

# Introduction

At present, we Turkestanis are not sufficiently acquainted with religious and worldly knowledge. Our old maktabas and madrasas are in ruins, reminiscent of the nesting places of owls. Our madrasas, far from teaching worldly sciences, don't even teach *tafsir* and *hadith*, [which are] the basis of all religious knowledge. We do not have any teachers' training colleges to train teachers, or any workshops to teach skills. We do not have any merchants with modern business skills. There are no organized schools for the elementary education of our children. . . . If this . . . continues, soon even our present existence will be destroyed.

*Hāji Muin b. Shukrullah, 1916*

In combining intimations of mortal danger faced by Central Asian society with a profound faith in the power of education to provide the solution, this speech from one of the first pieces of modern Central Asian theater neatly exemplifies the reformist project of the first generation of modern Central Asian intellectuals, the “Jadids.” The unease about the present lay in a sense that traditions of the past were not only incapable of meeting new needs but were also failing to transmit the values of the past. A thoroughgoing reform of culture and society was needed if Central Asians were to survive the unprecedented challenges of the modern world. Although the Jadids saw themselves as reformers of their society, their enthusiastic embrace of modernity led them to radically new conceptions of society. Their attempts at rescuing tradition redefined it, and their attempts to return to a “pure” Islam brought new understandings of Islam and of what it meant to be a Muslim. The Jadids were successful in garnering considerable support for their project, but their call for reform also evoked vigorous opposition from established elites (the *qadimchi*) in their society. It was through the debate over the meaning of Central Asian culture that Central Asians came to imagine the modern world and their place in it. This book tells the story of this debate.

I seek the roots of this debate in Central Asia's experience of modernity, a global condition that brings with it new forms of organization of self and society, new forms of intellectual production, and new ways of imagining the world (and one's place within it). Modernity is not reducible to the inculcation of culturally specific norms or traits; nor is it synonymous with economic development. Rather, as an enormous body of interdisciplinary literature has argued in recent years, the modern condition transforms tradition (indeed, it makes it possible to conceive of tradition as tradition); it takes—and produces—numerous cultural forms, and it inheres in (economic) underdevelopment as much as in development. This conception of modernity therefore differs substantially from that of classical modernization theory, which saw modernization as a unilinear process that dissolved all opposition to it in its conquest of traditional forms.

The Jadid formulation of the predicament of Central Asian society was as much a result of the profound transformation of Central Asia in the fifty years of imperial Russian rule as a response to it. When Russian forces abruptly conquered the khanates of Central Asia between the 1860s and the 1880s, there existed no theater, no printing press, and no benevolent societies. All of these means of cultural production arose in the half-century of Russian rule. Between the establishment of the governorate-general of Turkestan in 1867 and the Russian revolutions of 1917, Central Asia became increasingly intertwined with imperial (and hence global) economic networks; its social order was drastically reshaped, with the extinction of old elites and the emergence of new ones. Its political order was, of course, reconstituted. New groups, such as the Jadids, adopted and appropriated new forms of communication and sociability in their attempts to reform, creating, in the process, radically new understandings of tradition, religion, and the world.

The Jadids of Central Asia were far from alone in the Muslim world in this period in (re)evaluating their cultural heritage under the exigencies of modernity. Jadidism, as this movement for cultural reform is usually called, had much in common with similar modernist movements popular among intellectuals throughout the Muslim world. The aim of such movements was nothing less than to reconcile Islam with a modernity they very much admired. But whereas similar modernist movements in India, the Ottoman lands, Iran, Egypt, and Algeria have received extensive scholarly attention,<sup>1</sup> Jadidism, especially in its Central Asian

