Muslim reformism in Daghestan

Islamic politics and Muslim education after the Russian Revolution

Sahakyan, N.

Publication date
2021

Document Version
Other version

License
Other

Citation for published version (APA):
General Conclusion

The emergence of the reformists of Daghestan
In the second half of the nineteenth century, the discourse over the necessity of reforms in Muslim education, Muslim culture, social life and Islamic law spread over the territories controlled by the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. Being tightly connected with these empires, the 'ulamā’ of Daghestan also participated in this discourse. At the turn of the century, the first reformists had already launched their activities in Daghestan aiming to implement the reforms through which they desired to fulfill their vision of the future for a developed Daghestan.

In this thesis I discussed the works of three main figures—Abū Sufyān Akaev, ‘Alī Kaiaev and Muḥammad-Qādī Dibirov. Though they owed their education to the nineteenth century Daghestani traditional madrasas, they also studied or cooperated with the scholars outside Daghestan and spent some time in places such as Egypt and Central Asia. Kaiaev studied in Egypt, while others like Akaev and Mavraev went to Kazan, Ufa and Bakhchysarai to become familiar with the new method schools already quite widespread and rooted in these places. These close ties influenced the development of the Daghestani reformist discourse.

After spending some time outside Daghestan, they returned to the country and sought to make use of the methods and knowledge they had gained. This new knowledge and methods related mainly to the sphere of education and in
the following years they established new schools or became teachers at existing schools. In both cases, they saw their main mission in the introduction of the new knowledge that they claimed was most important for the development of the country. Their first activities were launched in the villages or regions they were familiar with; however, there they met with much resistance and failed to enroot their educational enterprises. For instance, in 1901 Muḥammad-Qādī Dibirov was invited to the village of Aksai in Khasaviurt okrug. The invitation was sent by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ḥajjī Dydymov. Later, Dibirov wrote about his practice in Aksai: “This madrasa was clearly Arabic before me [i.e., had a traditional orientation with a curriculum centering on Arabic and Islamic sciences]. I converted it into a secular school. Alongside Arabic, I also taught secular sciences. All of the mullas and qādis were against me and considered me an unbeliever. Thus, I had to leave Aksai for Temir Khan Shura.”

Faced with stiff opposition to their enterprises, the reformists left their native regions for Temir Khan Shura, the administrative center of Daghestan in the Kumyk lowlands. Reformism thus became an urban phenomenon and developed in opposition to the traditional religious authorities whose power bases were in the mountains.

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, these reformists found in Temir Khan Shura fertile ground to implement their ideas. It is there that they started to cooperate with other actors, including the socialists; and it is in this entanglement that the individual reformists began to form a group characterized by common ideas and beliefs on how education and society should be organized. In this context, the city of Temir Khan Shura played a significant role.

Built as a fort in the 1830s, Temir Khan Shura was an Imperial Russian rather than Daghestani or Islamic town. In 1866, Temir Khan Shura gained the status of a city, and by the end of that century had already became a home for nearly ten thousand people, only ten percent of whom were Muslims; the majority of the population, including that of the garrison, consisted of Christian Russians and Armenians (around 70%) and Jews (20%). The city had four churches (two Orthodox, Catholic and Armenian), two mosques and two synagogues.

Unlike rural parts of Daghestan such as the Avar and Dargi regions, where

traditional education and the traditional Muslim authorities (mainly Sufi shayks) were strongly rooted and influential, Temir Khan Shura promised new horizons and new visions for the Islamic expansion of the reformists. It was a *tabula rasa* for the Daghestani reformists who hoped to implement here the full scope of their plans and projects without directly facing the criticism of the supporters of the traditional education system.

