James H. Meyer

TURKS ACROSS EMPIRES

Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian–Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914

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Turks Across Empires

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JAMES H. MEYER
Acknowledgments

Writing a book has been one of the most humbling, at times even humiliating, tasks that I have ever undertaken. While I have often read in passages of this sort that the process of writing a book involves many people, I had never really begun to understand the meaning of those words until now. During the course of roughly ten years of dissertation and book research and writing, such an enormous number of people provided assistance or advice to me that I am simply unable to acknowledge them all here. I would therefore like to apologize in advance to anyone who is left out.

This book is dedicated to everyone who has helped me through this process. At the very top of this list are my parents, the two individuals most responsible for turning me on to foreign countries and languages. Without my Mom and Dad enthusiastically dragging me to places such as Paris, Italy, and La Shebba, Tunisia when I was a kid, I never would have gone to Turkey as a young adult after college. None of this would have happened without their support and encouragement. My older brother Jack was also an early inspiration for me in part because of his own travels and writing, but also for suggesting, back in 1991, that I check out Istanbul. My sister Trish and her family made visiting Ann Arbor during graduate school a lot more fun, helping to remind me what going home was all about. Without my daughter Eszter, meanwhile, I never would have stayed so long in Istanbul in the first place. I love them all more than words can express.

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At Brown, where I conducted my doctoral studies, my advisor Engin Akarlı chaired the committee overseeing the dissertation upon which this book is based. Early on, when I was in graduate school, Engin Bey told me “Don’t be afraid to fly!” and I have tried my best to follow his advice. Tom Gleason kindly and energetically introduced me to the academic study of Russia, and was instrumental in getting the original version of this work off the ground. Adeeb Khalid provided important and useful feedback while serving on my dissertation committee as an outside reader, and has been a great inspiration to me throughout graduate school and beyond. Mark Mazower, who had tutored me on Balkan population movements at Princeton, gave me my first job after graduate school when I worked as a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University. Years later, Mark would emerge once again to help me greatly in the publication of this book. I thank him so much for caring, and for believing in this project.
Since 2009, Montana State University has been my home. I have learned to look at the borderlands from the perspective of a beautiful mountain ski town. My department chair, David Cherry, and numerous people from my department—especially J. Barton Scott, Billy Smith, Bob Rydell, Brett Walker, Catherine Dunlop, Dale Martin, Dan Flory, Kristen Intemann, Michael Reidy, and Susan Cohen—have helped talk me through the book-writing process and related concerns at various points. My most junior colleague at MSU, Maggie Greene, has read every word of this book multiple times, and has discussed this project with me on countless occasions. I will never forget what they have done for me, and I thank all of them for teaching me something about how to be a good colleague.

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² Fazıl Gökçek (ed.), Fatih Kerimi İstanbul Mektupları (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2001)
Special appreciation is sincerely conveyed to the scholars, librarians, archivists, and other friends and colleagues I have met during the course of researching this book in Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine. The staffs of the archives and libraries where I have researched this book have been incredible, as have the representatives of the grant-giving agencies I have been fortunate enough to work with. I would also like to thank the many people who have trained me in language and paleographic skills over the years, whose expertise and patience I have hopefully put to good use. The staff of the Interlibrary Loan Department at Montana State University have been very helpful, not to mention forgiving. The conversations I have had with colleagues, students, and friends at MSU—in the classroom, in the office, and on the ski lift—have pushed this book in directions I could not have thought possible.

At Oxford University Press, my editor, Robert Faber, put in a tremendous amount of work to make sure that this project got off the ground. I feel deeply grateful and indebted to him. Cathryn Steele, Janaki Chokkanathan, and Saipriya Kannan have been very helpful and patient in dealing with my numerous questions regarding pictures, designs, and other practical details. Elizabeth Stone’s copy-editing, not to mention her professionalism, patience, and steely nerves under pressure have been greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank my proofreader, Bob Marriott, for his excellent work. Others to whom I owe thanks include Azat Akhunov, who befriended me in Kazan and whose help was invaluable in helping me find my way, research-wise, as well as Blair Ruble, Cassandra Balent, Elvira Fedorova, Gülden Güneri, Guzel Nabiullina, İbrahim Maraş, Igor in Kazan, İldiko Beller-Hann, İldus Zagidullin, Ingeborg Baldauf, İsmail Türkoğlu, Jane Burbank, Janet Klein, Jeff Bartos, Josh White, Mary Gluck, Michael Khodarkovsky, Mila and Sveta in Baku, Norihiro Naganawa, Olga Litvin, Orit Bashkin, Paul Werth, Refik Mukhametsin, Robert Crews, Robert Geraci, Simon Dixon, Tadeusz Swietochowski, Tony Greenwood, Willard Sunderland, William Pomerantz, and my neighbors—sorry! Also thanks to C.C., M.A., and E.H., wherever you are.

When I returned to Bozeman after winter break in January 2013, one of the first things I did was put up on the wall a photocopy of the photograph that is now on the cover of this book. I spent almost every day of the last several years sharing some serious mental space with Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, İsmail Gasprinskii, and their friends, biographers, and peers. I will miss the entertaining stories and challenging company of these fascinating individuals, even as I move on to new things.

James H. Meyer

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Transliteration and Pronunciation

Transliterating names and places into Latin script is no simple task. Russian names have been rendered according to modified versions of the US Library of Congress system of transliteration. Exceptions include names that are well known in English (Leo Tolstoy rather than Lev Tolstoi). Names from Ottoman documents have been transliterated into their modern Turkish forms.

Transliterating Turkic languages from Russia is somewhat trickier. No standard system of transliteration exists for the Arabic-script languages of the Russian Empire, while there are numerous systems of transliteration available for the modern-day Cyrillic and Latin versions of modern Turkish, Tatar, Crimean Tatar, and Azeri. In most cases I employ local systems of transliteration, but have made exceptions in some cases with well-known figures. For Tatar, I have employed ĕ when transliterating ү, and use ‘ye’ to designate a frontal ‘E.’

Some Turkish letters are pronounced differently from their English-language equivalents, including:

- C, ç is pronounced like a “J” (“Çim”). In Tatar, this sound is written as “dzh.”
- I, ı is pronounced like “e,” as in the French word “le” (“Le Big Mac”). In Tatar, this sound is usually rendered “i” or “y.” In this book I usually use ı.
- Ç, ç is pronounced like “ch” (“Çattanooga”). In Tatar, this is “ch.”
- Ş, ş is pronounced like “sh” (Flaşdrayv). In Tatar, “sh.”

The “soft g” (ğ) extends the sounds of the preceding vowel, but otherwise is not pronounced or aspirated. Ağaoğlu is pronounced “Ah-oh-lu.” Sometimes a soft ğ is hard in Tatar, and is transliterated as such.
**Dating**

Events in this book are recorded in local time. This means that both Russian and Ottoman dates are thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar. Prior to 1918, the Russian Empire employed the Julian calendar. The Ottoman Empire, meanwhile, employed the Rumi calendar, which was based upon the Julian calendar.
Introduction: Identity Freelancers

As the year 1912 began, Yusuf Akçura ("Akchura") was living in Istanbul, at the center of a Turkic world of his own making. Four years earlier he had left behind the tense political environment of Russia to begin a life in the Ottoman capital. A key personality in the largest Muslim political movement to grow out of the wild days of the 1905 Revolution, Akçura had once been one of the best-known Muslim political leaders in Russia.¹ Now, however, he was settling into the life of an intellectual in exile.² Whereas political change had been Yusuf Akçura's main concern in Russia, in Istanbul his focus would become the Turkic world. The community activist had become an identity freelancer.