1. I have benefited from the following: Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857–1964* (London, 1967); David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim*

form, remains virtually unknown. The volume of Western scholarship on tsarist Central Asia is slim, and work on Jadidism in Central Asia forms only a small part of it. Until very recently, specialist treatments of the subject were almost entirely lacking,<sup>2</sup> and one was left to retrieve Jadidism from brief passages widely scattered in broad-ranging synthetic works that subordinated Jadidism to much broader themes.<sup>3</sup> The very few longer pieces available on Jadidism suffered from the lack of access to primary sources that beset all study of Central Asia until the very last years of the Soviet regime.<sup>4</sup> Soviet scholars, while enjoying access to primary sources, were hampered by ideological constraints that often proved insurmountable. The situation has changed in recent years, but far less dramatically than many had hoped during the heady days of perestroika.<sup>5</sup> While the political context of scholarly production has been

---

*Solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978); Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton, 1962); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964); Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (London, 1962); Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875–1914* (Baltimore, 1970); David D. Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Society in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York, 1990); Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khān: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (Berkeley, 1973); Mangol Bayat, *The First Iranian Revolution: Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909* (New York, 1991); Nikkie R. Keddie, ed. and trans., *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn ‘al-Afghānī’* (Berkeley, 1968); Keddie, *Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn ‘al-Afghānī’: A Political Biography* (Berkeley, 1972); Homa Pakdaman, *Djermal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani* (Paris, 1969); Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad ‘Abdūh and Rashīd Ridā* (Berkeley, 1966); Elie Kedouri, *Afghani and ‘Abdūh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (New York, 1966); Zaki Badawi, *The Reformers of Egypt—A Critique of Al-Afghani, ‘Abdūh and Ridha* (London, 1976); Ali Merad, *Le réformisme musulman en Algérie de 1925 à 1940: essai d’histoire religieuse et sociale* (Paris, 1972).

2. The one exception was a monograph on Bukhara by Héléne Carrère d’Encausse: *Réforme et révolution chez les musulmans de l’empire russe*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1981), now available in English as *Islam and the Russian Empire*, trans. Quentin Hoare (Berkeley, 1988).

3. Serge A. Zenkovsky, “Kulturkampf in Pre-Revolutionary Central Asia,” *American Slavic and East European Review* 14 (1955): 15–42; Richard N. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867–1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, 1960), 254–255 (one page on “Dzhadidism” in the context of “The Rise of Native National Consciousness”); Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia* (London, 1964), 91 (one dismissive reference to prerevolutionary Jadidism as “merely a Muslim reformist movement with no separatist aims.”)

4. Héléne Carrère d’Encausse, “The Stirring of National Feeling,” and “Social and Political Reform,” in Edward Allworth, ed., *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule* (New York, 1967), 172–206; Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: A Cultural History* (Stanford, 1990); a brief account of Muslim reform, although based entirely on Russian sources, is found in Seymour Becker, *Russia’s Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865–1924* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 193–209.

5. Central Asian scholars have brought back into print numerous works of Jadid authors, but larger synthetic studies of the period remain rare; see “Jadidchilik nima?” *San’at*,

transformed in Central Asia in recent years, the severe economic dislocation of academic life (combined with new political demands from the newly independent states) in the post-Soviet period has meant that little new historiography has emerged on this important topic.<sup>6</sup> Outside the former Soviet Union, interest in Central Asia has focused on the contemporary period, with Jadidism enjoying the attention of only a few scholars. Thus, although detailed research on tsarist Central Asia has begun to appear in recent years, much more remains to be done.<sup>7</sup> This book is the first effort to comprehend Muslim cultural debates in Central Asia in a broad, comparative perspective.

## REFORM, CULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ELITE STRATEGIES

Much recent social thought has insisted that cultures, rather than being timeless givens, are products of historical change, their meanings contested and constantly in flux. New understandings of the world emerge through efforts by various groups in society to make sense of vastly new conditions they confront. In the case of Central Asia, the Jadids, in diagnosing the ills of their society and prescribing the cure (to use the medical metaphors they often favored), were usurping the moral and cultural authority of the established religious-cultural elites. Their prescription for reform contained a radical re-visioning of society and the roles of various groups within it as well as a redefinition of Central Asian culture and what was valuable within it. Not surprisingly, the Jadid project provoked considerable opposition.