This concentration of reform-minded scholars in Temir Khan Shura also was conditioned by the printing and publishing houses that they set up or cooperated with. Already from the 1870s several typographies were established in Daghestan. In 1901 ten typographies officially functioned in Daghestan, many of them located in Temir Khan Shura and Port Petrovsk (today’s Makhachkala). Most of their production was in the Russian language since

---

529 Source: https://www.etoretro.ru/
printing in the local languages was very difficult. Due to the lack of permission to open a printing house to publish their own works in Daghestani languages, the reformists Akaev and Mavraev started publishing several works (including those of Akaev) in Bakhchysarai at the printing house of Gaspinski.531 In 1903, Mavraev managed to organize the establishment of an Islamic printing house in Temir Khan Shura, thereby marking the start of mass production of reformist (and other) works. More than 300 titles, either in the Arabic language or Daghestani languages using the Arabic script, were published in this printing house before 1917.

The printing house contributed not only to the spread of reformist ideas but also became a hub for the cooperation of the reformists. Established by Mavraev, it was led by Akaev and published many works by him and other reformists. Another platform of cooperation became the newspapers published by the reformists, the most significant of which was Jarīdat Dāghistān established in 1913. Financed by Badavi Saidov and Magomed-Mirza Mavraev, Jarīdat Dāghistān became the main platform for reformist ideas. The newspaper thus became a platform for reformists to spread and control information. This control over the mass production of newspapers would be crucial especially after the 1917 revolutions.

The reformists’ books published in the printing houses of Mavraev and the contributions in the pages of the newspapers demonstrates that the main topic of the reformists’ discourse before 1917 was education. Akaev had a goal to publish textbooks for the new schools and in many cases these textbooks had nothing to do with religion. An episode in Akaev’s life clearly indicates this. While Akaev was selling books in one of the villages of Daghestan, he had a conversation with Jalāl ad-Dīn Karabudagkenstkii, an historian and well-known scholar in Daghestan. In that conversation, Akaev complained that he and his books were criticized by the traditional scholars. In response, Karabudagkentskii suggested to Akaev that he should “somehow connect his books with religion.”532 We can underline two vital nuances here. First, the topics of Akaev’s books were mainly not related to Islam and the textbooks he published were not designed to introduce Islamic sciences into the schools.

531 Ibid. P. 16-17
Second, we see that the opposition to Akaev was not about religious issues in the first place—he did not confront the traditional scholars of the mountains with books about Islamic reform—but about the place of secular studies in the madrasa curriculum.

The topic of education was dominant on the pages of Jarīdat Dāghistān as well and aroused quite some controversy. As we have seen, before 1917 the reformists also published articles related to religious questions and the political situation; but these did not touch upon debatable issues and were far from being radical. Also, in the light of tsarist censorship, the reformists refrained from attacking the traditional 'ulamā’ or the imperial order.

Being interested in the same issues, such as the school system and language issues, and acting across the same platforms such as the printing house and newspaper, the reformists shared not only goals and rhetoric but also resources and the environment that was created in Temir Khan Shura in the early twentieth century. Hence, when the 1917 February Revolution happened and the Russian Empire collapsed, they were visible as a coherent group—a phenomenon that was enhanced by the circumstance that most—though not all by far—reformists were of Kumyk ethnic origin.

The politicization of the reformists after the February Revolution
While in the years before 1917, the main emphasis of the reformists’ discourse was on school and language issues, the February Revolution opened new political roles for the reformists. The elimination of central control after the collapse of the empire allowed the reformists to articulate themselves on the political stage of the country as well. This participation is visible in their roles as organizers or active members of political events and by the rhetoric they adopted.

First of all, their personal participation in the political gatherings and other events allowed them to influence the political arena directly. To give an example, Dibirov became a member of the Executive Committee of Daghestan, and he participated in the congresses of the Muslims of the Caucasus in Tiflis and Baku. Already in 1918, while the question of the imamate was discussed in Temir Khan Shura, the reformists were in the center of the meeting and had a big impact on the creation of the anti-Gotsinskii sentiments. At the same time, they took certain positions which allowed them to fight against their political
and ideological opponents from a position of power. For example, Akaev served as a secretary to Shaykh al-Islām Akushinskii. These positions gave them power and freedom to act while their discourse allowed them to create their image as political actors in the state-building processes.

