

Amir Alimkhan's Attitude towards Jadid Movement

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the Jadid movement, its influence in Turkestan and the Emirate of Bukhara, the relationship between the Jadids and the Emir, and Emir Said Alimkhan's attitude toward the Jadid movement.

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At the beginning of the 20th century, when Amir Alimkhan, the last ruler of Bukhara, ascended the throne, the region of Turkestan and the Emirate of Bukhara witnessed the emergence and strengthening of revolutionary movements. As in the rest of the Turkestan region, the intellectual movement in Bukhara took on a political character, evolving as an opposition to conservatism. However, the political structure and historical legacy of the Bukhara Emirate led to the unique development of this movement compared to other regions. When Emir Alimkhan came to power, he initially adopted a positive stance toward the movement that had begun during the previous era. During this period, the growing Jadid movement in the Emirate of Bukhara gained a political dimension and transformed into the Young Bukharians movement. This political movement played a decisive role in shaping Emir Alimkhan's fate.

In the early 1900s, two opposing political forces existed in Turkestan and its subregion, the Emirate of Bukhara. On one side were the Jadids, who aimed to modernize and develop Bukhara into a progressive state. On the other side were the traditionalists, who sought to preserve the Emirate's system and favored governing the state based on Sharia principles rather than democratic ideals.

By the early 20th century, the Jadids began discussing reforming the country's education system and military using methods and practices adopted by the West. These debates gave rise to new ideas. To improve the dire conditions in Bukhara, the Jadids consistently emphasized the need for madrasa reforms at every opportunity ¹.

These developments were expressed in the Jadids' newspaper of that time as follows: "From the day we succeeded in publishing this newspaper, our primary goal has been to elevate science and education. For this reason, we advocate for the necessity of reforming madrasas ².

The demand for innovation initially emerged in the field of education primarily due to the absence of secular knowledge in madrasas, where only religious subjects were taught. As the intellectuals of Bukhara established connections with other regions, they had the opportunity to compare themselves with others. This comparison revealed the necessity for reform in the education system. For instance, an article

¹ Nurettin Hatunoğlu Türkistanda son Türk devleti Buhara emirliği ve Alim Han. -I.: Ötüken, 2016. -S.138.

² "Исложн мадраса", Бухоройи Шариф газетаси, С.97, 5 июл 1912. -С.97.

published in *Oyina*, a journal representing the voice of Jadidism in the Turkestan region, expressed these demands as follows:

"The progress of all societies is tied to science and knowledge. First, reading and writing must be learned in basic education. Then, subjects such as Arabic, mathematics, and others should be studied. To advance our trade and daily development, learning the Russian language is essential. After that, we should learn languages like French and establish connections with foreign countries. Let us understand, while we still have the opportunity, that lagging behind is unacceptable and that learning other languages is not a sin ³.

Fayzulla Khojaev, one of the Jadids of Bukhara, described this movement as follows: "The socio-political progress of Russia also influenced the peoples of Central Asia. This influence was evident in how supporters of the movement worked to improve existing schools. Subsequently, they demanded reforms in secular education and other fields. Over time, this movement gained strength and transformed into an educational and cultural initiative. Later, it extended to reforming local governance. As a result of this process, the Turkestan Autonomy was established in 1917 ⁴.

In the early years of his reign, Said Alimkhan, who ascended the Emirate's throne in 1910, was sympathetic to the Jadid movement. To support this assertion, we consider a historical fact: the first Jadid schools began operating in the emirate in 1893, during the rule of Amir Abdulahadkhan, and these schools continued their activities within the emirate until 1917. Given that Amir Alimkhan ruled the Emirate from 1910 to 1920, it becomes evident that for seven years after his accession to the throne, he allowed the Jadids to operate freely in the country. However, by 1917, Amir Said Alimkhan changed his stance. This shift was primarily driven by the revolutionary actions of the left-wing faction of the Jadids, known as the Young Bukharians, who aligned themselves with Soviet power and initiated efforts to overthrow the Emir from the throne.⁵

In the Emirate of Bukhara, the Young Bukharans operated as a faction of the Jadid movement between 1910 and 1920. Initially, they were established on the basis of a secret society called *Tarbiyai Atfol* (Child Education) ⁶.