---

1990, no. 12: 4–10; Begali Qosimov, “Jadidchilik,” in *Milliy uyghonish va o‘zbek filologiyasi masalalari* (Tashkent, 1993), 12–39; Qosimov, “Sources littéraires et principaux traits distinctifs du djadidisme turkestanais (début du XXe siècle),” *Cahiers du monde russe* 37 (1996): 107–132.

6. On the politics of the rewriting of history in contemporary Central Asia, see the very astute analysis by Stéphane A. Dudoignon, “Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 37 (1996): 33–36.

7. Two substantial works appeared while this book was being written: Stéphane A. Dudoignon, “La question scolaire à Boukhara et au Turkestan russe, du «premier renouveau» à la soviétisation (fin du XVIIIe siècle–1937),” *Cahiers du monde russe* 37 (1996): 133–210; and Hisao Komatsu, *Kakumei no Chūō Ajia: aru Jadūdo no shōzō* (Tokyo, 1996). Dudoignon’s article covers much of the same ground as this study, but with a different emphasis and rather different conclusions. Komatsu’s work, an extended biography of Abdurrauf Fitrat in the context of revolutionary change in Central Asia, remains, unfortunately, beyond my ken. I am grateful to Katie Sparling for acquainting me with its contents.

Western scholars have generally tended to ignore this opposition. As with modernist reform in the Muslim world in general, scholars of Jadidism have tended to focus on the Jadids as the sole voice of reason in their society while dismissing their opponents as unreasoning obscurantists opposed to all positive change. Thus, Edward Allworth sees the Jadids as “men . . . who dared reconsider the predicament of their people,” who “for the indigenous population of the region . . . created or adapted six instruments for their purposes.” Their opponents, however, are dismissed as “those internally governed by fixed habit and rigid tradition” who “failed to understand” the reforms suggested by the Jadids.<sup>8</sup> Soviet scholarship, on the other hand, acknowledged the contestation but reduced it to a Marxist metanarrative of class competition. The qadimchi were representatives of the feudal-colonial order, whereas the Jadids were mouthpieces of a rising nationalist bourgeoisie, both groups transparently expressing the ideology of their respective classes.<sup>9</sup> Both these views are misleading. The complete absence in Western scholarship of any analysis of the contested nature of Jadidism leaves us unable to explain the Jadids’ modest success except through invoking such orientalist tropes as the obscurantist nature of traditional elites or the fanaticism of Muslim culture. The Soviet view, too, simplified matters even as it confused them. The debate in Central Asian society cannot be reduced to conflicting economic interests for the Jadids often shared common social origins with their opponents and economic issues seldom surfaced in the debate. Rather, much of the debate discussed in this book centered around the competing claims to cultural authority—the authority to create and interpret culture—in which new elites challenged the authority of the old, for in the attempt to reform society lay a claim for leadership that was profoundly subversive to the established order.

I argue that the struggle between the Jadids and their opponents was over the possession and redefinition of what Pierre Bourdieu has called “cultural capital.”<sup>10</sup> The Jadids sought to redefine the culture their society should value, bringing to bear on the debate their access to new intellectual technologies and forms of sociability. Their opponents met the challenge by valorizing the cultural values that guaranteed their status

8. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 120–121.

9. Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1969) remains the standard work on Soviet historiography of the nationalities.

10. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, 1990 [orig. 1980]), 108–110.

and prestige. Neither group, however, entered the contest fully formed, and the lines between the two groups always remained porous. Many Jaidids were members of the religious elite in their own right, and many others were only a generation removed. More significantly, however, the ideas of both groups were articulated and refined through this contest. I follow Pierre Bourdieu in contending that only by “apprehending the specific logic of the social world, that ‘reality’ which is the site of a permanent struggle to *define* ‘reality,’”<sup>11</sup> may we begin to understand what was at stake.