In the sphere of articulation of their ideas, the reformists were well-grounded especially because they controlled the press. Already experienced in the publication of newspapers since 1913, the reformists significantly increased this sphere directly after the collapse of the empire. Alongside the Arabic-language Jarīdat Dāghistān, many newspapers started to appear in the major vernacular languages of Daghestan. These periodicals were crucial in the sense of spreading and controlling political information. This control also meant that the opponents of the reform-minded scholars would have problems in using these platforms. For instance, Dibirov mentions in his work that when Gotsinskii wanted to publish his open letter addressed to the people of the North Caucasus in Jarīdat Dāghistān, Kaiaev, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, did not want to allow that. Gotsinskii had to ask Mavraev for that favor. It was only after that that the letter mentioning Gotsinskii as a muftī (not imām) appeared in Jarīdat Dāghistān. While the traditional ‘ulama’ had no problems in the reproduction of religious knowledge through the circulation of manuscripts and the organization of scholarly debates on religious topics, in the sphere of political affairs the reformists had significant preponderance due to their periodicals which allowed them to spread information effectively. Unfortunately, there is no data about the circulation of these periodicals. In 1921, the Daggosizdat (“Daghestani State Publishing”) was publishing the Avar language newspaper Red Mountains, the circulation of which was between five hundred and one thousand copies.533 It can be assumed that the circulation of the newspapers published in 1917 by the reformists was less than one thousand. Nevertheless, given that at the turn of the twentieth century the literacy rate among Daghestanis was around ten percent of the population, this circulation was influential. Furthermore, in Daghestan like in many other parts of the Islamic world, one copy of a newspaper could be a source of information for hundreds of people: one educated person could read the information for the others.

Furthermore, unlike the Volga-Ural region, where after 1905 Gasprinskii’s pioneering newspaper *Terjuman* obtained competition in the form of more conservative outlets such as the journal *al-‘Asr al-jadīd* (“The New Century”) published between 1906 and 1907, in Daghestan the newspapers of the reformist camp did not have competitors from among the ‘ulamā’. In this sphere, the Bolsheviks could not compete either, given that their newspapers were in Russian, not using languages such as Arabic, Kumyk, Avar or other Daghestani languages that could attract a wider readership among the Muslim population. The effectiveness of ruling (or those who seek to rule) is dependent upon the communication (media, language, alphabets, etc.). In this context, the reformists possessed the necessary means to filter information and at the same time present themselves as desirable allies within the political formations of the post-revolutionary period.

In Daghestan, the balance of power was not clearly tilted to one side or another, and between 1917 and 1920 all actors maintained a certain flexibility. Gotsinskii was hesitant with regard to his imamate and signed as *muftī* rather than *imām*; Uzun Ḥajjī first elevated Gotsinskii to the office of imam, and then, when that failed, himself; Akushinskii supported the Bolsheviks and then struggled against them. These cases demonstrate this flexibility. Each of these leaders—Gotsinskii, Akushinskii and Uzun Ḥajjī—had the potential to become supreme leader in Daghestan. Their competition pushed them to be more flexible while making alliances with other forces on the field, such as the Bolsheviks in the case of Akushinskii or the passive support of Denikin in the case of Gotsinskii.

This flexibility was prominent not only for these shaykhs but also for the Bolsheviks and the secular political leaders. The Bolsheviks’ cooperation with Shaykhs Akushinskii and Uzun Ḥajjī against Denikin or Kotsev’s agreement with these very two shaykhs demonstrate that that flexibility was found on all sides of the political arena of Daghestan. Of particular importance is the fact that the first Soviet officials needed local allies because they lacked Muslim credentials. While the Daghestani people valued an Islamic madrasa education, all prominent Daghestani socialists had studied outside Daghestan: Takho-Godi at Moscow State University, Korkmasov at a Stavropol gymnasium

---

and Sorbonne University, Dakhadaev at the Institute of Engineers of Ways of Communication in Saint Petersburg and Buinakskii at Moscow State University. As we saw from our discussion of the language and education issues, persons who studied in Russian were seen by the Daghestani Muslim scholars as not to be trusted. Being the representatives of socialism in Daghestan, at the beginning they were perceived as anti-Muslim, forcing the socialists to eliminate this negative image. To make themselves relevant to Daghestani society, they had to articulate their message within the specific cultural context of that society. This required the use of the vernacular, for otherwise the message would not be accepted. To make socialism and the issues it discussed important and relevant to Daghestani society, the socialists chose to speak Islamic. For this purpose, they cooperated with some Sufi shaykhs such as Akushinskii but also with the reformists. This elastic strategy demonstrates that these Daghestani socialists were political moderates capable of balancing and negotiating political, educational and social concerns.

