

On the Local Origins of the Soviet Attack on “Religious” Waqf in the Uzbek SSR (1927)

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Abstract

This article studies when, how, and by whom the decision to nationalise land properties the rent from which supported mosques, shrines, and hostels (rather than schools) was first taken in Soviet Uzbekistan. Through a quasi-philological reconstruction of the drafting process behind the land reform decree in a peripheral area of Fergana, the article demonstrates how local power dynamics produced incentives for provincial Party and Soviet leaders to prove themselves better Bosheviks than their neighbours. A close scrutiny of chains of command is essential for capturing the importance of local political agency, pace top-down interpretations that privilege Moscow's or Samarkand's viewpoints instead.

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