



IDEAS AND POLITICS IN HISTORY

ИДЕИ И ПОЛИТИКА В ИСТОРИИ

DOI: 10.22363/2312-8127-2026-18-2-133-151

EDN: WSFUVQ

Research article / Научная статья

The heralds of the idea of a united ummah: the Muslim world in search of inter-regional cooperation at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries

Svetlana A. Kirillina  , **Alexandra L. Safronova** , **Vladimir V. Orlov** 

Lomonosov State University, *Moscow, Russian Federation*

 kirillina@iaas.msu.ru

Abstract. In the study the authors examine the evolution of ideas about Muslim unity among traditional intellectuals of the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The works and statements of Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), Salih al-Sharif al-Tunisi (1869–1920) and Shibli Nomani (1857–1914) are used as examples. The weakening of the Ottoman State and the triumph of the colonial powers of Europe confronted Arab and Indian Muslim theologians with the need to rethink the call for unity inherent in the Islamic tradition. The new understanding of this problem by Muslim politicians has raised a wide range of discussions of both a political and cultural-civilizational nature. As a result, the gradual emergence of a trend towards country patriotism in the Islamic world exposed the risks of splitting Muslim societies and gave the colonial powers new opportunities to undermine the Ottoman statehood. Correlations have been revealed between the views of intellectuals of the Islamic world on the acceptability of modernizing everyday life, culture and the worldview of the population and their ideas about the possibility of preserving the Ottoman leadership system. The authors evaluate the effectiveness of the practical work of both reformers and traditionalists in supporting the achievements of the centuries-old Islamic political culture in the educational and propaganda spheres. The conducted research shows the diversity of reactions of country and regional elites to political challenges from European colonization, the Young Turk revolution of 1908–1909 and the subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

© Kirillina S.A., Safronova A.L., Orlov V.V., 2026



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Revolution of Young Turks, World War I, Middle East, North Africa, South Asia

Contribution. The authors have made an equal contribution to the development of the concept, collection of data and their interpretation, and preparation of the article for publication.

Conflicts of interest. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Article history: received 19.11.2025; accepted 13.01.2026.

For citation: Kirillina SA, Safronova AL, Orlov VV. The heralds of the idea of a united ummah: the Muslim world in search of inter-regional cooperation at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. *RUDN Journal of World History*. 2026;18(2):133–151. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2026-18-2-133-151> EDN: WSFUVQ

Провозвестники идеи единой уммы: мусульманский мир в поисках межрегионального взаимодействия на рубеже XIX–XX вв.

С.А. Кириллина  , А.Л. Сафронова , В.В. Орлов 

Московский государственный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова, Москва,
Российская Федерация

 kirillina@iaas.msu.ru

Аннотация. В исследовании рассмотрена эволюция представлений о мусульманском единстве у традиционных интеллектуалов Ближнего Востока, Северной Африки и Южной Азии в конце XIX — начале XX в. В качестве примеров привлечены труды и высказывания Мухаммада Абдо (1849–1905), Салиха аш-Шарифа ат-Туниси (1869–1920) и Шибли Но‘мани (1857–1914). Ослабление Османского государства и торжество колониальных держав Европы поставили арабских и индийских мусульманских богословов перед необходимостью заново осмыслить свойственный исламской традиции призыв к единению общины. Новое понимание этой проблемы мусульманскими политиками подняло широкий спектр дискуссий как политического, так и культурно-цивилизационного характера. В итоге постепенное зарождение в исламском мире тенденции к страновому патриотизму обнажило риски раскола мусульманских обществ и дало колониальным державам новые возможности для подорыва османской государственности. Выявлены корреляции между воззрениями интеллектуалов мира ислама на приемлемость модернизации быта, культуры и мировоззренческой картины населения и их представлениями о возможности сохранения османской системы руководства. Даны оценки действенности практической работы как реформаторов, так и традиционалистов по поддержке достижений многовековой исламской политической культуры в просветительской и пропагандистской сферах. Проведенное исследование свидетельствует о разнообразии реакции страновых и региональных элит на политические вызовы со стороны европейской колонизации, младотурецкой революции 1908–1909 гг. и последующего крушения Османской империи в ходе Первой мировой войны.

Ключевые слова: Османская империя, младотурецкая революция, Первая мировая война, Ближний Восток, Северная Африка, Южная Азия

Вклад авторов. В разработку концепции, сбор данных и их интерпретацию, подготовку статьи к публикации авторы внесли равный вклад.

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 19.11.2025; принята к публикации 13.01.2026.

Для цитирования: Кириллина С.А., Сафронова А.Л., Орлов В.В. Провозвестники идеи единой уммы: мусульманский мир в поисках межрегионального взаимодействия на рубеже XIX–XX вв. // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Всеобщая история. 2026. Т. 18. № 2. С. 133–151. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2026-18-2-133-151>
EDN: WSFUVQ

Introduction

From the very early days of Islam, the problem of unity and division among Muslims was regarded as one of the most critical issues for the community's (ummah) existence. Medieval Islamic rulers imposed restrictions on freedom of expression and commentary on sacred texts, fearing division and weaker political standing of Islam adherents. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the desire for unity among believers worldwide grew particularly important for Muslim intellectuals, as the Islamic oikoumene (dar al-Islam) came under increasing pressure from colonial powers of other faiths. These circumstances gave rise to a complex debate in the educated strata of Islamic societies in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia on the importance of tradition and the need to borrow from European technological advancements, while simultaneously resisting European encroachment and defending the declining Ottoman Empire.

The article compares three principal perspectives of Muslim scholars and jurists on how to unite the Muslim community, transform traditional foundations of statehood and develop Islamic education to ensure cultural consistency. No matter how diverse the scholars were in terms of age, culture and generation, their focus was invariably on the fate of the Ottoman Empire — the successor to the medieval grandeur of the Abbasid era, the centre of political self-identification in the Middle East and South Asia, the guardian of caliphal legitimacy and values and natural defender of the Muslim cause in the context of European colonial supremacy.

