

**ISCKMC 2022****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****RELIGIOUS REFORMISM AND JADIDISM IN THE VOLGA-  
URAL REGION (XIX–XX CENTURIES)**

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**Abstract**

This article examines the phenomenon of religious reformism and Jadidism in the public thought of Muslims in the Volga-Ural region of Imperial Russia. The consideration of this phenomenon in domestic, Soviet and foreign historiography differs depending on the approaches of researchers due to its heterogeneous nature. The difference in approaches to this phenomenon is related to its various aspects, its multitude of dimensions, its internal and external premises that affected its formation: religious reformatory discourse, formation of capitalistic relations, the emergence of Tatar bourgeoisie and intellectual elite, germination and proliferation of enlightenment ideas, an attempt to revise the role of religion in the social life of people and deculturation of religious tradition, the rise of Salafi movements in Islamicate countries and reformatory ideas of Egyptians, Young Ottomans and Turks. It is noted that there are several prerequisites and factors for the formation of this phenomenon. The authors of this article suggest that Jadidism is a new social phenomenon that fuses inherently religio-philosophical settings of Islam supposing renewal of different spheres of society according to European patterns. Its denotation originates from *usul al-Jadid* (new method) in the system of Islamic education which supersedes and overlaps religious reformatory Islamic discourse. It strives for discourse in the name of national culture and the best practices of Russian and European cultures.

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## 1. Introduction

XVIII–XIX centuries became the turning point in the life of the Islamic society of Imperial Russia. Relatively monolithic society tends to lose its homogeneity: a new national class of wealthy people and intellectuals emerge as a result of the accumulation of capital; literature, art, and science advance; many mosques and madrasas open up in the cities and villages. One of the crucial events for the Muslims of Imperial Russia was the allowance of Katherine II to build up a stone mosque in Kazan in 1767. In 1773 she issued a decree suggesting a tolerant approach to other beliefs. As a sequence of this policy, the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly was founded in 1788 in order to regulate the state-confessional relations of nationals of Islamic belief (Frank, 2008). The other significant event in the social life of Muslims of the Volga-Ural region was the establishment of the Asiatic printing-house in 1800 where only in the 3 years of its operation more than 31.000 copies of books in Tatar and Arabic languages were printed there (Osmanova, 2013). The year 1804 becomes the year of the establishment of Kazan Imperial University. This is the period of development of capitalistic relations in Kazan Governorate: trade capital triggers the processes of transformation of it into industrial capital after the conquest of vast territories of Central Asia. Reason, knowledge, and education gain special significance in the domain of religion and philosophy. Renewal tendencies in the domain of religion can be found in the works of G. Utiz-Imeni, A. Qursawi, and Sh. Marjani etc. (Tuhvatullina, 2003). M. Kemper suggests that the particular “Islamic discourse” at this period was being constructed marking it chronologically – 1789–1889.

## 2. Problem Statement

### 2.1. Islamic discourse and its origins

A suggestion is made that there are inner and outer premises preceding the formation of this discourse. In XVIII peculiar puritan (Salafi) movement is being formed in Arabian Peninsula appealing to revive the initial purity of the Islamic faith and return to its origins, purifying the religious doctrine from medieval beddings, scholasticism, and innovations (*bid'a*). The cradle of this ideological trend can be traced back to the Golden age of Islam and is related to the Piety-minded factions of Islam. The adherents of this discourse suggest interpreting the faith as the Prophet Muhammad and his companions did, familiarizing with them and with righteous predecessors (*as-salaf as-salihin*) in following religious regulations. In formulating, articulating, and codifying their ideas the Islamic scholar, theologian, thinker, and jurist Ibn Taymiya (1263–1328) played a key role. The further development of puritanical ideas took place in the XVIII century (Stepanyants, 1982). Its key representatives were Muhammad al-Murtada al-Zabidi (1732–1790), Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Shawkani (1772–1834), and Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). They bound the degeneration of Islamic faith and teaching with the tight literal adherence to the religious authorities of previous ages. The key matters of this discourse are the condemnation of innovations (*bid'a*) in the domain of religion, tight adherence to the monotheism (*tawhid*) and literal meaning of the Quran and Sunnah, and prohibition of free interpretation of canonical texts (Mamirgov, 2007). Researchers claim that the rise of religious reforming movements of the XVIII–XIX centuries is a response to a higher level of development of western civilization – Arabian Peninsula was the least

developed part of the Ottoman Empire, and the Hijaz region corresponded to the period of the rise of Islam from the social development perspective.

