



UDC 94(574.54)+2-67

IRSTI 03.91.91

DOI 10.37238/2960-1371.2960-138X.2026.101(1).14

<sup>1</sup>Akıncı Meltem, <sup>2</sup>Akhan Zharas, <sup>3</sup>Yerimbetova Kunduzaj, <sup>4</sup>Auanassova Kamilla

<sup>1</sup>Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Antalya, Türkiye

<sup>2</sup>Müğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi, Müğla, Türkiye

<sup>3</sup>Sch of Art and Humanities Astana International University, Astana, Kazakhstan

<sup>4</sup>Zh.A. Tashenev University, Shymkent, Kazakhstan

E-mail: zharasakan@gmail.com, mltn.akinci@hotmail.com

## THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE'S ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE KAZAKH PEOPLE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

**Annotation.** From the late 18th century onwards, the balance of power in the Eurasian region began to shift rapidly, and particularly the expansionist policies pursued by the Russian Empire toward the south and east directly affected the Muslim populations of the area. In this context, the Kazakh steppe became a strategically and socio-culturally significant region that attracted the attention of the Russian authorities. These lands were not only important in terms of geopolitics but also became a central target of imperial policies due to the distinct religious identity of the Muslim Kazakh community inhabiting them. With the spread of Islam, the Kazakhs developed a unique religious identity and cultural structure. However, this structure came under severe threat from the late 18th century onward, as Russia established military outposts, reorganized administrative systems, and attempted to bring religious leadership mechanisms under its control. During this period, it can be observed that the Russian administration implemented systematic policies aimed not only at undermining the political sovereignty of the local population but also at eliminating their religious and cultural independence. The religious policies of the Russian Empire, which constitute the primary object of inquiry in this study, had a direct impact not only on the religious life of the Kazakh people but also on their social, cultural, and educational development. Russian interference in the region's religious institutions resulted in the marginalization of Islam from the public sphere, the subordination of religious leaders to state authority, and the erosion of religious education institutions such as madrasas. In this respect, the subject provides an important perspective for understanding the historical transformation of the Kazakh people while also offering an opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis of how similar processes unfolded across the broader Islamic world.

**Keywords:** Tsarist Russia, Kazakh, Islam, Religious Policy, Christianity, Madrasa.

### *Introduction*

The process of the Russian occupation of Turkistan, which was part of Russia's long-standing policy to reach the South (warm seas) at any cost, has been interpreted in various ways. The most apparent reason for the rapid success of Russia's centuries-old strategy lies in the backward socio-political structure of Turkistan. A state that failed to modernize its military and remained confined to traditional methods of warfare had little chance of prevailing against a power equipped with a modern army. The "Eastern Question", reflecting the imperial ambitions of Western powers over Ottoman and Turkistan territories, became one of the most influential phenomena shaping global politics. European states, which could not unite around common policies and instead prioritized their own social, political, and global interests, paved the way for the emergence of colonial societies. As a result of these conflicting interests, Islam gained a greater social and political function in the Middle East and in Turkistan. The balance of power, increasingly divided between East and West, began to represent two opposing poles: the East symbolized Islam, while the West embodied the Christian cultural sphere [1].

The colonial Tsarist administration brought not only the social and political affairs of the peoples under its rule but also their religious domains under strict control. The empire's initiatives to regulate the religious sphere had a significant impact on the spiritual and institutional structures of the colonized peoples. Consequently, Islamic institutions within Kazakh society underwent notable transformations. This process became particularly evident at the end of the eighteenth century when the Russian Empire began to slow down its policy of forced Christianization of Muslims and instead sought to monitor Islamic institutions by granting them official recognition and limited freedom of operation. Such measures enabled the structure and functions of Muslim administrative institutions to adapt to the empire's broader political and administrative system [2].



For the Kazakhs, adapting to Russia's administrative system proved to be highly challenging. Tsarist officials and military officers found it difficult to establish effective communication with the local population. There were several underlying reasons for this incompatibility. First and foremost, the number of Kazakhs who could speak Russian fluently was very limited. Moreover, Kazakhs were unaccustomed to submitting to Russian authorities, who adhered to a different faith. Consequently, the need arose for new administrative reforms that would facilitate the integration of the Kazakhs into the imperial governance structure.