The purpose of the study is to reconstruct the ways and mechanisms of the reinterpretation by Muslim ideologists of the 19th and early 20th centuries of the medieval thesis about the need for community's unity. The research focuses on the concepts of philosophers and politicians from Egypt, Tunisia and India, who acted

in the context of the European colonization of Asia and Africa and the weakening of the military and political capabilities of the Ottoman Empire.

Muhammad Abduh: A Muslim Reformer Ahead of His Time

The prominent Egyptian theologian and jurist Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) is remembered in the history of Arab social thought as a passionate advocate of Islam renewal. He pioneered and headed a religious reform movement (*al-islah ad-diniy*). He argued that Islam should be purged of religious-dogmatic distortions and innovations (*bid'ah*) that had accumulated over the centuries. At the same time, Abduh argued that the Islamic community (*ummah*) should embrace the achievements of Western civilization. A gifted individual with a vivid imagination and an open mind, Abduh proved to be a conscious rationalist and a master of casuistry and compromise in both theological matters and his relations with supporters and opponents alike.

Born in rural Egypt, Muhammad Abduh studied in the renowned madrasa at the Ahmad al-Badawi Mosque in Tanta, and later in al-Azhar, Egypt's leading scholastic academy. He tried his hand at teaching and journalism, but was subsequently sent into exile after supporting an attempted anti-foreign uprising led by Ahmad al-Orabi (1881–1882). He spent his years of exile in Beirut, where he taught at a madrasa, and in Paris, where he was publishing a literary and political weekly *al-'Urwa al-Wusqa* (The Strongest Bond) with his mentor Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani¹. After six years, he managed to return to Egypt. Burdened by his status of a political exile, Abduh was contributing his vigor to the field of “education and Islamic reform within the framework of existing legal system and established order” [1. P. 27]. He distanced himself from politics and established close contacts with Lord Cromer (1841–1917), British Consul-General in Egypt and head of the British administration. The British supported Abduh's initiatives, including those in education, enabling him to begin reforming al-Azhar University. Under Cromer's patronage, Abduh was appointed Grand Mufti of Egypt in 1899, a post he held until his death in 1905².

Arab historians tend not to dwell on Muhammad Abduh's collaboration with the British authorities, but rather, to focus on his exceptional reformist endeavours in education. However, Abduh's moderate political stance, his support for gradual and incremental reforms in Egyptian society, and his willingness to cooperate with the foreign powers that controlled the country, opened up broad prospects for him

¹ Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897) — a leading Islamic ideologue and reformer of the 19th century, religious and political figure, the founder of the concept of Pan-Islamism.

² For a detailed biography of Muhammad Abduh, see [2].

to implement his far-reaching plans. When he was accused of accepting foreign assistance to carry out reforms, he responded as follows: “The Holy Qur’an, time, and the experience of our ancestors allow us to use non-believers and non-Muslims to turn the situation to the advantage of Islam. Those who resort to such measures seek to unite the Muslim community and perform deeds that will be blessed by the Prophet” (quoted from [3. P. 327]).

Abduh’s stance against decisive political action emerged in the final stages of Ahmad al-Orabi’s uprising, when the radicalism of Egyptian officers shaped his cautious approach towards the revolutionary army and intelligentsia. It was during this period that he expressed his view that “an uneducated people cannot elect their own representatives” [4. P. 48]. Over time, he became convinced that an uncompromising struggle in conditions where the people were not ready for radical political and social reform would be doomed to failure and only lead to unnecessary sacrifices. In his words, “without systematic enlightenment, without explaining to the people their rights and duties, the introduction of radical political reform is equivalent to suddenly giving a child the privileges and responsibilities of an adult when they are not yet able to comprehend them” [5. P. 194].

Muhammad Abduh’s views on the caliphate were took shape in the context of a constantly changing political landscape, and somewhat lacked consistency. When he mentioned the institution of caliphate in its traditional interpretation, he at times compared it to parliamentary democracy, asserting that the caliph is a secular ruler, or, conversely, called for its restoration “exclusively on a spiritual basis”. According to Abduh, “The caliph is not infallible. He has not been granted divine revelations. He has neither the privilege nor the monopoly of interpreting the Qur’an and Sunnah”. Furthermore, he stated that “obedience to the caliph is possible only if he follows the righteous path indicated to him by the Qur’an and Sunnah”³.

As for the Ottoman Caliphate, Muhammad Abduh believed that the Turks had seized it, however, they were unable to apply its true legal essence in accordance with the norms and circumstances of the Arab provinces [6. P. 137]. According to Abduh’s disciple and follower, Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935), his mentor did not think much of the Ottoman Padishah Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909), whose claims to the title of Caliph were, in his opinion, dictated by insatiable personal ambition and a desire to elevate his status in the eye of European rulers. Nevertheless, Muhammad Abduh regarded the Ottoman Empire as the most powerful Muslim state of his time and viewed the Arabs attempts to secede

³ Cited as in: Rida, Muhammad Rashid. *Al-Khilafa au al-Imama al-‘Uzma [The Caliphate, or the Supreme Imamate]*. Cairo: Al-Manar Press in Egypt; 1341/1922. P. 140–141.

as perilous manoeuvres that could result in its downfall and further decline of the Islamic world⁴.

A pragmatist at heart, Muhammad Abduh was pursuing a balance between tradition and modernity. He envisaged a new reality for the Arab world that was inspired by European progressivism yet fully compliant with Islamic principles. He argued: “It is wrong, or rather reckless, to demand that the ummah follow unfamiliar paths... It is wiser to preserve the customs ingrained in the consciousness of its members, and then call on them to gradually embrace change. ... After some time, they will abandon their outdated habits and, consciously or not, strive for the better”⁵.

Abduh was familiar with the West from personal experience: he had lived in France for several years, visited other European countries, mastered the French language, and studied European academic literature on social and philosophical issues in depth. Until the end of his life, he retained a keen interest in European affairs. His knowledge of European customs and etiquette undoubtedly played a part in his true friendship with Lord Cromer, who considered him “a man of broad and enlightened views”⁶. As British researcher and author of Muhammad Abduh’s biography Mark Sedgwick writes, “He certainly bridged two very different worlds, and tried to show others how this might be done. One part of his modernism, then, was to prefer a marriage of civilizations to a clash of civilizations” [2. P. 6].

