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Muslim Reformism in Dagestan (1900–1930)

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The movement of Muslim reformism appeared in Dagestan in the early 20th century. The reformers aimed to develop Islamic thought and law in line with the new realities. There were three forms of this movement. The first group of scholars proposed reforming only the Islamic educational system, while supporting the tradition of the Shafi'i legal school. The second group of reformers went further and advocated expanding the framework of the Shafi'i legal school as well as the reform of education. The third group of reformers proposed reform of the system of Islamic education, criticized the legal schools, and called for independent judgments on the matter of Islamic law beyond the framework of the legal schools. Sufism also was the object of harsh criticism by the reformists of the second and third group. For this reason, the imperial and later the Soviet authorities supported the reform movement in Dagestan. Reformers, with their rational approach to Islam and to education, emerged as one of the Bolsheviks' major partners and were incorporated into the Soviet educational system. This ended in the 1930s during the Red Terror when many prominent reformers were executed or sent into exile. Still, the reformers' ideas survived. Their critique of Sufism and Islamic legal schools was later taken up by the Salafi groups in Dagestan in the post-Soviet period.

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THE epoch of great geographic discoveries widened the economic and political dominance of European countries in the different continents of the world. Toward the end of the 18th century the balance of power gradually shifted in Europe's favor. Beginning with this period, a large portion of the Muslim world found itself economically and politically subject to European empires. The reaction of Muslims to the domination of European institutions in Muslim society expressed itself in various forms, one of which was armed resistance to colonial expansion. Another type of reaction to the supremacy of Europeans had an intellectual character.

A portion of the Muslim elite understood that the Muslim Ummah was not capable of countering European society on either a military or an intellectual plane. They saw the stagnation of Islam to be the reason for this, a state that was brought about by an obsolete system of education, the Muslim world falling behind the countries of the West in the natural sciences, and the lack of Muslim unity. A number of Muslim intellectuals consecutively developed ideas of reform, envisaging among other things contact and interaction with European countries. Their goal was to borrow a series of European achievements in the spheres of education, science, and politics, which would allow Muslims to achieve progress within the framework of the proper development of Islamic civilization.¹

Ideas of reformism developed in parallel in different regions of the Muslim world — in Tunisia, Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and India. These ideas were interpreted through the prism of local particularities of cultural and political life and became integrated into local communities with consideration of their specific characters.

Interregional contacts between Muslims played a large role in the development of ideas of Muslim reform. Thus, in the case of Dagestan, we see the influence of different ideas, which were widely disseminated in the territory of the Russian Empire: in the Crimea and the Volga-Ural region. At the same time the ideas of the Egyptian reformers Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839–1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849–

1. Much has been written about Muslim reformism in the Near East in the 19th to early 20th centuries. For more detail about reforms in the Arab world, see Esposito 1998, 126–27, 142–45; Fazlur 1970, 317–33; Hourani 1983; Kedourie 1981; Nasr Abu Zayd 2006, 27; Hartman 1928; Abdelhamid Muhammad Ahmad 1963; Kurzman 2002.

1905), and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935), whose works were popular in Dagestan and often quoted in manuscripts, exerted a substantial influence on the formation of reformation discourse. In contrast to Azerbaijani reformers, who in large part were oriented toward Turkey, Dagestan had closer contacts with the aforementioned Egyptian reformers. This can likely be explained by the historic ties between Dagestan and the countries of the Arab world, and by the supremacy of the Arabic written tradition in Dagestan, which maintained popularity right up to the early Soviet period.

Muslim Reformism in the Russian Empire: Several Questions about Terminology, Approaches to Research, and Interpretation

Researchers associate the term “jadidism” with the term *al-usul al-jadid* (“new method”), which was founded by the Crimean scholar and educator Ismail Gaspirali (1851–1914). He developed a new method of teaching the Arabic and Turkic languages in which attention was given to a phonetic system of learning words. This was in contrast to the root system, which was widespread in the traditional system of Muslim education.

Subsequently the term “jadism” came to encompass a larger understanding of the reform of the Muslim education system. It meant including the natural sciences in the educational plan of Muslim madrasahs. Later the term came to be understood as an even more global movement of “Muslim enlightenment,” aimed at reforming not only the educational system, but also of all of Muslim society, stimulating the development of a Turkic national consciousness and the political activity of Muslims in Russia (Abdullin 1976; Kanlidere 1997; Edward 1975; Christian 2000).

It should be noted that the very terms *jadid* (“new”) or *tajdid* (“renewal”) have an entirely different meaning in the interpretation of researchers of Muslim reformism than in the understanding of Muslim theologians themselves. The former interpret the term *tajdid* as “new” or “that which did not earlier exist” in the context of building a principally new Muslim society.

Meanwhile Arabic dictionaries, as well as the Muslim reformers themselves, mean by this concept something slightly different. In dictionaries the lexical meaning of the term *tajdid* or its synonym *islah*, which is used more often in the Arab world, signifies a return of the old to its original form (Butrus al-Bustani 1867, 219; Ibn Manzur 1955,

414; Muhammad Murtada al-Zabidi 1966, 313). In the context of the ideas of the Muslim reformers, this term signifies a return to the period of the prophet Muhammad and the first three centuries of Islam and the elimination of all later innovations that have been introduced into Islam during the course of time.

The ideas of Egyptian and Dagestani reformers did not lie in the building of a principally new society, but were based on a return to the golden age of Islam, when in the areas of science and education Muslim civilization rapidly developed and was ahead of the rest of the world (Ingeborg 2001, 72–88). Thus, the understanding of *tadjiid* or *islah*, which several researchers have incorrectly translated as “modernism” as though it were some type of renovation, semantically represents an ontological opposition to “invented novelties,” against which the reformers and Salafis struggled (Alekseev 2002, 503).

If we turn to the Muslim Arab-language literature of Egypt and Dagestan, a curious picture is revealed. In the Egyptian journal *al-Manār*, the term “reformation” is translated with the term *al-islah* in an overwhelming majority of cases. Accordingly, the reformers use the term *muslih* to refer to themselves in the Muslim press. *Muslih* is a substantive noun formed from the participle of the active voice verb “reforming.” The term *tadjiid*, meaning “to renew” is also encountered, although more rarely in articles in this journal, as in other Near Eastern Muslim literature. Moreover, in the rhetoric of the reformers, this term also indicates not the creation of something new, but a “reanimation,” “restoration,” or “renewal” of all that was best in Islam.

