
ISLAMIST MOVEMENT IN THE KAZAKH STEPPE: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Islamist movement manifested at various levels, shaped by local contexts and global political dynamics. The unique lifestyle, ethnic composition, and cultural characteristics of the Kazakh people prevented the establishment of a centralized form of Islamism; instead, it persisted in diverse manifestations, often in conjunction with Jadidism, Turkism, and national liberation movements. This movement served as a catalyst for a new developmental trajectory in the early 20th century, facilitating the emergence of Kazakh youth as a political elite. Although the influence of Islamism within the national liberation movement was inconsistent, it bolstered the political elite's position against colonial powers and stimulated the formation of a national identity, though it did not develop into a comprehensive political program. The policies of Russification and Christianization implemented by the Russian Empire fostered the convergence of Islamism and national movements. These policies intensified the local population's commitment to preserving their spiritual and cultural identity while enhancing the Kazakhs' connections to the broader Muslim world. The Ottoman Empire emerged as a central hub for the movement. Its status as a Caliphate, alongside its religious educational institutions, pilgrimage traditions, and other cultural elements, significantly influenced the Islamic world. Nevertheless, it ultimately proposed only a concept of transnational Muslim unity aimed at resisting Western colonialism. A notable characteristic of the movement within the context of colonial and imperial politics was the aspiration to forge a powerful united front against colonial oppression and Western domination. However, this ambition yielded two divergent outcomes: it paved the way for the establishment of national autonomies in the territories colonized by the Russian Empire, while the Ottoman Empire, which adopted this ideology, found itself in crisis due to the surge of national liberation movements.

Keywords: A Historical Analysis, Islamist movement, Islamism, Kazakh steppe, Ottoman Empire

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1. Introduction

The Islamist political and religious ideology remains a contentious issue within both the scientific and socio-political spheres. In the context of academic inquiry, the study of the Islamist movement is increasingly pertinent, particularly as the Muslim factor becomes more complex in contemporary global politics. Consequently, this research aims to analyze the causes, driving forces, and developmental trajectories of the movement within the Kazakh steppe, while comparing it to the characteristics of the Ottoman Empire.

Historically, the Islamist movement in the Ottoman Empire has been more extensively studied than its counterpart in the Kazakh steppe. Considering the differing political contexts of these two regions during that era, this study provides a unique opportunity to examine the development of the movement within the frameworks of colonial and imperial politics from two distinct perspectives. Furthermore, this research identifies commonalities in the movement across these two colonial and imperial territories, regardless of their respective political situations.

The relevance of this research topic can be articulated through several key points. Firstly, by the end of the 19th century, Islamism had evolved into a political ideology that impacted all Muslim nations, playing a crucial role in the preservation of religious and cultural identity, particularly during the period of Russian colonization in Kazakh lands. Secondly, this inquiry facilitates a deeper understanding of the long-standing national liberation movement of the Kazakh people within the context of political struggle. Thirdly, educational reforms contributed to societal renewal, making it essential to examine the evolution of the knowledge systems of that time. Lastly, the significance of this research for contemporary society lies in its ability to elucidate historical factors that shaped religious movements and their roles within society and ideology.

The scholarly value of this study is underscored by the fact that the impact of the Islamist movement on the Kazakh steppe has not yet been adequately explored within the academic discourse. Therefore, a comparative analysis that delineates the state of the movement's development in both colonial and imperial contexts - specifically within the Kazakh steppe and the Ottoman Empire - highlights the originality of this research. The movement was marked not only by local dynamics but also by broader Muslim trends related to 'colonization', 'national liberation', and 'renaissance'. Additionally, this research endeavors to uncover new sources and present novel conclusions.

2. Materials and methodology

Numerous works exist on the topic of this research across various fields, including historical, religious, political, and cultural studies. Information found in periodicals, as well as writings by political figures and public activists from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, enables the construction of a comprehensive understanding of that period.

Given the complexity of the research subject, the chronological framework of this study primarily encompasses the period from the 1870s to the early 1915s.

The research is grounded in a reliable scientific foundation comprising periodicals published in England and Scotland, sourced from the archive of the British Library. The content of these publications provides critical insights into political events occurring in the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire during the early 20th century. To be more precise, 'Lincolnshire Echo' 1897. [1], 'Liverpool Daily' 1905 [2], 'Westminster Gazette' 1905 [3], 'The Globe' 1907 [4], 'Birmingham Mail' 1908 [5], 'Manchester Courier' 1910 [6], 'The Edinburgh Evening News' 1906 [7] and 1913 [8] issue of newspaper. These published articles were first put into circulation as a historical source.