From the very beginning of his reign, Emir Said Alimkhan implemented reforms aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of the population. On December 29, 1910, in the Ark fortress, Mirzo Nizomiddin Urganji read the emir's first decree to an assembly of scholars, nobles, dignitaries, and representatives of the Russian political agency. The main points of the decree were as follows:

1. Prohibition of palace gifts and tributes.
2. Introduction of the farsakh tax.
3. Reduction of land taxes by one-tenth.
4. Increase in the salaries of military personnel⁷.

Examining the provisions of this decree reveals that these reforms were, in essence, aligned with the changes that the Jadids sought to implement in practice. Additionally, in honor of his accession to the throne, Emir Said Alimkhan declared a general amnesty. Apart from hardened criminals, 21 individuals under house arrest for minor offenses and 50 individuals held in prison were released⁸.

Fifty-nine individuals convicted of murder and serious crimes, along with seven individuals sentenced to house arrest, were not granted freedom. Instead, they were exiled to Kabul, Darvaz, and Baljuvon.⁹ Emir

³ "Илми Тараққий" Ойина журнали, 1913. -С.10.

⁴ Файзулла Хўжаев. Бухоро инқилобининг тарихига оид материаллар.(Қайта нашр). -Т: "Фан". 1997. -Б.62.

⁵ Жамолова Д. Бухоро амирлигида жадидлар ва қадимчилар фаолияти (XIX аср охири-XX аср бошлари). -Т: "Мухаррир". 2021. -Б.51.

⁶ Ражабов Қ. Ўзбекистон XX асрда. 2 жилдлик. 1 жилд - Т: "Фан", 2024. -137.

⁷ А. Фитрат. Амир Олимхоннинг ҳуқумронлик даври. Тошкент., "Минҳож", 1992. -Б.12

⁸ Жамолова Д. Бухоро амирлигида жадидлар ва қадимчилар фаолияти (XIX аср охири-XX аср бошлари). -Т: "Мухаррир". 2021. -Б.55.

⁹ О'zR МА, I-1-fond, 31-, 735-ish, 22-varoq.

Said Alimkhan also issued a decree exempting the country from one year's taxes¹⁰.

From this information, it can be inferred that Emir Said Alimkhan, similar to modern liberal states, declared an amnesty upon his accession to the throne—an act considered one of the principles of democracy.

Positive opinions about Alimkhan can be found in the works of Abdurauf Fitrat, a prominent Bukhara Jadid, written before 1917. For instance, in his work "The Statement of an Indian Traveler", Fitrat states: "It is well known that the primary cause of any nation's progress is knowledge. In Bukhara, you have both madrasas and wealth. I firmly believe that with a just, open-minded Emir and a Allah-fearing minister, all affairs can be reformed"¹¹.

From Fitrat's statements, it can also be understood that after ascending to the throne, the Emir did not oppose the Jadids, and the Jadids, in turn, maintained a positive attitude toward the Amir. Furthermore, in March 1911, the Emir issued a decree titled "On Ending Excessive Wedding Ceremonies." According to the decree, anyone serving dishes other than pilaf at weddings would be punished with 75 lashes, and traditional games such as *uloq* and horse races, typically held during circumcision and wedding ceremonies, were banned¹².

Emir Alimkhan paid special attention to organizing the education system and, in 1911, signed another decree titled "On Education." According to this decree:

In madrasas, extraneous subjects were not to be taught, and only tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) and hadith (prophetic traditions) were to be included as formal lessons, funds collected from state-controlled *waqf* endowments were to be used to build schools in various parts of the city, and teachers were to be appointed for these schools, schoolteachers were required to be scholars, skilled writers, and eloquent speakers. In addition to receiving funds from the *waqf*, teachers were to be granted an annual salary of 120 sums from the state treasury, no tuition fees were to be charged from students. An inspector was to be appointed for the schools, tasked with conducting monthly inspections and reporting directly to the Emir.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Emir shared similar views with the Jadids and issued decrees aimed at reforming the emirate's education system. Emir Alimkhan also initiated reforms in the madrasa education system and, in 1913, constructed a new madrasa in the city of Bukhara. Regarding Emir Alimkhan's reforms in the madrasa education system, Fitrat expressed the following: "Recently, His Majesty graciously took the initial step required for the reform of the madrasas in Bukhara by heeding another part of our complaints. In this regard, they constructed a new madrasa for teaching the necessary sciences. Until now, we had to travel to distant cities to acquire religious knowledge, but now we can study in our own homeland. Thus, we wholeheartedly congratulate His Majesty on this pious generosity"¹³.

In 1914, the Jadids of Bukhara established the "Ma'rifat" society, which was engaged in the trade of books, and on December 22, 1915, the Amir approved the charter of this society¹⁴.

The Emir, of course, did not fully align with the ideas of Jadidism, as Said Alimkhan was born into the Emir's family. Despite its flaws, he defended the Emirate system until the end of his life, regardless of its shortcomings. In this regard, we consider the following piece of information:

The last ruler of the Manghit dynasty, Emir Said Alimkhan (1881-1944), and the first chairman of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic (BXSR) and the Uzbek SSR, Fayzulla Khodjaev (1886-1938), were vastly different in many respects. However, there is one point that connects them: both were sons of Bukhara, born in this great land. Yet, both of them died far from their homeland: one in the forests of Moscow in 1938, and the other in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1944. The deaths of both figures ended in

¹⁰ Амир Саййид Олимхон. Бухоро халқининг ҳасрати тарихи.- Тошкент.: "Фан", 1991. –Б.8.

¹¹ А.Фитрат. Танланган асарлар. Тошкент: Маънавият, 2000. –Б.117.

¹² Жамолова Д. // Ўзбекистон тарихи, "Амир Олимхоннинг Бухоро амирлигидаги ислохот фармонлари". №2. 2017. –Б. 62.

¹³ А. Фитрат. Икромот ислохот корони ҳукумат Бухоро. (Бухоро ҳукуматининг ислохот корона қадамлари) // "Ойна" ,1915 йил 30 январ. № 8 . –Б.198-200.

¹⁴ О'zR МА, I-461 fond, 1- ro'xat, 1919 ish, 12 varoq.

tragedy. Both longed for their homeland and died in exile. This is a heavy, sorrowful, and mournful history. The lessons of history are even more difficult. Therefore, I can confidently say that for these individuals, and especially for Fayzulla Khodjaev, the fate of the homeland was not "a trivial matter." Both Fayzulla Khodjaev and even Emir Alimkhan were deeply concerned about the fate of their homeland, Bukhara, Turkestan, and, more broadly, the fate of Uzbekistan.

However, both of them made serious mistakes and committed grave errors. Emir Alimkhan, if he had listened to the ideas of Fayzulla Khodjaev, the son of a prominent merchant and his younger contemporary, without looking down on him, could have established a constitutional monarchy in Bukhara. This would have made it possible to seriously resist the threat of Bolshevism¹⁵.

From the above information, it can be understood that at the beginning of his rule, the Emir did not engage in any conflict with the Jadids. On the contrary, he supported their movement. However, as a result of the intervention of third parties, namely the Bolsheviks, tensions emerged. In conclusion, it can be said that Emir Said Alimkhan initiated a series of reforms aimed at organizing society during the years 1910-1917. However, the events of April 1917 brought significant changes to the Emir's character. While the Emir was conducting reforms across the country, he shifted his focus to limiting the activities of the Young Bukharians. As a result, the Emir lost his power. Although the Jadids took over after the Emir's fall, their rule did not last long. Soon after, the Bolsheviks abolished the independence of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic (BXSР). The only ones who suffered as a result of these changes were the common people.

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¹⁵ Ражабов Қ. // Ёшлик журнали, “Мунгли кечмиш”. № 5. 2014. –Б.10.