As a natural outcome of these conditions, dissatisfaction with Tsarist rule grew among Muslim communities living in the border regions of the Russian Empire. The central government was aware of this development. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the regions with dense Muslim populations were regarded by the Tsarist administration as potential centers of separatism. Therefore, it became essential to establish institutional mechanisms capable of integrating Muslim communities into the empire and ensuring tighter administrative control over them. One of the earliest steps taken in this regard was the regulation of the activities of Sharia courts and the introduction of a system that would bring religious figures under state supervision. In 1736, Empress Anna Ivanovna issued a decree placing high-ranking Muslim clerics under the supervision of local administrations. During the reign of Catherine II, Tsarist religious policy underwent profound changes, leading to extensive efforts to reorganize the religious sphere. Accordingly, the "New Christianization Bureau" (Novokreshchenskaya Kontora), which had been responsible for converting non-Christian populations since 1740, was officially abolished in 1764 [2].

#### *Materials and Research Methods*

During the course of this study, Turkish, Russian, and Kazakh sources were subjected to a comprehensive comparative analysis. Works written in different linguistic and cultural contexts reflect not only the historical understanding of their respective periods but also the ideological frameworks and methodological approaches of the authors.

Turkish-language studies generally emphasized the spiritual and cultural consequences of Tsarist Russia's colonial policies, as well as the Muslim peoples' efforts toward religious revival. These works highlighted the role of Islam in fostering social cohesion and preserving cultural identity among Turkic communities. Turkish scholars tended to interpret the resistance to missionary and assimilationist policies through the lens of shared civilizational and cultural unity, viewing Islam as a unifying moral and intellectual force in the Turkic world.

Russian-language sources, by contrast, focused primarily on the internal administrative logic of imperial governance and the mechanisms of control over Muslim institutions. They examined the Russian Empire's pragmatic approach toward Islam, emphasizing its regulatory functions and integration within state policy. These studies, grounded in official documents, reports, and administrative records, provided valuable insight into the bureaucratic and ideological foundations of the imperial management of religion.

Kazakh-language sources concentrated on the local dimension of religious life, the transformation of Islamic institutions, and the spiritual consciousness of society under colonial rule. These works revealed the role of Islam as a vehicle for maintaining national identity, explored the relationship between the Kazakh clergy and the Orenburg Muftiate, and analyzed the impact of colonial policies on the moral and social fabric of Kazakh communities. Through these analyses, Kazakh scholars emphasized the continuity of historical memory and the spiritual resilience of their people.

A comparative examination of these three bodies of literature made it possible to uncover the complexity of the research topic and to understand how it was interpreted across distinct cultural and intellectual traditions. Turkish studies illuminated the link between Islam and cultural renewal; Russian works revealed the political and institutional dimensions of religious governance; and Kazakh research exposed the lived experience and spiritual repercussions of these policies.

In their intersection, these perspectives formed a coherent analytical framework, where each linguistic tradition complemented the others by providing unique insights. Turkish sources contributed an ideological and civilizational perspective, Russian sources offered a political-administrative analysis, and Kazakh sources revealed the historical and spiritual context. Together, they allowed for a multifaceted and holistic understanding of Tsarist Russia's religious policy in the Kazakh steppe.

#### *Research Results*

**Political Actions of Tsarist Russia.** The Tsarist policy toward the nomadic peoples underwent sharp changes over time [3]. The Russian government's policy toward Muslims began to transform during the reign of Empress Catherine II. In 1773, Catherine II issued a decree to the Holy Synod, declaring: "If the Lord regards all religions and languages as equal on earth, we shall decide to do the same." Following the proclamation of Catherine's decree, it became significantly easier for Muslims within the empire to obtain permission to build mosques. In 1785, Empress Catherine II ordered Baron Igelström, the governor of Ufa and Siberia, to build a mosque for 500 worshippers and a Muslim school in the Kazakh steppe[4]. The authority to grant permits for



mosque construction was transferred to local akhunds [5]. However, these colonial initiatives were directly designed and implemented by Tsarist Russia. In this context, Islam, which was embraced by the majority of the Kazakh population, was exploited by the Russian administration for political purposes.

