presented with such importance that, in conclusion, the People's Commissar emphasized the secrecy of the mission and the very existence of the second "delegation": "... the delegation from the Central Spiritual Administration is official, but it represents only this Office and no one else. This is the delegation that is sent by virtue of Ibn Saud's telegraph invitation addressed to the Central Spiritual Administration. We will only inform the Turks about this delegation, which should not take official part in resolving the Caliphate question, and will only confine itself to questions of the 'Holy Sites' and pilgrimages. The other delegation, which will oppose Britain's plans in resolving the Caliphate question, is secret and will act not as a delegation as a whole, but individually. All its significance will depend on the personal influence of each of its members in the Muslim world. We will not tell the Turks about this delegation, and you also should not tell anyone about it. The members of this 'delegation' are mere pilgrims and no more. We still do not know the personal composition of this delegation, but it is possible that in a certain part these delegations will coincide."

When confronting the unusual idea of sending two Muslim delegations to the All-Muslim Congress, the question inevitably arises of who in fact were the secret pilgrims, whose main task it was to

disrupt the British Caliphate plans. Of course, we are talking about a well-designed special operation to influence an important part of the international Muslim community, using its liberating potential. Its details remain unknown, but the results, as we will see, will speak for themselves.

The main, “open” delegation of Soviet Muslims selected for participation in the Congress in Mecca was led by the head of the Central Spiritual Administration in Ufa, Mufti R. Fakhreddin, and included the following representatives: Kashafetdin Tarjemani (Ufa), Gabderrahman Gomeri (Astrakhan), Tahir Ilyas (Kazan), Moslakhmetdin Khalil (Crimea), Mahdi ben Maksoud (Siberia), Abdul Wahed al-Qari (Turkestan).

The following foreign representatives attended the Congress: 12 people from India (four each from the Caliphate Committee, the Ulama Association of India and the Ulama al-Hadith Association), 16 people from the Ibn Saud State (five from Najd and 11 from Hijaz) three from Asir, four from Java, two from the Irshad Java Association, four Egyptian ulama in a personal capacity, three from Palestine, three from Syria, two from the ulama of Sudan, three from the Caliphate Association of Upper Nile, two from Turkey, two from Afghanistan and two from Yemen.

At the same time, it was noted that anti-British Caliphitists, such as the Ali brothers, were personally present at the “Luchnow Conference”, and not as representatives of the Caliphate Committee. The Committee, by the end of October, just as instructions had been sent to the Consul General, had not yet made its remarks about its report at the conference in Mecca.

By the way, in the above-mentioned letter, the People’s Commissar made a parallel reference to the issue of signing a treaty with Ibn Saud: “... Our recognition of Saud places on the agenda the issue of concluding a treaty according to the type of contract we intended to conclude with Hijaz. With the arrival of the next post, we are expecting you to provide detailed considerations on this issue.

Unfortunately, we could not prepare in time a letter of commendation and will try to send you the most recent in subsequent mailings. In order to soothe Saud’s possible dissatisfaction with the delay receiving his letter of commendation, I enclose a letter I drafted to Saud myself.

We think that both this letter and our gifts (Pastukhov writes about them in detail) will help you to dispel the misunderstandings that Saud and his confidants may have due to the delays in correspondence. The handing over of gifts should, in our opinion, contribute to strengthening your friendship with Ibn Saud and his associates.”

By the way, “gift diplomacy”, which works particularly well in the East, was actively used by all powers that had diplomatic missions in the Kingdom. Solving questions about gifts, as well as fulfilling those individual practical requests that some Saudi officials addressed to Soviet diplomats, were also part of their daily work and their correspondence with the Center.

Soviet diplomats predicted that a possible compromise might be reached between Ibn Saud and Indian Muslims if their representatives “continue to participate in the Meccan Congress and if he garners the support of Muslims from other countries.” From this it is clear that the Soviet Muslims, whose delegation according to the Soviet Leadership’s plan was to participate in the work of the Congress, were assigned an important role in toeing the line held by opponents of pro-British forces. As mentioned above, one of the main reasons the attitude of the Soviet leadership toward Ibn Saud was so positive (although it was unconditionally positive) was that Ibn Saud was considered by the leadership of the NKID and, probably, the main part of the top party-state leadership, as an antagonist of pro-English forces.