Muhammad Abduh’s worldview was based on a synthesis of rationalism, liberalism and nationalism, as well as a recognition of the universal nature of Islam. Turning to history, he put special emphasis on the fruitful influence of Arab-Muslim culture on Western countries. Abduh emphasized that Muslims had carried the torch of human knowledge for five centuries, developing astronomy and creating chemistry and algebra, and passing on the almost lost Greek heritage to Europe and bequeathing it a school of philosophy [1. P. 211]. Abduh used these arguments as the basis for his conclusion that the time had come for the Arabs to claim Europe’s debt, given that Europe had benefited from their scientific and cultural achievements throughout the Middle Ages. Justifying the need for the Muslim East to assimilate European scientific, technological and other experience, Abduh emphasized that “Muslims cannot live in isolation; they must be armed with what others are armed with” [3. P. 344].

⁴ Rida, Muhammad Rashid. *Tāriḥ al-Ustaz al-Imām al-Shaykh Muhammad Abduh* [*The History of the Teacher, Imam and Shaykh Muhammad Abduh*]. Vol. 1. Cairo: Manar Press; 1931. P. 911–915.

⁵ Abduh, Muhammad. *Al-Amal al-Kamil li-l-Imam al-Shaykh Muhammad Abduh* [*The Complete Works of Imam Shaykh Muhammad Abduh*]. Vol. 1. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq; 1993. P. 321.

⁶ Cromer. *Modern Egypt*. Vol. 2. London: MacMillan and Co., 1908. P. 179.

However, despite his high regard for European civilization, Muhammad Abduh believed that Europe should be used as a model rather than as a sample for blind imitation. In 1903, he visited Algeria, which had been under French control since the mid-19th century, with its capital being one of the most Europeanized cities in the Arab world⁷. During a conversation with a cosmopolitan ‘progressive’ Algerian, Abduh voiced his concerns over the bleak prospects for Algerians if they lost their Islamic identity. He doubted that, no matter how hard they tried, Algerians would ever be accepted as full French citizens. This view aligns with Lord Cromer’s assertion that Abduh, a “genuine Egyptian patriot”, regarded a “Europeanised Egyptian ‘as a bad copy of the original’”⁸.

Despite the many issues that preoccupied Muhammad Abduh, he could not lose sight of the topic of Muslim unity. Abduh aligned the idea of unity with the need to convene an Islamic congress (*al-mu’tamar al-islami*) to discuss the most urgent issues facing the Muslim world. To promote this idea Abduh and Rida founded in 1897 *Al-Manar* (the Lighthouse), a magazine that became perhaps the most widely read Muslim periodical of its time. However, as early as 1884–1885, during his visit to Tunisia, Muhammad Abduh stated that *Al-Urwa al-Wusqa* was not only the name of a periodical, but also of a secret society with branches throughout the entire Islamic world [9]. By that time, however, the newspaper itself had ceased to exist and the paths of Abduh and al-Afghani had diverged forever. It is still unclear if Muhammad Abduh envisaged implementing the concept of an all-Muslim forum based on the cells of this society. We cannot answer this question yet. Evidently, the association remained a figment of his imagination, much like a fictional society ‘Umm al-Qura’ (*Jami’a Umm al-Qura*) of the Syrian ideologist Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1855–1902) [9. P. 140–145]. But thanks to *Al-Manar*, the idea of holding an all-Muslim convention spread widely in Egypt and far beyond its borders.

Muhammad Abduh believed that a path to unity among the Muslim community (*ummah*) lied through strengthened moral foundations of Islam’s followers and reformed education. He dedicated the last decades of his life to comprehensive reorganisation of al-Azhar University, the principal institution in the Egyptian school system. However, he failed to implement all of his ambitious plans due to stubborn resistance from traditionalist theologians and a lack of trust from government circles. Nevertheless, Abduh’s contribution to al-Azhar’s reform cannot be overstated: his efforts resulted in the establishment of a modern education system that enabled the university

⁷ For further details on Muhammad Abduh’s trip to Algeria, see [7].

⁸ *Cromer*. *Modern Egypt*. Vol. 2. P. 179.

to depart from traditional teaching methods based on the concept of ‘blind imitation’ (taqlid) [10. P. 66–69].

Muhammad Abduh’s entire conscious life was a constant fight against a relentless pressure from irreconcilable spiritual opposition. He constantly came under fierce criticism, often anything but constructive. Traditionalist ulama accused him of all sorts of evils, including an inflated ego, unfounded claims to leadership in the Islamic world, incompetence in religious science, a fundamental misunderstanding of the essence of Sharia law and an unacceptable bias towards Western rationalism and secular philosophy. They also reminded him of his collaboration with the British colonizers, a sin they considered unforgivable. Some conservative Muslim theologians regarded Abduh’s attempts to revise established religious and legal concepts as ‘manifestations not of true Salafism’ (i.e. following the example of ‘pious ancestors’), but rather, of Wahhabism⁹, strongly associated with disobedience to the sultan’s authority in the Ottoman era [11].

Further developments in Arab social thought confirmed that Muhammad Abduh as an ideologist with unwavering powers of persuasion and an original thinker was, in many ways, ahead of his time. His role was simply to fling open the doors and expose a musty tradition to fresh currents. His inherent common sense, insight, and foresight enabled him to bridge the gap between religious and secular ideals. He vividly demonstrated that reasonableness could be a useful tool in reconciling traditional and modern values and recognized the need to build a world in which cultural and religious diversity reign supreme.

Salih Al-Sharif Al-Tunisi: a Traditionalist and a Critic of Islamic Reformism

Salih al-Sharif al-Tunisi was one of the most prominent and erudite opponents of religious reformers in the early 20th century. His ideas on revolution and the Ottoman rule had a significant influence on intellectual frameworks relating to societal restructuring across the Middle East and North Africa. Salih al-Sharif was born in Tunisia around 1869 into a family of hereditary theologians (ulama) of Algerian origin. His father and grandfather were both teaching at the University of al-Zaytuna in the capital for almost thirty years, and Salih followed the same professional career. In 1889, he also started teaching at this renowned center of Islamic scholarship and cultural refinement in North Africa [12. P. 210–211]¹⁰.