Finally, alongside these traditional ‘ulamā’ and the Bolsheviks, the reformists of Daghestan also were quite flexible in their agendas. Their flexibility made their cooperation with the Bolsheviks possible. Their desire to demonstrate the compatibility of socialism and Sharī’a and later their adjustment of their Islamic and educational agendas to the programs and demands of the socialists are good examples of that.

The engagement of the reformists in the political processes brought more political concepts and ideas onto their agendas. As they switched from merely educational to political issues, their way of communication and argumentation also changed. From the tradition of debating through manuscripts (a slow process, given that scholars took their time to write sophisticated rebuttals and commentaries in Arabic), they shifted to face-to-face debates during meetings and congresses, where they occasionally had to shout in order to make themselves heard. Thus, they no longer addressed only the small group of ‘ulamā’ and their students; rather, they broke out of the old corporation of religious scholars and entered a field where actors came also from among ordinary people and secular elites. In this context, the terms they used became crucial; they explained their viewpoints in a terminology that was familiar to the Daghestani people—and acceptable. Thus, when supporting the parliamentarian system, they explained it as Islamic shūrā; and when attacking
their enemies, they described their actions as *fitna*. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it was just a rhetorical maneuver; nothing indicates they did not feel comfortable when using the religious idiom.

In this thesis I described the 1917 revolutions in Russia as an important turning point in the discourse of the Daghestani scholars, and when I started this project, my preliminary title and subtitles often mentioned the word “revolution” or “revolutionary.” In the course of my work, I then realized that ideological discussions of the Petrogradian perception of revolution are nearly absent from the lexicon of the Daghestani ‘ulamā’. They were talking about positive and negative consequences of the revolutions of 1917 for Daghestan, and they were talking about the compatibility of Islam and socialism; however, questions about the nature of a revolution, of class and society, and, importantly, of socialism, remained completely beyond their discussions. A reader who opens the issues of *Jarīdat Dāghistān* will hardly find any mention of Lenin or his ideological standpoints.

Daghestani scholars of Islam of all sides were acting in the general context of the Russian Revolution of 1917; however, their discourse was located in the Islamic arena. They were more concentrated on issues related to Islam and the Muslim world, and when they discussed the revolutionary events in Russia, they were explaining them through these Islamic lenses. The Daghestani ‘ulamā’ operated within the classical field of Islamic law, in which they were firmly grounded. All of them argued from within the Islamic (mainly *Shāfi‘i*) tradition. However, the agendas and solutions offered by individual scholars differed because even within the *Shāfi‘i* tradition they had enough space to maneuver. This was especially vivid in the discussions over the imamate; while some used arguments from the *Shāfi‘i* tradition in favor of the imamate, others referred to the same corpus of legal works to identify arguments against it. In this context, however, the reformists made some steps to go beyond the *Shāfi‘i* tradition as well when they needed to make counterarguments. Not limiting themselves to only one source of inspiration, these scholars were easily “juggling” the rich varieties of the Islamic tradition. To be sure, in many cases they echoed the Egyptian reformists, but they never followed them blindly; rather, they also took arguments from other works, including those from beyond the *Shāfi‘i* school. They adopted what was essential for their own agenda and omitted what was not supporting their standpoint.
The revolution was something that gave them an opportunity and freedom to talk but it was not the basis of their discussion on the ideological level. Thus, the Daghestani ‘ulamāʾ pursued their visions of a Daghestani future in a language that can be described as Islamic. Tellingly, there were limits to the discourse about the compatibility of socialism and the Shariʿa; while both the reformists and the Bolsheviks of Daghestan sought to substantiate the compatibility of socialism with the Shariʿa, the reformists also mentioned contradictions and then gave preference to the solution offered by the Shariʿa. This cooperation and shared rhetoric between the socialists (later the Bolsheviks) and the ‘ulamāʾ (both reform-minded and not) was anchored in the dominance of Islam in every sphere of life. Those ‘ulamāʾ who agreed to cooperate with the Bolsheviks demanded guarantees for the enduring centrality of their religion. The local Bolsheviks’ cooperation with the traditional ‘ulamāʾ and the reformists was possible also because at the center the Bolsheviks claimed to implement a policy of giving some freedom to the religions oppressed during the imperial era. This temporary policy of “religious equality” also served as a justification for the ‘ulamāʾ who preferred cooperation with the Bolsheviks over those who demanded that the struggle against the Bolsheviks take the form of jihād.