On 22 September 1788, Empress Catherine II established the Orenburg Muftiate in order to strengthen Russia's colonial policy through Islam. Beyond this objective, Catherine II pursued several other aims. First, Tsarist Russia sought to bind the Kazakhs more firmly to the Russian Empire. Second, such a measure was intended to limit the Kazakhs' connections with the Islamic centers of Turkestan. Third, it was assumed that these reforms would significantly diminish the warlike characteristics of the nomadic Kazakhs. Consequently, the Russian government financed the construction of mosques throughout the Kazakh steppe.

Kazakh historian Saulebek Rustemov, in his work *Orynbör Muftiyatı jәne Kazaktar* ("The Orenburg Muftiate and the Kazakhs"), emphasized that the real objective behind the establishment of the Muftiate was to restrict Turkey's influence over Russia's Muslim subjects. According to Rustemov, "Turkey's statements aimed at liberating Muslims from various political pressures did not leave the Tsarist government indifferent." On 4 December 1789, during the inauguration ceremony of the Muftiate building in Ufa, the first Grand Mufti, Muhammadjan Husain, called upon Muslims to remain loyal to the Russian Tsar. Empress Catherine II appropriated religious preaching and ideological control by assigning only trusted individuals to mosques and schools, thereby keeping them under close supervision. These clerics became known in history as "appointed mullahs"[6].

For the Kazakh population, who were increasingly becoming subjects of the Russian colonial regime, the role and position of the Orenburg Mufti held great importance. The issue of establishing the Orenburg Muftiate was first raised by the Tsar's representative in Ufa, O. Igelström, and was submitted to the Senate in 1787. The proposal received support from both the Senate and the Tsar, and on 22 September 1788, Catherine II signed the decree establishing the Orenburg Muftiate. According to this decree, from the late 18th century to the early 19th century—over a period of more than fifty years—the religious affairs of the Kazakhs remained under the authority of the Orenburg Mufti. During the same period, the Kazakh steppe underwent a process of integration into the economic, administrative, and ultimately political system of the Russian Empire. The simultaneous occurrence of these processes made the situation increasingly chaotic. Nevertheless, many scholars agree that the efforts to better understand Kazakh religious beliefs and the process of Russian integration proceeded along distinct and separate trajectories [7].

According to the "Temporary Regulations" of 1867–1868, when the Kazakhs' religious affairs were removed from the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Mufti, religious unrest erupted among the Kazakh population and persisted until the early 20th century. The Grand Mufti was appointed by the governor of the Orenburg region with the approval of the Senate, and in 1789 Muhammadjan Husain was appointed as the first Grand Mufti. The Tsarist government pledged to ensure the proper functioning of the Muftiate by allocating funds from the state treasury—1,500 rubles per year for the Grand Mufti, and 900 rubles annually for three judges and eight clerical officers [6].

Catherine's decree contained no provision regarding the election or appointment procedures for the Mufti or members of the Sharia Court. However, the Mufti was appointed by the Russian government rather than elected by Muslims—a practice that continued unchanged until 1917. The first Mufti, Muhammadjan Husain, had long been on the state payroll and rewarded for his service to Russian political interests even before his appointment. The appointment of subsequent muftis and qadis demonstrated that these officials were indistinguishable from ordinary Russian bureaucrats in their loyalty to the state. The main criterion for selection was not "religious scholarship" but "loyalty to the Russian Empire." Successive muftis—Abdussalam bin Abdurrahim, Abdulwahiddin Suleyman, Selim Giray Mirza Tefkilev, Mirza Muhammad Yar bin Muhammad Sharif, and Safa Bayazid—were all appointed based on this criterion of loyalty [8].

These developments were shaped by both external and internal factors. Among the external influences, the deterioration of relations and escalation of war between Russia and Turkey at the end of the 18th century played a significant role [9]. This situation affected the political and military balance in the region and had a profound impact on local populations. As a result, Catherine II implemented security measures aimed at limiting Turkey's influence over Russia's Muslim subjects [10]. In 1788, the ambassador of the Emirate of Bukhara to Turkey declared that the war with Russia aimed to "protect Muslims from Russian domination" [9]. Accordingly, the Emir of Bukhara, who supported the Ottoman Sultan, appealed to Kazakh sultans to assist the Turks in their struggle against the Russians. In response, the Russian Empire sought to demonstrate goodwill toward its Muslim subjects by establishing Muftiates concerned with Islamic affairs [10]. The establishment of these Muftiates aimed to weaken the resistance of Turkic Muslim peoples in Turkestan against Russia's colonial expansion [9].