⁹ A conventional term used to describe the religious and political movement in Central Arabia led by Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), who preached strict monotheism and the purification of Islam from ‘innovations’.

¹⁰ For more on the significance of regional centres of Islamic learning, see [13. P. 201].

When France occupied Tunisia in 1881, Salih al-Sharif was attempting to adapt to life under foreign protectorate for a while, but ultimately chose to leave his country. In 1900, he relocated to Istanbul and then to Damascus, where he stayed for several years. His political views were inconsistent, and he often changed his circle of friends. While in Istanbul, he met Enver Pasha and other leaders of the Young Turk movement and embraced some ideas of the Union and Progress Party. However, in Damascus, according to Muhammad Rashid Rida, Salih al-Sharif drew close to pro-Ottoman mystics. In particular, he was in close contact with the Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi (1849–1909) — Sheikh of the Rifaiya Brotherhood, Naqib al-Ashraf (head of Prophet Muhammad's descendants) in Aleppo, Sheikh al-Masha'ikh (head of all Sufi sheikhs) — who was a close associate of Sultan Abdul Hamid II¹¹. Perhaps it was a sense of belonging to the Sharifian milieu that drew them close¹². As was discovered by the German historian P. Heine, Salih fell under the influence of Sheikh Abu al-Huda, underwent the Sufi initiation rite (*wird*), and joined the Rifaiyya [16. P. 94]. Salih also established friendly contacts with prominent figures within Damascus' Algerian expatriate community, notably engaging with adherents of the Qadiriya Sufi order — descendants of Emir Abd al-Qadir. This venerated Algerian nationalist icon took residence in the Syrian capital following his liberation from French incarceration in 1856, subsequently dwelling there for 27 years [17].

During this period, Salih al-Sharif maintained an unwavering ideological and political stance as a staunch opponent of Islamic reformism, driven by a resolute commitment to safeguarding tradition against the encroachments of modernism championed by such figures as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. While teaching at al-Zaytuna, Salih vehemently criticized Abduh and his adherents — most notably Muhammad Rashid Rida — condemning their perceived abandonment of the Islamic tradition's venerable intellectual legacy. He accused them of harboured inclination toward unmediated interpretation of sacred texts — the Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to Salih, such an approach more aligned with the views of ignorant Wahhabi troublemakers rather than the scholarly obligation to safeguard and advance the cumulative erudition of classical Islamic thought [18. P. 333]¹³.

¹¹ Rida, Muhammad Rashid. *Rihla [Travel Notes]*. Beirut: Dar al-Sakafa al-Islamiya; 1971. P. 34. For further information on al-Sayyadi's biography, influence and reputation, see [14. P. 353].

¹² Both in the Maghreb and in the eastern Arab provinces, sharifian ascendancy has for centuries been regarded as a key element in the development of political ties. See [15. P. 97–99].

¹³ Tunisian intellectuals were well acquainted with the reformist ideas of Abduh and Rida and viewed them largely with disapproval. In 1904, a group of Tunisian ulama demanded that the government ban the journal *Al-Manar*, founded by Rashid Rida, on the grounds that it 'constantly undermines, at their very foundations, the most fundamental and non-negotiable principles of Islamic orthodoxy' (cited as in: [19. P. 92]).

In October 1908, the Tunisian religious alim's staunch repudiation of modernist principles and progressive ideals precipitated a contentious incident at the Umayyad Mosque. The upheaval unfolded around a theological lecture delivered by Muhammad Rashid Rida at the Umayyad shrine. According to eyewitness accounts, Salih al-Sharif, upon entering the assembly amidst the gathered attendees, demonstratively disrupted the proceedings with a confrontational interjection. His pointed denunciation of Rida's positions — alleging the propagation of Wahhabi ideology¹⁴ — was delivered in a manner both polemical and publicly disparaging. Al-Sharif sought to provoke Rida into making extremist statements in order to get him arrested or to undermine his authority. Al-Sharif's attacks escalated into a full-blown urban riot in the central districts of Damascus. Rida fled in haste and the instigator was arrested by the police but later released by an outraged mob, who laid siege to the government building. As a result, the Young Turk leader in Syria, Asad Bey, was forced to leave Damascus in haste and flee to Beirut [20. P. 89; 21. Pp. 108–109].

This episode illustrates the complex and painful feelings evoked among the ulama of the Middle East by the dramatic events of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the subsequent attempted counter-coup in Istanbul. Salih al-Sharif was no exception: a firm believer that Sultan Abdul Hamid II was the true vicegerent of the Prophet on Earth and the legitimate ruler of orthodox Muslims, he initially condemned Enver Pasha and his allies for forcefully removing the Sultan from power¹⁵. However, two years later, he adopted a more pragmatic approach, renewing his former contacts with the Young Turks. In 1911, he secretly travelled to Cyrenaica with Enver, who was then commander-in-chief of the Ottoman forces in North Africa. There, they organized the logistics for the Senussi insurgency against the Italian invasion.

Hardships of this dangerous mission forged an unbreakable bond of camaraderie between the Tunisian theologian and the Turkish military officer. Both Enver Pasha and Salih al-Sharif were well aware that the Italians were exploiting ethnic divisions in their propaganda campaigns, as well as the broader European efforts to incite discord among the Arab-Berber populations of North Africa against the Ottoman rule [23. P. 61]. The rise of Arab national movement, and in particular, the Arab Congress convened in Paris in 1913, made Salih

¹⁴ Al-Barudi, Fahri. *Mudhakkirāt al-Barudi [Memoirs of al-Barudi]*. Damascus: Dar al-Khayyā; 1951. P. 70.

¹⁵ In Islamic culture, the idea of consensus in the selection of a ruler has always stood in contrast to notions of a violent change of power. The use of force was justified solely on the grounds of protecting the community from external threats and internal unrest. See: [22. P. 160–161].

al-Sharif finally agree to cooperate with Istanbul. During the First World War, he acted as an advisor to Enver Pasha, assisting him in secret and delicate affairs.