But there was another point of view. on April 8, 1926 in the newspaper Pravda, an article appeared in which the English press commented about the Cairo All-Muslim Congress scheduled for May during which a Caliph was to be elected, who will also be the Chairman of the Muslim League of Nations. The logical conclusion was reached that if the congress were to take place in the capital of a country occupied

by British forces, “it is unavoidable that Britain would be involved in some fraudulent scheme.” However, for some reason, it further claims that Mecca was chosen as the seat by League, and Mecca “is currently in the hands of the leader of the Wahhabis of Ibn Saud, who recently, with the consent of Britain was proclaimed King of the Arabian state Hijaz. Ibn Saud expelled from Mecca King Hussein, who did not please the British, and recently signed an agreement with Britain, under which for a decent subsidy he pledged to faithfully implement British directives.” Even more dissonant with the line of the NKID was the following statement: “Most likely, the same Ibn Saud will be a candidate for the post of Caliph, who will thus try to fulfill Britain’s two primary asks entrusted to him: 1) weakening the prestige of Turkey in the eyes of the Muslim peoples, who abolished the Caliphate and whose members were members of the deposed Turkish dynasty; and, 2) guarantee the influence of Britain on the Muslim peoples, ensuring her future influence on the Caliph.” [*Pravda*, 1926]

Chicherin was furious: in the article everything was turned upside down. In it Ibn Saud was portrayed not as an antagonist of the British, but rather as their protégé. But his reaction needed to be very sensitive. Following the publication of this article two letters were sent to the editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, F. A. Rothstein.

The first is an internal memorandum by Pastukhov addressed to Chicherin (with a copy to Rothstein) dated April 9, 1926, in which it was reported: “In *Pravda* on April 8 of this year an item appeared: ‘The revival of the Caliphate under English patronage,’ in which an anonymous author views Ibn Saud as an English agent, whose task it is to facilitate the implementation Britain’s plans for the Caliphate. Noting that the convocation of the Cairo Congress is in the interests of British diplomacy, the author cites the fact that Mecca, which was chosen as the seat of the new League of Nations of Muslim Nations, is in the hands of Saud. The appearance of this kind of item in our press reveals the author’s complete ignorance of the present situation with the Caliphate matter, and can have an extremely adverse effect on the policy we are pursuing on this issue, both in Arabia and among our Muslims. In addition, such attacks against Saud can be brought to his attention by our antagonists and hamper the work of Comrade Hakimov. We find ourselves in an awkward position before the Turks, whom we advised to send a delegation to the Ibn Saud congress. It is necessary to take measures to ensure that even our central newspapers do not contain such ‘reflections’ that undermine the political line we are pursuing.” [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1926, p. 1–7]

Chicherin attached such great importance to this question that, following Pastukhov’s note, the very next day he also sent his angry letter to Rothstein. Let us recall that the Commissar was always insistent, although unsuccessfully so, about ensuring that all publications in the press on foreign policy issues were coordinated with the NKID. He wrote: “I would consider it of the utmost importance to reach out of our press on the issues raised in Comrade Pastukhov’s April 9 letter. Ibn Saud has long ceased to be an English protégé.

Ibn Saud has become one of the major leading personalities of the East, playing a role in the onset of a new period in the development of these peoples. Britain is now trying to make compromises with him, but he, while giving in to compromise, generally continues to follow his own policies. To speak of him as an English protégé, as *Pravda* does, can only damage the further development of our relations with him and make our work, by the way, in connection with the forthcoming Congress in the Middle East and with the upcoming pilgrimage much more difficult. It is extremely important that our press bodies do not make statements, that serve to indicate their ignorance of current reality or that are detrimental to the further development of our relations in the Middle East.”

And so, in response to a request from the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims the Government allowed a delegation of Soviet Muslims to go to Mecca to attend the World Muslim Congress under the auspices of the Saudi monarch.

THE DECISIONS OF THE CONGRESS

The Congress was held in Mecca from June 7 to July 5, 1926. The Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation has in storage, with reference to a TASS report of March 19, 1926, the following text of a telegram of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims from Ufa, sent to the Chairman of the Central Election Committee of the USSR, M. I. Kalinin, signed by Mufti Rizaetdin Fakhreddin: “The Muslim population of the RSFSR in subordination to the Central Spiritual Administration fully subscribes to the protest of Indian Muslims against the convening of the Caliphate Congress in Cairo. The Congress should be convened in a country outside the sphere of influence of the imperialist powers. Egypt, which is under the domination of Britain, and where there is no guarantee for the Muslims to freely reveal their true opinions, does not meet this condition. The convening of the Congress in Mecca as a sacred place for all Muslims would be fully consistent with the task facing this Congress.” [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1926, p. 115] A researcher of this issue, V. S. Romanenko cites a telegram in a version published in the newspaper *Izvestia* [*Izvestia*, 1926], which added at the end: “Provided that this place shall be sheltered from the influence of the imperialists.” It is possible that during publishing the text was thus augmented. The aforementioned author views this position of the leadership of the Muslim community of Russia as a manifestation of its role as an instrument of support for Moscow’s foreign policy in the Islamic world [Romanenko, 2005, p. 18].