This cooperation guaranteed them a place in the framework of the Soviet system. Of course, with the Bolsheviks establishing themselves firmly, the reformists’ sphere of activity was again limited to education and culture, with no access to political power. Their works were related predominantly to education and culture. The loss of their political positions coincided with the loss of the traditional Muslim scholars’ dominance over the urban regions of Daghestan (Akushinskii was now an enemy of the Soviet system and his control was mainly limited to the Dargi region; Uzun Ḥajjī tried to establish his own emirate and died; and Gotsinskii continued his fight against the Bolsheviks in the Avar mountains only.). In this situation, the reformists filled the emerging vacuum of religious authority. By using the notion of pure Islam, they positioned themselves as the better religious authorities and guardians of Islam. After the defeat and execution of Gotsinskii in 1925, the reformists became the only Muslim (Islamic) players remaining in the public discourse on politics. This temporary alliance was a short success story as it allowed for the opening of a new Islamic journal and of schools which had much in common with those desired by the reformists.
This changed with the shift in the general Soviet religious policy in the mid-1920s. This break in their cooperation, however, was bilateral since the role that the reformists desired was that of politician-scholars. The end of the 1920s demonstrated that the Soviet system did not have any room for them beyond educational and some purely religious issues. The reformists felt the fragility of this cooperation. Once the Bolsheviks turned against the reformists, leading personalities of the latter began to write works in which they openly attacked atheist standpoints; examples of which would be ‘Ali Kaiaev’s *The arrow that pierced the throat of the atheist* and Akaev’s *The dialogue between a Muslim and an atheist*. With the production of such works and their circulation in manuscript form, the reformists in a way returned to the “traditional” media culture that they had left when engaging with printing and journalism. A detailed analysis of these works remains beyond the scope of the present thesis, but their mere emergence characterized the end of a short period of mutual tolerance against common enemies.

**The place of the Daghestani case in the study of Jadidism and reformism in Russia**

In her book, *Tatar Empire: Kazan’s Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia*, Danielle Ross claims that the Tatar Jadidism emerged from “the social hierarchies, institutions and debates within the Volga-Ural ‘ulama’” and was conditioned by the socio-economic changes of the 1850s-1890s.535 Danielle Ross emphasizes that Tatar Jadidism was a last stage in a continuous development of Islamic learning in the Volga-Urals. She argues that Jadidism was a successful result of the pre-Jadīd expansion of literacy and education carried out by the Tatar scholars whom the Jadīds would criticize.536 Ross’s claim can partly be applied to the Daghestani reformism.