Despite the spreading of Salafi ideas late in the Volga region, Tatar intellectuals accepted some Salafi ideas and approaches to interpreting religious texts. Prominent theologian and prolific writer Rizaetdin Fahretdin (1858–1936) notices that the works of Ibn Taymiya (accordingly Salafi ideas) have started to spread among Tatar people recently. He points out the work of Sh. Marjani (1818–1889) *Aqida 'Adudiya* where Sh. Marjani refers to Ibn Taymiya in his commentaries. Though the assumption is made that the Tatar intellectual elite of that period cannot be fully identified with the scholars of Salafi discourse. Turkish researcher on Jadid movements Kanlidere highlights that Qursawi, Marjani, Barudi, Fahretdin, and Bigiev responded positively about Sufi practices, despite the fact Salafi opinion leaders considered Sufi practices as one type of polytheism (Fahredin, 2013).

### 3. Research Questions

The natural consequence of the emergence of new religious consciousness in the Middle East was the "opening of the gates of ijtihad" in the theological practice which granted the individual opportunity to reason in a new paradigm without appealing to authorities. Not only established religious traditions were questioned but also some aspects of the Islamic creed. Development of individual initiative, and striving for freedom of will and action become indispensable conditions for the reforming of social life (Stepanyants, 1982).

The other outer factor which had a great influence on not only Tatar intellectuals but also the whole Islamic world is the activity and works of Grand Mufti of Egypt Muhammed 'Abdo (1849–1905) who headed the Administrative Council of the University of al-Azhar. M. 'Abdo conducted the educational reforms at al-Azhar University, triggered fundamental reforms in Islamic legislation, and lectured the students spreading his ideas. He propagated the idea of the revival of might and greatness of Islamic civilization through the returning to the purity of Islam of Prophet Muhammad's period distorted by late interpretations. He exhorted that returning to the true faith should be accompanied by applying the rationalistic tradition of Islamic exegesis, reasoning has potentially indefinite capabilities, and the individual possesses perfect intellect and mind, therefore there are no utmost capabilities for intimate knowledge. Every age needs its appropriate age and circumstances interpretation of the Quran. M. 'Abdo contributed a lot to the revival and reform of intellectual thought of Egypt and overall Islamic thought. He influenced the works of a series of Tatar intellectuals at the end of the XIX – at the beginning of the XX centuries. Some of them such as Kamali (1873–1942) and Bigiev (1874–1949) were the immediate disciples and adherents of his teaching during their education at the University of al-Azhar, Barudi (1857–1921) met with al-Afghani (1838–1897) and 'Abdo in Cairo during performing the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1887 (Dudoignon, 2006).

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The other premise which caused the formation of Islamic discourse and forming the views of Tatar intellectuals was the literary legacy of Young Ottomans who embodied the ideas of French

Enlightenment. Its partisans Kemal (1840–1888), Midhat (1844–1913), and Ziya-bey (1829–1880) praised human reasoning, the ideas of justice, new ideals of an individual, put tremendous effort into democratization and liberalization of social and political life. They condemned bureaucratic absolutism, tyranny, cringing, and ignorance present in the Ottoman society of that period. Young Ottomans strived for the active role and innovations in the social and political life of a personality. Their strive for innovations can be regarded as an exaggerated projection of their aspirations for change. To a greater extent, it was a qualitative change rather than a quantitative advance (Mardin, 2000).

At the beginning of the XX century, there was a person who influenced the consciousness of Muslims tremendously – Gasprinskiy (1851–1914). He gained fame as an editor of the newspaper *Tarjuman* which started being issued on 10<sup>th</sup> April of 1883. In his periodicals, he defined the key problems of the Turkish-Islamic society of Russia and proposed solutions for the questions of the high priority the society is facing such as the reformation of the system of Islamic education, enlightenment of people, and education of women. In the 1890s his newspaper became an independent edition of Russia with a special Turkish-Islamic approach to reflecting the facts and events of the Turkish-Islamic world.