Reports from Tsarist officials reveal that Russian administrative authorities paid special attention to the religious situation in the Kazakh steppe. In correspondence addressed to the director of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one such statement reads:



“In the early days of our dominance in the steppe, our political interests required that the Kazakhs and other Muslim peoples of Turkestan be treated with inviolable respect. This necessity stemmed from the involvement of local khans, sultans, and influential figures. Above all, the authorities not only tolerated Islam but also took a keen interest in it” [10].

In the spring of 1789, the Tsarist government took measures to transfer the religious affairs of the Kazakhs to the Orenburg Mufti. To this end, Orenburg Governor O. Igelström sent a letter via Tatar mullahs to the Kazakhs of the Junior Zhuz, requesting that the resident Mufti assume control over their religious matters [6, p. 82]. However, a group of Kazakh aristocrats expressed their reluctance to hand over religious affairs to a Muftiate established by the Tsarist government and decided to consult the Emir of Bukhara.

Consequently, in December 1789, Mufti Muhammadjan Husain traveled to Kazakh territory, met with the Kazakh aristocracy, and successfully persuaded them to recognize the authority of the Orenburg Mufti. This marked the first step in the gradual expansion of the Muftiate’s influence across the Kazakh steppe under Russian control.

In these regions, the appointment of qadis and mullahs fell under the jurisdiction of the Mufti. The Orenburg Mufti also organized various activities to enroll Kazakh children in newly established madrasas in Ufa, Kazan, Troitsk, Orenburg, and Omsk. By the late 18th century, the Orenburg Muftiate oversaw 28 akhunds, 969 mullahs, 114 mosques, and 1,921 madrasas [6, p. 82].

In the first quarter of the 19th century, under the influence of the Mufti, a madrasa was founded in the Bukey Orda region, staffed with Tatar teachers from the Volga-Yaik area. The Orenburg Muftiate also proposed the publication of Islamic literature by the central government. Its activities in promoting Islam strengthened its authority among the Kazakhs. Recognized as the principal institution safeguarding the Muslim faith in the region, the Orenburg Muftiate sought to maintain stability and resist excessive state interference. For instance, in 1807, Mufti Muhammadjan Husain sent a letter to Tsar Alexander I, requesting the Muftiate’s independence from provincial administration; however, this request went unanswered. On the contrary, the Tsarist government undertook various measures to curtail the Muftiate’s influence-particularly after the conquest of Turkestan-further limiting its religious and administrative powers [11, p. 92].

In 1822, the Statute on the Siberian Kirghiz was promulgated, encompassing the majority of the Kazakh population. Drafted by the prominent jurist M. Speransky, this unilateral document exposed the Russian officials’ inability to foresee future developments. The Tsarist state aimed to replace the traditional rule of khans with an administrative-territorial system. The tribal structure of the steppe population was transformed into administrative districts, thereby weakening the authority of the Chinggisid sultans and seyids (religious leaders). To this end, a district (okrug) system governed by regional administrators was introduced.

The Regulation on the Administration of the Akmola, Semipalatinsk, Semirechye, Uralsk, and Turgay Regions, adopted on 25 March 1891, included provisions concerning the religious affairs of Muslims: the appointment and dismissal of individuals holding the title of mullah were placed under the authority of the military governor. The Kazakhs’ religious affairs were thus removed from the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muftiate and transferred to the local administrative system. The underlying objective of Tsarist Russia was to baptize and eventually Christianize the Kazakhs.

However, the Orenburg Muftiate protested the transfer of Kazakh religious affairs to the military administration. In 1872, acting on the advice of missionaries, Ufa Governor Ushakov proposed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs the immediate dissolution of the Orenburg Muftiate. Ushakov reported that the Mufti of Orenburg had called upon the Tatar, Bashkir, and Kazakh peoples of Turkestan to unite in resisting Russia’s colonial policies. His proposal was enthusiastically supported by K. Pobedonostsev, the chief procurator of the Holy Synod, which played an active role in the struggle against Islam. Nevertheless, the Tsarist government refrained from disbanding the Muftiate, fearing that such a step would intensify Muslim opposition to its colonial rule across the empire.

The removal of religious authority from the Orenburg Muftiate deeply affected Kazakh students studying in madrasas. Religious leaders in the region intensified their campaign to restore Kazakh religious affairs to the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muftiate [6].