The Daghestani reformists were latecomers in the Jadīd movement spreading in the Ottoman and the Russian Empires from the mid-nineteenth century and reaching its zenith in the early twentieth century. The first Daghestani reformists launched their activities only at the beginning of the twentieth century. The main activities such as the opening of schools and publishing of newspapers began around 1907 when Akaev and Kaiaev returned from their

536 Ibid. P. 142
travels. The comparison of the Central Asian and Tatar reformists’ discourse over madrasa reforms with the Daghestani reformists’ discourse clearly shows that the same rhetoric and claims related to the “backwardness” of the old education system and the incapability of these schools and their teachers with the demands of modern times. The Daghestani reformists, especially Akaev, clearly accept the fact that they had organized travels to become familiar with the methods of the reformists of Crimea, Central Asia, the Volga-Urals and Egypt. However, they did not copy the reformists’ methods and ideas blindly. First of all, their educational background came from the Daghestani traditional madrasa. While the desire to learn new methods during their travels was crucial, their educational background gave them the prism to look at these new methods and ideas. Furthermore, the reformists of Daghestan were followers of the Shāfīʿī madhhab and were acting mainly within its framework. Contrary to them, the Ḥanafī and Mālikī madhhabs were dominant in Central Asia and Egypt, respectively. This difference also means that the lenses through which the Daghestani reformists viewed the reforms differed. Thus, the Daghestani reformism was the product of not only outside influence but also the result of the Daghestani traditional Islamic education of the late nineteenth century.

In his book The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia, Adeeb Khalid demonstrates that the Jadīds of Central Asia were a strong power before the revolutions of 1917. The Jadīd-schools numbered in the hundreds and their influence was significant. At the end of the nineteenth century, Central Asia and the Volga-Urals had already become a significant center for the reformist movement. As Khalid claims, there were many Jadidisms in the Russian Empire, each with its own concerns rooted in local social struggles. The fact of the pervasive presence of the new-method schools and appearance of new generations of Jadīds among Tatars and Central Asians speaks about the compatibility of the reforms and local tradition. The picture of the reforms and the new-method schools in Daghestan, however, demonstrates the opposite. The Daghestani reformism was influenced by two main sources, the Jadīds of the Russian Empire and the reformists of Egypt, which in their turn influenced the Tatar Jadidism as well.

537 Ibid. P. 166
Unlike Central Asia and the Volga-Ural region, where at the turn of century the new-method schools were widespread elementary education institutions, the reformists of Daghestan could not build a huge network of schools and in this way spread their influence. The major part of Daghestan, especially its two largest regions—the Avar and Dargi regions—remained significantly under the influence of the traditional ‘ulamā’ and Sufi authorities. In 1908 there were only eleven new-method schools (Other researchers mention only eight schools) in the whole of Daghestan, and nearly all of them were in Temir Khan Shura okrug. Before 1917, due to the limited influence of reformism in Daghestan, the traditional ‘ulamā’ did not write (or at least we could not discover) anti-reformist works criticizing the reformists at the ideological level. Rather they blocked any reformist initiatives for opening the new-method schools in mountainous Daghestan. The conflict between the reformists and the traditional ‘ulama’ was not as violent as in other Muslim regions of Russia and sometimes there were no clear frontier lines between the reformists and the traditional ‘ulama’. The same ‘ālim could be a reformist in some questions and traditional in the case of other issues. For instance, this was the case with Bashlarov, who supported the school reforms but opposed any reform in the case of religion.

Only the February Revolution opened up a real confrontation between the reformists and a part of the traditional ‘ulamā’; however, this confrontation was still not over the reforms of the educational system but rather over the dominance of the political affairs. As Adeeb Khalid shows, the February Revolution also opened up a similar confrontation between the reformists and the traditional ‘ulamā’ of Central Asia, where the reformists and the traditional ‘ulamā’ even organized separate congresses. In Daghestan, however, the struggle took on different forms. First, the reformists were too few to organize separate gatherings counterbalancing the influence of traditional authorities. Furthermore, in the case of political questions there was no coherence among the traditional ‘ulamā’ in Daghestan. The new politics brought into the open the deep conflicts that had existed in Daghestan before the rise of reformism.