## 5. Research Methods

### 5.1. Religious reformism and Jadidism

One of the most significant factors of the rise of religious reformism and Jadidism is the wide interest of Tatar people in national origins, spiritual and religious ethical traditions which can be considered as a premise for the awakening of peoples of Imperial Russia, cultural and intellectual rise of Islamic people including almost all groups of the national elite. Tatar nation as one of the largest nations of Imperial Russia and its intellectual elite immediately engage in these processes and become the leaders of this rise. They were actively involved in the election process to the State Duma, joined various social organizations, and political parties, and prepared the conduction of All-Russia Islamic congresses. They established media outlets in national languages. Only in the years 1905–1907, 33 editions (21 newspapers and 12 magazines) were being issued in the Tatar language. Free media institutions become the platform for the discussion of actual problems of modernity for the young generation of people in the person of teachers of Jadid schools and intellectuals who initiate the process of ousting of influence of conservative Ulama<sup>1</sup>The position and role of traditional clergy in the society as custodians and transmitters of traditional piers of Islamic society diminishes due to the spread of printed press in Arabic script and the *new method* (Dudoignon, 2006). The social and economic position of traditional Ulama deteriorates, and the position of Jadid Ulama improves because their activities were financed by patrons and charitable endowments.

During this period we become witnesses of the emergence of reformist-revivalist and enlightening works. Rizaetdin Fahretdin issued didactic essay series by the title *The science of morality*: in 1897–1903 was released and then republished several times its parts *Well-mannered child* (Fahretdin, 1889), *Well-mannered mother* (Fahretdin, 1905), *Well-mannered woman* (Fahretdin, 1909), *Manners of students* (Fahretdin, 2002), etc. In 1990 Tatar public leader Ibragimov (1857–1944) started his series of brochures

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<sup>1</sup> (Ulama was a social class of Islamic scholars and jurists).

*Mirror* (Ibrahimov, 1903) where he called upon Islamic society to modern sciences and enlightenment. The founder of madrasa *Muhammadiyya* based on a «new method» system of education Barudi (1857–1921) who is well-known for his erudition and innovative ideas at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries started the edition of the round of theological essays by the common title *Islamic enlightenment* (Barudi, 2015).

Tatar intellectuals as the most progressive part of society initiate the processes of formation of national self-consciousness and self-determination. Problems of constructing national identity acquire high priority. Tatar historian Habutdinov (2008) points out that *Russian Muslims in the person of Tatar, Crimean-Tatar, Azerbaijani elites started purposeful activities on nation-building*. English philosopher and anthropologist Gellner describes this process as an emergence of the nation where the transition from absolute domination of religion to culture takes place and the latest joins with ethnic identification markers (Gellner, 1991). Ontological and socio-ethical questions are discussed in society, and religious ones become of secondary importance. Society calls for more openness and transparency in the religious sphere, the need for the symbiosis of pure natural religion with the new paradigm of reasoning. As a consequence of these developments, at the beginning of the XX century, new philosophical and socio-political movements such as liberalism (S. Maqsudy, Y. Akchura, F. Karimi), theological liberalism (M. Bigiev, Z. Kamali), socialism (M. Vahitov, G. Ibragimov) appear on the stage actively developing under the influence of Russian revolution of 1905–1907 (Sabirov, 2012).

In this context, a wide Jadid movement emerges which constitutes the traditions of the reformist-enlightenment movement in the persons of Qursawi, Faizhanov, Marjani, liberal religious reformist ideas, the most progressive ideas and achievements of Russian and Western European thought. Jadidism as a sequel to the development of the Tatar enlightenment and religious reformist movements of the XIX century and its more high-quality form composes the complex of religious and philosophical ideas which implied the replenishment of different spheres of society. Yuzeev points out that at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries there is a convergence of enlightenment ideals with the reformist, an attempt to accommodate the religion to the new socio-cultural realities which emerged in the Volga-Ural region at the beginning of the XX century. Representatives of this course Fahretdin, Bigiev, and Bayazitov considered that the rise in socio-economic and cultural levels of the Tatar nation was directly related to the uptaking of the achievements of Western European civilization (Yuzeev, 2015). If originally Jadidism was considered a movement for reforms in the system of Islamic education, then the notion of Jadidism expands its usage into other spheres of public life: social, cultural, and political. Religious-reformist activities of Marjani and socio-political activity of Gasprinsky leads the movement out of the boundaries of the system of school education. Representatives of Jadidism demanded the adaptation of Islamic society to the realities of modern life, called for a reevaluation of certain Sharia regulations, and adoption of achievements of Western civilization. The opening of «the gates of ijthad», using the national languages during the Friday sermons, and the permissibility of theatrical performances are mere examples of these narratives. Religious consciousness of Tatar nation transformed due to exposure to secular sciences and culture, extrapolation of Jadid world outlook upon popular masses and kept on evolving till the 1917 – in the post-revolutionary period the circumstances of existence of religious philosophy altered. Consequently, altered the attitude of authorities towards religious communities.