One of the appendices to a press briefing prepared by the Middle East Department of the NKID and sent to Hakimov for review, included an interview with Tahir Ilyas, secretary of the delegation of Soviet Muslims from Kazan, given to the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, dated August 28, 1926, upon the arrival of a delegation of Russian Muslims in Constantinople and published along with other materials relating to the Congress in Mecca. In it, he, in particular, “ploughed through” the former ruler of the Hijaz:

“Having freed Hijaz from the usurper and the tyrant Hussein and his sons, the Sultan of Najd, Abdul Aziz bin Saud, convened representatives of the entire Muslim world for a congress in Holy City of Mecca to discuss the improvement of Mecca and facilitate the movement of pilgrims.” But his comments were not without tones of propaganda: “Of course, in the era of Tsarism, Russian Muslims could not take part in such a Congress. In those days, in no way was communication between Russian Muslims and Turks, blood-related Turkey, allowed. Northern Turks (should be simply: “Turks” — V.N.), who studied in Turkey, faced many obstacles when trying to convene scientific congresses. But now the entire Muslim world sees how much Russian Muslims have won thanks to the laws of the Soviet government on freedom of belief and religious doctrines.” [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1926, p. 119]

Unlike Cairo’s, the Congress in Meccas, judging from the list of participants, was very representative. Moscow couldn’t help but be pleased with the fact that Fakhreddin was elected one of the two co-chairs of the Congress.

The question of the Caliphate at the congress was not discussed at all.

By the way, shortly after the All-Muslim Congress in Mecca, namely at the end of October — the beginning of November 1926, a congress of Muslims — Inner Russia, Siberia and Kazakhstan — gathered in the USSR. To some extent the decisions made there echoed those that were made earlier in Mecca.

In one of the interviews, Mufti Fakhreddin described the events in Arabia like this: “After a hard-fought and victorious struggle against the British protégé Hussein and his son Ali, the leader of the Wahhabis, Ibn Saud united a large part of the Arab lands and created an independent Arab state.” [*Russian State Archive*, 1926, p. 43] The sympathies of the Soviet delegation, acting in according with the instructions they had received from the Moscow, were clearly on the side of the Saudis.

It is indicative that the Congress would adopt a number of anti-colonial decrees. In particular, a decision was reached: “On behalf of all Muslims, to appeal to the French and English governments, ruling in Syria on the basis of a mandate from the League of Nations, demanding the transfer of the Hijaz railway, constructed with donations from Muslims from all over the world, to the Hijaz Government and the Executive Committee of the Congress.” [*Russian State Archive*, 1926, p. 44]. At the seventeenth meeting, the participants disagreed on the question of who should be commissioned to build a railway between Jeddah and Mecca. Some thought that in order to implement this project it was necessary to create a special committee, while others thought that the Executive Committee of the Congress could manage this. They agreed upon the following: “The Congress decided to hand over the project to the Executive Committee, in the process selecting a certain number of its members to organize in their respective countries subscription committees, with the condition that the named members would be in contact with the Executive Committee, send them the receipts and will monitor the progress of the funds collected.” [Romanenko, 2005, p. 143]. By the decision of the Congress, the railways were to become waqufs, the revenues from them were placed in reliable financial institutions and should be spent according to the constituent document of the waquf and by decision of the Executive Committee.

The issue of slavery in Hijaz was considered, and at the suggestion of the Indian delegate, who condemned slavery’s preservation in the strictest manner, the Initiative Commission decided to refer it to the Congress, expressing its opinion that “the Hijaz government should prohibit any slavery that takes place in Hijaz and which is contrary to Sharia law». This motion was passed. In the discussions, delegates expressed their concern about the terrible sanitary conditions in Hijaz during the Hajj and discussed in detail measures needed to improve the situation. They spoke about diseases and epidemics raging there during the pilgrimage, reminding those in attendance that the King of Egypt annually sends gifts and donations to Hijaz to help with medical needs. The delegates called on Muslim governments and peoples to send medical missions to Hijaz to receive pilgrims, create and equip hospitals and mobile assistance centers, build special slaughterhouses for sacrifices, public toilets, improve water quality in Mecca by building a drainage system and by installing pumps on tanks and wells. It was also recommended to upgrade the port in Jeddah, to establish a system to account for pilgrims, and to concentrate in one treasury the property of pilgrims who perish in order to ensure their return, etc. [Romanenko, 2005, p. 137–140] The delegation of Soviet Muslims proposed several draft decisions, including one on how to protect the health of pilgrims, which were approved by Congress [Hassan, 1926].