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Additionally, materials from Fund No. 4 [9; 10] of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK) were utilized as sources for this research. The factual foundation is further enriched by the published works of politically active public figures from that period, including Alikhan Bokeikhanov [11; 12; 13], Mirzhakip Dulatov [14], Mukhametzhan Tynyshpaev [15], Ismail Gasprinsky [16], Yusuf Akchura [17], and Mahmudhoja Behbudi [18]. Furthermore, the study incorporates materials from various scientific research endeavors.

To elucidate the research topic, a comprehensive set of historical and interdisciplinary methods was employed. The historical method facilitated the examination of the development of Islamism across various historical periods in the Kazakh steppe. A comparative historical method was utilized to identify the trajectory, characteristics, and distinctions in the development of the Islamist movement in other regions. Contextual analysis was applied to study the Islamist movement within a broader global and regional framework. This approach enabled the exploration of external factors, such as the influence of global Islamic movements, processes of colonization, and the geopolitical interests of contemporary powers, which significantly impacted the evolution of Islamism in the region. Furthermore, a political and ideological analysis was conducted to investigate the ideological underpinnings of the political landscape at that time and their effects on political movements and sentiments in the Kazakh steppe.

These methods facilitate a comprehensive study of the Islamist movement in the Kazakh steppe by linking local developments with global trends.

3. Results

In the 19th century, Islam played a central role in the social and cultural life of the Kazakh steppe. During this period, religion became an integral aspect of

Kazakh identity, serving as a unifying link among various tribal groups of indigenous peoples and contributing to the preservation of shared cultural values.

Several local, regional, and global factors can be identified as facilitating the spread of the Islamist movement in the Kazakh steppe. Within the context of the regions examined in this research, Islamism possessed distinct objectives and characteristics, evolving under the influence of various political, social, and cultural dynamics. Consequently, two primary factors can be attributed to the development of the movement in the Kazakh steppe:

1. Despite a decline in the activities of Sufi brotherhoods, such as Naqshbandiya and Yasavi, due to colonial policies, their significance in the spiritual life of the Kazakh people remained intact. These Sufi brotherhoods maintained close connections with Muslim centers beyond Russia and actively sought to promote their ideology among the Kazakhs, thereby reinforcing religious consciousness [19, p. 569].

2. The Kazakh pilgrimage to Mecca represented another channel for the dissemination of Islamism. Despite the challenges posed by personal passport restrictions, many Kazakhs undertook the pilgrimage and returned with new ideas and a strengthened sense of belonging to the global Muslim community. In 1896, a representative of the Empire's Ministry of Internal Affairs remarked that those who completed the pilgrimage were highly regarded in their society and were "prepared to spread the spirit of extremist Islam" [19, p. 574]. Furthermore, on May 25, 1900, Alikhan Bokeikhanov published an 'Open Letter to Pilgrims' in issue 20 of the newspaper DUG, which was published in Omsk. The article indicated that 100-120 individuals from the Akmola and Semipalatinsk regions undertook the pilgrimage annually [11, p. 363].

Among the regional factors, the following two can also be highlighted:

1. The Jadidist reform movement, particularly that of the Crimean Tatars, had a significant influence on education. This movement contributed to the modernization of educational practices, the enhancement of religious instruction, and the revival of Muslim identity. The new methodologies introduced by the reformer Ismail Gasprinsky were disseminated through the newspaper Tardzhiman, reaching other regions, including those inhabited by Russian Turks. This reform movement supported the Kazakh steppe and strengthened the ties of the Kazakhs with the broader Muslim world. The Jadidists were notably influenced by Jamal al-Din Afghani [20, p. 88].

2. In the spiritual realm, the religious situation in the Kazakh steppe was influenced by Muslim communities from neighboring regions, including inner Russia, East Turkestan, Central Asia, and the Afghan government under British influence. For instance, in 1912, the tsarist gendarmerie arrested two teachers from Kashgar in the Turkestan region – Iskakov and Abdurakhmanov – on charges of propagating pan-Islamic ideas [21, p. 80]. Additionally, Tatar merchants and clergy were particularly active in this context. The Tatars maintained close connections not only with Muslim centers in Russia but also with other Islamic countries. They disseminated religious texts, publications, and ideas that encouraged local Muslims to preserve their faith and cultural identity amid colonial pressures. Conversely, these actions were also aimed at establishing Tatar

dominance in the religious, cultural, and educational spheres over the Turkic peoples of Central Asia. Consequently, some Tatars emerged as leaders of the movement, actively holding positions of influence in Central Asia [22, p. 172].