For Akçura and other Muslim activists from Russia, the Young Turk takeover of July 1908 could not have come at a better time.³ Back in Russia, the political concessions offered by Tsar Nicholas II in 1905 had almost immediately begun to suffer reversals. Once the possibility of the monarchy's immediate overthrow had been averted, the government lost its willingness to reform. Political activity for subjects of all faiths became increasingly restricted, while the "counter-coup" of June 3, 1907 had targeted Muslims in particular. The future of political reform in Russia seemed very dim. Across the imperial frontier, the Ottoman capital awaited.

Akçura's early days in Istanbul had not been easy. He had arrived in late 1908, ostensibly to work as a correspondent for the Orenburg (Russia) newspaper Vakit ("Time"). The pay was irregular and sporadic, and life in Istanbul was expensive. Nevertheless, the decision to spend some time in the Ottoman Empire, if only temporarily, had seemed to be a wise one at the time. In Russia, many of Akçura's erstwhile colleagues were now behind bars, and Akçura himself had been detained for six weeks in 1906. Rather than face imprisonment in Russia, Akçura had chosen to start over, once again, in the Ottoman capital.

¹ The 1905 Revolution in Russia did not overthrow Tsar Nicholas II, but rather resulted in promises to create a parliamentary monarchy. The revolution is generally considered to have lasted from 1905 to 1907, with its most important turning point coming in the form of the October Manifesto of 1905. In Turkey, Akçura would later be known as "Akçura oğlu."

² I usually refer to the individuals in this book as "Muslims," rather than "Turks," "Tatars," or any other national designation. This is because the vast majority of Muslims in the late imperial era would not have seen themselves in national terms, nor were they administered as such by their governments.

³ The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which took power in a military overthrow of Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II in July 1908, is often referred to as "the Young Turks." In this book they are referred to as "Young Turks," "Unionists," and "the CUP."
Indeed, since the Young Turk takeover Istanbul had developed into an important center for Russian Muslims in exile. Alongside Akçura in the Sublime Porte was an array of writers, activists, and others roaming the city’s streets. They had come to the Ottoman Empire for a variety of reasons, drawing upon networks that crossed the imperial frontier. The pan-Turkists—people like Akçura and his friends, who are today associated with late imperial pan-Turkism in the historical literature—were part of this broader population of Russian-born Muslims living and traveling between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.  

Arriving in Istanbul several months after Akçura was Ahmet Ağaoğlu (“Ah-oh-loo”). Ağaoğlu was also a Muslim activist, from today’s Azerbaijan in the southern Caucasus, whose experiences had been similar to those of Akçura in a number of ways. Like Akçura, Ağaoğlu hailed from a rather prestigious, if somewhat provincial, family of better-than-average means. Ağaoğlu also resembled Akçura in that he had traveled and studied abroad, learning foreign languages and the skills associated with international living at a relatively young age. After 1905 Ağaoğlu had also, like Akçura, become involved in Muslim community leadership politics and a burgeoning Turkic-language print media in Russia to become a newspaper editor and well-known public figure in Baku. Tsarist authorities, however, considered Ağaoğlu a troublemaker, and perhaps even a terrorist. At the time of Ağaoğlu’s departure for Istanbul in December 1908, an investigation into his activities had recently been launched by authorities in the southern Caucasus.  

İsmail Gasprinskii (also known as “Gaspirali”), a comrade and fellow activist of Akçura and Ağaoğlu in Russia, was also in the process of coming to grips with the counterrevolution in Russia. Unlike his friends Akçura and Ağaoğlu, Gasprinskii had chosen to stay in Russia, in his hometown of Bahçesaray, Crimea. During the years immediately preceding the First World War, however, Gasprinskii traveled often, journeying to Egypt and India during the course of his efforts to organize a world Muslim congress. The Crimean-born activist also visited Istanbul on an annual basis during the Young Turk years, meeting up with Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and other Russian-born Muslims who were living in Istanbul at that time. As much as Gasprinskii was a man of the world, this twice would-be émigré had chosen to not join his friends in setting up a new life in the Ottoman capital. Instead he had made the decision to remain in the land of his birth.  

Istanbul was not just a place of exile, but also opportunity. In Russia, where an estimated 20 million Muslim subjects outstripped the Muslim populations of both Iran and the Ottoman Empire, the Turkic-language media sector developed

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4 I refer to these individuals as “future pan-Turkists” because I wish to stress the degree to which pan-Turkism was a creation of Türk Yurdu, rather than the other way around.

5 Ağaoğlu (known in Russia as Agaev) was from Şuşa, a mountain resort town located in Nagorno-Karabakh. This region is today disputed between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Şuşa’s entire (Muslim) Azeri community fled the region as refugees in 1992.

6 Particularly in connection to Ağaoğlu’s alleged activities in Difai, a Muslim militia that was formed during the 1905 Muslim–Armenian conflict in the southern Caucasus. See Chapter 3 of this study.
quickly after the Revolution of 1905. The Muslim periodical press in Russia had a Wild West quality to it, and had been particularly lively in comparison to the staid quality of Ottoman newspapers under Sultan Abdülhamit II. Since the sultan’s overthrow, however, the press laws in the Ottoman Empire had been greatly liberalized. Akçura and Ağaoğlu possessed the kinds of skills that were needed badly in Istanbul’s new media market. While they and other Muslim activists from Russia often suffered adversity during their early years in the Ottoman capital, they eventually got the break they needed.

In 1911 word reached Istanbul that Mahmut Bey Hüseyinov, a wealthy merchant and philanthropist from Orenburg, Russia, had willed the sum of 10,000 gold rubles to the Russian Muslim community of Istanbul for the creation of a Turkic-language journal to be published in Istanbul. The journal would be called *Türk Yurdu* (Turkic Homeland), with Yusuf Akçura serving as editor. Ahmet Ağaoğlu, meanwhile, became one of *Türk Yurdu*’s most frequent contributors, while numerous other Russian and Ottoman-born writers also wrote for the journal. Soon, the people running *Türk Yurdu* had also established a set of lodges, called the Turkic Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*), which provided meeting space for conferences, talks, and other activities relating to Turkism (*Türklük*) and the Turkic world. By 1914, the Hearths would boast sixteen branches and a roster of more than 3,000 members.

Longtime outsiders in Russia, the Russian-born activists would find themselves the toast of Istanbul under the Young Turks. Akçura and his friends became personally
acquainted with influential cultural and political figures in the city such as Halide Edip, Ziya Gökalp, and Enver Bey, the future Ottoman Minister of War. With Türk Yurdu, Akçura and his friends had stumbled across a winning formula—one that also attracted the attention of Orientalists from around the world. In the words of a 1913 article appearing in the French journal Revue du Monde Musulman, Akçura had achieved “a fame comparable to that of Seyyed Djemal ed-din [Afghani],” perhaps the best-known Muslim activist of the late imperial era. Yusuf Akçura’s moment had arrived, and so had that of pan-Turkism.