In Dagestani Arabic-language works both of these terms are encountered precisely in this same context in which the Egyptian reformers used them. Besides this, the Dagestani reformers in their polemical works used the special term *jadid* or *hizb al-jadid* — “the party or group of jadids.” However, in the Dagestani Arabic language tradition this term refers exclusively to those who supported the ideas of absolute *ijtihād* (FBR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMS, op. 1, no. 35, l. 52; ‘Abd al-Khafiz al-Ukhli 1949). The Dagestani written tradition does not refer to advocates of Islamic educational reform as jadids. The Arabic-language work of the Dagestani theologian Abd al-Hafiz Omarov is interesting in this respect. He provides a precise differentiation between “Wahhabists” and “jadids.” Moreover, he, like other Dagestani authors, also exclusively calls adherents of absolute *ijtihād* jadids. His manuscript does not mention all the other reformers who were for reforms in education, but who all the same remained followers of the Shafi‘i

legal tradition. Unlike the “Wahhabists” and the “jadids,” they remain absent from his critical works (Shikhaliev 2006, 339–40).

Many of the characteristics of jadids of the Volga-Ural region, such as the ideas of a pan-Turkic Muslim nation, the predominance of the Turkic language in the educational process, the integration of jadids in imperial institutes, and their political or social activity, were entirely uncharacteristic of Dagestan. Here we observe what we could call “Islamic discourse,” which differs from the jadid discourse of the Volga region, as it had its own system of evaluation, symbols, and argumentation.² In contrast to the reformist discourse of Dagestani scholars at the beginning of the 20th century, which was expressed in Islamic forms, jadid discourse of the Muslims of the Volga region was expressed mostly in European forms. As a result, the religious and cultural identity of Muslims of the Volga-Ural region began to be supplanted by a new, national identity, which was determined by national and linguistic characteristics (Kemper 2008, 28–29).

Beginning in the 1930s, Jadidism was viewed by Soviet scholars through the prism of the Marxist theory of the development of socioeconomic formation. Soviet researchers analyzed Jadidism within the framework of a dichotomy between the “progressive” Islam of Jadids and “Asiatic Muslim feudalism” represented by their opponents. The former expressed the interests of the developing bourgeoisie, which aspired to the ideas of Europe, whereas the latter were representatives of the old Hanafi or Shafii theological elite, whom the Soviet scholars called “kadimites.”

In the postwar years, interest in these problems died down a little, as Soviet historians and social scientists interpreted Islam as a “feudal-clerical element” that was foreign to communist ideas, and the majority of social scientists wrote about Islam from the position of its critics.³ In the years of the Khrushchev thaw a reevaluation of the history of Jadidism began in Soviet literature. In the context of socialist historical research scholars tried to reexamine the essence of “Jadidism” through interpreting Islam as a specific Tatar national cultural heritage, which received the name “mirasism.” In the framework of such an approach, the Tatar scholars displayed a growing interest in prerevolutionary Tatar literature, including eastern manuscripts and archival sources. At the same time, Soviet scholars examined these

2. For the concept of Islamic discourse, see Reinhard 1994; for Islamic discourse among the Muslims of the Volga and Ural regions, see Kemper 1998.

3. For the “class” character of Islam in Soviet historiography, see Kemper 2009, 1–48.

sources with a secular outlook, ignoring their religious context.⁴ As a result of this approach the classical Muslim scholar-theologians of the 18th to 19th centuries began to be interpreted almost as harbingers of socialist reform, who struggled with “medieval obscurantism.” This was characteristic of Islamic studies both in the Volga region and in Dagestan. Such an approach ignored the Muslim context in discussions about Islam within the milieu of Tatar and Dagestani scholar-theologians. Jadidism and previous ideas of reform of the system of Muslim law and dogmatics began to be interpreted as a progressive movement that had an exclusively secular character.

As an additional consequence of such an approach, researchers turned their close attention to questions of Jadidism, and as a result almost completely ignored the work of those whom Soviet historiography referred to as “kadimites.” Such a conditional division into “jadids” and “kadimites,” with close attention paid to the first as a “progressive movement” and insufficient attention to the second as a “period of stagnation,” remains popular in present-day literature.⁵

Thus, from the 1930s up to 1980, jadidism was interpreted by various researchers as a bourgeois-liberal, bourgeois-national, counter-revolutionary, pan-Islamic, pan-Turkic, and finally enlightenment movement. At the same time, Soviet historiography for the most part ignored the Muslim context in discussions of jadids and their opponents. Instead, Soviet scholars attempted to show the activities of jadids not so much in the framework of Islamic tradition, as in the context of the Tatar national cultural heritage. Frequently such works by Soviet researchers did not consider internal Muslim sources that reflect the discourse among the reformers and their opponents.

Typology of Muslim Reformism in Dagestan

In the context of the development of Muslim reformism in Dagestan, it is possible to speak of the definite influence of the ideas of Jadidism from the Crimea and Ural-Volga region on Dagestani reformers. But, along with this, we can observe an even more significant influence of Arabic models of reformism on Dagestani intellectuals. In general discourse about the development of Muslim societies, Dagestani reformers are divided into several groups.

4. For more detail, see Kemper and Bustanov 2012, 29–53.

5. For criticism using this approach, see DeWeese 2016, 37–92.

The first group called for reforms in the sphere of Muslim education, all the while remaining strict adherents of the Shafi'i legal tradition (*taqlid*). They considered the broad development in science and enlightenment along a European (and in this case Russian) model to be a necessary and foundational condition for the development of society. Dagestani intellectuals borrowed the overwhelming majority of these approaches from the Tatars of the Crimea and Volga-Ural regions. They practically repeat verbatim the ideas that the Tatar scholars Kh. Faizkhanov and I. Gaspirali promoted (Faizkhanov 2008, 5–19; Gasprinskii 1885). The Dagestani scholar and Sufi sheikh Sayfallāh-Qāḍī Bashlarov (1853–1910) was an outstanding representative of this group of reformers. Having traveled widely in Russia and the Near East, he received both a religious and European education; besides Arabic, Turkic, and a number of other eastern languages, he had a significant command of Russian, German, and Latin. The latter was a result of training with German doctors, who were invited by the colonists of the Volga region (Shikhaliev 2003, 72–73). In 1907 he studied with the important Sufi sheikh of the Volga-Ural region, Zaynulla Rasulev (1833–1917), one of the supporters of the new method of education, and for a while taught in a new method school in Ufa. At the same time in matters of theology he remained an advocate of the traditional legal schools and rejected the possibility of reform in the sphere of theology and Muslim practice (An-Nitsubkri, 364; Shikhaliev 2016, 35–40).

Followers of this group of reformers borrowed I. Gaspirali's ideas for reform of the educational system and the “sound” method of teaching from the Tatars of the Crimea and Volga region. In political issues they did not see themselves as under the aegis of Russian law. This meant that Dagestani reformers completely ignored the Russian institutions of power. As opposed to Tatar Jadids of the Volga region, widely represented by a Muslim faction of the Russian State Duma, Dagestani reformers were completely apolitical.