Bourdieu’s numerous works on the social reproduction of culture provide a valuable point of departure for this study. In his attempt to transcend the opposition between structures and representations, between the objectivist claims of twentieth-century social science (shared also by Soviet Marxism) and the phenomenological alternatives proposed to them, Bourdieu has defined a reflexive sociology that seeks to understand how social agents make sense of their world by plotting strategies of social action given the possibilities and constraints of the world. What is significant to Bourdieu are not the “rules” of society, but rather the strategies that social agents bring to bear on their social action. These strategies emerge from a “practical sense” represented by a logic of practice that is defined by the agents’ experience of the world. This shift of attention from structures to practices, without denying the existence of structural constraints within which individuals and groups act, allows him to see the individual as an agent actively negotiating the social world rather than as a mere actor acting out a script dictated by structures; at the same time, it reminds us that social agents act on a terrain that contains limits as well as possibilities.<sup>12</sup> The social game is played with symbolic or cultural capital, markers of status and prestige, that signify the distinction of social agents. Wealth is certainly one such marker, but others, such as education, comportment, possession of culturally valued knowledge, and claims to august lineage, are also significant in their own right. The definition of what is culturally valuable, as well as the rules of the social game itself, are constantly being contested and negotiated by individuals and groups. Individuals and groups differ in terms of their symbolic capital, but Bourdieu sees them arranged not in

11. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 224.

12. Bourdieu, *Logic*; Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford, 1990 [orig. 1987]).

a rigid pyramidal hierarchy but in a social “field” in which groups have more properties and interests in common the closer they are to each other. The field becomes the arena for competition and contestation. In terms of cultural production, the competition of elites leads to the definition and elaboration of culture, as different groups seek to transmute “‘egoistic,’ private, particular interests . . . into ‘disinterested,’ collective, publicly avowable, legitimate interests.”<sup>13</sup>

Such an approach has numerous advantages for this study. The notion of symbolic capital enables us to go beyond the vulgar-Marxist formulations of Soviet historiography without losing sight of the contested nature of reform. It also forces us to consider the competition within Central Asian society as a central feature of Jadid reform. The Russian conquest had transformed the nature of the social terrain in which social competition took place in Central Asia (indeed, the Jadids themselves were a result of that transformation); access to new means of communication and sociability allowed the Jadids to challenge the rules of the game, while at the same time contesting the value of the symbolic capital possessed by the older elites. The stakes for which the older elites put up such stubborn resistance to the ideas of the Jadids were nothing less than their social survival as an elite.

This approach also allows us to problematize the very notion of reform itself. As a trope for disinterested rectification of the social order, “reform” is a problematic enough notion when it is invoked by established states to reaffirm their authority (cases as disparate as those of the Ottoman empire during the Tanzimat era and the Soviet Union during perestroika illustrate this); it is far more so in cases where movement for reform comes from unofficial groups in society. In Central Asia, where the native state ceased to exist (as in Turkestan) or was not a participant in reform (as in Bukhara and Khiva), arguments for reform were nothing short of arguments for a reconstitution of society according to the vision of a new elite. Thus, only a focus on elite competition allows us to understand the politics of the 1917, when revolution redefined the rules of the game and brought competition into the open.

13. Bourdieu, *Logic*, 109; Bourdieu’s works on the reproduction of culture include *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass., 1984 [orig. 1979]); Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York, 1993); Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, 1988 [orig. 1984]); and Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice (London, 1977 [orig. 1970]).

By focusing on the social life of ideas and connecting it to the social fortunes of their carriers, we can also avoid reifying religious and national identities. This last is a task of considerable importance, for thinking about post-Soviet Central Asia is laden with misleading and facile assumptions about identity. Policy makers debate the potential of “Islamic fundamentalism” in Central Asia, a danger deemed to inhere in the fact of Central Asia being “Islamic.” By showing how the meaning of Islam and of being a Muslim changed over time (and the period covered by this book was pivotal in this regard), I hope to bring some sophistication into the debate over the nature of Islam in Central Asia.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, post-Soviet state elites in Central Asia have staked their legitimacy on fulfilling the historical destinies of nations that are deemed to have existed and to have developed together since time immemorial. This book also questions these claims by highlighting the historical process that underlay the construction of modern group identities in Central Asia.