This book is a study of Yusuf Akçura and a group of individuals known as the pan-Turkists. I look at the ways in which the Türk Yurdu circle of writers and activists shaped and were shaped by their time. As Scott Spector has discussed in relation to Franz Kafka’s circle of Jewish–German intellectuals, poets, and writers living in pre-war Prague, the people who made up the Türk Yurdu circle were similarly “at once atypical and symptomatic of their period.” Akçura and his

13 Enver was one of the Young Turk “triumvirate,” also including Talat and Cemal, who took power in January 1913. In 1914 he married Princess Emine Naciye Sultan, becoming an in-law of the royal family.
14 Orientalists—scholars of Oriental Studies—were the precursors of today’s scholarly experts on the Middle East, Asia, and the Islamic world.
16 Scott Spector, Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka’s Fin De Siècle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 234–5. These writers are called “Jewish–German” because they wrote in the German language.
friends, I argue, were deeply embedded within their communities in Russia, as well as in the trans-imperial community of Muslims passing between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In this study I explore the networks and circles in which Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu lived, and use their lives as a point of departure for examining broader changes taking place during this era.

Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu were hardly isolated in their activities. Theirs was a generation known for peripatetic activists traveling across the late imperial world. Mohandas Gandhi, born in the same year (1869) as Ahmet Ağaoğlu, was also a part of this broader community, as was future Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1951). Taking their cues from legendary intellectual and activist figures such as Jemaleddin Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, the individuals who form the heart of this book were similarly looking to strengthen their communities in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

While discussing the worlds of Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu, I focus mainly on three concentric circles of people. The first is that of the Türk Yurdu circle, the group of mostly Russian-born writers, activists, intellectuals, and other figures who played a role in the pan-Turkic scene of Unionist-era Istanbul. The next circle, somewhat larger, is made up of Muslim activists, teachers, and students in Russia and the Ottoman Empire. These were the foot soldiers of cultural reform, the people fighting in the educational trenches of provincial Russia, or who traveled across empires in search of education and employment. The largest circle, finally, is that of trans-imperial Muslims—the people who traveled and lived between empires. These were the merchants, pilgrims, refugees, and millions of others whose experiences, I argue, established the context out of which Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu emerged.

In telling the story of the pan-Turkists before pan-Turkism, my point is not to trace a teleological pathway toward any particular form of identity. On the contrary, I wish to emphasize the degree to which the people we know as pan-Turkists veered from one identity concept to another as their needs changed over time. Far from evolving seamlessly towards Turkish nationalism, the people who would come to be associated with pan-Turkism moved in a series of fits and starts in response to the revolutionary changes taking place around them. Living in an era that preceded the establishment of nation-states in the region, these Muslim activists had numerous options available to them with respect to both identity and other issues. Long thought of as architects of the national era to come after the First World War, the pan-Turkists were, in fact, very much a product of the late imperial age.

Pankaj Mishra skillfully weaves together the reactions of these and other figures to the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905. From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals Who Remade Asia, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012) 1–2.
Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu came from three of the most closely integrated Muslim-inhabited regions of the Russian Empire: central Russia, Crimea, and the southern Caucasus. The province of Kazan, located in the central Russia region that produced Yusuf Akçura, lies approximately 400 miles east of Moscow. The Kazan Tatars, who today make up approximately 50% of the Republic of Tatarstan inside the Russian Federation, are the subject of hotly disputed origins stories, but have been clearly shaped linguistically and culturally by both Mongolian and Turkic influences. The Kazan Khanate, which emerged out of the Golden Horde’s disintegration in 1437, was for much of its 107-year existence locked into a frequently changing set of alliances and conflicts involving Muscovy (Moscow) to the west and the Crimean Khanate to the south. In 1552, the Kazan Khanate was conquered by Muscovite Tsar Ivan IV (the “Terrible”), and by the late nineteenth century this region was by far the oldest site of Muslim–state interaction within the Russian Empire. Muslims in central Russia were more embedded within tsarist systems of rule than was the case on the periphery. The connections linking Kazan elites to Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as their degree of experience living under Russian institutions, went back hundreds of years. The fact that these relations could be quite close, and that Kazan Tatars often acted as interlocutors between tsarist officials and Muslims on the periphery, was a subject of both pride and tension. Indeed, in the final decades of the nineteenth century, the proximity of Muslims in central Russia to state power became uncomfortably close as state officials sought to centralize their Muslim and administration in this region. When the revolution came in 1905, redefining their relationship to state power became the most important priority on the political agenda for Muslims in this region.

In Crimea, meanwhile, relations with Russia were even more fraught. The Crimean Khanate, like that of Kazan, was established in the wake of the Golden Horde’s disintegration in the latter half of the fifteenth century. In 1475, Khan Mengli Giray acknowledged the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan, beginning an era of nominal Ottoman control. After the Ottoman defeat in the Russian–Ottoman War of 1768–74, however, the Ottomans were obliged to sign the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, which transformed Crimea into an independent state. This status was to prove short-lived, as a ramped-up Russian military presence in the

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18 I use the term “central Russia” to describe a region that has been called by turns the middle Volga region, the Volga-Ural region, and inner Eurasia. Cities such as Kazan, Nizhnii Novgorod, and Orenburg are located within this region.


20 Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 27.

21 Crimea became part of Russia more than 200 years after Kazan. The southern Caucasus was incorporated into Russia decades after Crimea, and Central Asia was conquered only in the mid-nineteenth century.

22 By “more embedded” I mean more integrated into the social and administrative life of the empire.
region preceded Crimea’s annexation in 1783.\footnote{On Russia’s first annexation of Crimea, see Alan Fisher, \textit{The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1772–1783} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), especially 132–6.} Largely in response to these developments, approximately two-thirds of the peninsula’s Muslim population left Crimea at this time. Almost all of them ended up in the Ottoman Empire, where Crimean Tatars were able to establish communities that would continue to attract new generations of Crimean émigrés for decades to come.\footnote{Compared to Muslims from most other parts of Russia, the language and traditions of the Crimean Tatars were relatively close to those of Ottoman Turks, and so they experienced fewer difficulties fitting into Ottoman society.}

Muslim–state relations in Crimea were different from those of central Russia. If matters pertaining to administration and centralization were paramount in shaping Muslim–state interactions in central Russia in the late imperial era, in Crimea these interactions more frequently stemmed from issues relating to Muslim emigration. The trauma inflicted by successive waves of Muslim departure from Crimea has been long-lasting, and marks the politics of the region to this day.\footnote{The entire population of Crimean Tatars was deported, in 1944, to Siberia and Central Asia, receiving permission to return only in 1990. Today, Tatars make up about 12% of Crimea’s population.} While Crimean Muslims were more involved in politics and administrative issues than was the case in the Caucasus or Central Asia, they were still much less engaged with tsarist institutions than was the case for Muslims in central Russia.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{The Russian and Ottoman empires in 1914.}
\end{figure}
The third area within Russia that is discussed in this study is the Caucasus, which is usually subdivided into northern and southern regions. This is mainly because the two areas became parts of Russia at different times and were under differing sets of administrative institutions. Most of the southern Caucasus, which is where today’s Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan are located, became part of the Russian Empire in the early nineteenth century following the treaties of Gülîlistan (1813) and Türkmenchâi (1828) between Russia and Iran. The northern Caucasus, meanwhile, is composed of Chechnya, Dagestan, and other republics that today form the southern border of the Russian Federation. The southern Caucasus, unlike the north, had some institutions of rule that were similar to those of central Russia and Crimea, most notably official institutions of ulema.