The second group of scholars, who also supported the reform of the system of Muslim education, came out with an appeal to widen the limits within which several theological-legal questions could be decided in the framework of the Shafi'i legal tradition. They employed the system of principles, arguments and methods of the Shafi'i legal system (“*Al-Ijtihad fi'l Mazhab*”). They did not advocate the idea of a complete revision or rejection of the Shafi'i legal tradition, but called for using the methodology and principles of the Shafi'i tradition to “reform” or “cleanse” some later interpretations of various private opin-

ions of legal scholars, if they contradicted the fundamental Muslim sources of the Quran and the Sunnah (FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 1, no. 35, ll. 2–32, Nazir ad Durgili, “Al-Idzhtikhad”; *ibid.*, ll. 69–108, ad Durgili, “Ta’lik al-khamid”; Al Gazanishi 1926).

The Dagestani scholar-theologian and poet Abusufyan Akayev (Al-Gazanishi, 1872–1931), who was one of the founders of the first Islamic printing houses in Dagestan, was a most active figure among the followers of this group. As he was interested in the ideas of reform of the system of Muslim education in the Russian empire and studied the articles and notes of Ismail Gaspirali, the founder of the Russian new method system of teaching in madrassas, Abusufyan Akayev visited Bakhchysarai, Orenburg, and Kazan in 1898–99. There he became acquainted with the principles and methods of instruction in new-method madrassas, which had begun to be widely developed among Muslims in the Volga region. Having returned to his native village in Dagestan, Abusufyan Akayev opened the first new-method school with a fundamentally new system of instruction. In that same year he visited Bakhchysarai in the Crimea, where he studied publishing. From 1904 right up to the early Soviet period he published dozens of books and textbooks for madrassas in Arabic and his native Kumyk language in his publishing house in Temir-Khan-Shura in Dagestan. In 1905 Abusufyan Akayev left for Istanbul, and then Cairo, where he became acquainted with the Egyptian reformer Rashid Rida. As a result, Rashid Rida began the publication of articles under the title “The Revival of Dagestanis” in the Cairo newspaper *Al-Mu’ayyad* (Orazaev 2012, 248–52). During the Soviet period, Abusufyan Akayev was the editor-in-chief of the Arabic language newspaper of Dagestani reformers, *Bayan al-hakaik*, from 1925 to 1928. In 1928 he was sent by the Soviet authorities to the camps on a charge of Pan-Islamism and died there.

Finally, the third group of reformers went further and beyond the call to reform the Muslim system of education and criticized the four Sunni legal schools. They advocated following not the opinions of Muslim theologians, but rather relying on the Quran and Sunnah, to derive independent opinions on questions of Muslim law within the framework of the schools of law (*al-ijtihad al-mutlaq*) (FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 1, no. 37, ll. 101–6, Ali b. ‘Abd al Khamid al Gumuki, “Risala fi-t-takhlid”; al Gumuki 1913; ad Dagestani, *Khark al asdad*). This group of reformers was practically unconnected to the jadids of the inner regions of the Russian Empire, but had close contact with Egyptian reformers.

The main and most active figure in this group of reformers was Ali Kayaev (al-Gumuki, 1878–1943). Ali Kayaev received his primary education in a madrassa in his native village. Then for more than ten years he perfected his knowledge under different Dagestani theologians in the mountains of Dagestan. In 1900 he was invited to Astrakhan to teach in a local madrassa, where he spent five years. In 1905 Ali Kayaev left for Cairo, where he taught in one of the madrassas attached to Al-Azhar university. Being in Cairo, he became close to Rashid Rida, who engaged Ali Kayaev in collaborating with the journal *al-Manār*. In 1908 Kayaev returned to Dagestan. There he began to actively disseminate the ideas of Muslim reform he had become acquainted with in Egypt. In the village of Giundelen (now in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria) he opened a new-method madrassa, where he actively inculcated the experience of the revitalized madrassas of Egypt. Soon he moved to the capital of Dagestan oblast, the city of Temir-Khan-Shura, and in 1913 with the cooperation of the governor general, Sigismund Volsky, started to publish the Arabic language newspaper, *Jaridat Dagistan*. In its style, thematics, and questions broached, this newspaper was similar in many ways to the journal *Al-Manār* that Rashid Rida published in Cairo.

After the establishment of Soviet power in Dagestan, Ali Kayaev left for his native village of Kumukh, where he taught in the local madrassa until its closure in 1927. At the end of the 1920s he was invited to the Institute of National Culture in Makhachkala as a research fellow; however, he was quickly accused of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism and was exiled to Kazakhstan, where he died in 1943. It should be noted that among the reformers, representatives of the second and third groups enjoyed greater popularity. They wrote dozens of Arabic-language works, in which they broached a large number of questions about the theory of Muslim law and Sufism. Their opinions, references to sources, and even the subject matter of the issues they raised concerning the theological-legal complex almost fully coincides with analogous subjects that were widely presented in the Egyptian press of that time, in particular in the journal *al-Manār*. This fact, together with criticism of a general Turkic-Muslim idea, a deliberate distancing from the Turks of Azerbaijan and Turkey, and also a complete disregard of Ismail Gaspirali's concept of a "Russian Islam," gives us reason to suppose that the influence of the Egyptian model of reformism on Dagestani theologians was more appreciable and effective than the ideas of Tatar or Azerbaijani Jadids.

In contrast to the Jadids of the Volga region and the Egyptian reformers, political issues rarely arose in the discourse of Dagestani reformers and their opponents. On the whole discussion focused on specific problems that were tied to the system of Muslim law, dogmatics, and questions of education and science. If we look at the chronology of the discussions of reformers and their opponents, then we can observe that these debates took place in a kind of political vacuum. Their opponents were represented by the theologians, who were advocates of the Shafi'i legal system that was traditional for Dagestan. This system is tightly interwoven with Sufism. Neither the reformers nor their opponents saw the replacement of the imperial period with the Soviet one. At the same time, several questions broached by the reformers, in particular the issue of a choice of language, show that similar discussions emerged in the Soviet period. This is connected to the early Soviet government's policy of developing national languages, cultures, and the study of national histories in the autonomous and union republics of the USSR.⁶

Almost all Dagestani reformers were strict opponents of the secularization of society, and even in the early Soviet period several of them wrote works criticizing the idea of materialism.⁷ All three groups of reformers were categorically opposed to copying any model of European society. In their circle, they often issued the call to return to a "golden age of Islam," by which they meant the period of the "righteous caliphate." They explained even the striving of Dagestani reformers to use the achievements of European sciences not as a desire to integrate into European institutions, but rather as a "return to their own lost scientific heritage," which had been characteristic of the Islamic world in the previous centuries. This heritage was then borrowed by the Europeans in the time of the Crusades and the Reconquista in Spain (Zametki Ali al-Gumuki 1961; IIAE DNTs RAN, f. 1, op. 1,

6. For more detail, see Bustanov 2016, 108–66. Reformation discourse in the politics of the early Soviet government is a theme for separate research, which would take us off the course of this article's objective. Therefore, we have limited ourselves below to only brief coverage of this issue.
7. In particular, in 1924, Abusuf'ian Akaev wrote the Arabic work, "Convincing Cases for the Existence of the Creator," where he subjected the "views of the socialists, who are in essence communists" to harsh criticism. Ali Kayaev also wrote a work in Arabic, "The Arrow That Pierces the Throat of the Atheist," in which he disputed with the materialists who advocated for the secularization of society as well as a materialist view of the creation of the universe. In *Baian al-haqaiq*, the journal of the early Soviet period that was published by the reformers, one can also encounter a series of articles that criticize those who advocated the secularization of society.

no. 141, ll. 2a–36). This shows the indubitable influence of the ideas of Egyptian reformers on Dagestani theologians.