In 1914, Salih became head of the North African branch of Teshkilat-i Mahsusa¹⁶, the Ottoman secret service. From early 1915 onwards, he worked in Berlin alongside his colleagues, Az-Zaytuna teacher Ismail as-Safayih (1856–1918); Tunisian-Turkish publicist and writer Abd al-Aziz Jawish (1876–1929); a Young Turk activist, Islamic thinker, poet and later author of the lyrics of the Turkish anthem, Mehmed Akif Ersoy (1873–1936); and a number of European Orientalists. Arab-Turkish political exiles coordinated covert activities in colonial territories, organized revolutionary movements in Arab capitals and disseminated propaganda through newspaper articles, brochures, leaflets and booklets. They collaborated closely with the Berlin-based ‘News Agency for the East’ (Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient), founded in late 1914 by the German archaeologist and consul in Cairo, Max Freiherr von Oppenheim (1860–1946) [26. P. 114–116].

Working under the guidance of M.F. von Oppenheim, Salih al-Sharif took part in conceptualizing ‘war through revolution’ — an asymmetric warfare strategy based on mobilizing Muslim populations within enemy colonial territories to undertake jihadist activities and anti-imperialist insurgencies [27]. This ‘anti-colonial jihadism’ was intended to distract enemy troops from the front lines, complicate the Entente logistics, and create political chaos in the colonies. To support this concept, al-Sharif wrote a commentary entitled *Hakikat al-Jihad* (The Truth of Holy War), published in early 1915 by the German Society for the Study of Islam. In this work, he openly demonized the Entente powers, portraying them as ‘true barbarians’ and ‘servants of Satan’. He urged North African Muslim military officers and soldiers to renounce their allegiances to British and French colonial powers, exhorting them instead to pledge loyalty to the Ottoman Caliphate’s sovereign banner — held by the venerable Osman dynasty — and its steadfast German allies¹⁷. In essence, this was a kind of ‘cross-jihad’, where orthodox Muslims by God’s will fight alongside the infidel Germans against their fellow believers under the yoke of the infidel British and French. Salih al-Sharif proposed that, in such a situation, Muslims serving in the Entente armies should defect to the Ottoman-German side and thus turn against the Anglo-French occupation of the Islamic world.

¹⁶ Teshkilat-i Mahsusa, also known as the Department of Eastern Affairs (Umur-i Şarkiye Dairesi), was based in Istanbul. Its personnel comprised 30,000 military and civilian staff, generally of Arab origin [24. P. 64–65].

¹⁷ *Schaich Salih ash-Sharif At-Tunisi*. Haqiqat al-dschihad. Die Wahrheit über den Glaubenskrieg. Aus dem Arabischen übersetzt von Karl E. Schabinger. Mit einem Geleitwort von Martin Hartmann. Berlin: Verlag Dietrich Reimer, 1915. S. 35.

During his stay in Berlin, Salih al-Sharif authored a series of polemical appeals and scholarly treatises that systematically dismantled the Entente efforts to delegitimize the Ottoman Caliphate. He also called for pan-Islamic unification in the face of the Ottoman impending defeat in the First World War¹⁸. Following the Ottoman surrender, geopolitical exigencies compelled al-Sharif and fellow Maghrebi émigrés to relocate to Switzerland, where he ultimately passed in 1920 [28. P. 106].

Military developments along with his unwavering loyalty to Istanbul propelled the provincial Maghrebi theologian into the inner circles of the Ottoman Empire's political elite, elevating him to a position of prominence within secret services of the Young Turks. His propagandistic endeavors functioned as a crucial liaison between Ottoman leaders and German intelligence services, who sought to leverage Muslim intellectuals as catalysts for destabilization and insurrection within Entente-controlled North African territories. Notably, al-Sharif's conceptual synthesis of jihad with anti-colonial resistance emerged as a particularly potent instrument of Ottoman wartime propaganda during the First World War.

Shibli Nomani: A Call for Unity between the Muslim Centre and Periphery

The Muslim community of British India, emerging from the vestiges of the Mughal dynasty, was in search for a paramount authority figure. In his book *In Search for Saladin*, renowned Islamic scholar Akbar S. Ahmed describes the situation as follows: “After the fall of the Mughal dynasty and the establishment of British rule, Muslims in South Asia entered an era of uncertainty, lacking a unifying power, a universally recognized leader, or a common idea” [29. P. 46]. Muslim movements in South Asia from the mid-19th to the early 20th century sought to consolidate the community, prompting Muslim intellectuals to turn to socio-political thought in the Middle East [30].

The idea that South Asian Muslims had common interests with Islam adherents in historical heartlands of Islamic civilization gained popularity among both Islamic leaders in the provinces British India and the rulers of Muslim princely states — including Hyderabad, Rampur, Bhopal, Navanagar, and Kalat — across the Indian subcontinent [31. P. 15–17]. Following the Mughal Empire decline, South Asian Muslims turned to the Ottoman Caliph as their spiritual leader¹⁹. J. Nehru points this out in his book *The Discovery of India*, “The Mughal Emperors in India

¹⁸ *Hilafet Risaleleri*. Vol. 4. Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2004. P. 146–168; Al-Tunusi S. *Hilafet-i Muazzama-i İslamiye*. *Hilafet Risaleleri*. Vol. 4. Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2004. P. 422–448.

¹⁹ See: *Documents and Speeches on the Indian Princely States*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1985.

recognized no Khalifa or spiritual superiors outside India. It was only after the complete collapse of the Mughal power in the nineteenth century that the name of the Turkish Sultan began to be mentioned in Indian mosques²⁰.”

The question of whether the Ottoman sultans legitimately held the right to the title of Caliph and spiritual authority over Sunni Muslims provoked mixed reactions among Muslim intellectuals of different ideological movements in South Asia. Nevertheless, adherents of several Muslim organizations within British India's provinces — notably the Nadwat ul-Ulama (Assembly of Scholars) — endorsed the Istanbul padishah's claim to the title of Caliph. After the Caliphate was abolished by Turkey's republican leadership in 1924, these followers aligned themselves with the transnational movement aimed to defend the institution of the Turkish sultan-caliph [30; 32].

One of the most prominent figures in Islamic circles in British India who turned to historical and cultural heritage of the Middle East in their ideological quest was Shibli Nomani (1857–1914), a scholar, theologian, poet and philosopher from Azamgarh who was also an Islamic reformer. He is often referred to as the ‘father of Urdu historiography’. Shibli Nomani received a traditional Islamic education and was fluent in Arabic, Persian and Old Ottoman Turkish. Despite his commitment to traditional cultural values, he believed that education should incorporate English language instruction and European scientific disciplines.

