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**RELIGIOUS POLITICS OF RUSSIAN ROYALTY RELATED TO TURKIC MUSLIM PEOPLE**

The article analyses religious confessional politics of Russian royalty related to Turkic Muslim people. Russian royalty pursues its own interest in order to invade Turkic Muslim people. Religious politics of royal's monarchy composed of several stages. Establishing Orynbor Muftiate led to rigid control over Islam and religious leaders. Permission was given by royal to build mosques and religious schools for Turkic-Muslim countries, and it was allowed for Tatar mullahs to come to Kazakh land by law. However, royal government who was afraid of facing religious Muslimfanatics banned religion and persecuted religious Muslims. It was clear that royal's politics related to Turkic Muslims, following traditional Islam for many centuries, aimed at uniting and strengthening and maintaining their religion.

**Key words:** Islam religion, Russian royalty, religious politics, mosque, Orynbor muftiate.

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**Патшалық Ресейдің түркі-мұсылман халықтарына қатысты діни саясаты**

Мақалада патшалық Ресейдің түркі-мұсылман халықтарына қатысты діни конфессионалдық саясаты талданады. Патшалық Ресей түркі-мұсылман халықтарын жаулап алуда өз мүддесін көздейді. Ресей монархиясының діни саясаты бірнеше кезеңдерден тұрды. Орынбор мүфтилігінің құрылуы ислам діні мен дінбасыларының қатаң бақылауда болуына алып келеді. Алғашында патшалық тарапынан түркі-мұсылман елдерінде мешіт пен медреселердің салынуына рұқсат беріп, татар молдаларының қазақ даласына келуі заңдастыру нәтижесінде жүзеге асқаны белгілі. Алайда түркі-мұсылмандарының діни фанатизмге ұшырауынан сескенген патша үкіметі дінді құдалап, мұсылмандарды қуғындайды. Сан ғасырлар бойы дәстүрлі исламды ұстанған түркі мұсылмандарына патша саясатының көздеген түпкі мақсаты олардың исламға деген сенімдері жоғалмай, керісінше бірігіп, берік болуына ықпал еткені белгілі.

**Түйін сөздер:** ислам діні, патшалық Ресей, дін саясаты, мешіт, Орынбор мүфтилігі.

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**Религиозная политика Царской России в отношении тюрко-мусульманских народов**

В статье анализируется религиозно-конфессиональная политика царской России в отношении тюрко-мусульманских народов. Царская Россия преследует свои интересы в завоевании тюрко-мусульманских народов. Религиозная политика российской монархии проводилась в

несколько этапов. Создание оренбургского муфтията приводит к жесткому контролю над исламом и религиозными лидерами. Известно, что сначала царское правительство разрешило тюрко-мусульманским народам строить мечети и медресе и узаконило приход татарских мулл в казахскую степь. Однако царское правительство, опасаясь, что тюрки-мусульмане подвергнутся религиозному фанатизму, стало преследовать религию и мусульман. Конечная цель царской политики в отношении тюркских мусульман, веками придерживавшихся традиционного ислама, привела не к потере веры, а наоборот, укрепила веру в ислам и способствовала единению народа.

**Ключевые слова:** религия Ислам, царская Россия, религиозная политика, мечеть, Оренбургский муфтият.

## Introduction

Political, economic, as well as general cultural politics of Russia related to Kazakhstan was researched deeply indomestic and foreign historiography. While religious politics of Russian Empire on Turkic Muslim people is a topic which still haven't been fully unfold. There are many well known authors and researchers who built a historiographic foundation in the context of Empires and Islam studies and tradition of Russia's politics related to Islam. We know that D. Arapov, D. Azamatov, A. Abdrashitov, A. Tikhonov, T. Karpenkova, I. Zagidullin, G. Faizov, A. Junusova, R. Fahrutdinov, A. Tasmagambetov, G. Sultangalieva, A. Nurgalieva, Z. Sadvokasova, S. Rustemov, R. Aitbayeva, P.S. Shabley, etc. worked on this topic (Arapov, 58; Azamatov, 23; Abdrashitov, 24; Tikhonov, 46; Karpenkova, 35; Zagidullin, 416; Faizov, 116; Junusova, 32; Fahrutdinov, 23; Tasmagambetov, 358; Sultangalieva, 305; Nurgalieva, 298; Sadvokasova, 303; Rustemov, 179; Aitbayeva, 140; Shabley, 24). It is worth to mention E. Campbell's research among western history researchers (Campbell, 2003:50-83).