The main discussions that were developed not just between reformers and their opponents, but also among the reformers themselves, touched on the issues of Muslim education, the legal sphere, and Sufism. At the same time, it should be noted that a clear distinction between reformers and “kadimites” did not exist in Dagestan. When each of the groups proposed their vision of the issues being considered, the reformers discussed them among themselves as well as with those who came out against the individual positions that they expounded. Among the opponents of the idea of the reform of Muslim law and Sufism were those who supported the Shafi’i legal tradition, including the Sufis. The latter generally wrote independent essays, at first as an answer to the reformers’ criticism of various Sufi practices and then they themselves critiqued the reformers for their call to *ijtihad*. The numerous Arab-language manuscripts, as well as the prerevolutionary and early Soviet press, reflect these polemics. Moreover, the Muslim press — the prerevolutionary Arab-language newspaper *Jaridat Dagestan* and the early Soviet Arab-language *Bayan al-Hakaik* — were the platform that reformers used to disseminate their ideas more widely. This explains the fact that against the general background of debates and discussions on various issues, the voices of the reformers were more noticeable in the first third of the 20th century.

Jadids and the Reform of Islamic Education in Dagestan

In comparison to other Muslim regions of Russia, in Dagestan ideas for the reform of Muslim education had their own specific character. This was tied to the multinational character of Dagestan and to the predominance of the Arab-language tradition. At the same time, in the Volga-Ural region a large number of essays, equally in the Arabic, Tatar, and Farsi languages, were written in Arab script. In Dagestan, the influence of the Arabic-language tradition was overwhelming. Until the dissemination of the reformers’ ideas, the national literature occupied an extremely limited place and was entirely represented by only a few fragmentary paragraphs of historical essays, dictionaries, and short, concise records.

One of the main questions raised by Dagestani reformers in the early 20th century was the question of the teaching and development of national languages and literatures. The issue of the language of instruction in this context called forth heated discussion. There were

several opinions on this problem among the Dagestani reformers. Ali Kayaev highlighted three different views on the question of the language of instruction in Dagestani Muslim schools. The first group advocated for the introduction of the Turkish language, the second for instruction in Arabic, and the third for Russian (Navruzov 2012, 57–67). Critiquing all three of these positions, Ali Kayaev advocated teaching children in their native Dagestani languages. He explained this approach by saying that Russian is not an Islamic language, and the introduction of Turkic furthers the marginalization of the Dagestani people. It would include them in the orbit of influence of the much larger Turkic peoples — the Turks or Tatars — and as a result, Dagestanis would lose their own cultural and national identity (Navruzov 2012, 67). While remaining a proponent of Arabic as the language of learning in Dagestan, Ali Kayaev all the same understood that this language is quite difficult to learn by the old method. His idea consisted of learning Arabic with the aid of the native language. While he did not deny the importance and necessity of learning Arabic, Ali Kayaev proposed a method for optimizing learning through active inclusion of the native Dagestani language at the beginning stages of the educational process with a later transition to Arabic.

Arabic continued to be the predominant language of scholarship both among the reformers and their opponents. Not one of those who presented themselves as local spiritual elites advocated for a complete abolition or replacement of Arabic for any other language, either Turkic or Russian. On this issue, both the reformers and their opponents, in a rare exception, were united. The voices of advocates of inculcating Turkish in Dagestan garnered no attention in the discussion and played no meaningful role.

Abusufyan Akayaev held analogous views. He criticized the policies of the tsarist government that only allowed the study of the natural sciences, which were essential to Muslims, in Russian. He saw in this an attempt to Russify Dagestanis. The Dagestanis' sharp rejection of Russian as a language of the infidels as well as the fact that the language was not capable of educating the local peoples while preserving their identity, in Akayaev's opinion, left instruction in their native language as the only solution. All the same in the final analysis Abusufyan Akayaev remained a proponent of the Arabic language. Native languages played the exact same role for him as in Ali Kayaev's rhetoric, to facilitate instruction and to preserve Dagestani self-identity. Both reformers understood that Arabic did not threaten the loss of national and cultural identity (Akaev 2012, 225–33).

The Jadid schools in Dagestan differed from the “old-method” schools in their system, structure, method of educational process, and an almost complete replacement of educational literature.⁸ Besides this, the new-method schools’ program included as necessary subjects the natural and social sciences, as well as mathematics, geography, history, natural science, etc., which in the kadimite system were studied mainly on an individual basis.

It is noteworthy that the reformers taught the natural sciences almost exclusively in Arabic and, in rare instances, with Turkic-language textbooks. Together with this, a portion of reformers developed their own textbooks in their own native languages (Kumyk, Avar, Lak), using the Arabic script.

It is interesting that despite the reformers’ criticism of the old system of education, a strict opposition between the reformers and “kadimites” did not exist in Dagestan. All the Dagestani scholars’ critiques were directed at the Russian schools that had been opened after the end of the Caucasian War in 1859. Moreover, they were criticized both by reformers and their opponents (Al-Bagini 1996, 374; Omarov 1869, 45; Kaimarazov 1989, 69–71, 89–92; Kaiaev 1993, 360–61; Akaev 2012, 225).

To sum up, in general the ideas of the Dagestani reformers on questions of education boil down to the following:

1. An active introduction of the natural and social sciences into the educational process of existing schools. Reformers advocated that Dagestanis not study these sciences individually, dependent on the specialization of different scholars, but within the framework of the general education process in madrassas.
2. Required instruction during the beginning stages in native languages with a gradual transition in the older classes to Arabic.
3. A separation of the individual discipline “Arabic language” as an instrument for the study of subsequent disciplines. Arabic grammar should serve not as the object of deep study, but as an ancillary discipline for the subsequent study of Islamic sciences.

As a whole, the ideas for the reform of the Muslim educational system, proposed and partially introduced by the reformers, did not find strict opposition from other scholars. The fundamental debate in Dagestan between the reformers and their opponents unfolded around issues of a legal nature.