Convinced that Muslims of his time could learn invaluable lessons from the past, Shibli authored several biographic books on illustrious personalities within Islamic history. His meticulous research on the life of Prophet Muhammad culminated in the initial two volumes of *Sirat an-Nabi*²¹, Shibli's hagiographic work. The book was subsequently expanded by his disciple, Sulaiman Nadvi (1884–1953), who augmented the existing corpus with five additional volumes, following Shibli's demise [33. P. 167–168]. Shibli Nomani's works venerate the ‘heroes of Islam’ — eminent figures hailing from the classical centers of Islamic civilization — thereby fostering among Indian Muslims a unifying sense of participation in a singular Muslim cultural heritage [34. P. 124–125].

It was through his acquaintance with the eminent Muslim reformist and educator, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), that Shibli Nomani found his way to Aligarh College, established in 1875. Over the span of sixteen years, he dedicated himself to the intellectual endeavor of reconciling traditional and modern pedagogical paradigms within Islamic education, while concurrently instructing in Persian and Arabic [35. P. 240–247]. However, Nomani grew increasingly disillusioned with Sayyid Ahmad Khan's advocacy for tempered constitutionalism

²⁰ Nehru J. *The Discovery of India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1989. P. 100–101.

²¹ Nu‘mānī, Shiblī. *Sirat Un Nabi. The Life of the Prophet*. New Delhi: Kazi Publications, 2003.

and his collaborative stance toward British colonial rule. In 1892, accompanied by the British Orientalist Thomas Arnold, he visited Syria, Turkey and Egypt. In Istanbul, Shibli was awarded a medal by Sultan Abdul Hamid II in recognition of his scholarly innovations.

In Cairo, he encountered the eminent Islamic scholar and reformist Muhammad Abduh, whose intellectual influence profoundly shaped his ideological perspectives and broader engagement with Middle Eastern models of social thought. From Abduh's eclectic and occasionally contradictory repertoire of thought, Shibli Nomani adopted those that aligned with his own aspirations and hopes — notably, the notion of ummah unity among Muslim communities across geographic boundaries, as well as the vision of an educational framework harmonizing Islamic tradition with contemporary scientific and sociopolitical thought. Nomani prioritized pan-Islamic unity over national and social divisions, considering it imperative for safeguarding Islamic principles against Western encroachment. Thus, E.Y. Vanina's analysis of Nomani's intellectual legacy reveals his distinctive methodology in conceptualizing Islamic civilizational evolution. As she observes, Nomani advocated for Indian Muslims to align themselves not merely with the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal legacy, but equally with the broader Islamic heritage spanning the Arab Caliphate, Iran, the Ottoman Empire. This orientation manifested clearly in his scholarly works, focused predominantly on historical studies of the Prophet Muhammad, early Arabia, and Iran with significantly lesser interest in India per se [36. P. 180–181]. Moreover, his theoretical framework notably emphasized the dialectical relationship between core and peripheral elements in shaping a cohesive Muslim religio-cultural tradition.

Shibli Nomani made it popular for South Asian Muslims to travel to the Middle East, inspiring subsequent generations of Muslim intellectuals and public figures in British India to follow in his footsteps. His journeys were principally motivated by an academic pursuit — gathering ethnographic and pedagogical data on Arab and Turkish societies. Drawing on his observations, Shibli Nomani sought to create an educational model for British India that would build on the experience of developing educational systems in Islamic civilizational centers and feature the most progressive elements of European pedagogical frameworks.

In his famous travelogue, 'Turkey, Egypt and Syria: a Narrative of Travels', Nomani provides a detailed account of his travel impressions spanning a period from May to September 1892²². Istanbul particularly captivated his imagination;

²² Safarnama Rum-o-Misr-o-Sham: A Travelogue of Rome, Egypt, Syria and Turkey, compiled by Maulānā Shiblī Nu'mānī, entitled *Shams al-'Ulama'* [Sun of the Scholars], Professor of Arabic at the Madrasat al-'Ulūm, Aligarh. Transl. from the Urdu by G.M. Bruce. Syracuse (NY): Syracuse University Press, 2020.

he portrayed it as a city of singular grandeur, full of magnificent mosques, madrasas, schools and colleges boasting impressive libraries and printing houses. However, his accounts of education systems in Istanbul, Cairo and Beirut reveal his disappointment with traditional teaching methods he observed in the madrasas since they remained obstinately divorced from the progressive didactic frameworks essential for engaging with modernity²³. He wrote, “To this day, old and new education compete with each other, with their harmonious integration yet unrealized. In both Constantinople and Cairo, education is divided between traditional and modern frameworks. They are developing completely separately, to the detriment of both”²⁴. However, despite his fervent advocacy for educational reform within Muslim societies, he prioritized tradition, “Though I have devoted considerable effort to advancing pedagogical innovation, I remain an unwavering proponent of madrasas and ulema as the custodians of authentic knowledge. Traditional education is an indispensable foundation”²⁵.

Although Nomani’s travelogue is written in Urdu, it also contains a number of passages in Arabic and Persian, as well as documents in Old Ottoman Turkish. This was natural for the author, who taught these languages in Aligarh, and were accessible to educated Muslims in British India. His further works also distinctly manifest this symbiotic relationship between Urdu and the classical Islamic linguistic traditions. Shibli encouraged his colleagues and students to collect books by renowned Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman authors and translate them into Urdu for future generations.

With the rise of the Khilafat movement in British India (1919–1924), Nomani’s travelogue acquired heightened political relevance, as the Ottoman sultanate and its imperial legacy evolved into potent symbols for anti-colonial resistance against British hegemony.

Inspired by Shibli Nomani’s example, his student and follower Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), one of the founders of the Khilafat movement, believed that the Ottoman Empire’s political evolution was crucial in shaping the concept of Muslim identity in British India. According to Azad, the Ottomans’ example helped overcome feelings of remoteness from centres of Muslim culture in the Near and Middle East²⁶. Following in his teacher’s footsteps, Azad travelled extensively throughout the Arab East and visited Turkey and Iran. He was renowned as an expert in Arabic and Persian literature, spoke Arabic, Persian, and Turkish,

²³ For more on Nomani’s views on the reform of Islamic education, see [37. P. 145–157].