If at the beginning of the XX century the Tatar intellectual elite considered Jadidism as an intellectual-cultural movement, mental awakening aimed at rapprochement of Tatars with European culture, reorganization, and modernization of public life according to European patterns, then after the 1930-s Jadidism is declared as a bourgeois movement and is considered within class categories. In 1931, scholars Arsharuni, and Gabidullin denote Jadids as a leading Tatar bourgeois class and their activities as a political struggle in various forms existing till today (Arsharuni & Gabidullin, 1931).

The Soviet historiography of 1940–the 1950s elaborates on the phenomenon of Jadidism with such narratives as «counterrevolutionary movement», and «bourgeois-nationalist movement» embodying the ideas of nationalism, pan-Turkism, and propaganda of the class world. It was specified that the Jadids strived for isolation of the Tatar nation to transform it into the province of Ottoman Imperial authorities. The authors of the decree implied that the Jadids after the October revolution – they are mercenary agents of capitalistic countries, representatives of national counterrevolution united around Trotsky-Bukharin nationalistic groups (Khakimov, 1997).

From the 1950–the 1970s the evaluation of this phenomenon in historical works originated from previously posed narratives and varied according to the degree of its partisanship to the ideology of the ruling Communist Party. It is stated in *The History of Tatar ASSR* that Jadidism – it is a nationalistic movement peculiar to Tatars emerged in the post-reform period. Jadids advocated for European enlightenment and reformed religion with the objective to narcotize the consciousness of people using their susceptibility to education and culture. They served the interests of bourgeois society and strived to present it as a common phenomenon to the popular masses. Nonetheless, their aspirations didn't comply with proclaimed goals. Their schools taught secular sciences to meet the demands of the bourgeoisie for educated and literate clerks so that they will increase the profits of their employers. Further, it summarizes: «In essence, Jadid movement was a pure bourgeois-nationalistic, reactionary movement closely associated with the ideas of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism» (Vorobyov & Gimadi, 1955). Similar evaluations of Jadidism within the class paradigm continued till the end of the 1960s.

Since the 1970s, there is a tendency to consider the phenomenon of Jadidism as one of the stages of enlightenment. Abdullin suggests elaborating on the phenomenon of Jadidism as one of the stages of enlightenment, later in 1990 – as a public phenomenon that represents the bourgeois-democratic aspirations of Tatar people at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries.

In this period the consideration of the essence of Jadidism acquires other characteristics. Especially, Davletshin in his book *The Soviet Tatarstan* binds Jadidism with school reform (Davletshin, 1974). Lazzarini, having examined the changes of approach to Jadidism in the Soviet period, considers it as one of the stages of the enlightenment movement (Lazzarini, 1982). In the preface of the book of Validi (1887–1932), it is noted that religious reform is the first step of the reformatory movement (Validov, 1986). The second step – is a deep modernization of traditional Islamic culture including lingual and educational reforms (Bennigsen, 1983).

Rorlich (1986) in his famous research devoted to Volga-Ural Tatars considers Jadidism within the scope of the wide Tatar reformatory movement. Turkish researcher Kanlidere defines the role of Ulama in the reformatory movement of Tatars continuing the tradition of Lazzarini. He identifies Jadidism as a symbiosis of Islamic thought and modernist ideas: *Jadidists under the influence of permeating of modern*

thought in XIX century realized the necessity of selective assimilation of Western culture, intended to transform the mental stance of Muslims to religious thought, education, gender sphere, and policy (Kanlidere, 1997, p. 83). He points out that the religious problem takes up a dominant position in the activity of Tatar religious thinkers (Kanlidere, 1997).

Thus, from the 1970–the 1990s the phenomenon of Jadidism was being discussed in depth, and the gradual rapprochement takes place with those definitions which were posed in Tatar intellectual milieu in the 1920s. The purposeful retreat takes place from class positions, alienation of Jadidism from reactionary pan-Islamism, and pan-Turkism as an expression of open counterrevolutionary activity. Suchlike an evolution of the interpretation of the phenomenon of Jadidism converges the position of Russian and foreign researchers who consider this phenomenon as a wide reformatory movement of Muslim nations extrapolating its influence on almost all spheres of human life. Based on this position we can conclude that till a certain time Jadidism was one of the forms of enlightenment, further it was examined in the wide context of the reformatory movement. Eventually, the separation of Jadidism into reformism and enlightenment is artificial: the whole national stage should be identified as a coherent reformatory-jadidistic period with specific stages of development that are closely intertwined.