Global events significantly influenced the Kazakh steppe during the 19th century. Western powers recognized the Ottoman Empire as the supreme ‘Caliph’ of all Muslims [23, p. 29]. However, the empire’s weakening under pressure from European powers generated considerable unrest among colonized Muslim populations. Notably, during this period, the Ottoman Empire was the only Muslim-majority state that had not succumbed to European colonialism.

The Islamist ideology of the Ottoman Empire garnered support from state authorities, local religious leaders, and intellectuals who viewed it as a means to resist colonialism, challenge Western powers, and preserve their Islamic identity. The concepts of Islamism and the Caliphate developed concurrently.

However, the notion of a ‘Caliphate’ failed to gain traction in the Kazakh steppe, in stark contrast to its robust support in India. Some researchers have noted that in 1857, the British were compelled to obtain a decree from the Ottoman Sultan urging Indian Muslims to remain loyal to their government [24, p. 104-105].

Consequently, the history of the Islamist movement’s development within the framework of colonial and imperial policy can be examined through political, religious, and cultural dimensions as a comparative analysis of the political, religious, and cultural aspects of the Kazakh Steppe and the Ottoman Empire (Table 1.).

Ultimately, the primary objective of the movement under the two political regimes was to develop within the framework of Muslim peoples’ identity. Its unifying purpose was to resist the pressures exerted by European powers, colonial policies, and Christianization efforts. A significant role in disseminating these ideas was played by the clergy and ulema in both territories. Additionally, the media, literature, art, and education contributed substantially to this endeavor.

4. Discussion

The Islamic movement that emerged in the second half of the 19th century underwent changes depending on the regions in the course of its development. European politicians and researchers used the term ‘pan-Islamism’ to describe the policies of Sultan Abdul Hamid II of the Ottoman Empire, similar to how the terms ‘Pan-Slavism’ and ‘Pan-Germanism’ were used for other movements of the time. The term was employed with a negative connotation, associating it with the Ottoman Empire’s resistance to Western pressure and its efforts to protect other Muslim regions from foreign influence.

Researcher K.H. Ansari characterizes this movement of the early 20th century as “one of the paradoxes of Islamic history” It is clear that this contradiction refers to colonized nations. The author points out that the first group of Muslim socialists originated from former ‘pious Muslims’, including Russian socialists who came from various silsilas of the Naqshbandi Sufi brotherhood, as well as those who arrived in Kazan [25, p. 509]. Here, it can be inferred that the

author focuses not only on the movement itself but also on its evolution. While the goals of the movement may not have significantly changed, its form could adapt depending on the political circumstances.

Table 1. A Comparative Analysis of the Political, Religious, and Cultural Aspects of the Kazakh Steppe and the Ottoman Empire

Kazakh steppe in the context of colonial policy	Ottoman Empire in the context of imperial policy
Political	
It served as a means of resisting colonization, Russification, and Christianization	It functioned as a means of uniting Muslims within the empire while suppressing separatist sentiments
There was no singular leader of the movement	The Sultan served as the leader of the movement
Manifested through the contributions of individual ulemas, the movement lacked a centralized character	It evolved into a centralized state ideology, supported by the ruling elite.
It was particularly intertwined with Jadidism and national liberation movements	It was integral to a state reform aimed at modernizing the empire and was closely associated with Turkism
It developed primarily at the local level, striving to preserve Islamic identity and achieve political autonomy	It reached a global level, serving as a means to strengthen relations with Muslim communities outside the empire, including those in colonized regions, and to restore the empire's status
There was no significant force of influence on other regions.	It exerted a strong influence on Muslim territories in other regions
However, through the efforts of the Muslim faction in the State Duma, it became possible to articulate their political views.	As the ideology of a sovereign state, it governed the institutions of power
In conjunction with the national liberation movement, it ultimately achieved political autonomy in the later stages.	It clashed with the national liberation movement, ultimately contributing to the collapse of the political regime
Religious	
The influence of neighboring countries, including the educational centers of the Tatars, Bashkirs, Bukhara, and Samarkand, predominated	The religious objective of reinforcing the Caliph's role as the spiritual leader of all Muslims was intertwined with political considerations.
The religious disposition of the people was intertwined with national traditions. Individuals with religious education and the clergy held significant authority within the population.	The authority of Islamic institutions, the clergy, and pilgrims was strengthened within the state
Cultural	
Literary works, newspapers, and educational reforms functioned as platforms for the expression of Islamist ideas	Literature, art, and education played a significant role in promoting Islamic identity
The Ottoman alphabet began to be employed in periodicals, and some activists advocated for the Ottoman language to serve as a common language among the Turkic peoples. However, this phenomenon did not gain significant prevalence in the Kazakh steppe.	The empire aimed to reinforce cultural ties with Muslims in other regions by utilizing Islamic symbols and shared traditions