The caveat against reification also applies to viewing Jadidism as a unified movement, as is often done in the existing literature, which tends to see Jadidism as a movement that spread out from its centers in the Crimea and the Tatar lands on the Volga and swept all before it throughout the Muslim borderlands of the Russian empire. Jadidism was a coherent movement to the extent that it was (or came to be) embedded in a set of self-reproducing institutions (e.g., new-method schools that recruited their own graduates to teach in them). Beyond that, it is difficult

14. Anthropologists in recent years have produced numerous excellent studies of “local knowledge” of Islam in diverse contexts: see the following: Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven, 1968); Dale F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin, 1976); Eickelman, “The Study of Islam in Local Contexts,” *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17 (1982): 1–16; M. Nazif Shahrani, “Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse in Afghanistan and Turkistan in the Modern Period,” in Robert L. Canfield, ed., *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1991); Michael Lambek, *Knowledge and Practice in Mayotte: Local Discourses of Islam, Sorcery and Spirit Possession* (Toronto, 1993); John R. Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton, 1993); Patricia Horvatic, “Ways of Knowing Islam,” *American Ethnologist* 21 (1994): 811–826; Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way* (Princeton, 1995). In addition, although not directly related to this literature, but very pertinent to Central Asia, is Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, Penn., 1994).

This line of inquiry has helped dissolve the notion of a monolithic Islam. Indeed, Abdul Hamid el-Zein (“Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6 [1977]: 227–254) suggested that the notion of a single “Islam” be replaced by many “islams” to account for the multiplicity of Islamic expression. A similar argument has been made recently by Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London, 1993).



to impute any unity to the “movement.” To be sure, the Jadids of Central Asia used the same symbols, tropes, and metaphors as the Jadids of European Russia in their discourse, but there is no reason to assume that they necessarily imbued them with the same meaning intended by the original authors. As Roger Chartier forcefully argues, texts are open to multiple readings, since a work “acquires meaning only through the strategies of interpretation that construct its significances. The author’s interpretation is one among several and it does not monopolize the supposedly unique and permanent ‘truth’ of the work.”<sup>15</sup> Rather, social agents use, or “appropriate,”<sup>16</sup> texts for their own strategies and social struggles. In the case at hand, Central Asian Jadids used texts from elsewhere—from the Muslim centers of the Russian empire as well as the broader Muslim world—in struggles that were grounded in local realities. The Jadids were not moved by abstract ideas such as “reform” or “pan-Islam” or “nationalism,” but rather used these abstractions to navigate the social struggles of Central Asia.

## PRINT AND THE RE-IMAGINATION OF THE WORLD

Jadidism would have been inconceivable without print. The Jadids gloried in the powers of print (and printed books and newspapers) to spread knowledge and enlightenment, and publishing remained a significant field of endeavor for them. This marked a sharp contrast to the situation before the Russian conquest, when the production and transmission of knowledge in Central Asia existed in the scribal domain with a strong component of orality. Knowledge was transmitted in a ritualized setting through face-to-face interaction between individuals; the possession of knowledge provided moral and cultural authority in society, which translated into status and prestige, if not always directly into wealth, although that connection was common, too. The advent of the printing press, the railway, the telegraph, and the modern postal system transformed these patterns and allowed the Jadids to redefine the nature of cultural production in their society.

15. Roger Chartier, “Intellectual History and the History of *Mentalités*,” in *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Ithaca, 1988), 41.

16. Chartier again provides a splendid introduction to this notion; see his “Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France,” in Stephen L. Kaplan, ed., *Understanding Popular Culture* (Berlin, 1984). Cf. Michel de Certeau’s notion of “reading as poaching,” in de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, 1984), 165–176.