8. For more information, see Kemper and Shikhaliev 2015, 593–624.

Reformers and the Discussion of Taqlid and Ijtihad in Dagestan

In Dagestan discussions about *taqlid* and *ijtihad* have been going on for over three hundred years, since the end of the 17th century. The main discussion has revolved around the question of its fundamental permissibility or impermissibility, and also the limits of applying *ijtihad*. An overwhelming majority of Dagestani theologians remained adherents of the Shafi'i legal school, denying the possibility of the existence of the scholar-mujtahid in their midst. Theoretically allowing *ijtihad* in the framework of existing schools, they believed that at the present time there was not one scholar who met the strict criteria that apply to a mujtahid. In respect to the highest level of *ijtihad* (absolutely independent — *al-ijtihad al-mutlaq al-mustakil*), Dagestani theologians ruled out even its theoretical permissibility. They argued that the founders of the four schools of law had already conceptualized and researched all the foundational questions of Muslim rites and practices, so that even if some kind of unresearched questions remained they would have an individual character (*khas*) and relate to the “branches” of law (*furu'*). The last is theoretically entirely solvable through the path of *ijtihad* in the framework of the legal school (*al-ijtihad fi'l mazhab*).

Their opponents wrote that many of the rulings proposed in Dagestan departed from the principles of Sharia or did not address the contemporary reality. Therefore, they needed to be revised.

The abovementioned three groups of reformers approached the questions of *taqlid* and *ijtihad* differently. Representatives of the first group were strict adherents of the Sunni legal schools. Theoretically allowing the practice of *ijtihad* within the framework of the schools of law, they thought that in the present practically all basic and individual issues were already worked out in the legal systems. Therefore, to pronounce new fatwas it is simply enough for scholars to search for analogies in the numerous legal essays, and not resort to the practice of *ijtihad* (Saifullakh an-Nitsubkri, 369–70).

Thus, in particular, one of the representatives of this group, Jamad ad-Dina al-Garabudagi, wrote a short review of an essay by Ali Kayaev, where Ali Kayaev criticized adherence to the schools of law (*taqlid*) and appealed for absolute *ijtihad*:

There is not a doubt that it is imperative to follow one of the four schools of law [*madhhab*]. It is forbidden to stray from the framework of a par-

particular madhhab, as well as blend together the opinions of different schools, choosing for oneself that which is advantageous [*tafliq*]. And as to that which Ali al-Khumukh [Kayaev — Sh. Sh.] wrote in his work, to that I say that the creation of a new school of law is impossible. And those words, which Ali al-Khumukh has cited in his text, are nothing but the words and opinions of people, and not Sharia, which we must follow and beware of what contradicts Sharia. And the opinion of al-Khumukh, that Allah and His envoy forbid following the opinions of just anyone and that it is necessary to be guided only by the Quran and Sunnah, can be *attributed* to he himself and those who without appropriate knowledge and fear of God call for *ijtihad*. And to be guided by books of later legal scholars [*faqih*] — this is following the Quran and Sunnah, since these same scholars were guided by the Quran and Sunnah in the pronouncement of any decision. We choose for ourselves an imam [in this case an eponym for a legal school — Sh. Sh.] and are guided by what he has learned from the Quran and Sunnah. Our religion is Islam, the purest and most correct religion. It is forbidden to change anything in it, bringing impious [*fasiq*] fatwas, following the call of those who pretend to a level of absolute mujtahid. And it is not harmful that we will not follow after them. The arrow will strike the liars. (FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 1, no. 37, l. 113).

This group of reformers thought that the formation of a new Muslim elite with new views was possible only through the development and reform of the system of Muslim education and that there was no need to reform the Shafi'i legal system.

The second group of reformers were inclined to a wide development of the practice of *ijtihad*, however they limited it by the framework of legal schools. This group of scholars considered the development of Muslim society only through the reform of the system of education to be insufficient. In their works these representatives wrote that there are often different, even opposing opinions about the same issue in the framework of one legal school, not to mention different systems. They thought that such disagreements separate Muslims, negatively telling on the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*. In this regard the discussion that unfolded in 1927–1928 between an adherent of the second group of reformers, Nazir ad-Durgili (1891–1935), and an adherent of *taqlid*, Iusuf al-Djunguti (1869–1929), is characteristic.⁹

9. The collected manuscript consists of three interrelated works: (1) Nazir ad-Durgili's work "Al-Ijtihad wa-t-taqlid"; (2) Iusuf al-Djunguti's answer, "Al-Qawl as-sadid," to Na-

Nazir ad-Durgili wrote an essay in which he examined several issues related to contradictions within the different Shafi'i and Hanafi legal schools. He notes that several of the later scholars of these schools pronounce judgments that contradict the Quran and Sunnah. In such a case, Nazir thinks, it is necessary to throw out the decision of such jurists and follow the direct reasoning of the Quran and Sunnah.

He also noticed that disagreements among different legal schools move from the plane of theology to political enmity. As an example, Nazir writes about the consequences of disagreements between the Hanafis and Shafi'is in several historical periods. Thus, for example, in the 18th century when the Mongols laid siege to Merv, the Muslim community of Hanafis and Shafi'is within the city started a war among themselves. As a result of this their enmity weakened the two groups to such an extent that the Mongols captured the city without difficulty and destroyed both the Hanafis and the Shafi'is. A similar thing occurred in the city of Rey, where there were three groups already fighting among themselves: Hanafis, Shafi'is, and Shia. The schism is displayed even with the worship of Muslim holy places:

We see that followers of all four legal schools pray to Mecca and Medina separately from each other, moreover each of these followers prays strictly for his own imam, as if they were followers of different religions. Even more, several Hanafi scholars think that it is not fitting for Hanafis to give their daughters in marriage to Shafi'is. (FBR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMS, op. 1, no. 35, l. 36)

According to Nazir, in order to overcome this schism and unite the Muslim *Ummah*, it is necessary to employ *ijtihad* through turning directly to the Quran and Sunnah in relation to those disputed questions that contradict each other in different schools of law. At the same time, Nazir calls for applying *ijtihad* only within the framework of any one of the legal schools. He comes out as an opponent of absolute *ijtihad* and criticizes those reformers who call for it (*ibid.*, ll. 5b–6a).

Iusuf al-Djunguti wrote a critical essay in answer to Nazir al-Durgili's work. Commenting upon Nazir's opinions and examples concerning disagreements in the different legal schools, Iusuf writes that even if disagreements exist, it is a great blessing for Muslims. This is

zira ad-Durgili's "Al-Ijtihad wa-t-taqlid"; (3) Nazier ad-Durgili's answer, "Ta'liq al-hamid 'ala-l-qawl as-sadid" to Iusuf al-Djunguti's work "Al-Qawl as-sadid." (Manuscript in Arabic. FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 1, no. 35, l. 102.

because these disagreements allow Muslims to follow different decisions regarding several difficult issues, widening the scope of everyday Islamic practice (Iusuf al-Dzhungutii, ll. 316–656). Iusuf al-Djun-guti also defended the position that the existence of mujtahid of any level in his contemporary time is impossible. He thought that all legal issues had already long been decided by legal scholars, so it only remained to scholars to follow these decisions. However, both of these theologians were unanimous that those scholars who did not meet the criteria put forward for a mujtahid must absolutely follow one of the four legal schools.