In the collective study by scholars such as R. Abdullaev, D. Alimova, I. Bagirova, I. Sulaev, Sh. Ramazanzade and D. Kenzhaev, it is argued that one of the influential leaders of the Islamic movement, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, played

a crucial role in shaping the national content of modernization currents in the Islamic world. This significance is highlighted through his impact on prominent figures of the Turkic world, such as İsmail Gaspıralı, Yusuf Akçura, Ali bey Huseynzade, Mehmed Emin Resulzade, Mahmudkoja Behbudi, Abdurauf Fitrat, and other intellectuals [18, p. 213].

Researchers also highlight that al-Afghani “equated the national question with the factor of Islamic unity, justifying the necessity of the evolution of Muslims through educational reform and the improvement of state governance” [26, p. 213]. A similar viewpoint can be found in the work of scholar K. Lenz-Rayman. Although he classifies the Islamic movement of the early 20th century as a form of modernist Salafism, he notes that the movement of that period was “primarily characterized by its intellectual and modernist nature, as well as by the diversity of its goals and its broad scope” [27, p. 79]. From the authors’ perspectives, we can conclude that the most effective pathway for the movement’s entry into the Russian Empire was through the field of education.

According to Turkish scholar Pir Murat Sivri’s critical perspective, “Undoubtedly, the idea of Pan-Islamism was not aimed at uniting the entire Islamic world under a single banner. Rather, it was a formula proposed primarily for the improvement and development of the conditions of Muslims. However, European politicians, intellectuals, and public opinion frequently perceived this idea as ‘dangerous’ without hesitation” [28, p. 1381]. From the author’s viewpoint, this suggests that the movement’s multifaceted nature might have contributed to such a perception. Nevertheless, when comparing P. M. Sivri’s opinion with the research of N. Keddie on the political life of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, it becomes evident that the movement was “not as safe as to be disregarded by the great empires of its time”. This is particularly reflected in al-Afghani’s efforts to incite Muslim populations adjacent to or within Russian territories to revolt against Russian rule, as documented in the work [29, p. 131].

Thus, Islamism, or as referred to by European researchers, ‘Pan-Islamism’, was an ideology that advocated for the unification of all Muslim peoples into a single community, regardless of race, nationality, or language. It sought to unite Islamic states and Muslim populations under a common Islamic identity. One of the leading ideologues of this movement, which emerged in the second half of the 19th century, was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani from Afghanistan. In this context, it is worth paying attention to Lothrop Stoddard’s work ‘The New World of Islam’. Although the book is primarily aimed at a Western readership, the author acknowledges that “Islam is not merely a religion but a powerful force that influences the cultural and political lives of millions of people”. Furthermore, Stoddard highlights Jamal al-Din al-Afghani’s innate ability as a propagandist, noting that “wherever he went, he had the power to captivate the masses” [30, p. 63].

Regarding the current state of Islamism, it remains relevant in the 21st century, albeit with various interpretations. Some groups attempt to use this ideology for political purposes, striving to unite Islamic states in opposition to foreign interference and to protect Islamic values. Others focus on fostering cooperation in areas such as economics, science, education, and culture, aiming

to strengthen the position of Islamic states on the global stage. However, Islamism continues to be a subject of debate in political and social contexts, with its definitions, content, and impact varying depending on specific regions and contexts.

In the context of the Kazakh Steppe in the 19th century, the country faced severe difficulties in all spheres. To the north, the Tsarist government intensified its colonial policies and engaged in Christianization efforts. Meanwhile, to the south, Kazakhs were under pressure from the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand. “During these challenging times, Maral Ishan emerged with his supporters in the Torsyn Sands of Torgai, aiming to unite Khiva, Kazakhstan, Bashkortostan, and the Volga region into a single Muslim state” [9]. Maral Ishan was not only a Sufi sheikh but is believed to have commanded a military force. Archival documents suggest that he, at the request of Kazakhs from the Syr Darya region, assisted Bukharians in their resistance against Khivans [10].