New means of the production of knowledge were crucial to the Jadids in numerous ways. Most immediately, these means enabled an unprecedented flow of information, putting Central Asian intellectuals in contact with the broader world in ways that had hitherto been impossible. By the turn of the twentieth century, Central Asian readers could read books and (increasingly) periodicals published throughout the Russian empire as well as those imported from the Ottoman empire, Iran, and farther afield. This circulation of literature, accompanied by the circulation of people facilitated by modern transport, made Central Asia part of a broader world, or rather, a part of several overlapping translocal communities, in a far more immediate way than had ever been possible before.

Furthermore, modern means of communication were not transparent vessels for the communication of ideas; they helped shape new ways of imagining the world and thus transformed the parameters of debate in Central Asian society.<sup>17</sup> Print helped transform the social uses of literacy as it redefined the framework and, increasingly, the norms of public debate over culture. As a result, by the turn of the century, Central Asians not only debated new ideas, but they debated in a manner that was new. As I argue in Chapter 4, newspapers, magazines, books, and theater created a public space that became the central venue for discussing culture and society. Unlike the decades' worth of learning in the madrasa that provided entree to the cultural elite, access to the new public space required only basic literacy (and not even that for the theater). In the new public, the older cultural elite was increasingly marginalized.

This rapid flow of information combined with new means of communications wrought a fundamental transformation in the way in which Central Asian intellectuals had come to see the world. In different ways,

17. A considerable and rapidly growing literature has explored how print contributes to a desacralization of knowledge and its demystification. Some of the landmarks in this literature are Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'apparition du livre* (Paris, 1958); Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979); Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, 1987). Scholars of modern Muslim cultural history have recently paid considerable attention to the uses of print; see, Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, 1989); Juan R.I. Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement* (Princeton, 1992); Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: The Early Years of the Press* (New Haven, 1994); Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27 (1993): 229–251; Adeb Khalid, "Printing, Publishing, and Reform in Tsarist Central Asia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994): 187–200.

the discovery of geological time and language families, the idea of Progress, and the modern map of the world all transformed how Central Asians could imagine their world. New conceptions of time and space were reflected in the Jadids' emphasis on history and geography, allowed a far-reaching historicization of the world that produced new, rationalist understandings of Islam and Muslimness. The growing consciousness that the grand narrative of history was not necessarily centered on Islam or the Muslim community, that they themselves were a product of history, and that they coexisted (often in disadvantageous situations) with other faiths and other communities were crucial to the elaboration of modern identities in Central Asia during this period. Their emergence, moreover, was a result of this basic reconfiguring of the world, not its cause.

Dale Eickelman has called this the "objectification" of Islam, the emerging perception of Islam as a coherent, systematic, and self-contained set of beliefs and practices, separate and separable from worldly knowledge, which came to displace previously held understandings of Islam as embedded in everyday social practice and as something irreducible to a textbook exposition.<sup>18</sup> Underlying the discourse of reforming tradition was a new kind of knowledge, produced and transmitted in a radically new context. Unlike the Jadids, their opponents often set forth an uncompromising traditionalism that valorized existing practices as the essence of "true" Islam. Yet, as I argue, this understanding of tradition was itself marked by modernity, since the very valorization of tradition made use of modern means and was an expression of its proponents' modern predicament.

Similarly, the community—its nature and its boundaries—also came to be reimagined, giving rise to the first articulations of modern Central Asian "national" identity. All nations are imagined,<sup>19</sup> but they may be imagined in many different ways. Jadid notions of identity were articulated in the context of new ethnographic knowledge produced by the colonial regime and the influx of romantic discourses of nationhood from the Tatars and the Ottomans; they were firmly rooted in the political realities on the ground in Turkestan. The objectification of Islam led to the emergence of a largely secular Muslim confessional nationalism in which Islam functioned as a marker of political and cultural identity

18. Dale F. Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies," *American Ethnologist* 19 (1992): 643, 647–649.

19. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2nd ed. (London, 1991).

for a community initially defined by its adherence to a religion. The relationship between ethnic and confessional definitions of the nation is fluid, rather than fixed;<sup>20</sup> in the Muslim world of the turn of the century, a certain tension between the two forms of community existed, but it could be elided more easily than the existing literature on the subject often realizes. It is well to remember this form of political Muslim identity today, when all “political Islam” has come to be synonymous with the most intransigent visions of the utter incompatibility of Islam and modernity.

#### DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZE: NEW FORMS OF SOCIABILITY

Hāji Muin’s call for organized schools reflected a central concern of the Jadids: the creation of a system of well-organized schools that would offer a standardized, disciplined education providing *both* religious and worldly education to future generations of the community. Indeed, the new-method (*usul-i jadid*) school gave the movement its name. Understanding the centrality of the faith both in knowledge and in organization provides crucial insights into the nature of Jadidism.

The Jadids’ faith in the ability of the human intellect to solve the problems of the world was intertwined with the notion of progress that the desacralization and historicization of their outlook helped promote. I will explore the origins of this conception of the power of knowledge in Jadid thought at some length, for it represents an important aspect of their modernity. In the process, however, the concept of knowledge itself came to be subtly redefined, as it came to encompass new fields of knowledge and new ways of knowing. For the Jadids, of course, these transformations were transparent: They did not contravene tradition but helped bring it to its true fruition. There was no contradiction between the notion of progress and their faith in Islam. Indeed, only knowledge could enable Muslims to understand Islam properly, and Islam itself was the best guarantee of progress. As a closer inspection shows quite clearly, new notions of knowledge (and hence of religion, history, and politics) lay at the bottom of the Jadid critique of society.

But if knowledge was a panacea, it needed organized institutions to be properly produced and disseminated. The Jadids’ critique of their society centered on the disorder that they saw prevailing in it. The maktab

20. M. Hakan Yavuz, “The Patterns of Political Islamic Identity: Dynamics and Transnational Loyalties and Identities,” *Central Asian Survey* 14 (1995): 341–372.

was disorganized, unhygienic, and run by uncouth teachers with no training in pedagogy; there was no system for inspecting schools; there were no organizations for establishing schools; and the philanthropy of the rich, insufficient as it was, took no organized form. The Jadids' efforts to overcome this disorder are a central feature of their reformist project. Their faith in the efficacy of organization and order marks the Jadids as moderns. Their quest for new forms of organization—new-method schools, publishing houses, benevolent societies, and (eventually) political parties—was significant in itself in transforming the rules of the social game in Central Asia, as organized, impersonal (and to a certain extent, self-perpetuating) institutions increasingly became arenas for debate and the production and transmission of culture, replacing dialogic interaction in the informal settings where cultural practices had previously been located. The new-method school, for instance, was more than merely a reformed maktab: It was the site of a new cultural practice, that of schooling, which it marked off from everyday practice and objectified.

The Jadids' pioneering of incipient institutional forms in the Muslim society of Central Asia gave them a certain advantage over their opponents, who, for various reasons did not organize in similar fashion. A new public space was created for the interpretation of Central Asian culture, and of Islam itself, in which the traditional carriers of Islam were increasingly marginalized. The process of institutionalization was neither easy nor unilinear, since material difficulties combined with opposition from traditional elites and suspicion of the colonial state to ensure that a large gap remained between Jadid ambition and Jadid achievement. Nevertheless, by 1917, new-method schools were widespread, a print-based public space had taken hold, and the traditional elites' monopoly over the definition of culture had been shaken.

## COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE RUSSIAN BORDERLANDS

In pointing to the transformative role of Russian rule, it is by no means my intention to claim that imperial benevolence was the linchpin of cultural regeneration in Central Asia. Rather, I hope to distance the analysis from the hackneyed dichotomies of resistance and collusion, of native authenticity and “Westernization” (or, in our case, Russification), by suggesting that the social and institutional terrain on which struggles over culture take place in colonial settings is very much the product of colonial

rule. To look for “responses” to colonialism in a domain located entirely outside of it is futile, since the very formulation of the response is inextricably intertwined in patterns of colonial knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Although this obviously applies to modernist re-visions of identity, even visions of the authenticity of native tradition are articulated through means of cultural production often introduced by the colonizer. For if culture is to be located in the struggles of elites, then the colonial presence was a major feature of the social terrain on which they took place. This presence may not have determined the nature of the competition, but it certainly provided a major resource even as it also defined the limits of the permissible.