**Transformation of the Religious Policies of Tsarist Russia in Kazakh Territories.** Tsarist Russia believed that the consolidation of Islamic institutions among the Kazakhs would make them more loyal subjects of the empire. For this purpose, a part of the Kazakh population was subordinated to the Orenburg Spiritual Administration, established in 1788. Through the religious and commercial activities of the Kazan Tatar clerics and merchants dispatched to the region, Russia sought to strengthen its political dominance. However, this policy eventually backfired: the growing Tatar influence in the region became a matter of concern for the Russian authorities.

It would be inaccurate, however, to attribute the rise of Tatar influence in Turkistan solely to Russian policy. With the incorporation of this region into the Russian Empire, the Volga–Ural and Turkistan regions became more



interconnected. Consequently, the activities of Kazan Tatars in this area became naturally easier. Allen Frank argues that the influence of the Kazan Tatars in this region was not the product of state policy, but rather a natural outcome of the region's integration under Russian rule. The Tatars transmitted the intellectual and social awakening of their own homeland to these territories. Following the incorporation of the Kazakh steppe into the Russian state, particularly during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Tatar impact in the region intensified, especially with the development of a new network of schools (mektep) (Somuncuoğlu, 2014, p. 229).

Realizing the role of Islam in maintaining peace within Russia and Turkistan, Empress Catherine II permitted Tatar clerics to engage in religious activity in the region. Russia sought to benefit from the Tatars' economic success, entrepreneurial skills, and their relationships with other Muslim communities. Thus, the Tatars became useful intermediaries for strengthening Russian influence in the Turkistan lands. They participated in this process while maintaining their language, culture, and faith. As Kosaç [14] notes, at that time, there was no alternative method for sustaining Russia's colonial rule, and the process itself was extremely costly for the empire.

Until 1860, the Orenburg Governor-General appointed Tatars as "field correspondents" (muhabirs) and "persons with adequate knowledge of the Tatar language" during preliminary investigations. Most of the mullahs operating in Kazakh territories did so without official permission. At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, clerics arriving in the Kazakh steppe were required to obtain special authorization from the Orenburg Border Commission. However, archival records show that many clerics lacked such permits [15].

The Tsarist government grew increasingly alarmed by the rise of Muslim movements and organizations in Algeria, France, Egypt, India, China, and the Ottoman Empire. Over time, the relationship between Muslim and Christian communities became one of the most critical socio-political issues of the modern world [11, p. 35]. Political upheavals within the Muslim world soon reached the borders of the Russian Empire. Fearing the rise of a global Muslim movement, Russian colonial authorities gradually abandoned their earlier policy of supporting Islamic expansion. This shift was presented under the guise of a mission to "liberate the Kazakhs from the shackles of Islam and pave the way for national progress." Yet, this objective proved difficult to realize due to structural and social barriers.

There were several reasons for this failure. First, Islam had already deeply rooted itself in Kazakh territories by the 19th century. Second, not only Kazakh intellectuals but also certain Russian scholars criticized the new policy, emphasizing its harmful consequences for the Kazakh people and exposing the anti-popular nature of the colonial administration's actions.

Nevertheless, the Tsarist government remained reluctant to grant concessions to the Orenburg Mufti; on the contrary, it sought to restrict his authority, a trend that became particularly evident after the conquest of Turkistan.

Following the administrative reforms of 1867–1868, the religious affairs of the Kazakhs and other Muslim communities in Turkistan were removed from clerical control and placed directly under the local colonial administration. Consequently, the religious matters of the Kazakhs fell within the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muftiate. In 1871, religious schools were transferred to the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and in 1880, the Ministry of the Interior prohibited the Orenburg Mufti from intervening in the religious affairs of the Muslims in Turkistan. Subsequently, religious and social duties previously performed by Muslim clerics—such as marriage registration, family mediation, and inheritance arbitration—were transferred to newly established People's Courts (Narodnye sudy) [15].

By the late 1860s, significant measures were taken in Orenburg and the Kazakh steppe to reduce Tatar influence and promote Russian dominance. In January 1867, Orenburg Governor-General Kryzhanovsky submitted a report to Minister of the Interior Valuev concerning "measures against the spread of Islam in the eastern parts of Russia." Kryzhanovsky argued that the conquest of Turkistan would inevitably strengthen Islamic influence in the region and pointed out the extensive commercial relations of the local population with the khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand. What troubled him most was the growing influence of the Tatars over the Kazakhs [16].