In his youth, Maral Ishan studied under the renowned Jalangayak Ishan in Bukhara, who was a spiritual guide to Abilai Khan, and received the title of ‘Sufi Shaykh – Ishan’. After completing his education, he moved to the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, specifically the region of Qyzylorda, where he preached the Sufi path among the local Kazakh communities along the Syr Darya River. Maral Ishan established more than ten mosques in the Syr region and seven mosques in the Saryarka region [9].

The events surrounding Maral Ishan in the first half of the 19th century indicate that, prior to the Islamist movements led by Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani or Sultan Abdul Hamid II, there was already a robust platform based on the distinctive values of Islam in the Kazakh steppe. Maral Ishan’s idea of establishing a ‘Muslim state’ can be viewed as one of the advanced actions striving for independence during his time. Accordingly, it can be reasonably argued that the Islamist movement in the Kazakh steppe originated from the resistance of religiously educated individuals against colonial powers and began to develop in a new context following the first Russian Revolution.

In the early 20th century, the role of religious leaders in the political struggle for national self-determination was significant and multifaceted. As a social institution, they actively influenced the formation of national identity and played a vital role in political and national liberation movements. Their religious education and service earned them considerable respect among the people. However, it is important to acknowledge that, as in all religions, there were individuals with conservative viewpoints among Islamic clergy. Such perspectives were also reflected in the press. For example, the journal ‘al-Izok’, published under the leadership of Serali (Sherali) Lapin and associated with the public political organization ‘Shuro-i Ulema’, was characterized by both progressive and conservative foundations [31, p. 3].

Thus, the historical development of the Islamist movement in the early 20th century, as previously noted, gained momentum with new content. The First Russian Revolution had a significant impact on this progression. As a result of the revolution, a decision was made to convene the State Duma. Foreign press outlets widely reported on the discussions regarding the procedure for conducting

elections to the State Duma in regions such as Poland, Ural, Torgai, Siberia, Turkestan, the Caucasus, the Steppe, and among nomadic tribes [2, p. 7; 3, p. 10].

Although Muslims participated in the first convocation of the State Duma, they were not organized into a separate faction. However, a Muslim faction was established in the second convocation. While this faction was not allocated many seats, it was primarily composed of Tatars and Bashkorts. Following the participation of the representatives of the Kazakh people, who held a small number of seats in the State Duma, subsequent leaders of national liberation movements emerged not only in Kazakhstan but also across Central Asia. Specifically, among these leaders were A. Bokeikhanov, the chairman of the Alash Autonomy, M. Tynishpaev, the first chairman of the Turkestan Autonomy, and Serali (Sherali) Lapin, who contributed to the organization of the faction and served as the leader of the public political organization 'Shuro-i Ulema', established in June 1917 in the Turkestan region.

The experiences of Kazakh youth in the empire's parliament heightened their motivation for achieving national independence. Through their work in the State Duma, they gained vital political experience that would further their aspirations.

Thus, the resistance of the Kazakh people against colonization was notably strong in the early 20th century. M. Tynishpaev stated, "In the eyes of the Russian authorities, Kazakhs are not human beings but rather harmful creatures devoid of the right to live, and therefore they (the colonizers) permit themselves to commit all kinds of atrocities" [15, p. 27]. Similar sentiments can be found frequently in later periods as well. One such expression can be seen in A. Bokeikhanov's article published on December 23, 1911, in issue 36 of the newspaper 'V Mire Musul'manstva'. He remarked on the disgraceful conduct of the third convocation of the State Duma, stating that "the police administration has forgotten the genuine needs of Muslim peoples, who have been stripped of any autonomy, expanding the scope of Russification, exile, and repression". He further noted that "indeed, both God and people have forgotten the lives of Muslims" [12, p. 364].

In general, despite the decree of 1905 that granted religious freedom to the peoples of the empire, tsarist officials continued to regard Muslims with hostility or suspicion [19, p. 583]. There was even surveillance over individuals subscribing to or purchasing Muslim newspapers. Among these publications were 'Vaqt' in Orenburg, 'Tardzhiman' in Bakhchisaray, 'Yoldyz', 'Bayan ul-Haq', 'Qazan Mukhbiri', 'Idel', 'Kaspiy' and others [21, p. 81].