At the same time Iusuf harshly criticizes the Wahhabis, who according to him, call for absolute *ijtihād*. In this connection he develops a list of proponents of the “heretical” ideas that were widespread in the Islamic world, having also penetrated into Dagestan: the Arab scholar Ibn Taymiyyah and his students (Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Abd al-Hadi, et al.); Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his students; the Egyptian reformers Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and Rashid Rida. Iusuf assigns the final three to the Wahhabis. In particular he mentions:

Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, despite the fact that he was a prominent scholar, all of his good deeds were mixed with bad. He erred in a number of fundamental things and made mistakes in several particular issues. He did not follow [the opinion of] the majority of scholars of his era. His students were the same — Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Abd al-Hadi, who followed along his path. With regard to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the head of the Wahhabis and the founder of the new upheaval, he followed the teaching of Ibn Taymiyyah in his error and thus a great evil disseminated from him. The Wahhabis conquered many people, captured two precious sacred places, and committed other bad deeds. . . . As to the wicked Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and his student Rashid Rida, editor [of the journal] *al-Manār*, they were also Wahhabis, just like their followers. They are impious idols, who do not follow the path of the believers, but come out against prominent scholars and the pious. They are imperfect in their religion, lie, and the society of Masons [*al-masuniya*] are their masters, a society that was created with the goal of choosing what is good for people from various religious and customs The views of these unrighteous Egyptians coincide with those of the Protestants of Europe, who also reformed the Christian religion, thinking that it was a good thing for people. The Egyptian reformers tried to reform Islam and called Muslims

to their renovation of religion, similar to what the Protestants did. And the similarity between the Egyptian reformers and the Protestants is obvious. Both published and disseminated books with the goal of bringing disorder to the hearts and minds of people and turning them away from the true path. . . . (ibid., ll. 66–67)

Nazir in an answering essay partially agreed with this. He also harshly criticized those who called for independent, absolute *ijtihad* outside of the bounds of the legal schools, like, for example, the Egyptian reformers and their followers from the ranks of Dagestanis, whom he called “Jadids.” At the same time, Nazir did not agree with Iusuf’s criticism of the Wahhabis, noting that those who were called Wahhabis in fact adhered to the Hanbali school of jurisprudence and that the term “Wahhabi” did not have a theological but rather a political character (FBR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMS, op. 1, no. 35, ll. 76b–77a). After this discussion, which included both the criticism and apologetics of the view of Ibn Taymiyyah, the Wahhabis, and the Egyptian reformers, other scholars got involved, who also wrote their own essays (FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 1, no. 25, ll. 105–30; FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 1, no. 37, ll. 107–11).

The position of the third group of reformers differed from the ideas of the first two groups. They tied the reform of Muslim society to the fundamental revision of the entire system of Muslim law and dogmatics. Followers of this group harshly criticized adherence to any legal school, calling for a return to the Quran and Sunnah as the only source of Muslim law and decision-making outside the framework of any legal school. Having close contact with Rashid Rida, the Dagestani reformers of the third group borrowed almost all of the Egyptian reformers’ ideas on issues of education and law with the exception of social and political issues.

Thus, one of the theologians of this group, Masud al-Mukhukhi, wrote an essay, “The Incineration of Obstacles on the Path to Ijtihad” (Masud b. Mukhammad al Mukhukhi ad-Dagistani) in Arabic at the beginning of the 1920s, in which he substantiated his criticism of Dagestanis’ adherence to the legal schools and called for absolute *ijtihad*:

Many scholars in the present day, in pronouncing legal decisions, distance themselves from the Quran and Sunnah. In pronouncing fatwas, they are guided by the opinions of later scholars, those who wrote books, commentaries on these books, and subcommentaries. Our modern scholars who depend not on the Quran and Sunnah, but on the opin-

ions of other scholars, do not know from where one or another decision is taken, what is its base or argument. They deny a pronounced decision even when they can see a clear argument in the Quran or Sunnah. They deny this, saying that the epoch of *ijtihād* concluded many centuries ago, that no more mujtahids remain, and that it is necessary to rely on later books and the opinions of scholars who wrote commentaries and sub-commentaries. . . . In our time it is rather easy to meet the requirements brought forth for the scholar-mujtahid. The book of the Almighty Allah is before them and the Ḥadīth are all collected in the books. The collectors and interpreters of the Ḥadīth already determined the authenticity or inauthenticity of any Ḥadīth long ago, whether it has been abrogated or annulled. They have determined the direct or figurative meaning of any word in the Hadiths and written about all of it in books. In the same way scholars have already written all about the unanimous opinion of scholars [*ijmā'*] so nothing remains unclear in this issue. It remains to us only to make a decision guided by all these sources. . . . And there is no reason to refuse *ijtihād*, except in those situations when a person is not a scholar [*‘avam*]. All scholars must be guided by the Quran, the Sunnah, the unanimous opinion of scholars, and judgment according to analogy [*qiyas*] in pronouncing any decision as far as their abilities and diligence. Even those who have not reached the level of a mujtahid must be guided by the argument [Quran and Sunnah] to the extent that they are able to understand it. And they are forbidden to follow the opinions of just anybody, except for in those situations when they are completely weak in *fiqh*. . . . In our century the ideas of the reform of education, science, and religion have been widespread. People have begun to be summoned to the Quran and Sunnah, being guided by them both. And when these ideas appeared in Egypt, and also spread into both India and Russia, they were followed also in Dagestan, where several scholars came out against the obduracy of the tradition of following legal schools (*taqlid*), and called for a return to the religion that existed in the first centuries of Islam. . . . Many of our contemporary scholars are guided by those fatwas that were rendered by their predecessors. In this they claim that they are following the Shafī'i or Hanafi school. In reality they do not follow these schools, as they do not even use those books that the imams al-Shāfi'i or Abū Ḥanīfah wrote but use the fatwas or commentaries of those scholars who wrote later. In this manner, it turns out that they are not following even their own imams, much less the Quran and Sunnah, and are guided in their actions and decisions by the books of later scholars. At the same time the very founders of these legal schools forbid following their opinions in those situations where they contradicted the Ḥadīth. Thus

those who count themselves as belonging to any maddhab, in reality do not adhere to it. Fanatically following a maddhab, these scholars prefer the words of scholars, even non-Arabs, to the Ḥadīth. Moreover they prefer the words of these non-Arab scholars even over the words of the very founders of the maddhab, which they supposedly follow. (Masud b. Mukhammad al Mukhukhi ad-Dagistani, ll. 2, 28, 30–32)

Thus we see that despite their similarity in views concerning the necessity of reforming the system of Islamic education, in issues of the theory of Muslim law the opinions of representatives of the three groups differed. Adherents of the first group remained advocates of following one of the legal schools, de facto denying the possibility of employing the practice of *ijtihād*. The second group supported the ideas of *ijtihād*, restricting them with the limits and methodologies of one or the other legal school. The third group altogether criticized following the legal schools and advocated the idea of returning to the Quran and Sunnah, calling for absolute *ijtihād* outside the framework of any legal school. The ideas of the third group of reformers differed not just in their views on adherence to the *taqlid* or the limits of the adoption of the practice of *ijtihād*. Their views also differed on Sufism, which was widely disseminated in Dagestan in the first third of the 20th century.