Tsarist policies regarding the Qur'an culminated in attempts to alter and remove certain verses in 1892. This act provoked discontent not only among Russian Muslims but also among Ottoman intellectuals. Notably, the first printed Russian translation of the Qur'an-by Sablukov in 1878-contained several expressions and interpretations inconsistent with Islamic principles, yet it drew no official reaction from the Ottoman press, likely because the Ottoman Empire was at war with Russia during that period. However, later publications explicitly highlighted the textual distortions in the Qur'an, which deeply alarmed Muslim intellectual circles [17].

Beginning in 1906, the publication of numerous newspapers across Russia enabled Turkic Muslims to participate in political movements and elections as a unified body, fostering a strong sense of solidarity. The Second All-Russian Muslim Congress convened in St. Petersburg on 13–23 January 1906, though Kazakh delegates were notably absent. One of its main outcomes was the establishment of the organization Ittifaq al-



Muslimin (Union of Russian Muslims). The Third Congress, held in Nizhny Novgorod on 16–21 August 1906, was the first to receive official permission from the Ministry of the Interior. A Kazakh delegate, Shah Mardan from Astrakhan, attended-marking the first participation of a Turkistani representative in such an event. Education was the principal topic of discussion at this congress, which laid the groundwork for the unification of Turkic-language educational systems across different regions [18].

#### *Conclusion*

With the occupation of the Kazakh steppes by Tsarist Russia, the religious structure of these regions was systematically transformed. The Russian administration sought to bring religious affairs under its control through various administrative and legal measures, such as appointing official mullahs, granting titles to religious leaders, and imposing pressure on madrasas. These policies aimed to integrate religious institutions into the state mechanism, thereby enabling the government to guide and influence the Kazakh population through religion.

Despite these repressive measures, the spread and strengthening of Islam in the Kazakh lands could not be halted. The Kazakh people preserved their religious values and maintained Islam at the center of their social life, thus safeguarding their cultural identity. In this process, ishans, sheikhs, and ulamas-who possessed significant influence among the population-emerged not only as religious figures but also as leaders of political and spiritual resistance. Their activities constituted a powerful alternative to Tsarist Russia's attempts to control Islam.

From the late nineteenth century onward, the emergence of the Jadidist movement and the spread of modern education throughout the Kazakh steppe further complicated the relationship between religion and modernization. The debates between the traditional ulema and the Jadid intellectuals reshaped the internal dynamics of the religious sphere; nevertheless, both sides represented distinct but complementary forms of resistance against Russian colonial domination. Similarly, Kazakh youth educated in Russian schools developed new perspectives on religion, identity, and politics, giving rise to a generation that straddled two worlds-the imperial system and their native society.

The Tsarist policy of repression toward Islam extended beyond religious leaders to include educational institutions, mosques, and madrasas. The state's attempts to appoint official mullahs curtailed the autonomy of religious figures and initiated a process through which religion was transformed into an instrument of imperial control. In this regard, the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly played a central role. Initially established by the Tsarist authorities as a regulatory institution for Islamic affairs, the Assembly gradually became influential in the religious life of Kazakh society, institutionalizing the relationship between religion and politics through the office of the mufti.

However, the influence of the Orenburg Assembly was not confined to administrative functions. Over time, it evolved into a source of consultation and legitimacy for Muslim communities. The Assembly occupied an ambivalent position-caught between the Russian Empire's desire to control Islam and the Muslim population's efforts to preserve their faith. At times, it acted as a representative body that conveyed the demands of the Kazakh people to the imperial government; at others, it served directly as an instrument of colonial policy.

By the early twentieth century, the social, cultural, and political significance of Islam in the Kazakh steppe had become increasingly visible. The Jadidist movement introduced a new mode of religious thought and educational reform, while the traditional ulema continued to maintain their influence over the masses. As a result, a pluralistic religious atmosphere emerged within Kazakh society, where different interpretations of Islam coexisted. This pluralism clearly demonstrated the failure of Russia's Islamic policies and the resilience of the Kazakh people's religious identity.