The social activist M. Dulatov was also not exempt from such suspicion. According to a report from the Omsk police department dated August 10, 1911, the public figure M. Dulatov was arrested. The reason for his arrest was his brochure titled 'Oyan Qazaq', which he had left at the printing house of the 'Vaqt' newspaper. He was accused of "promoting the idea of pan-Islamism and inciting protests among the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) against the current policies of the Russian government" [14, p. 18]. However, prior to this, Dulatov's work had already been published in a print run of 1,000 copies by the partnership 'Karimov, Khusainov & Co.' in Ufa and was dispatched to the city of Petropavl on March 31, 1910, with shipment number 056977 [14, p. 37].

The influence of the Islamist movement in the Kazakh steppe manifested in political, religious, and cultural aspects. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, there was no single leader of the movement here; however, a strict government oversight was present.

Tatars and Bashkorts living in the territory of the Russian Empire, as well as educational centers in Bukhara, significantly contributed to the dissemination of Islamist ideas through education, publishing, and personal connections. For example, on January 15, 1911, P.A. Stolypin, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Chairman of the Russian Government, declared to the Council of Ministers that it was the Tatars who promoted the ideas of pan-Islamism and Turkism in the Turkestan region [32, p. 249].

Additionally, the 'Stepnaya Gazeta' publication contains information about Hussein Jumayev, a mullah from the Edire district. He studied alongside Kazakhs from the age of 10 to 15, later spent four years in Semey, and, after completing a 12-year course in Bukhara, returned to gain the respect of the community [16, p. 69]. Numerous such records can illustrate the connections between the colonized Kazakh steppe and other Muslim peoples.

The newspaper 'Tardzhiman', published by the reformer I. Gasprinskiy, reached the Kazakh steppe even though it did not have a large circulation. One of the readers of 'Tardzhiman', a resident of Semey named Saduakas Musa Shormanov, wrote a letter to the editorial office regarding an article published in issue 12 in 1888. In his letter, he stated: "... you assert that the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people, as a nomadic population, do not have stone or permanent mosques and schools. We would like to inform you that the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) indeed have permanent mosques and schools, and many of our children study religious sciences in villages and cities" [16, p. 57].

Overall, I. Gasprinskiy had a significant influence, particularly on the Turkic world, including Kazakh intellectuals. For instance, A. Bokeikhanov expressed his condolences after Gasprinskiy's death, writing that "Ismail Bey passed away as a great educator, esteemed teacher, and revered elder of the Turkish nation" [13, p. 364].

The development of Islamist ideology can be observed as not limited to the field of education but also intertwined with the political struggle of the national liberation movement. In an article by A. Bokeikhanov included in the book 'Forms of National Movement in Contemporary States', edited by A. I. Kostelyanskiy and published in St. Petersburg in 1910, he mentioned the potential formation of two parties in the Kazakh steppe. The first was a "national-religious oriented party aimed at uniting Kazakhs with other Muslims, taking inspiration from Tatar parties". The second was oriented toward the belief that the future of Kazakhs was related to the introduction of Western culture [33, p. 36].

In general, the late 19th and early 20th centuries were a politically unstable or transitional period for the Kazakh steppe, as well as on a global scale. The attention of entire empires was particularly focused on the Islamist movements in the colonized Muslim states. For instance, the English press in 1906 noted, "The situation in Russia is severe, with revolutionary movements intensifying day by day; fortunately, there are no noticeable actions from leading Muslims here, unlike

the movement promoting pan-Islamism in Iran” [7, p. 3]. However, this period of instability opened many opportunities for the political awakening of Kazakh youth. Russian émigré historian S.A. Zenkovskiy remarked on this, stating, “During the period of liberalization from 1905 to 1920, the population of Russia was afforded the opportunity to openly discuss national interests. Among them, the Muslim Turkic peoples, who constitute a significant part of the Islamic world, were not particularly affected by Westernization.” He further noted that “the aspirations of the Turkic peoples in Russia to preserve their distinct identity were often more related to their shared affinity for Islam and culture rather than national ideals” [34, p. VII].

The chronological framework of this research regarding the Ottoman Empire primarily encompasses the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II.

In the late 1830s, the Tanzimat reforms implemented in the Ottoman Empire aimed to improve relations with Western countries, modernize the state, and centralize authority. The additional Islahat reform (Islahat Fermanı), enacted in 1856 to further develop the Tanzimat reforms, also provided numerous opportunities for Western countries. However, these reforms encountered significant resistance from conservative state officials, political elites, and the ulama. Furthermore, they contributed to political instability and unrest within the empire.