The interconnections between empire and imperial knowledge have received considerable scholarly attention in recent years,<sup>22</sup> but the politics of native cultural production in the conditions of empire have been less popular. The Jadids, like many colonial intellectuals, occupied a liminal space between the colonial power and native society. From this position they could appropriate colonial ideas for their own uses, invoking the superiority of the colonizer to exhort their society to reform; at the same time, they talked back to the colonizer in the colonizer’s own language. This involved them in bitter struggles over turf in their society with groups that had made their own compromises with the colonial regime.

In the Russian case, even the colonial nature of the regime remains a matter of dispute. Although the Russian empire was one of the largest empires in the world during the period under discussion here, sophisticated study of the Russian imperial experience is only now beginning. Scholars centrally concerned with one or more of the “nationalities” of the Russian empire have long been used to viewing the Russian state as a colonial entity (although often more as a matter of reflex than as an analytical preoccupation), but mainstream Russian history has seen imperialism only in Russian foreign policy, being content to study the borderlands as a problem of administration rather than imperialism.<sup>23</sup> And of all the borderlands, Central Asia remains the least known.

21. Frederick Cooper and Ann L. Stoler, “Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule,” *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989): 609; Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, new ed. (Berkeley, 1991), xi.

22. The *locus classicus* of this debate is, of course, Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

23. The major works on Russian imperialism are concerned almost entirely with imperial competition outside the boundaries of the Russian state, not with imperial interaction within it: Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860–1914*, trans. Bruce Little (New Haven, 1987); John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700–1917: The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment* (New York, 1997). The recent work by Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als*

To be sure, Russia's geographic contiguity to its empire made for several peculiarities of its colonial experience (the state usually did not recognize the borderlands as separate political entities), but the basic epistemological operations of empires were, nevertheless, present. Moreover, as I argue in Chapter 2, Central Asia, conquered between the 1860s and the 1880s, occupied a position that was in many ways unique in the empire. The distinctly colonial conception that informed Russian rule in the region contrasted markedly to earlier periods of annexation that had brought other Muslim and non-Muslim groups under Russian rule. If in previous periods of expansion, the Russian state had coopted local nobilities and absorbed conquered populations into its system of social classification, in Central Asia the rhetoric of conquest mirrored nineteenth-century notions of colonialism. Russian administrators constantly compared Turkestan to British India (the protectorates of Bukhara and Khiva were directly inspired by British treaties with various princely states in India) or French North Africa and sought to benefit from the experience of these powers in ruling "their" Muslims. The local population remained "natives," regardless of social standing.

Although such colonial policies and practices were very important to Central Asian cultural life, their appreciation is also crucial to understanding late imperial Russia as a whole. The fact that Russia was a multinational empire is often glossed over in mainstream Russian (as opposed to "nationalities") historiography, with a resultant loss of historical perspective. The imperial borderlands, perhaps Central Asia more so than any other, were not incidental to Russia. Their existence—and their subjugation—helped define Russia and Russianness in very tangible ways that are lost to analysis if Russia is seen as a unitary state.

The study of imperial interactions in the Russian borderlands also helps to deconstruct the notion of "the West." Scholarly discourse is so permeated with the dichotomy between Russia and "the West" (which events of the past decade have only entrenched more deeply) that it appears as a paradox that Russia should personify "the West" in its Asian borderlands. Yet, Russians saw themselves as resolutely European in Central Asia, sharing in the European civilizing mission to which all imperial powers pretended. If world history of the last two centuries is to be glossed as "Westernization," then we face the paradox that many of

---

*Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich, 1992), is the first substantial treatment of Russia as a multiethnic empire.