²⁴ *Safarnama Rum-o-Misr-o-Sham*. P. 119.

²⁵ *Ibid.* P. 42–43.

²⁶ Azad, Abul Kalam. *India Wins Freedom: The Complete Version*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman; 1988. P. XII.

and had an in-depth knowledge of Islamic teachings and history. He maintained friendly relations with prominent Muslim figures in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Iran [9. C. 151–152].

The brothers Muhammad Ali Jauhar (1878–1931) and Shaukat Ali (1873–1938) — renowned leaders of the 1920s Khilafat movement — were profoundly influenced by the pedagogical legacy of Shibli Nomani, under whose guidance they had studied Arabic and Persian at Aligarh University. Their intellectual paradigm posited that a comprehensive grasp of Islam's core tenets and modern ideological currents required not merely a profound knowledge of the oeuvre of regional Muslim reformers and enlightenment thinkers, but also a nuanced engagement with the sociopolitical realities of the Middle East [38. P. 270–271]. In their search for the concept of an Islamic unity, generations of Indian Muslims have found an enduring source of inspiration in the ideological heritage and social thought of the Middle East.

Shibli Nomani is renowned for his practical achievements in establishing and enhancing programs for Islamic educational institutions that fused tradition and innovation. These included the National College educational centre in Azamgarh, Osmania University in Hyderabad, and the Dar ul-Ulum madrasa in Lucknow. He sought to introduce Urdu language instruction in Indian Muslim universities, integrating traditional teaching styles with modern educational frameworks [39. P. 56–57]. Shortly after this demise, his disciple Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi realized his dream by establishing the House of Writers (Dar ul-Musannifin) in Azamgarh [40. P. 498]. This public educational institution honours the memory of this outstanding intellectual and Islamic reformer in South Asia.

Conclusion

A wide range of opinions and perspectives on Muslim unity proposed by 19th- and 20th-century Islamic thinkers compels to compare their proposals and contrast their worldviews. Muhammad Abduh's pro-British inclinations seem to have stemmed less from any naive faith in Britain's professed commitment to Egypt's advancement, and more from his pragmatic evaluation of the geopolitical dynamics at play within Egyptian society. At the turn of the century, the British colonial authorities in Egypt favored educational projects and encouraged the Muslim reformist cultural activities, in contrast to the Khedive and his entourage, as well as the traditionalist spiritual elite. In Tunisia, modernization effort was primarily supported by French elites. For traditionally-minded Tunisian ulama — most notably Salih al-Sharif al-Tunisi — the defense of Ottoman heritage in the pre-war and wartime years functioned as a dual-purpose strategy: it simultaneously

mitigated the growing influence of Arab and Berber nationalist movements while reinforcing the legitimacy of the caliphate's governance over communal affairs without foreign colonial interference. For Shibli Nomani, active social life in Istanbul, Damascus and Cairo provided a cultural and civilizational anchor and source of inspiration for recreating the unique identity of South Asian Muslims. This approach was consistent with Nomani's desire to teach spiritual disciplines in his homeland in the Urdu language, rather than in traditional Arabic or Persian. Meanwhile, the Islamic intellectual elite viewed patriotic sentiments among certain Muslim groups conceptually from two angles: as guaranteeing the formation of a future national identity, and as a factor that would help to maintain the stability of the Caliphate in Istanbul.

Notably, all three thinkers turned to the eternal archetype of Islamic culture — the Sufi 'path' (tariqa) or wandering in search of knowledge (talab al-'ilm) — at different stages of their lives. Through their research and ideological perspective, they found that voluntary migration and acquaintance with the lives of fellow believers in other countries enriched them with endless regional subtleties and aspects of Islamic tradition, in keeping with the Prophet's famous saying, 'The whole world is a mosque.'

References

1. Amin, Uthman. *Ra'id al-fikr al-misri, al-imam Muhammad Abduh* [The pioneer of Egyptian thought, Imam Muhammad Abduh]. Cairo: Maktabat al-nahda al-misriyya; 1965. (In Arab.).
2. Sedgwick M. *Muhammad Abduh. A biography*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications; 2010.
3. Ahmad Amin. *Zu'ama' al-Islah fi-l-'Asr al-Hadith* [Leaders of reform in the modern era]. Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-'Amma al-Misriya li-l-Kitab; 1948. (In Arab.).
4. *Al-Imam Muhammad Abduh: Imam al-tajdid wa-l-islah* [Imam Muhammad Abduh: leader of renewal and reform]. Beirut: Dar al-kitab al-lubnani; 1974. (In Arab.).
5. 'Imara, Muḥammad. *Al-Imam Muḥammad 'Abduh, mujaddid al-dunya bi tajdid al-din* [Imam Muḥammad 'Abduh, the renewer of the world through the renewal of religion]. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq; 1988. (In Arab.).
6. Hourani A. *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1984.
7. Bencheneb R. Le séjour du šayh Abduh en Algérie (1903). *Studia Islamica*. 1981;53:121–135.
8. Chenoufi M. Les deux séjours de Muhammad 'Abduh en Tunisie. *Cahiers de Tunisie*. 1968;16:57–96.
9. Kirillina SA, Safronova AL, Orlov VV. The three faces of caliphatism: ideas of the caliphate among Islamic thinkers of the late 19th — early 20th centuries. *RUDN Journal of World History*. 2025;17(2):137–158. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2025-17-2-137-158> EDN: UMHRYU
10. Al-Samara K. Muhammad 'Abduh: Islam and new urbanity in the nineteenth-century Arab world. *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies*. 2018;3(1):63–79. <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v3i1.77>