Ultimately, Tsarist Russia's religious policies in the Kazakh territories formed part of a broader and long-term strategy of assimilation and control. Nevertheless, this strategy failed to achieve complete success due to the Kazakh people's deep attachment to their faith, the influence of spiritual leaders, the endurance of educational institutions, and the continuity of traditional culture.

For the Kazakhs, Islam was not merely a belief system but also a foundation of resistance against colonial rule, a means of identity construction, and a source of social solidarity. This reality reaffirms that religion functioned not only as a theological entity but also as a historical, cultural, and political force within Kazakh society.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Türkmen, İlker. Kadimci - Ceditçi İkileminde Kaderci (Fatalistik) Düşünceye Bürünen Türkistan. Karadeniz Araştırmaları, 12/85, 2025, p.140.
- [2] Mirzageldiev, Beybit. Kerim, Şamşadin. Raşimbetov, Rustem. Kazaktardın Orınbor Müftiligine Karatılı jene Musulmandık Baskaru Jüesinin Damı. Al-Farabi Atındağı Kazak Ultık Universitetinin Xabarşı, 2/64, 2018, p.118.



- [3] Somuncuoğlu, Tümen. Çarlık Rusyasi Dönemi Türkistanı'nda İslam ve Modernleşme. Türk Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, 182, 2014, p.229
- [4] Makhmutov, Zufar. Dukhovnaya I Obrazovatel'naya Deyatel'nost Tatar v Kazakhskoi Stepi v Kontekste Vnutrennei Politiki Rossiiskoi İmperii (Vtoraya Polovina XVIII – Nachalo XX Veka). Samarskii Nauchnyi Vestnik, 1/18, 2017, p.114.
- [5] Ukazi İmperatritsi II 1773 g. Orenburskim Voennim Gubernatorom, p.5-10.
- [6] Rustemov, Saulebek. Ornbör Müfligi jene Kazaktar. Kazak Tarihi, 4, Almatı, 2004, p.82.
- [7] Kılıçoğlu, Mehmet Erkan.18.-20. Yüzyıllar Arasında Kazak Bozkırında Dini Uyanış. FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, 18, 2021, p.113.
- [8] Hablemitoğlu, Necip. Çarlık Rusyas'nda Türk Kongreleri. İstanbul, 2004, p.30-31.
- [9] Frank, Allen. Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, Leiden: Brill, 2001, p.45.
- [10] Ross, Danielle. Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020, p.120.
- [11] Khalid, Adeeb, The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidizm in Central Asia, Berkeley, 1999.
- [12] Muxitdenov, Damir. İstoriya İslama v Rossii: Uçebnoe Posobie, Moskva, 2019, p.144.
- [13] Tınışbaev, Muhamedjan. İstoriya Kazakskogo Naroda, Almaty: Sanat, 1998. p.135.
- [14] Kosaç, Grigory. Gorod na Stike Dvux Kontinentov: Orenburgskoe Tatarskoe Menşinstvo i Gosudarstvo, Moskva, 1998, p.60.
- [15] Arapov, Dmitrii. Sistema Gosudarsvennogo Rerulirovaniya v Rossiyskoy İmperi: Posledniya Tret XVIII - načalo XX vv., Moskva, 2005, p.167-168.
- [16] Ayan, Ekrem İbray Altınсарin ve Nikolay İvanoviç İlminski'nin Kazak Eğitim Sistemine Etkileri, Turkish Studies International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic Volume 3/7 Fall, 2008, p.132.
- [17] Bayar, Salih. 19. Yüzyılda Çarlık Rusya'sının Türkistan Coğrafyasında Eğitim ve Kültür Politikaları, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Kastamonu, 2010, p.65.
- [18] Karaca, Ahmet. Çarlık ve Bolşevik Rusya Döneminde Türk-Müslüman Kurultayları'nın Bolşevik Devrimine Etkisi. Avrasya İncelemeleri Dergisi, 11/1, 2022, p.76.