## Methodology

In general we will research Russian royalty's politics related to Turkic Muslims using civilizational methodology and additional new imperiologic theories. Conducted politics of the Empire against non-Christian people is proved by general historical common facts. On the one hand, it was aimed to limit the religion, and on the other hand, in order to open up regions metropolises had to compromise with religious and political establishment. Moreover, the article regional Islam gives us an opportunity to determine beginning of the religious period in the history of Turkic Muslim. Every region religion developed along with particularity of traditions. In this article historical-comparative, historical-genetic, etc. methods were used.

## Religious confessional politics of Russian royalty

Along centuries Islam, in objective term, was inevitable part of Russian Empire's history. In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century number of followers of Islam in Russia was more than 25 million people. On the first place, in terms of number, was Kazakh – 3.236.394 (Sadvakasova, 2005:126). Russian royalty's politics regarding the religion in Kazakhstan was conditionally composed from several stages. Despite the progressive research and publications talked about complexity and contradictories of the politics, certain sketchiness was dominating.

In fact, confessional politics of the Empire has never been unidirectional and monotonous (Campbell, 2003:96). In 16<sup>th</sup> century Russian royalty implemented the politics of open persecution of Islam followers and forced Christianizing the people. However, in 18<sup>th</sup> century the new stage of religious confessional politics started. From Russian Empire recognized Islam as an official religion (certainly as a confession with the limited rights) and the strategy of religious tolerance of the state towards it was at head (Campbell, Elena., 2003:8). Starting from that time religious leaders and mullahs has been supported from the state. However, religious confessional politics pursued the strategy of weakening Islam.

It is clear that Russian royalty's relation with Muslim countries started complicated events. In 1740 systematic Christianizing people of other religions in Russian Empire started for the first time. Economic pressure and forced Christianizing was used openly; many mosques were destroyed. Except some small group of people who accepted orthodox Christianity, majority of Kazakh stood against missionary politics. Along with Kazakh people who were against of forced Christianizing, Muslim Bashkir and Tatar people were one of the reasons to become moving power in the first stages. In 1740 Russian Muslims were persecuted for accepting Islam. In this persecution followers of Islam had

to pay taxes of Christians and Turkic Tatars who refused their ancestor's religion were exempted from military service. Moreover, propaganda of Christianity was one of the responsibilities of Christian office of Kazan governance. In Kazan governance in June of 1744, 418 mosques out of 536 were demolished. However, Russian royalty refused destroying all mosques (Bartold, 1977:409-410).

In the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century religious invasion was considered as regular issue in Empire's routine. Only at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century historical period had significant role in state-religious politics. Because, Emperor Ekaterina II in her governance (1762-1796) was inspired by educational ideas, thus she believed that Islamization was only way to develop Kazakh Steppe. In order to integrate steppe people to the Empire, the politics of using Tatar mullahs was conducted (Krivec, 1999:35-36). Russian royalty believed that expanding «developed», similar to Russian model Islam in Kazakh Steppe through Volga Tatars, they could put it against traditional conservative religious model (Sultangalieva, 2000).

Measures against Bukhara propagandists' service, who were the most respected among Russian Muslims were discussed. There Ufa vice governor council offered a plan. On the basis of that plan it was offered to establish special government body where «faithful» to Empire's rules, mullahs will control religious affairs in order «to fight propaganda against government» in invaded countries of Russia. Thus in neighborhood Muslim states thoughts about Religious Institution (Spiritual Assembly) as tool to fight against ideological threat was formed (Zagidullin, 2007:73-74).