Despite the different approaches to examining this phenomenon, it is the fact that originally Jadidism represented the method of conducting a lesson (Usul al-Jadid) in the madrasa and a set of reforms in the system of Islamic education (the second half of the XIX century). Because of this fact Abdullin (1990) and Lazzerini (2015) reckoned that Jadidism started in the 1880s. In 1880 it developed as a large-scale socio-political movement of Islamic nations of Imperial Russia. The other researchers considered Jadidism as a set of religio-philosophical regulations focused on the renewal of spiritual, socio-economical, and political spheres of society. Perhaps this is the reason why researchers offer different versions of data about its emergence.

## 6. Findings

DeWeese criticizes the Jadidocentric approach in researching the phenomenon of Jadidism proposes his approach. He raises the origins of researching Jadidism in the spirit of Protestantism to the work of Bennigsen *Islam in the Soviet Union*. In his research Jadidism is defined as a religious reform accentuating the rupture with conservative Islamic tradition, preservation of some particular fundamental settings pointing to Islam and the ways of its survival in the modern conditions of the dominance of reason and spirit of criticism (Bennigsen, 1967). DeWeese suggests that the key words are here not «conservative» or «traditionalism» but «fundamentalism». He objects to those who say that there will be necessarily reformed in religion which will evoke the process of purification of the religion and will only keep the most fundamental. As characteristics of this natural process, he emphasizes the following traits: carrying out the school and alphabetic reforms, the realization of the national political project, etc. using the following narratives: backward dogmatism, obscurantism, traditional theology, inconsistent fidelity to traditional religious authorities (taqlid), the right of every Muslim to find answers in the canonical sources of Islam. The DeWeese (2016) claims:

It is Ibn Taymiya's program, of course, and contemporary Salafists', and, for that matter, Luther's as well; but what is most telling is the absence of any explanation that the important "innovation" here lay not in talking of "the right of every man", but in talking only about "the Quran and the Hadith" as the sources to be mined in seeking answers to those "religious questions". (p. 89)

In his article, DeWeese tries to refute some myths around the research on the phenomenon of Jadidism.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that the consideration and analysis of Islamic discourse, religious reformism, and the phenomenon of Jadidism have distinctive characteristics in the history of social thought and are related to the periodization of national historiography: pre-revolutionary Tatar, Soviet, and post-Soviet. In pre-revolutionary Tatar historiography, Jadidism is considered a progressive phenomenon oriented at surmounting scholasticism and rapprochement of Tatar culture with the Russian and European, modernizing the social and political life according to European patterns. Though after the 1930s Jadidism is designated as a bourgeois, nationalistic, pan-Turkic, and pan-Islamist movement and elaborated by class paradigms. In the 1970s there is an attempt to consider it as one of the stages of the enlightenment movement. After the crucial events of the 1990s and the dissociation of the Soviet Empire, the research on Jadidism acquire once more its relevance, and it is considered in wide scope as a movement for reforms, enlightenment, progress, modernization of different spheres of society, the idealization of the image of Jadids takes place. At the same time, a cohort of researchers proposes a more balanced approach converging various positions. They reckon that Jadidism is not a new phenomenon in the history of the region, the notion of Jadidism is not equivalent to the notion of modernism: not only do Jadids strive for science, the progress of a nation, etc.

The authors of this article suggest that the analysis of this heterogeneous phenomenon in the social life of the Tatar nation should be proceeded according to its different characteristics, the role of Jadids should not be overestimated proposing a more balanced approach. The difference in approaches to this phenomenon is related to its various aspects, its multitude of dimensions, its internal and external premises that affected its formation: religious reformatory discourse, formation of capitalistic relations, the emergence of Tatar bourgeoisie and intellectual elite, germination and proliferation of enlightenment ideas, an attempt to revise the role of religion in the social life of people and deculturation of religious tradition, the rise of Salafi movements in Islamicate countries and reformatory ideas of Egyptians, Young Ottomans and Turks. The authors of this article suggest that Jadidism is a new social phenomenon that fuses inherently religio-philosophical settings of Islam supposing renewal of different spheres of society according to European patterns. Its denotation originates from *usul al-Jadid* (new method) in the system of Islamic education which supersedes and overlaps religious reformatory Islamic discourse. It strives for discourse in the name of national culture and the best practices of Russian and European cultures.



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