As was the case in Crimea, the issues that faced inhabitants of the Caucasus were those of the periphery. Migration, and the risks and opportunities associated with life on the border, constituted a much more important feature in the lives of Muslims here than was the case in central Russia. Indeed, while the battles taking place in central Russia at the end of the nineteenth century were largely administrative, people in the Caucasus were often fighting for their very lives. In the northern Caucasus in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Russian Army removed an estimated 400,000 Muslims from their homes in the mountains, while in the southern Caucasus Armenians and Muslims fought a bitter war with one another in the early years of the twentieth century.

For the purposes of this study, I define the late imperial era as beginning after the conclusion of the Crimean War in 1856 and ending with the onset of World War I. The long half-century discussed in this study was an era of relatively little open conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. This era of generally good relations between the empires was accompanied by an expansion in economic growth in both states. Russia was an emerging economic powerhouse in the final decades of the nineteenth century, while the Ottoman Empire remained a land of opportunity and potential emigration for Muslims outside its borders.

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26 Ethnically there are also important differences, as Muslims in the southern Caucasus tend to be Turkic, whereas those in the north Caucasus are not. Another name for the southern Caucasus is “Transcaucasia” (закавказье).


28 “Ulema” is the Turkic spelling of “ulama,” an Arabic term that refers to the religious elite in Islamic society. In Russia, the ulema were organized into state institutions. See, especially, Chapter 2 of this study.

29 Nagorno-Karabakh would also be a site of particular conflict between Armenians and Azeris in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today the region, which is recognized internationally as part of Azerbaijan, is controlled by a regime allied with Armenia.

30 The thirty-six years spanning 1878 to 1914 constituted the longest period of peace between Russia and the Ottoman Empire since the middle of the seventeenth century. There had also been a 21-year break in conflict between 1856 and the outbreak of the 1877–78 war.

In looking at the ways in which Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu were embedded within their era, this book focuses upon three themes in particular: mobility, revolution, and the politicization of identity. The first of these themes, mobility, relates to a broader phenomenon of growing interconnectedness taking place in the late imperial era with respect to people, goods, and information. "Technological developments taking place during these years helped to increase the speed and ease of traveling long distances." In the two decades following the Crimean War the amount of railway line in Russia increased by nearly a factor of twenty. The time it took to travel by ship from Odessa to Istanbul was cut to just one day by 1912.

The trans-imperial travels of Gasprinskii, Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and their comrades made up just one element of a much broader development taking place in the region at this time: the emergence of the trans-imperial Muslim. The nineteenth century was an era of unprecedented mobility in the region for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, but for Muslims the rate of movement between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was particularly intense. From the Russian conquest of Crimea in 1783 until 1908, an estimated 5 million Muslims arrived in the Ottoman Empire from Russia and the Balkans, with millions more following in the decades to come. This incoming migration of millions of Muslims occurred in an empire with a total Muslim population of just 14 million in 1914.

The term "trans-imperial" means more than just "international." While, in the most general sense, the term "trans-imperial" can be used to mean "across empires,"
in using it. I focus more specifically upon those people who lived *between* the two states. This could mean spending a significant amount of time in both empires, possessing dual subjecthood, or simply traveling across the imperial frontier. At a time when imperial officials in Russia and the Ottoman Empire sought to develop industry, agriculture, armies, and tax bases, such human resources were of critical value. State officials could not always afford to be too picky regarding the ethnic or religious makeup of the populations living within their realms.

Muslims and others crossed the border for a variety of reasons. Many Muslims hoped to build a new life in the Ottoman Empire, where they could benefit from government policies, adopted in 1860, featuring the distribution of land and even travel fare to Muslims looking to settle in the empire. Others stayed for shorter periods, crossing back and forth between the two empires for purposes of trade, pilgrimage, study, or some combination thereof. Cross-border travel occurred in both directions, and some refugees returned to their homelands in Russia even after they had been given land and subjecthood in the sultan's domains. Others stayed in the Ottoman Empire but continued to benefit from Russian subjecthood in order to evade conscription, legal punishment, or other unpleasant run-ins with Ottoman authority.

Muslims were not alone in crossing the border between empires. Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and other communities likewise passed over the Russian–Ottoman frontier. Because of the particularities regarding the policies of Russian and

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42 On the pilgrimage from Russia to the Ottoman Empire, see Kh. Al’mushev, *Khadj-name: kniga o khadje* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Izd-vo: Medina, 2006). This is the hajj-diary of one Khamidulla bine Fatkhulla Al’mushev, who traveled for two years, from 1899 to 1901, to Mecca and back. Also see I. A. Nurimanov, *Khadj: rossiiskikh musul’m* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Izd-vo "Medina," 2008).

43 The capitulation treaties were initially economic agreements that Ottoman statesmen contracted with various European countries. They eventually came to guarantee separate legal systems for foreign nationals living in the Ottoman Empire. On the capitulation treaties, see Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Reform Revolution, and Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 101, 103–4, 119.

44 On Armenians wishing to emigrate from Russia to the Ottoman Empire, see Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive (BOA) HR SYS 2773/23; HR SYS 2840/7; HR SYS 2840/10; and HR SYS 2840/31. On Ottoman Armenians wishing to immigrate to Russia, see, BOA, DH. MKT , 1440/8. On Ottoman Armenians who had earlier immigrated to Russia wishing to return to the Ottoman Empire, see BOA, HRH SYS 2840/38; HRH SYS 2840/39; and HRH SYS 2840/41–44. On Russian Jews wishing to emigrate from Russia to the Ottoman Empire, see BOA, HR SYS 1299. On Ottoman Muslims living in the Russian Empire, see BOA, HR SYS 1269/2, s. 23, 39–41, 171–173; Azerbaijan State History Archive (ADTA), f. 524, op. 1, d. 32, ll. 16–17, 29–30 ob. For information on cases involving Christians and Jews exploiting ambiguities in citizenship laws, see BOA, HRH 572/30, HRH 572/40, HRH 572/38, and HRH 572/41. See Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 32.
Ottoman authorities, however, Muslims had options that people of other religions generally did not possess. While some Christians left the Ottoman Empire and settled in Russia, there did not exist in Russia a policy similar to that of the Ottoman Empire’s practice of providing subjecthood to virtually all incoming Muslims who wanted it.\footnote{Russia claimed Jews fleeing Russia for the Ottoman Empire as their own subjects in the 1880s, and sought to register them as Russian subjects residing in the Ottoman domains. Karpat, 
\textit{The Politicization of Islam}, 186.} Whereas for Christians and Jews trans-imperial opportunities occasionally developed in an ad hoc manner, for Russian-born Muslims they were institutionalized, commonplace, and more or less assured.\footnote{Ottoman immigration policy was nevertheless willing to accept Christian and Jewish immigration; Karpat, \textit{Ottoman Population}, 63. Throughout Ottoman history, there have been such examples, dating most famously back to the Ottoman Empire’s acceptance of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. However, such cases were not granted automatically.} Muslims from Russia could set out for the Ottoman Empire and expect to eventually become Ottoman subjects, and for the system to be competently managed. Moreover, if things did not work out for them in the Ottoman Empire, they could, in most cases, go back home.