11. Zhantiev DR. Islamic traditionalism in the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the era of Abdul-Hamid II (1876–1909). *Istoriya*. 2021;12(5):21. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.18254/S207987840015902-1> EDN: ASKYNV
12. Ibn ‘Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir. *Tarajim al-a‘lam* [Biographies of outstanding people]. Tunis: Al-Dar al-tunisiyya li-l-nashr; 1970.
13. Kirillina SA, Smirnov VE, Cherkasova TD. The sacred geography of the Near and Middle East through the ages and generations. *Moscow University Oriental Studies Bulletin*. 2023;67(4):197–204. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.55959/MSU0320-8095-13-67-4-15> EDN: EKMCHY
14. Zhantiev DR. Religious policy of sultan Abdul-Hamid II in the Syrian vilayets of the Ottoman Empire (1876–1909): methods and symbols. *RUDN Journal of World History*. 2021;13(4):347–362. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2021-13-4-347-362> EDN: WTUEFX
15. Solovieva DV. The Idrisi Sharifs in Alawi Morocco (XVII–XVIII cc.): allies or antagonists of the power? *Moscow University Oriental Studies Bulletin*. 2022;(3):93–107. (In Russ.). EDN: SQLIBW
16. Heine P. Sâlih ash-Sharîf at-Tûnisî, a North African nationalist in Berlin during the First world war. *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*. 1982;33:89–95. <https://doi.org/10.3406/remmm.1982.1941>
17. Zhantiev DR. Emir Abd al-Qadir al-Jazairi and the legacy of Ibn Arabi in Ottoman Damascus. *Istoriya*. 2023;14(10):6. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.18254/S207987840028762-7> EDN: NOWUWZ
18. Ardiç N. *Islam and the politics of secularism: the caliphate and Middle Eastern modernization in the early 20th century*. London; New York: Routledge; 2012. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203137734>
19. Kraiem M. Au sujet des incidences des deux séjours de Muhammad ‘Abduh en Tunisie. *Revue d'Histoire Maghebine*. 1975;3:91–94.
20. Der Matossian B. *Shattered dreams of revolution: from liberty to violence in the late Ottoman Empire*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press; 2014.
21. Zhantiev DR. Unsuccessful voyage: the conflict over the arrival of Muhammad Rashid Rida in Damascus in 1908. *Lomonosov Readings. Oriental and African Studies (Moscow, March 27 — April 3, 2025)*. Moscow: Lomonosov Moscow State University, Institute of Asian and African Studies; 2025:108–109. (In Russ.). EDN: DNTYAX
22. Solovieva DV. The bases of sultan’s power in Alawi Morocco during XVII–XVIII centuries: the triumph of military force or the search of consensus? *RUDN Journal of World History*. 2025;17(2):159–171 (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2025-17-2-159-171> EDN: UGSNOE
23. Aksakal M. The Ottoman proclamation of jihad. In: Zürcher E-J, ed. *Jihad and Islam in World War I: studies on the Ottoman jihad on the centenary of Snouck Hurgronje’s “Holy war made in Germany”* Leiden: Leiden University Press; 2016. P. 53–69.
24. Stoddard P. *The Ottoman government and the Arabs, 1911 to 1918: a study of the Teskilat-i Mahsusa*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press; 1963.
25. Schwanitz WG. Germany’s Middle East policy. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*. 2007;11(3):26–41.
26. Kröger M. Max von Oppenheim — mit Eifer ein Fremder im Auswärtigen Dienst. In: Teichmann G, Völger G, eds. *Faszination Orient. Max von Oppenheim, Forscher, Sammler, Diplomat*. Köln: Dumont; 2001. P. 106–139.
27. McKale D. *War by revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in World War I*. Kent (OH): The Kent State University Press; 1998.
28. Commings DD. *Islamic reform: politics and social change in late Ottoman Syria*. New York: Oxford University Press; 1990.

29. Ahmed AS. *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic identity. The search for Saladin*. London; New York: Routledge; 2001. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203990995>
30. Shukla RL. *Britain, India and the Turkish Empire. 1853–1882*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House; 1973.
31. Hasan M, ed. *Communal and pan-Islamic trends in colonial India*. New Delhi: Manohar Publications; 1985.
32. Minault G. *The Khilafat movement: religious symbolism and political mobilization in India*. New York: Columbia University Press; 1982.
33. Gordon-Polonskaya LR. *Musul'manskiye techeniya v obschestvennoy zhizni Indiyi i Pakistana* [Muslim trends in the public life of India and Pakistan]. Moscow: Vostochnaya literature publ.; 1963.
34. Ikram SM. *Indian Muslims and partition of India*. Delhi: Atlantic Publishers; 1992.
35. Lelyveld D. *Aligarh's first generation*. New Delhi: Princeton University Press; 1978.
36. Vanina EU. *Indiya: istoriya v istorii* [India: history in history]. Moscow: Nauka publ.; 2014.
37. Troll CW. Muhammad Shibli Nu'mani (1857–1914) and the reform of Muslim religious education. *Madrassa. La transmission du savoir dans le monde musulman*. Sous la dir. de N. Grandin et M. Gaborieau. Paris: Éditions Arguments; 1997. P. 145–157.
38. Allana G. *Muslim political thought through the ages. 1542–1947*. New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research; 1987.
39. Murad MA. *Intellectual modernism of Shibli Numani*. Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture; 1976.
40. McDonough Sh. Shibli Numani: a conservative vision of revitalized Islam. In: Baird RD, ed. *Religion in modern India*. New Delhi: Manohar; 1989. P. 477–501.

Information about authors:

Svetlana A. Kirillina — Doctor (Historical Sciences), Professor, Head of Department of Middle and Near East History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 11 Mokhovaya St., bldg. 1, Moscow, 125009, Russian Federation, e-mail: kirillina@iaas.msu.ru ORCID: 0000-0001-5769-3715. SPIN-code: 2492-5979.

Alexandra L. Safronova — Doctor (Historical Sciences), Professor, Head of Department of South Asian History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 11 Mokhovaya St., bldg. 1, Moscow, 125009, Russian Federation, e-mail: alsafonova@iaas.msu.ru ORCID: 0000-0003-1554-3449. SPIN-code: 6189-7121.

Vladimir V. Orlov — Doctor (Historical Sciences), Professor of the Department of Middle and Near East History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 11 Mokhovaya St., bldg. 1, Moscow, 125009, Russian Federation, e-mail: orlov@iaas.msu.ru ORCID: 0000-0002-2649-5422. SPIN-code: 6318-4102.