Religious institution that governs Muslim of the Empire was called «Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly». Literally it is translated as »Spiritual Majlis/Meeting/Assembly of Muslims of Orenburg» (Turkic Muslims called it «Orynbor Religious Mahkama/Institution»). Thus, systematic steps were done in order to prepare «new appearance of religious servicers as clerks», «agents of government» (according to E. Campbell) as high level Muslim clerks.

Religious Institution of Orynbor Muslims (Spiritual Assembly) on 22 September of 1788 by the decree of Empire reformed in Ufa as institution chaired by Mufti, consisted of two or three «Kazan Tatar» mullahs, which will examine candidates for religious positions and hire mullahs. Later from 1797 to 1918 it was foundation was called Orynbor Muftiyat (Rystemov, 1997:179). Formation of these organizations had political reason as setting government control over Muslim society and

neighboring Kazakhs, and it had intention of leaders of Empire to settle Islam and Muslim Tatars in Central Asia. These actions, in general, complied with politics of Great Ekaterina to set government control over religious life and religious institutions (Campbell, Elena., 2003).

In this term, one of the most reliable mullahs in Russian government in 19<sup>th</sup> century B. Shagimardanov in his reports addressed to Emperor's clerks states with «first, God... secondly, Prophet... thirdly, Great Majesty» formula, delivered his credo on behalf of all religious servicers (they are appointed mullahs, imam-khatybs, ahuns, muftis) whosubmitted to Empire's colonization (Orynbor oblystyq Memlekettik Muragaty, F. 6. Op. 10. D. 7475. P. 4).

The period of forced Christianizing Russian Muslims ended when Ekaterina II, who dismissed Novokreshensk office in 1762 and permitted to build mosques along Volga and South Ural in 1767, came to throne. In 1773 one more decree of Sacred Synod was announced, according to which it was permitted to build mosques from stones, and it had to be controlled by aristocrats (Malashenko, 2007:93).

Regulating state-Islamic relations especially direction to Kazakh Steppe wasn't easy. It is important to note that even during Orynbor Muslim Religious Institution (OMRI) 9later – Muftiat) there were various mosques in many places led by mullahs and ishans and those were independent from government institutions. In order to conduct instructions baron A.O. Igelstromsent his servants from capital in order to give instructions to local government in order to avoid implementation of plans of Bukhars who moved here (Zagidullin, 2007:73-74).

With formation of Russian state and its strengthening, it remained to elect religious heads (mullahs) of middle and lower joints among Tatar, Bashkurt, Azerbaijan, Kazakh, Uzbek, and other Russian Muslims. However, power controlled this system, and tried to sort out «untruthful» persons. After establishing Orynbor Islamic religious norms in 1788-1789 in Ufa, in many areas of Russia it was regulated on basis of aristocratic laws, which noted main rules of Sharia, as well as local traditions.

Emperor Alexander I (1801-1825) continued inner politics of Great Ekaterina, it was announced by manifesto on 12 March of 1801. We mentioned above that, Russia's confessional politics related to Islam and Muslim leaders has never been one-directed. Moreover, Religious Institution (Spiritual Assembly) service gave benefit that government couldn't expect. Despite all efforts made and after

start of nationalization of Russian Islam, in about century in surroundings of the country two cultural worlds: state – orthodox-Slavic and opposition-Muslim world, composing local people's special spiritual traditions existed (Ermakov, 2001:285-286).

However, logic of development of Islam among Turkic Muslims and Kazakhs contradicted interests of Russian colonial politics. Russian Empire couldn't estimate spiritual potential of Islam and its revolutionary spirit, thus it faced unexpected results. International relations, geopolitical processes had influence on confessional politics as well (for example, Russian-Turkish war). Kazakhs, Tatars, Bashkirs, etc Muslims of the Empire supported Turkish Sultan during continuous Russian-Turkish war between Russia and Ottoman Empires, moreover, sent them financial aid secretly. Especially, during Russian-Turkish war in 1787-1791 anti Russian religious propaganda from Bukhara towards whole Russian Muslims was supported by Kazakh aristocrats. Generally, at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century Islam became factor of fight against colonization. New opposition leaders such as Maral-ishan from Kazakh Steppe appeared (Nurtazina, 2016:270).