\textbf{REVOLUTION AND MASS POLITICS}

A second important context for the creation of the pan-Turkists was that of the revolutionary era. In the first wave of revolutions to rock Europe since 1848, constitutionalism and parliamentarianism appeared to be winning out in some unexpected places, including Russia (1905), Iran (1906), and the Ottoman Empire (1908).\footnote{On this wave of revolutions, also see Nader Sohrabi’s \textit{Revolution and Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire and Iran} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. 74–86. Mehmet Emin Resulzade was particularly involved in developments taking place in Iran. See Chapter 6 of this study.} These revolutions came on the heels of Japan’s stunning military victory over Russia in 1905—an event that was widely celebrated in the Middle East and Asia as a hopeful sign for the non-Western world.\footnote{In that an Asian country had managed to modernize itself to the degree that it had defeated a European power.} Finally, it seemed, positive change was on the way.\footnote{Japan was also seen to be an important part of the rising of the east. Aydin, \textit{Politics of Anti-Westernism}, 78–83.}

The skills and experiences of the Muslim activists were well suited for the era of mass politics that the 1905 Revolution brought to Russia.\footnote{“The Muslim activists” here refers specifically to Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu, but could also include any number of people associated with Muslim community activism in Russia during these years.} The activists had all lived abroad, spoke foreign languages, and knew the vocabulary of parliamentarianism.\footnote{By which I mean they were comfortable with the discourses and vocabulary of modern politics, which they had seen firsthand in France and read about in newspapers.} Perhaps even more importantly, they could communicate with Russians. At a time when even many Muslim elites could not speak Russian, the Muslim activists
were able to participate in Russian politics in a way that was beyond the capacities of most of their contemporaries. For Akçura, Gasprinskii, Ağaoğlu, and their allies, the newly begun twentieth century appeared very promising. Constitutionalism and parliamentarianism—rather than nationalism or identity—were the main concerns of these figures during their years of activism in Russia.

It was during the course of the Revolution of 1905 that the activists would first cut their teeth on public careers. Gasprinskii, Akçura, and Ağaoğlu would all edit or publish newspapers during this time, putting out news stories and opinion pieces three or four times a week. They also became involved in organizing for the İttifak movement, the “all-Russian Muslim” political organization they helped found in early 1905. İsmail Gasprinskii, who was already well known among the five hundred or so subscribers to his Bahçesaray (Crimea)-based newspaper Tercüman, became one of the most influential early figures in the movement. Akçura, who was related to Gasprinskii by marriage, was soon brought into İttifak and given important tasks to carry out, such as negotiating the movement’s electoral 1906 alliance with the Constitutional Democrats. Ahmet Ağaoğlu, meanwhile, was a newspaper editor, community representative, activist, and suspected criminal. The Muslim activists were concerned with much more than identity. They were looking to bring about change.

**POLITICIZING IDENTITY**

The late imperial era was also a time of what I call “politicized identity.” In using this term I am referring to a tendency, shared by a wide variety of individuals during these years, to articulate political conflict in terms of civilizational difference—usually on a national or religious basis. Separatists waging war in the late Ottoman Balkans and Eastern Europe challenged the legitimacy of multinational and multi-confessional empires by invoking national or religious identity. Meanwhile, government officials in these same empires sought to similarly associate their state with such concepts.

52 In Tatar, the organization was known as the “Bütün Rusya Müslümanları İttifağı” (“The All-Russian Muslim İttifak”).

53 Also known as “Kadets,” the Constitutional Democrats would go on to form the majority in the first parliament.

54 Like Abdütreşid Ibrahimov, Fatih Kerimi, and Mehmet Emin Resulzade.

55 This tendency could also be seen in the United States of the early 1990s with the theories of Samuel Huntington, who argued that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.” “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (Summer 1993), 22–49, here 22.

56 Such as in Greece in the 1820s, and then later in Serbia and Bulgaria. In the Russian Empire it was mainly in the western borderlands—such as among Poles and Ukrainians—that separatist movements fought in the name of national and religious identity were articulated.

57 The militant Catholicism of Napoleon III, the official nationalism adopted under Tsar Nicholas I, and the Islamist rhetoric and symbolism of Abdülhamid II were all examples of this kind of development. On official forms of identity in late imperial Russia see Richard Wortman,
In looking at invocations of identity, I make three main arguments.\(^{58}\) First, the invocation of identity involved tangible and material concerns. When people articulated their case in a civilizational manner during the course of legal, administrative and other conflicts, they usually had practical—rather than simply theoretical—reasons for doing so.\(^{59}\) The creation of pan-Turkism in the early twentieth century was part of this broader context in which discourses pertaining to national or religious identity were employed as a means of accomplishing practical tasks.\(^{60}\)

Second, I argue that the politicization of civilizational identity was a shared project. Even before the creation of Türk Yurdu or the Turkic Hearths, a wide variety of individuals had already contributed to creating—and politicizing—pan-Turkism. These included tsarist government officials, scholars of Oriental studies, and Muslim opponents of the activists, all of whom invoked pan-Turkism in a variety of contexts and for their own specific reasons. While the pan-Turkist intellectuals in Young Turk-era Istanbul are the individuals most closely associated with pan-Turkism, they were hardly alone in creating this discourse.

Third, I look at power relations, and argue that the politicization of civilizational identity was often embedded within them. In particular, I am interested in the impact of an audience’s expectations upon the manner in which a message is delivered, especially in cases in which there are unequal power relations. How people described themselves, and the communities in whose name they spoke, in many ways reflected practices or discourses that were either encouraged or imposed upon them by their interlocutors in the state or elsewhere. This was especially the case with activist-intellectuals like Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu.

THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD

The three major themes of this book—mobility, revolution, and the politicization of identity—were noteworthy features of the late imperial period. They also constitute important characteristics of the post-Cold War era, particularly with regard to the regions of the Middle East and Russia discussed in this book. The experiences

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\(^{58}\) In this respect, I follow Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker in drawing a distinction between identity as a category of practice—that is the invocation of an identity form to an audience—and identity as a category of theoretical analysis. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), “Identity,” 59–90, here 60.

\(^{59}\) By “civilizational manner,” I am referring to the deployment of civilizational terms, including but not limited to nationality and religion.

\(^{60}\) Kemal Karpat has discussed the “politicization of Islam,” writing that “Islam became the instrument of change and adaptation” in the late imperial age. It is this *instrumentalization* of civilizational identity that I am referring to when using this term. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, v.
of the pan-Turkists and the circles in which they traveled provide valuable lessons, I argue, for our present era.