Sufism in the Discourse of Russian Reformers of Dagestan

Sufism in the scope of the Naqshbandi and Shadhili tariqas was closely tied to the Shāfi'i theological tradition in Dagestan. Moreover the Naqshbandi tariqa was represented by two parallel branches: Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya and Naqshbandiyya-Mahmudiyyah. Sheikhs of the first branch played an important role in Muslim insurgency movements in the northeastern Caucasus in the 19th century. The second, Mahmudiyyah branch, developed in parallel in the territory of northern Azerbaijan at the end of the 19th century and penetrated Dagestan, where it united with the Shadhili brotherhood at the beginning of the 20th century through the abovementioned sheikh Saifulla Kadi Bashlarov. Beginning at the very end of the 19th century, sheikhs of the Mahmudiyyah branch of the Naqshbandiyyah brotherhood criticized the “false sheikhs” or “imposter sheikhs,” those who called themselves Sufi but did not have the authority to do so. Their criticism was primarily directed at representatives of the

Khalidiyya branch. Moreover, these discussions revolved around specific issues of Sufi rituals and rites, where one of the sides accused the other of illegitimacy and breaking the principles of ritual practice of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood.¹⁰ Later the Muslim reformers became involved in this critique. Their rhetoric was directed as much at the criticism of individual imposter-sheikhs as at the criticism of Sufism as a whole, as a movement that was illegitimate from the point of view of Sharia.

Representatives of the first two groups of reformers were generally loyal to Sufism, and in their works they even wrote laudatory reviews about several Dagestani and Chechen sheikhs. At the same time, they criticized those Dagestanis who numbered themselves among the sheikhs who were collecting students around themselves, although they had no basis for it.

The views of Sufism and Sufis of representatives of the first two groups were illuminated on the pages of the Arab language journal *Bayan al-haqa'iq*, which was published in the city Buynaksk from 1925 to 1928. There were a considerable number of positive articles about Sufism in this journal including fragments of works of Near Eastern medieval Sufis as well as several modern Dagestani sheikhs. At the same time in practically each issue of that journal there were articles in which the authors criticized their contemporary sheikhs, noting their low level of education, money-grubbing, thirst for profit, and violation of the norms of Sharia.

The chief editor of that journal, Abu Sufyan Akayev, himself wrote in one of the issues:

Even though Sufism is not mentioned in the Quran and Ḥadīth, all the same the movement is not censured, on the condition that it conforms to the Quran and Sunnah. (al-Gazanishi 1925, 11)

The journal editor's criticism of some contemporary Dagestani sheikhs sometimes called forth the displeasure of the readers. Thus, in one issue of the journal *Bayan al-haqa'iq* a letter with the following content was published:

It surprises me that some scholars who have great knowledge revile certain righteous Sufis, who appealing to Allah and His envoy, withdrew to their homes, read the Quran and summon people to piety. How do these

10. For more information, see Shikhaliev 2006, 137–52; Shikhaliev 2007, 137–52.

scholars know that these righteous men are unclean in their thoughts or “devour the worldly, using religion?” Why do they call them “false sheikhs?” Why can these righteous ones not be true sheikhs? And why do they not have the right to accept gifts from others, if the very envoy of Allah accepted such gifts? (al-Ashilti 1927, 7)

In answer to this criticism of the journal’s position, Abu Sufyan Akayev left his own commentary below this letter:

We do not censure those righteous men who live in isolation in their homes, occupying themselves with remembrance of Allah [*dhikr*] and living on that which they earn by their own labor. On the contrary, we ask Allah that He might assist and help such righteous men. Our criticism is directed at those who wander among villages and cities, demanding offerings for themselves, using religion as a cover. Likewise, we do not say that all sheikhs are unclean in their thoughts; however, the majority of them are so. Scholars say that a sign of a true sheikh is that he becomes poor after he was rich. But the sign of a false sheikh is his striving for riches when formerly he was poor. And if we look at the sheikhs of our time, then we see that the majority of them correspond exactly to the second description. We do not see that they became poor after they started on the path of Sufism and that for the sake of Allah distributed all their belongings, as true Sufis did in the past. (ibid., 8)

Followers of the third group of reformers, critics of the legal schools and advocates of absolute *ijtihad*, held a different position on this issue. As an example of their views, we might put forward the letter written by Muhammad al-Umari al-Ukhli (1902–40) a student of Ali Kayaev, to the prominent Dagestani sheikh Hasan Hilmi al-Qahi (1853–1937):

My dear! I see that the Sufis are perfecting our epoch. They are placing their living and deceased teachers as intermediaries between Allah and His servants. These Sufis appeal to the sheikhs requesting intercession for them before Allah [on the Judgment Day], turning to them for satisfaction of their worldly and religious needs. They assert that the path to knowledge of Allah is closed and opens only with the help of the sheikhs. They call to them for help, when they are seized by sadness, when calamity strikes, when misfortune occurs. . . . As for what those ignoramuses are doing, for that there are no instructions, neither in the Quran nor in the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad . . . In truth, mentorship [*ash-*

shakhiyya] and appeal to Sufism [*at-tasavvuf*] in our age is a snare that the sheikhs set [by the prompting of] Shaytan as a sign of sin and error, and with its help they hunt people with stupid dreams and weak hearts . . . Closing the gate of Sufism is the demand of Sharia for today. (Abd al-Khafiz al-Ukhli, ll. 16–17)

One more reformer belonging to that group, M.-S. Saidov, also regarded Sufism extremely negatively. Verses remain that he wrote in 1924 and addressed to one of the students of Ali Kayaev, Mas'ud al-Mukhukhi. In them M.-S. Saidov strictly opposes Sufism in Dagestan, accusing the Sufis of ignorance and striving for worldly goods. It is curious that in this poem the author criticizes Sufism itself as well as the sheikhs. In his conclusion, M.-S. Saidov accuses the Sufis of lack of faith (*kafir*). Their actions, he said, contradict the norms of Sharia, which flow from the content of Muslim sources (FVR IIAE DNTs RAN, FMC, op. 5, no. 30, l. 1b).