«Regulations about Siberian Kazakhs» as of 1822 established and legitimized appointment of mullahs in Kazakh society and by district decree local administration was responsible to build mosques and schools. Imperial government gave spiritual ruling of Kazakh to Orynbor mufti. By support of Emperor Tatar mullahs distributed Quran religious books in Kazakh Steppe, because, imperial government supported expansion of Islam in Kazakhstan. In order to implement colonizing politics of Russian Empire in their own interests, imperial power held political viewpoint related to Islam (Atishev, 1979:63-64).

Mullahs who passed exam in Orynbor Muslims' Religious Institution (Spiritual Assembly) could go to Kazakh Steppe only after receiving an order of Orynbor governance administration. They took significant place in Muslim religious social hierarchy of the Empire. Officially registered Muslim religious servants were appointed by civil clerks and official bodies of Russian state. Their services weren't limited with propaganda of Sharia. Mullahs believed that it is important to teach people to obey law and be faithful to Russian imperial throne. In 80<sup>th</sup> of 18 century Russian government started moving Tatars and Bashkirs who will conduct religious propaganda to Kazakh Steppe (Sultangalieva, 2000:147).

In mosques built with government support metric books were used. In order to get rank of

official religious servant and get certain rights after passing the exam (on theory of Islam and practice) documents of mullahs were sent to the office of the Department of «foreign» religious affairs of Ministry of Interior Affairs, then to the supreme authorities to approve.

In case if the documents are approved, Orynbor muftiat gives to candidate decree of the Emperor and certificate verifying a religious rank of Akhun, which also gives the title of Mudarris or teacher. Thus, in the history of Kazakhstan the terms of «established» and non-established» mullahs appeared; which means that there was decree to take independent mullahs «out of staff». Moreover, in the history of Russia for the first time Islam was divided into official and non-official. Those who couldn't be included in the list of established mullahs due to certain reasons (for example, lack of finance to reach Ufa or due to certain political reasons not willing to make relations with Russian government) had to run their service in a hidden way (Nurgalieva, 2010).

It is important to note that in 19<sup>th</sup> century pro-state «established mullahs» and akhuns were used Russian government not only for distribution of Islam, but as clerks to be spies and collect secret political information. For example, letters of chairman of Orynbor border commission B. Grigoriev in 1853-54 and mullah Batyrkhan Shagimardanov captures attention. Data shows that mullah B. Shagimardanov used to requested information from government on situation in Khiva and Eset batyr revolution, and other necessary secret information (F-6. Op. 10. D-7475a. P. 6).

There were many contradictions and failures in religious politics of the Empire. Attempts to fix rules of relation between state and Islam in legitimate way were done in 1819 by General A.P. Ermolayev. In 1831 works on «Rules on Islamic religious leaders» started, however, it hasn't been completed. In 1849 eight education institutions to prepare imams was opened (Malashenko, 2007).

There was factor of Islam in the content of the armed revolution of Kenesary – last Khan of Kazakh against Russia (1837-1847). Therefore, in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century government took measures to restrict influence of Islam in Kazakh life and nomad people's social life. In this term, in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century Orynbor border commission prohibited Tatars to serve as mullahs and spend long time in the steppe, and Kazakh had to swear according to their traditions (without Quran and mullahs), as well as were prohibited to travel to Turkestan, Bukhara, and make pilgrim to Mekke (Crews, Robert, 2006).

Generally, Russian Empire's politics related to religion in Kazakhstan had contradictory tendencies: to develop Islam by controlling it, distribution of Islam in according to their own model in Kazakh Steppe, and gradual expansion of Christianity among Kazakh people. The Emperor had never refused his Russification and Christianizing intentions. In the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian government attempted to use Islam in Kazakhstan in the interests of colonization politics. He built in certain parts of Kazakhstan, especially in western regions mosques, and provided them with mullah-agents, distributed religious books. Moreover, using the situation with weak Islamic education in nomadic areas, government clerks and «educators» (following politics of Russification and Christianization) strengthened spiritual expansion. This process, certainly, related with the name of famous rusificator of dependents N. Ilminski (1822-1891).