In addition, at the proposal of Shaykh Rashid Rida, the Congress decided: “To declare on behalf of Congress its demand to return to the Kingdom of Hijaz the Aqaba and Maan, which were forced to join Transjordan by the British.” [Romanenko, 2005, p. 146] Thus, Ibn Saud managed to achieve his goal — to get the support of the Muslim world on the inclusion of territories in his state, which the British decided to keep under their control within the framework of the map of the Middle East, which they wrote after the Ottoman Empire collapsed. Nevertheless, the support of this resolution was not unanimous: the Egyptian, Afghan and Turkish delegations left the hall in protest during the last, eighteenth, meeting.

The Chicherin archive contains an unsigned (and, naturally, secret) document from the Consulate General in Jeddah dated April 2, 1927, evaluating the outcome of the Muslim Congress in Mecca (it is not clear why such an important document was sent to the People’s Commissariat so late). In particular, it stated: “Both Muslim congresses, which took place in 1926, found a unanimous support. While the Cairo Caliphate Congress, in the general opinion of both the Eastern and European press, suffered a political collapse, while the very same press was equally unanimous in its recognition of the success of the Mecca Congress ... Most curiously and what is rather glaring when reading numerous types of literature devoted to the Congress, is the fact that the lion’s share of this literature falls on the period before the Congress. On the contrary...

at the end of the Congress, there is no resonance, and no assessment or comments on its results... And this is everywhere, except in India, where the Congress gave rise to a severe controversy and battle, not at all accidental, but stemming from the situation in which the Congress was convened and took place.

The authors of the document, reciting the goals which Ibn Saud set for himself when convening the Congress (according to his address in the newspaper *Umm al-Qura* dated April 2, 1926), stressed that "Ibn Saud considers Hijaz the spiritual achievement of the entire Muslim world... This appeal was to refute the widespread rumors about the intolerance of Wahhabis, their savagery, fanaticism, and thereby deprive Ibn Saud's enemies of the most important weapon against him... And these motives serve to explain how the Congress's agenda was set — to focus the attention of Muslims on the situation in Hijaz and the reforms planned there, which undoubtedly would require money."

"In the event that an attempt to convene a congress was unsuccessful," the document said, "Ibn Saud could fend off any attacks on his government and on his very stay in Hijaz by indicating the complete indifference of the Muslim world to the fate of the holy country. It should be noted that Ibn Saud has already resorted to such arguments after the failure to convene a congress in Mecca in 1925, before his occupation of Medina and Jeddah.

The authors of the document claimed that the success of the Mecca Congress from the very beginning was not at all guaranteed, since allegedly only the Indian Caliphatisms supported the King, "with whom they had an agreement even before he launched his attack on Hijaz. Referring in his invitation to the Congress to 'duties he had assumed,' Ibn Saud is referring precisely to his promises he made twice to Indian delegations who had come to Hijaz after he occupied Mecca." The essence of his promises was that Ibn Saud promised complete freedom of religion in Hijaz to all forms of Islam.

Diplomats have concluded that the success of the Congress as a whole and the support of the Indian Caliphatisms could be explained by the fact that "regardless of its program, the Mecca Congress was juxtaposition of the Caliphate of Cairo." The same motive following the statement of the USSR's Muslims prompted Turkey, after some hesitation, to support Ibn Saud. The document cited as an example the statement of the Turkish ambassador to Egypt Muhiddin Pasha: "We have suffered enough from the Caliphate, the Caliphate question for us does not exist." [*Al-Siyasa*, 1926] Indeed, the contradictions between the ideas of the Caliphatisms and the anti-Caliphate line of the Kemal leadership of Turkey were very pronounced, but, nevertheless, common interests remained, which would manifest themselves later.