As was the case in the late imperial era, the post-Cold War era has been a time of greatly expanded interactions among different regions of the world. The term that is used today for this practice—globalization—differs in some important ways from the late imperial era. Nevertheless, there were some important areas of overlap. In the post-Cold War era, the border between Turkey and the former Soviet Union opened for the first time in several decades, reflecting a sharp decrease in overall tensions in the region. Also similar to the late imperial era, the post-Cold War era has constituted a time of unprecedented expansion with respect to trade and travel between the countries in the region, especially Turkey and the former USSR. Sectors relating to news and information as well as education have become particularly lively—and contentious—aspects of cross-border relations in the region, much as they were in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are also important parallels between the late imperial age and our own with respect to the theme of revolution and mass politics. The post-Cold War era itself was ushered in by a wave of revolutions, the first to hit Europe since the revolutions discussed in this book. During the Cold War, superpower involvement tended to limit the spread of revolutions to neighboring states, but in the post-Cold War era such waves have become more common. Examples of these include the Arab Spring, the color revolutions of the former USSR, as well as other episodes of mass unrest breaking out in places like Iran, Turkey, and Ukraine. From Georgia to Crimea, from Gezi Park to Syria, the successor states of Russia and the Ottoman Empire are undergoing a period of political volatility and revolutionary change the likes of which has not been seen for generations.

Our era is also one of politicized identity. Beginning in the years immediately following the breakup of the USSR, there has been a tendency to attribute conflict

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61 I am referring to the time period following that of global superpower tensions, underscored by the threat of worldwide nuclear holocaust, which came to an end in the late 1980s. While current US–Russian policies are sometimes described as “returning to the Cold War,” the reach of these tensions is no longer global, but rather is focused almost exclusively upon states which used to be within the Soviet orbit.

62 Mustafa Tuna employs this term in “Imperial Russia’s Muslims” (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2007), 35–6.

63 Also like the late imperial era, the post-Cold War Eurasian borderlands have witnessed numerous small conflicts even as the threat of large-scale conflict between major powers appeared to be receding.

64 Not unlike tsarist officials in the early twentieth century, government officials in Azerbaijan, Russia, and elsewhere have shut down the schools of Turkish preacher Fethullah Gülen.


66 Superpower involvement was important to limiting revolutionary waves. Instead of quick revolutions, protracted civil wars were more common, such as in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

67 This is quite different from the Cold War era, when there were sudden coups and drawn-out conflicts, but relatively few examples of revolutionary waves. The wave of Nasserite coup attempts in the 1950s Middle East constitute the only real example that bears any resemblance at all to post-Cold War waves, and these came at a time when the USA and USSR were still formulating their approach to the Middle East. Once the positions of the superpowers became more settled, the prospect of revolutionary waves dimmed just as they did everywhere else in the Cold War world.
to identity, rather than interests.\textsuperscript{68} As Yugoslavia broke apart in the 1990s, participants and observers alike articulated the conflict in terms of timeless animosity.\textsuperscript{69} This “hatred” was repeatedly described as “centuries old” even as it was apparent that the wars in Yugoslavia were fought over very tangible issues that had arisen relatively recently.\textsuperscript{70}

Two decades later in Iraq, fighting between Sunni and Shiite communities has similarly been depicted as yet another chapter in an eternity of “Sunni–Shiite divide” with many analysts preferring to ignore the very concrete and recent events that have

\textsuperscript{68} Huntington argues that “the fundamental source of conflict” in the new world “will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.” The Clash of Civilizations? 22.

\textsuperscript{69} At the time of the wars in Yugoslavia US Secretary of State Warren Christopher intoned, “The hatred between all three groups—the Bosnians and the Serbs and the Croatians—is almost unbelievable. It’s almost terrifying, and it’s centuries old.” As reported in Samantha Power, A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), xii. A strong rebuttal to this line of thinking can be found in Gregory Harms, It’s Not About Religion (Santa Monica, CA: Perceval Press, 2012).

\textsuperscript{70} Such as the division of Yugoslavia’s foreign debt—not to mention the redrawing of its borders.
created this instability.\textsuperscript{71} Perhaps most notoriously, the attacks of September 11, 2001, were also frequently depicted as expressions of religious hatred, rather than political violence.\textsuperscript{72} Today, in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine, conflicts that are deeply connected to matters like economics, politics, and natural resources are increasingly described in terms of religious and national difference.

**VOICES AND SOURCES**

Traditionally, the pan-Turkists have been viewed through the prism of identity, with older studies on Turkish and Ottoman history usually treating pan-Turkism as the penultimate stage in an “emerging” Turkish nationalism that culminated with the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923.\textsuperscript{73} While more recent accounts have provided somewhat more sophisticated analysis relating to the types of identity that the pan-Turkists formulated, these works often resemble older studies with respect to three points in particular.\textsuperscript{74} First, both older and newer discussions of the pan-Turkists tend to focus narrowly upon ideas and arguments about identity, and make little connection between the pan-Turkists and the larger developments that were taking place around them. Second, the sources that these studies employ are drawn almost entirely from the published writings of the pan-Turkists themselves. Third, the arrival of the pan-Turkists in Istanbul during the Unionist period is generally described in terms of a one-way migration from Russia to Istanbul, rather than as simply the latest step in a lifetime spent crossing borders.\textsuperscript{75}

With respect to the last of these points, narratives surrounding the pan-Turkists have often resembled studies focusing upon mass Muslim migration into the Ottoman

\textsuperscript{71} See, for example, the *Washington Post* video essay that “explains” today’s Sunni–Shiite political conflict in almost entirely religious terms, noting that “[t]he divide between Sunnis and Shias began 1,400 years ago.” Karen DeYoung, “The Sunni–Shiite Divide, Explained.” *Washington Post*, June 13, 2014. (Online source, accessed August 13, 2014.).

\textsuperscript{72} Instead of looking at the specific grievances regarding US policies that Osama bin Laden had been expressing for years—such as support for Israel and the presence of American troops on the Arabian peninsula—many discussions of the attacks have focused instead on concepts like jihad and verses from the Koran.


\textsuperscript{74} Holly Shissler’s *Between Two Empires* builds upon previous studies on the pan-Turkists by going outside Turkey to look carefully at Ahmet Ağaoğlulu’s activities in Paris and, to a lesser extent, Russia. See, especially, 43–150. Shissler also looks beyond Ağaoğlulu’s Turkist identity by looking at his possible interest in Persianism. *Between Two Empires*, 82–3.

\textsuperscript{75} The fact that Akçura and Ağaoğlulu returned to their lands of origin after World War I is often acknowledged, but no connection is made between the return travels of the pan-Turkists and those of other trans-imperial Muslims.
Empire.\textsuperscript{76} In both cases, the relevant literature has tended to pay little attention to the fact that people often returned to Russia or otherwise maintained connections with their lands of origin. Instead, emphasis is placed upon the theme of arrival, and the ultimate transformation of incoming Muslims into Ottomans, and then Turks.\textsuperscript{77} This approach, however, has in recent years been challenged by a small number of scholars who have looked at the Russian–Ottoman frontier in new ways. Examining a range of issues linking people, goods, and state policymaking to developments taking place on both sides of the border, these scholars have produced important works that I seek to build upon with this study.