During a difficult period for the empire, Sultan Abdulhamid II, initially supportive of the reform policies backed by many progressive officials like Midhat Pasha, later diminished the authority of the modernized parliament established by the Tanzimat reforms and consolidated absolute power in his hands [6; 7]. The Sultan considered strengthening the state through a coherent ideology in response to the increasing pressure from the West at that time. In the political arena, ideas of ‘Ottomanism’ and ‘Islamism’ were promoted concurrently. In this context, as researcher M. Cengiz Yıldız notes, the idea of ‘Ottomanism’, aimed at uniting all people in the empire regardless of race, language, or religion, failed to gain support, while ‘Islamism’ emerged as the state ideology that sought to unite Muslim elements [35, p. 5]. Sultan Abdulhamid II expressed this sentiment in his diary, stating: “When the Prophet of Allah appeared, the darkness of the world was illuminated, leading the nations from their crude traditions to generosity, gentleness, and kindness. Let us not forget the great civilization of Islam... and if we wish to restore ourselves and regain our former strength, we must not forget the source” [8, p. 3].

Islamism within the empire began to spread in the 1870s and gained significant strength by the 1900s [36, p. 72]. The emergence of Islamism in the empire was influenced by both internal and external factors. Researcher K. Özkan attributes the internal factor to the previously mentioned Tanzimat and Islahat reforms, while the external factor pertains to the West’s aggressive, imperialist actions against the Islamic world [37, p. 23].

On September 15, 1897, the Lincolnshire newspaper published an interview with one of Sultan Abdulhamid II’s secretaries, Kemal Bey, given to a representative of ‘Le Gaulois’. In this interview, Kemal Bey stated that “the Sultan has no connection to the uprising on the Indian border and that ‘pan-Islamism’

does not exist”. Regarding the reforms in the Ottoman Empire, he acknowledged that although the required reforms were implemented, they ultimately failed because they did not meet the needs of the East. However, Europe continues to demand further reforms. For the sake of peace, Turkey agrees, yet the more it complies with European demands, the worse its situation becomes [1, p. 3].

Thus, after Sultan Abdulhamid II ascended to the throne, is the ideology he supported the same as the ‘pan-Islamism’ discussed by Europeans? This is certainly a matter that requires careful consideration, as it undoubtedly poses a scientific topic for later comprehensive and in-depth research.

After Islamism elevated to the level of state ideology in the Ottoman Empire, the government prioritized religion in both its internal and external policies. “The ruling Sultan sought to adopt the religious title of caliph rather than the title of padishah. This is because religion, particularly Islam, played a significant role in the foundation of his overall policies. The number of hours dedicated to religious subjects in Nizamiye schools increased, and the curriculum was adapted to emphasize religion”, states Y. Akchura [17, p. 20].

In addition, the status of religious officials, pilgrims, and the pilgrimage itself, as well as Islamic religious institutions, significantly strengthened during this period. European publications from this era frequently reported on Sultan Abdulhamid II’s charitable works. The publication ‘Kiev Word’ noted that “... the Sultan allocated substantial funds from his personal treasury for charity, rebuilt entire residential areas that had been destroyed by fire with his own finances, and established shelters, employment centers, and hospitals for the poor and disabled... The Sultan was proficient in French and German and personally read foreign newspapers” [16, p. 404].

Meanwhile, the German newspaper ‘Kreuzzeitung’ remarked, “At the helm of the Ottoman state is a hardworking monarch who strives daily to enhance the Turkish army and naval fleet... The Sultan focuses on public education and attempts to alleviate tribal and religious discord...” [16, p. 405].

In the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire, the connections with other Turkic Muslim peoples are noteworthy. “It is not surprising that during the early period of the Ottoman Caliphate, the most active and enthusiastic supporters were the Muslims of Central Asia and India. They were influenced by British and Russian expansionists and often discussed the idea of forming a Muslim League, sometimes seeking assistance from the Turkish Sultan. Although these efforts did not yield tangible results, the Sultan maintained contact with the Muslims of Central Asia residing in or passing through Constantinople” [38, p. 284], states Dwight E. Lee.

Thus, it can be asserted that the Ottoman Empire became a center of the Islamic movement. There are several reasons for this assertion. One reason is that intellectuals supportive of Islamism and the caliphate from the Russian Empire frequently traveled to Istanbul for gatherings, a phenomenon attributed to the support of the imperial policy of the time. İsmail Gaspiralı proposed adopting the Ottoman script as a common language. Despite facing Western pressure, the Ottoman Empire remained an uncolonized Muslim empire.