Thus, in issues of Sufism, the difference between the reformers of the first two groups and the third was that the former recognized Sufism, criticizing only the imposter sheikhs. These sheikhs used Sufism for their own personal interests, introducing into it, because of their ignorance, all kinds of innovations that contradict Sharia and by this discredit the movement. The third group unambiguously came out not only against individual Sufis, but also against Sufism itself, including Sufi ritual practice.

Instead of a Conclusion: The Reformers and the Authorities in the Imperial and Early Soviet Periods

Many of the Muslim reformers' ideas were familiar and interesting to the prerevolutionary authorities in Dagestan. Interpreting Sufism as a dangerous phenomenon for the existing power, the imperial authorities counted on enlisting the support of a certain segment of the Muslim spiritual elite. It is not by accident that the tsarist administration initiated the publication of the reformers' Arab-language newspaper *Jaridat Dagistan*. Ali Kayaev carried out the main work of publishing the journal (Nazruzov 2012, 16–17). By this, the authorities supported the anti-Sufi rhetoric of the Dagestani reformers and used it in their own interests.

At the same time, the reformers themselves were not active supporters of the existing authority, of which their later works give evidence. However, given the overwhelming preponderance of adherents

of the Shafi'i legal system, followers of Sufism, they understood that a broad development of their ideas was possible only with support from the imperial authorities, who could grant them a forum in the form of the Muslim press.

After the establishment of Soviet power, the Bolsheviks conducted policy concerning Islam in the northeastern Caucasus using the same methods and ideas as the imperial authorities. Understanding the huge influence of the Muslim elite on the population, they used a policy of support for the "weak elite," in the person of the Jadids and reformers, against the traditionalists. According to the apt description of D. Yu. Arapov, all the work of the organs of Soviet power went to widening opposition between the Jadids and "traditionalists," skillfully using one against the other. Chekists quickly mastered the ways and methods of the imperial secret police and actively employed them in Muslim issues (Arapov 2010, 92).

The fate of the system of Muslim education in Dagestan in the early Soviet period is also interesting. While at the beginning of the 1920s Muslim schools and madrassas still continued to function, after the beginning of the antireligious campaign of the Soviet government at the end of the 1920s their legal activities ceased. This included those few schools where instruction already occurred using the new method (Bobrovnikov et al. 2010, 107–67). Soviet schools, which were analogous to the former new-method madrassas in structure and methods of instruction, began to operate in their place, even often in the same buildings where such new-method schools had earlier existed. The reformers who had previously taught in the new-method schools were in large part included in the new Soviet educational system after their closure. This can be explained by the fact that in the early Soviet period the Soviet authorities simply did not have other teachers. Other reformers became workers in the Soviet scientific institutes. Thus, in particular, Ali Kayaev after the closure of the Muslim schools began to work at the Institute of National Culture (later the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography, Dagestan Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Science), which opened in 1924.

The integration of the Islamic reformers into the Soviet educational and academic institutes concluded in the 1930s when the Soviet authorities already had enough of their own scientific personnel. The reformers with their former religious education were no longer needed. Many of them were shot in the years of repression or sent to the camps, where they perished.

All the same, the ideas of the reformers and their views on the reform of Islam and on Sufism did not disappear without a trace. Discussion concerning “correct” and “incorrect” Islam in the rhetoric of pre-Soviet and early Soviet reformers and their opponents revived and continued in the postwar years up to the post-Soviet period. In the post-Soviet period, thanks to the fall of the “Iron Curtain,” Dagestanis had the opportunity to study in the large universities of Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Having returned to Dagestan, the students brought back with them these same discussions about Sufism and several legal issues, reminiscent of those that all three groups of reformers advocated. The question of the necessity of jihad against Russia is new in the rhetoric of post-Soviet Salafists.¹¹ The Dagestani theologians had remained silent about this after the suppression of the uprising of 1877 in Dagestan by imperial power.

As has already been mentioned, Dagestani Arab-language sources of the first half of the 20th century often compare the positions of the reformers with the ideas of the so-called Wahhabis, considering these two groups to be identical. Indeed the methods of reasoning and rhetoric of the Wahhabis and the reformers are very similar to each other, in particular with regard to such issues as the return to the sources of early Islam, criticism of Sufism, and a denial of the authority of the four legal schools.¹² Nevertheless, the ideas of the reformers about the need to borrow the achievements of modern knowledge and the Salafi turn against European knowledge in the post-Soviet period, while possessing an external transregional similarity as a reaction to colonization, have fundamentally different goals and standards.

The reformers stood for the integration of Muslims into the leading directions of modern scientific knowledge. They attempted to find a way out of the crisis in which Muslims found themselves and turned to European scientific achievements and rationalism to attain that

11. In this context by Salafis we mean Dagestanis from the followers of the Arab scholar Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who are known in scholarly literature as “Wahhabis.” Terms such as “Salafis” and “Wahhabis” in scholarly literature are still contentious, to say nothing about terms like Sufi, as the followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab call themselves “Salafis.”
12. Arguments exist among the supporters and opponents of the Wahhabi movement concerning the ideas of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. His supporters think that he was a follower of the Hanbali legal school and that his ideas were directed only at cleansing Muslim dogmatics of later practices. Their opponents assert that besides this Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab also called for a rejection of the legal schools and was an adherent of absolute *ijtihad*. For more about this disagreement, see al-Baha 1981, 76–77; Muhammad Khalil Harash 1982, 29–33.

goal. In a number of sources they are even called “Mu‘tazilites,” implying early medieval Islamic theologians who explained many issues of dogmatics and law from the position of rationalism, emphasizing the role of reason in the development of Islamic thought. In the ideas of the Egyptian and Dagestani reformers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, the reform of the educational system was a deeply Islamic project and the reformers tried to realize their dreams using Muslim sources, symbols, images, and arguments. In this their principal difference from many Jadids of the Volga region was in the ideas that were directed at a broader conception of nation-building and integration into the Russian imperial institutions. The Wahhabis, by contrast, while calling for a return to the early times of Islam, rejected both European influence and the role of reason and rational methods in the working out of a new legal system. They were categorically against the creation of a new Muslim way of life.

In this manner, we see how outwardly similar ideas, which were developed throughout centuries, were actualized and filled with new content in accordance to the realities of the time. New ideas and practices of the 19th to the first third of the 20th centuries were the result of contacts between Muslims of Dagestan and Islamic centers both interregionally within Russia as well as abroad. However, these new ideas were not blindly copied, but transformed by Dagestani theologians who took into account local realities and were integrated into the local Muslim society.

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