539 Ibid. P. 161
These conflicts were over the question of the imamate and the *jihād* against Russia, separating the traditional Daghestani ‘ulamā’ into two main camps. These issues became a vital part of the Daghestani political environment and overshadowed the conflict between the reformists and the ‘ulamā’. The conflict over the imamate veered the reformists into an alliance with the ‘ulamā’ who were against Gotsinskii’s imamate and pushed them to put aside the conflicts that existed between them. Thus, the Daghestani political actors became divided into two big camps—the supporters and the opponents of Gotsinskii’s imamate. The struggle between the reformists and the traditional ‘ulamā’ in Central Asia was much more violent after 1917 especially. Based on the anti-Gotsinskii sentiments, the reformists, the Daghestani Bolsheviks and a part of the traditional ‘ulamā’ found themselves in cooperation. While ideologically the reformists were in deep conflict with these traditional ‘ulamā’, their political agendas and common enemy overlapped. Thus, we see not a clear confrontation between the reformists and the traditional ‘ulamā’ but rather camps where the reformists and the traditional ‘ulamā’ found certain spheres to collaborate.

During the period of writing of this thesis, I have been taking into account the argument by Devin DeWeese that so far scholars have given most of their attention to the Jadīds while the history before the Jadīds, and, importantly, the cultural production of the non-Jadīds were left out of their attention. For DeWeese, Jadīd studies need a “vacation.” My investigation of the Jadids of Daghestan demonstrated that there are still some aspects of Jadidism that have been ignored in scholarship. Furthermore, the Daghestani case helps us understand how the local environment influenced the development of Jadidism. At the same time, DeWeese insists that “Jadids deserved a different kind of attention—more critical.” To give such critical attention and not repeat the Jadids’ narrative of progress and enlightenment, I endeavored not to study the Jadīds in isolation from their ideological opponents and political partners. Thus, in this thesis I followed the idea that Devin DeWeese expressed and tried to turn the reformists “into real individuals shaped by complex relationship with their own society.” Thus, reformists can be discussed only in the context of the existing conflicts of a society full of other actors besides the reformists.

543 Ibid. P. 41-42
In his article on *al-Manār*'s influence on Riza etdin Fakhretdinov, Stephane Dudoignon calls attention to the “Salafist” aspects of Jadīd programs. Later, Devin DeWeese and Danielle Ross develop this line further, in particular by emphasizing the reformists’ links to the balanced reformists of the ’Abduh-Riḍā circle. The Daghestani case study investigated in this thesis fully corroborates the importance of this link to the Salafi-minded reformers in Cairo. During their visits to Egypt, Kaiaev and Akaev developed relations with ’Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā, and *al-Manār*, the famous newspaper edited by Rashīd Riḍā, remained an important stimulus for all of them. Even the structure of *al-Manār* was a model for the newspaper *Jarīdat Dāghistān*. The newspaper had several sections: Official, Unofficial, Literary, Announcements, Scientific and Section of Letters. The last two pages (out of four) were mostly used by Dagestani Muslim scholars who were discussing such issues as education and Islamic law.

The present study demonstrates the centrality of religion in the discourse of the Daghestani reformists. The traditional education system of Daghestan was religious; hence every change in educational programs—even if not touching explicitly upon issues of faith and the interpretation of Islam—was in a natural way also seen as an attack on what was regarded as “orthodox” Islam. The reformists sought to speak on behalf of Islam and portrayed themselves as the authority on interpreting the religion. This led to the development of positions that we would now classify as Salafist, especially during the 1920s, when the reformists were attempting to become the only trustable source for the interpretation of Islam. Unlike previous decades, when the reformists were open to cooperation with the Sufis, the reformists claimed to be the defenders of the pure Islam which should be restored from the defilements introduced into the religion by the pseudo-Sufi shaykhs. This claim of purity allowed the traditional ‘ulamā’ to associate the Daghestani reformists with the Wahhabis. In their turn, the reformists embraced the anti-Wahhabi discourse as a defense shield against those blaming them of adhering to Wahhabism.

---


Daghestani Jadidism and civic nationalism

After discussing the agendas and visions of the reformists and their allies and enemies, as well as following the patterns of development for the reformisms in the territories of the former Russian Empire, it is meaningful to return to the relation between the terms “reformism” and “Jadidism” one more time. In order to avoid starting with the premise that the Daghestani scholars-intellectuals were just an offshoot of Tatar or Central Asian Jadidism, throughout this thesis I employ the term “reformists.” My analysis of the Daghestani reformists’ writings allowed me to establish a significant cohesion in their views and perspectives and, hence, to treat them as a coherent group. They shared the same vision of the future for Daghestan, of how the country should develop and what means should be used for that development.