Many of the works in Ottoman history that have influenced me the most have little or nothing to do with pan-Turkism. Recent studies looking at Jews, Albanians, Greeks, and other groups inside the Ottoman Empire have helped shape my thinking on the experiences of the Muslim communities discussed in this book. While these works tend not to focus directly upon the issue of identity, they nevertheless address the question of how imperial communities viewed themselves vis-à-vis the state.\textsuperscript{78}

This study also engages scholarship on Russia, specifically that which pertains to Muslim communities in the empire. For decades, Muslim communities received scant attention in works on Russian history, with studies on the Muslims of Russia remaining largely the preserve of a small group of “nationalities studies” experts with a background in Turkic languages. In works produced in the 1980s and early 1990s, these scholars drew mainly upon published sources such as newspapers and


memoirs and focused upon the themes of nationalism and Muslim–state conflict in Russia.  

In more recent years, however, historical literature pertaining to Muslim communities in Russia has changed considerably. With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of radical Islamic movements in the Middle East and elsewhere, historians of Russia began, in the first decade of the twentieth century, to turn their attention more closely to the Muslim communities of Russia. These works focus upon the important question of what state policymaking toward Muslims can tell us about the nature of tsarist and Soviet administration. While these studies have opened up exciting new vistas for the study of Muslim communities in Russia by drawing upon previously inaccessible state archival materials, their discussions of Muslim–state interactions in Russia tend to benefit little from the source material produced directly by Muslims. As a result, these studies tend to be more helpful with regard to clarifying the objectives and strategies of tsarist policymakers.


82 What exactly constitutes a “Muslim” voice can be a complicated question, as certain documents such as petitions are produced by Muslims but often translated or otherwise mediated by state officials. As is the case with any other source, petitions need to be read critically, rather than be accepted at face value as unmediated expressions of the community’s will.
and bureaucrats towards Muslims, but less so in relation to the question of how Muslims viewed the tsarist state.\footnote{This is one area where my findings diverge from those of Robert D. Crews. See Chapter 2 of this study.}

One reason why my work asks different questions about the pan-Turkists is because I draw upon sources that have never been used in discussions about these figures. Rather than draw solely upon the published writings of the pan-Turkists themselves, this study employs a broad collection of source material produced in Russian, Ottoman Turkish, and the Turkic languages of the Russian Empire.\footnote{Including languages that we would identify today as Tatar, Crimean Tatar, Bashkir, and Azeri. A smaller number of sources used in this study were written in French, Arabic, and Hungarian.} Some of these sources—such as like the cache of letters written by Yusuf Akçura that I discovered in an archive in Russia—have never been employed at all in published research. Others, meanwhile—such as Russian and Ottoman state archival documents—have only rarely been used in combination with one another. By working in depth in archives and libraries in ten cities spread across Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, I have sought to produce a story of the pan-Turkists unlike any other—one that reflects the trans-imperial experiences of these individuals and the communities in which they lived.\footnote{Istanbul, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Ufa, Simferopol’ Baku, Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi.}

**CHAPTERS AND CONTENT**

In Chapter 1 (“Trans-Imperial People”) I map out the trans-imperial context of the pan-Turkists. I discuss the approaches of trans-imperial Muslims and bureaucrats in the Russian and Ottoman empires to the frontier that divided the two states, and then explain how the pan-Turkists likewise fit into these patterns. While the conditions and lifestyles of the pan-Turkists were different from those of the majority of trans-imperial Muslims, there were also important parallels between them and the broader population.

The next three chapters examine the Russian Muslim political and cultural contexts out of which the pan-Turkists emerged. In Chapter 2 (“Insider Muslims”) I look at developments taking place in Russia in the final decades of the nineteenth century, and argue that these events played a decisive role in the shaping of Muslim political and cultural attitudes in the years following the Russian Revolution of 1905. Chapter 3 (“Activists and the Ulema after 1905”) focuses upon Muslim politics after 1905, and traces the battles over Muslim community leadership that took place during those years. In Chapter 4 (“The Great Muslim Teacher Wars”) I discuss the Muslim culture wars of early twentieth-century Russia, emphasizing the importance of material, as opposed to simply intellectual, factors that played a role in the creation of these conflicts.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus upon identity. Rather than re-hash the somewhat sterile discussions of “identity formulation” that have traditionally dominated scholarly
examination into the pan-Turkists, I concentrate upon the iterative act of naming. In Chapter 5 (“The Politics of Naming”) I look at the ways in which the pan-Turkists and other Muslims in Russia invoked religious and national identity, and argue that there were often practical and material reasons behind the public articulation of identity. In Chapter 6 (“Istanbul and the Pan-Turkic Scene”) I make similar arguments with regard to the activities of the pan-Turkists in Istanbul and the creation of the pan-Turkic brand.

What did it mean to “market” Muslim identity in the late imperial era? Marketing identity, in the manner in which I use the term, refers to an act of salesmanship, of invoking Muslim identity in a manner that is designed to appeal to select audiences. The pan-Turkists were not, I argue, the only individuals involved in the selling of pan-Turkism. Rather, a vast array of individuals—Muslim and non-Muslim—were part of this project.

By tracing the lives of Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu across Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere, this book seeks to provide better answers regarding the agendas of the pan-Turkists. Their story is not, however, limited to this group of fascinating individuals, nor even the communities and states in which they lived. It is also the story of their time. Like George Antonius or Sati al-Husri, the pan-Turkists were people whose lives crossed frontiers, but who ultimately had to make a choice about where they would live and who they would be. While their range of options would become increasingly limited as time passed, the late imperial era nevertheless constituted a moment of great opportunity for them, when anything seemed possible. This book tells the story of that moment.86

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Trans-Imperial People

The pan-Turkists were trans-imperial people, and they were living in a trans-imperial time. In using the term “trans-imperial” I have in mind both the people who crossed borders, and the attitudes and assumptions behind state policymaking that made it possible for so much border-crossing to occur in the first place. In this respect and others, the pan-Turkists fit into a much broader context than that to which scholars have traditionally assigned them.

This chapter examines the trans-imperial context out of which Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu emerged. Before discussing these individuals, however, I first outline the landscape of the world between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in which they and other Muslims lived. I describe the conditions that Muslims found themselves in as they sought to navigate between the two states. I then look at the trans-imperial experiences of the Muslim activists. The people who would, years later, form the core of the pan-Turkist crowd in Young Turk-era Istanbul were, without question, very unusual figures in terms of their education and upbringing. In other ways, however, their experiences reflected those of a broader population of individuals. Such was the case with regard to the trans-imperial context.

RETYAINING SUBJECTS

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, millions of Muslims arrived in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Most, but not all, of these arrivals came from the Balkans and Russia. In the Balkans, the gradual loss of Ottoman territory, and the creation of independent or autonomous states with large Muslim minorities, precipitated a series of clashes in which Muslims were forcibly removed from their homes and lands. In Russia, major incidents of emigration, sometimes forced, took place in Crimea and the Caucasus.