Giving their general assessment of the Congress, the diplomats concluded: "1) The preparation for and convening of the Mecca Congress contributed to and aggravated the collapse of the Cairo Congress and thereby discredited the Anglo-Egyptian Caliphate venture; 2) the Mecca Congress contributed to the consolidation of the authority of Ibn Saud and thus played a positive role in his emancipation from imperialist influences; 3) the Congress carried out some positive work on practical issues relating to Hijaz, but at the same time, as a result of the failure of all the Indian Caliphatisms' attempts to make it pan-Islamic in a specific sense of the word, what the Congress did proved was the complete groundlessness of Pan-Islamism and the inability to conduct international Pan-Islamic affairs. This last circumstance was confirmed by the utter failure of attempts to create an international Pan-Islamist organization, one which had clearly emerged over the subsequent year from the moment the Congress took place."

The decisions taken at the Congress actually could not but arouse the satisfaction of the Soviet leadership (after all, Ibn Saud actually underwent a religious rehabilitation). But one cannot say that all its decisions corresponded to Soviet plans. In particular, they were contradicted by the following decision, taken against the objections of the delegation of Soviet Muslims (only it is not clear how resolutely they expressed their dissatisfaction): "To express on behalf of all Muslims the wish that Hijaz, in order to maintain his independence, will not grant foreigners concessions on their territory." [Brike-Bestuzhev, 1921, p. 61–73]

Speaking about this decision in his interview, Mufti Fakhreddin added: “Tbn Saud fully agreed with this expressed desire.” [*Foreign Policy Archive*, 1927, p. 4–10]

The Soviet leadership’s effective use of the participation of Soviet Muslims in the Meccan Congress at that time helped the Soviet Union strengthen its position in Arabia and the Islamic world.

References

- Blunt W. S. *My Diaries*. London, 1920. In 2 vols.
- Browne E. G. *Pan-Islamism. Lectures on the History of the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, 1904.
- Congrès du Monde musulman à la Mecque. Procès — verbaux (Pièces — annexes, No. 9–27). *Revue du Monde musulman*. 1926. No. XXIV. P. 125–212.
- FO 78/3131, January 9, 1880.
- FO 78/3314, February 1881.
- Gibb H. F. R. *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*. Boston, 1961.
- Hassan M. A. *Sabifa mujaza bi-‘amal al-Mu’tamar al-Qalami al-Islam al-awwal bi-Mecca al-Mukarrama*. al-Iskandariyya, 1345 A.H. [Hassan M. A. *A short story about the work of the First World Muslim Congress in Mecca*. Alexandria, 1926 (in Arabic)]
- Karabekir K. *Istiklâl Harbimizde: Enver Paşa ve Ittihat ve Terakki Erkânî*. Istanbul, 1967.
- Kramer M. S. *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*. New York, 1986.
- Longfold E. *A Pilgrimage of Passion: The Life of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*. London, 1979.
- Minault G. *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*. Delhi, 1982.
- Revue du Monde musulman*. 1926. No. LXIX.
- Sékaly A. *Le Congrès du Khalifat et le Congrès du Monde Musulman*. Paris, 1926.
- Al-Siyasa*. March 16, 1926 (in Arabic).
- The Times*. June 25, 1877.
- Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации*. Фонд 4. 1926. Архив Чичерина, Хиджаз. Письма НКВД. С. 1–7 [*Foreign Policy Archive of the RF*. Fd. 4. 1926. Chicherin Archive, Hijaz. Letters NKID. Pp. 1–7 (in Russian)].
- Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации*. Фонд 190. 1926 [*Foreign Policy Archive of the RF*. Fd. 190. 1926 (in Russian)].
- Брике-Бестужев С. Перспективы работы Коммунистического Интернационала в Анатолии, 14 сентября 1921 г. *РГАСПИ*. Фонд 495. 1921. С. 61–73 [Brike-Bestuzhev S. Perspectives of the Work of the Communist International in Anatolia, September 14, 1921. *Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History*. Fd. 495. 1921. Pp. 61–73 (in Russian)].
- Известия*. 18 марта 1926. № 63(2694) [Izvestia. March 18, 1926. No. 63(2694) (in Russian)].
- Правда*. 8 апреля 1926 [Pravda. April 8, 1926 (in Russian)].
- Романенко В. С. *Сотрудничество советской дипломатии и мусульманского духовенства СССР в 20-е годы XX века*. Нижний Новгород, 2005 [Romanenko V. S. Cooperation of Soviet diplomacy and the Muslim clergy of the USSR in the 1920s. Nizhny Novgorod, 2005 (in Russian)].
- Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории (РГАСПИ)*. Фонд 17. «ЦК РКП(б) — ЦК КПСС». 1926. [*Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History*. Fd. 17. “Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) — Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union”. 1926 (in Russian)].