Additionally, the historical role of the Ottoman Empire as a defender of Islam is well documented. Numerous pieces of evidence support this claim. For example, on June 8, 1914, Mahmoudkhodja Behbudi, one of the leaders of the jadid cultural enlightenment movement in Bukhara, met with İsmail Gaspiralı in Istanbul. It is noteworthy that M. Behbudi was one of the founders of the 'Turkestan Autonomy' declared in November 1917 [18, p. 8]. The first chairman of this autonomy was M. Tynyshpaev from the Kazakh intelligentsia, followed by M. Shokay. This further substantiates the collaboration between the Bukhara center and the Kazakh intelligentsia, exemplified by Behbudi.

Nevertheless, although Sultan Abdulhamid II's reign saw a number of changes, it could not halt the deepening crisis. While Islamism was adopted as the state ideology, it provoked discontent among national movements striving for independence and minority ethnic groups. The French publication 'The Petit Journal' published a telegram from Smyrna stating, "The 'Young Turk' committee in Macedonia has decided, in conjunction with the committee in Istanbul, to depose Abdulhamid II from the throne... This decision was made because His Majesty King Ferdinand of Bulgaria had secretly exchanged letters inciting war..." [5, p. 4].

Furthermore, according to Western publications, when asked about the situation by a high-ranking official in Istanbul, the official expressed sympathy for the 'Young Turks' while ridiculing pan-Islamism. He stated, "In his opinion, there can never be closeness among the various Muslim factions. We observe the enmity between Christian states that are at war with one another and the hostilities between Muslim nations. Right now, we have issues with our Shiite neighbors, Iran, and our Sunni neighbors, Yemen..." [4, p. 1].

In conclusion, while the Ottoman Sultan attempted to use Islamism as a means to strengthen his rule among Muslim populations and resist European colonialism, in the Kazakh steppe, it manifested as a response to the Russian Empire's colonization and Russification policies, reflecting efforts to preserve Islamic and ethnic traditions. The movement of consciousness found harmony with global ideological currents, adapting to the local needs of life. The influence of Jadidism on the revival of Islamic education was evident within Kazakh society.

5. Conclusion

The idea of Islamic revival that emerged in the second half of the 19th century has endured for centuries and has generated significant debate within European public opinion. This is primarily due to the perception of the Islamic revival movement in the West, which viewed it not as a 'natural reaction against colonial oppression' but rather as a political-religious trend that posed a 'threat to colonial policies'.

The development of the Islamic revival movement can be summarized through its religious, political, and cultural aspects:

Firstly, the main distinction between the movement's colonial and imperial policies lay in its geographical scope. In the Kazakh steppe, it did not extend

beyond local boundaries but intertwined with the struggle for political autonomy against the Russian Empire. This contributed to the formation of a political elite and reinforced the anti-colonial stance of local political leaders and religious authorities seeking national autonomy. It served as a catalyst for the awakening of political consciousness and led to a proactive pursuit of national interests.

Secondly, the revival provided spiritual strength to resist colonial policies aimed at Christianization. This strengthened the connections between Kazakhs and the Muslim world and reinforced their relationships with Sufi brotherhoods. Islam became an integral part of cultural and social life, emerging as a symbol of national identity.

The absence of a centralized administrative structure in the Kazakh steppe likely influenced the lifestyle of the Kazakhs and their internal divisions into clans and tribes. Their geographical dispersion presented natural difficulties in uniting under a single ideology. Additionally, by the end of the 19th century, Kazakh territory was entirely under the control of Russian colonial policies. On one hand, the government prioritized weakening Islam through the establishment of Russian schools and the assimilation of Russian culture. The activities of Islamic institutions were closely monitored.

Moreover, ethnic and cultural traditions were highly valued among the Kazakhs. As a result, the inability of diverse peoples to coalesce into a unique nation under a single religious ideology can be understood as a natural consequence. Furthermore, the Kazakhs had been striving for national independence for several centuries. It can be argued that Islamic revival helped to reshape that struggle. The fact that many of the young political elites who emerged at the beginning of the 20th century received their education not in Islamic centers like Bukhara, Istanbul, or Egypt, but in Russia, may have also influenced this situation.

Conversely, in the Ottoman Empire, although the state supported Islamic revival and strengthened Islamic institutions, it ultimately could not withstand the political fragmentation, ideological differences, and deep economic crises within the empire. Thus, it was only able to propose a concept of transnational Muslim unity directed against Western colonialism.

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