On the other hand, as South Kazakhstan and some parts of Central Asia joined Russian Empire, increased the potential of Muslims in the Empire. Royal politics couldn't force religious Kazakh people to refuse traditional Ishaism, and role of Turkestan, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Mekke centers. For example, from the data we can see that pilgrim revolution expanded in the territory of Kazakhstan as well (Qazaqstan Respublikasynyn Ortalyq memleketik muragaty F-78. T-2. Is-401. p. 100).

In the middle of 70<sup>th</sup> of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian government took a direction towards elimination of Tatar and Central Asian religious influence of government clerks on political life of Kazakh nomads. Later confessional politics of Russian government started openly controlling Islamic schools, intellectuals, censorship of publications. As a result, accusation of Russian Emperor in Islamism, Turkism, anti-government actions of Muslim religious leaders, national intellectuals led to persecution of Muslim religious leaders.

In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century this reason caused political protest in Kazakh society. When Kazakh intellectual M. Tynyshpayev (passed away in Stalin camp in 1937) offered Russian government, stating that it is necessary to give spiritual-religious freedom to Kazakh, he made several offers: a) release spiritual-religious affairs of Kazakh from various administrative institutions, and give it to special Kazakh spiritual institutions led by Kazakh mufti and independence of mufti from administrative institutions and society of religious propaganda; b) to build mosques, religious schools, places of worship without permission of Russian government;

c) avoid censorship in religious books in Kazakh, Arabic, and Tatar languages d) give metric books to Kazakh religious administration's competency e) open protests and discussions without participation of propagandists of religion and administration (Tynyshpaev, 2009: 17-19).

### Conclusion

In 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries religious politics of Russian Empire towards Turkic-Muslim people consisted of several periods. First period started at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century and lasted till 70<sup>th</sup> of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This period can be called as various liberalism politics, as religious schools were built in Turkic-Muslim areas, and number of mosques increased. Russian government implemented many religious reforms. Orynbor muftiat service and Tatar akhuns educational works showed its results.

In the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century increased number of non-Russian people in Russian Empire, and complication of relations with neighboring Muslim countries forced Russian Empire to use power in religious sphere, including special plan of Russian Empire towards colonized Kazakhstan. It was prohibited for Tatar and Central Asian mullahs to come to Kazakh Steppe. Excluding Kazakh religious affairs from Orynbor Muftiat, limiting number of mullahs, as well as Muslim schools could be seen from obstacles to issues of Muslim education institutions. At the end of second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox religion entered Kazakh Steppe. In 80-90<sup>th</sup> of 19<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox missionary politics started being implemented. Kazakh religious leaders protested Empire's politics against Islam in various ways.

Despite out of chronological circle of the topic, it worth to mention religious-confessional processes took place in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century with retrospective views. Orynbor Religious Institution (Spiritual Assembly) issue was considered separately. Starting from the formation of this institution, the territory of the Empire and the number of Muslims increased significantly, field of competency of Muftiat became unclear. Mufti of Orynbor offered to include European part of Russia, North Caucasus, Siberia in the competency of Religious Institution (Spiritual Assembly) and demanded to change the plan. Political division of Russian society led to separation of Muslims into two groups in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century: liberals and conservatives. Religious leaders were influenced by «new tendency». However, even though government knew that majority of Muslim

leaders' mood was «unconditional faithfulness», they found «new type of mullah» – political and people's active person as dangerous phenomenon. The ideas against government, such as liberal or similar group could join Muslim religious leaders, were concerning, thus Ministry of Interior Affairs demanded province administrations to

make sure that candidates for religious positions are not members of «Muslim movement». Clerks considered religious-people «Muslim movement» as «against the government» and opposite «state's interests». In 1911-13 majority of Muslim religious leader members were accused for being related to pan-Islamic movement.

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