The patterns of reformisms in Central Asia, the Volga-Urals and Daghestan overlap but there are also some key differences. The fermentations of reformism in Daghestan in the 1910s could be compared with those of the Central Asian Jadidism of the 1890s. The Daghestani reformists as well as the Jadīds of Central Asia were heavily influenced by the reformists of Egypt. In their turn, the reformists of Daghestan were also significantly impacted by Tatar and Central Asian Jadīds. All of this convinced me to look at the protagonists of this thesis as a part of the broader Jadīd movement, with all the necessary caveats.

While in certain spheres like the school reforms we see these similarities, there are also certain points where Daghestani reformism differs from Central Asian Jadīdism. Among these differences are the roles of the Daghestani reformists within the Soviet system. Unlike Turkestan’s Jadīds, who, as Adee Khalid claims, “rapidly transformed themselves into Muslim Communists” to be able to speak in the name of the Muslims of Turkestan, the reformists of Daghestan never pretended to be Communists or Bolsheviks. This is probably the reason why, in contrast to the Central Asian Jadīds, they could not capture the newly established power institutions and were limited to the spheres of education and culture. They did not adopt the rhetoric of class struggle that legitimated the new regime; rather, the reformists of Daghestan remained within the political language of “orthodox’ Islam. Another important difference was the non-Turkic character of Daghestani reformism, that is, the fact that a

broader Turkic solidarity or identity did not play any role. Even Kumyks like Akaev and Mavraev still identified as Daghestanis and cooperated with Laks, Avars and others. This feature in particular resulted in the circumstance that in Soviet and early post-Soviet historiography, the Daghestani reformists have never been seriously discussed in the context of Jadidism.\(^{547}\)

This brings us to the multiethnic character of Daghestan as a factor for the development of Jadidism and, in particular, to the absence of one dominant and overarching powerful ethnic nationalism that could have emerged as a political factor. In his book *Making Uzbekistan*, Adeeb Khalid claims that in Uzbekistan there were two competing visions of modernity— the Jadīds’ modernity and the Bolsheviks’ modernity. The Jadīds’ modernity was Islamic and nationalist.\(^{548}\) In the vision of Central Asian Jadīds the nation played a significant role. Daghestani reformists, in contrast, had no powerful nation to appeal to; rather, their point of reference was the notion of belonging to Daghestan. The concept of a nation-state was not workable in Daghestan. The many people of Daghestan—the *ahl Dāghīstān*, to use the phrase that the reformists frequently employed for denoting their audience—needed a model that would allow every ethnic group to practice its culture and language. We saw this very clearly in the chapter on the language of instruction and education, where the Daghestani Jadīds opted for supporting the many local vernaculars, in combination with Arabic, to the detriment of a forced introduction of Turkish or Russian. While in Central Asia the concept of nation and Turkism were uniting factors, in Daghestan such concepts would only have emphasized the divisions between the many ethnic groups.

This brings us to a surprising conclusion: in Daghestan we do not see the Jadīds contributing to ethnic nationalism but a civic nationalism associated with borrowings from liberalism—and all this in an Islamic form. The Salafiminded Daghestani Jadīds presented themselves as proponents of state models such as a federation or a republic, seen as the best forms for binding political communities together in an ethnically neutral way and on the shared principle


of justice and democracy. To this day the name of the Republic of Daghestan refers to that old geographical and multiethnic cultural unity as opposed to any individual ethnic nation (as in the cases of neighboring Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria or Karachay-Cherkessia, for instance). The adoption of this non-ethnic based political concept also meant a rejection of any political state-building initiatives based on Islam, and in particular any attempts to re-establish the imamate. In fact, any political unification attempts based on one nation/one language, or on one Islamic authority such as that of Gotsinskii, were rejected by the Jadids as colonial repression or as a resurgence of autocracy—as the end of the freedom they believed they had just obtained.