**Ахан Ж., Акынды М., Еримбетова К.М., Ауанасова К.М.**

### **РЕСЕЙ ИМПЕРИЯСЫНЫҢ XIX ҒАСЫРДА ҚАЗАҚ ХАЛҚЫНЫҢ ДІНИ ӨМІРІН БАҚЫЛАУҒА АЛУ ӘРЕКЕТТЕРІ**

**Аңдатпа.** XVIII ғасырдың соңынан бастап Еуразия кеңістігіндегі күштер тепе-теңдігі жылдам өзгеріске ұшырады. Әсіресе Ресей империясының оңтүстік пен шығыс бағытында жүргізген кеңею саясаты аймақтағы мұсылман халықтарына тікелей ықпал етті. Осы тұрғыда қазақ даласы Ресей билігінің назарын аударған стратегиялық әрі әлеуметтік-мәдени маңызы зор аймаққа айналды. Бұл өңір тек геосаяси тұрғыдан ғана емес, сонымен қатар мұнда өмір сүрген мұсылман қазақ қауымының ерекше діни болмысы себепті де империялық саясаттың негізгі нысаны болды. Исламның таралуымен қазақтар өзіндік діни бірегейлік пен мәдени құрылым қалыптастырды. Алайда XVIII ғасырдың соңы мен XIX ғасырдың басынан бастап бұл құрылым қатерге ұшырады. Ресей империясы әскери бекіністер салып, әкімшілік жүйелерді қайта ұйымдастырып, діни басшылық құрылымдарын өз бақылауына алуға талпынды. Осы кезеңде Ресей әкімшілігінің жүйелі түрде жүргізген саясаты жергілікті халықтың саяси тәуелсіздігін әлсіретіп қана қоймай, олардың діни және мәдени дербестігін де жоюға бағытталды. Бұл зерттеудің негізгі нысаны болып табылатын Ресей империясының діни саясаты қазақ халқының діни өміріне ғана емес, сонымен қатар олардың әлеуметтік, мәдени және білім беру дамуына да тікелей әсер етті. Аймақтың діни институттарына Ресей тарапынан жасалған араласу Исламның қоғамдық кеңістіктен шеттетілуіне, діни жетекшілердің мемлекеттік билікке тәуелді болуына және медреселер секілді діни білім беру орындарының әлсіреуіне алып келді. Осы тұрғыдан алғанда, бұл тақырып қазақ халқының тарихи трансформациясын түсінуге маңызды көзқарас ұсынады және мұндай үдерістердің мұсылман әлемінің өзге аймақтарында қалай жүзеге асқанын салыстырмалы түрде талдауға мүмкіндік береді.

**Кілт сөздер:** Патшалық Ресей, қазақтар, ислам, діни саясат, христиандық, медресе.

**Ахан Ж., Акынды М., Еримбетова К.М., Ауанасова К.М.**

### **ПОПЫТКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ УСТАНОВИТЬ КОНТРОЛЬ НАД РЕЛИГИОЗНОЙ ЖИЗНЬЮ КАЗАХСКОГО НАРОДА В XIX ВЕКЕ**

**Аннотация.** С конца XVIII века баланс сил в Евразийском регионе начал стремительно меняться. Особенно экспансионистская политика Российской империи, направленная на юг и восток, оказала прямое



влияние на мусульманское население этих территорий. В этом контексте казахская степь стала стратегически и социокультурно значимым регионом, привлечшим внимание российских властей. Эти земли представляли интерес не только в геополитическом отношении, но и как центр имперской политики из-за особой религиозной идентичности мусульманского казахского общества, проживавшего здесь. С распространением ислама у казахов сформировалась самобытная религиозная и культурная структура. Однако с конца XVIII века эта структура оказалась под серьёзной угрозой: Россия создавала военные укрепления, перестраивала административные системы и стремилась подчинить своему контролю религиозное руководство. В этот период можно наблюдать, что российская администрация проводила систематическую политику, направленную не только на подрыв политического суверенитета местного населения, но и на ликвидацию его религиозной и культурной самостоятельности. Религиозная политика Российской империи, являющаяся основным предметом данного исследования, оказала непосредственное воздействие не только на религиозную жизнь казахского народа, но и на его социальное, культурное и образовательное развитие. Вмешательство России в деятельность религиозных институтов региона привело к маргинализации ислама в общественной сфере, подчинению религиозных лидеров государственной власти и ослаблению религиозных образовательных учреждений, таких как медресе. В этом отношении рассматриваемая тема предоставляет важную перспективу для понимания исторической трансформации казахского народа, а также возможность сравнительного анализа аналогичных процессов в более широком исламском мире.

**Ключевые слова:** Царская Россия, казахи, ислам, религиозная политика, христианство, медресе.