Muslim departures occurred for a variety of reasons. In most cases, people left their homes because they had to. Forced migration, especially of Muslims, was a repeatedly occurring feature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in both

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1 In contemporary social science, many of the people I discuss would be described as “trans-national—a term that does not fit well with a pre-national era.
2 Karpat estimates that 5 million Muslims arrived in the Ottoman Empire from Russia and the Balkans from the Russian conquest of Crimea in 1783 until 1908. Karpat, Ottoman Population, 66.
3 Not all Muslims who left, however, were forced to do so.
the Balkans and Russia. In the Balkans, diplomacy was employed to force Muslims to leave, such as when the protocols ending the Greek War of Independence in 1830 recognized the legality of the seizure of Muslim lands in Greece. At the same time that the Ottoman–Greek protocols were being negotiated in London, a separate agreement between Istanbul and Belgrade granting Serbia autonomy from direct Ottoman rule included a provision to relocate the Muslim population of newly autonomous regions to the remaining Ottoman garrisons. While the Muslim–Christian population exchange that Greece and Turkey implemented in 1923 has been described as a “horrible precedent,” in fact the practice of removing Muslims at least in part by diplomacy was already well established from the early nineteenth century onward.

From Russia, the major incidences of mass human transfer occurred in Crimea and the northern Caucasus. In Crimea, there was a history of emigration and return dating back even prior to the Russian takeover of the peninsula in 1783. In the years immediately following Russia’s conquest, approximately one-third of Crimea’s Muslim population left the region, with most of the emigrants heading to the Ottoman Empire. By the beginning of the Crimean War in 1853, Muslims made up a population of approximately 300,000 in Crimea, or slightly less than half of the peninsula’s overall population.

The Crimean War (1853–56) constituted a veritable demographic earthquake for the region. In the years immediately following the war’s conclusion, 200,000 Crimean Muslims—roughly two-thirds of their entire pre-war population—left for the Ottoman Empire. Both the war itself and the decisions of tsarist officials

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4 Justin McCarthy estimates that 25,000 Muslims had been killed and 10,000 were forced to emigrate. *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 12, 339. Article 1 of the 1826 version of the London Protocol states outright that the aim is “to bring about an entire separation of the individuals of the two nations” (“afin d’effectuer une séparation complète entre les individus des deux nations”). “Protocole Relatif aux Affaires de la Grèce,” signed at St. Petersburg on April 4, 1826, by Wellington, Nesselrode, and Lieven. It has been reproduced in Gabriel Efendi Noradounghian, *Recueil D’Actes Internationaux de l’Empire Ottoman* (Paris: F. Pichon, 1897), 116. The Greek Senate lobbied the British government with the request that “Turks” be removed entirely, arguing that the restitution to them of property taken away from them during war was “entirely incompatible with the existence of the new state.” *Papers Relative to the Affairs of Greece, 1826–1830* (vol. 1) (London: Foreign Office of Great Britain, 1831), 507–8.


6 This quote is from Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (New York: Penguin Press, 1999), 392. Bulgaria and Turkey had carried out a limited and voluntary population exchange in 1913.


8 Kelly O’Neill, “Between Subversion and Submission: The Integration of the Crimean Khanate into the Russian Empire, 1783–1853” (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2006), 1, 46–7. Continued Muslim migration from the region during these years has generally been attributed to the destruction of native social and political institutions, the introduction of serf-oriented agricultural systems, and the settlement of Cossack units on the Crimean coastline. Fisher, “Emigration of Muslims,” 356–7.


played important roles in creating this exodus. Crimea had suffered significant devastation during the course of the fighting, which had taken place in its entirety on the peninsula and in its ports. The allied naval bombardments of Crimea’s largest cities, as well as the trench-warfare that had dominated the battles occurring in the peninsula’s interior, had emptied out entire swaths of territory in both urban and rural Crimea. Meanwhile, the fact that one of Russia’s adversaries during the war was the Ottoman Empire did not augur well for Crimean Muslims, who had linguistic, religious, and historical connections to the Ottomans. Once the war was over, local officials began to exile some Muslims to the Russian interior, moves that prompted many other Crimean Muslims—Tatars and Nogays—to leave for the Ottoman Empire, where it was common for Crimean Muslims to have family connections. It was not unusual for entire villages to leave together.

In the northern Caucasus, meanwhile, the Russian Army undertook a policy of “cleansing” (чохішчення) the region of Muslim populations between 1859 and 1864. These developments occurred in the wake of the 1859 arrest of the Imam Shamil, who had been leading resistance to Russian rule for twenty-five years. The objective of Russian military officials in the north Caucasus was to transfer Muslims from the highlands in the region to lower-lying areas further inside Russia. In all, the Army forcibly expelled more than half a million Muslim highlanders (гортси), mostly Chechens and Circassians, from their homes and lands. About 100,000 people were eventually resettled in Russia’s Kuban region, while a much larger number of Muslim highlanders—estimates range from 400,000 to more than 1 million—opted instead to set out for the Ottoman border.

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12 Many of the departing Muslims were not Crimean Tatars, but rather Nogays, a Turkic group from northern Crimea and elsewhere who are considered distinct from the Tatars. On Tatar and Nogay emigration from Crimea during these years, see McCarthy, Death and Exile, 16–17. Williams, The Crimean Tatars, 174–5. 
13 Memorandum from the regional headquarters, December 15, 1864, in which it was reported that the “goal” of Russian forces in the region was the “cleansing” of the region “of the remaining population.” Central State Archive of the Republic of Georgia (SSSA), f. 545, op. 1, d. 63, l. 311. 
14 This strategy was discussed, for example, in a report produced for the general headquarters in the north Caucasus on August 1, 1858. SSSA, f. 545, op. 1, d. 2, l. 1. 
15 For more on these events, see Dana Sherry, “Social Alchemy on the Black Sea Coast,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 10:1 (Winter, 2009), 7–30, here 8–9. McCarthy, Death and Exile, 36. McCarthy cites Alan Fisher and Kemal Karpat, among others, in his argument that 1.2 million Muslims departed from the northern Caucasus during these years, with 400,000 Muslims dying. Russian officials estimated 400,000 departures total. 
16 Jersild provides a breakdown of the various estimates that have been used by Soviet, Turkish, and Western scholars over the years. Jersild also writes that a total of 418,000 left, while 90,000 were given land in interior provinces. Orientalism and Empire, 26. Also see McCarthy, Death and Exile, 32–4; Karpat, Ottoman Population, 66–9. 
17 Muslims who resisted the Russian government’s plan to forcibly move them into the provincial interior were seen by the Russian Army and civil officials as fanatics whose religion was largely to blame for their rebellious behavior. See, for example, the exchange regarding Muslim fanaticism in response to a suggestion to allow Muslims to elect mullahs. Russian State History Archive (RGIA), f. 821, op. 8, d. 594, ll. 35. 40-ob, 56-ob, 58-ob, 104.
fatalities—mostly due to starvation, exposure, and disease—were in the hundreds of thousands. On at least one occasion, tsarist officials working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs raised the possibility of pursuing a population exchange with their Ottoman counterparts. The idea, first floated in 1873 by a Russian consular official working in Istanbul, involved exchanging portions of the Muslim community in the Kuban region for Armenians from the Ottoman Empire. Noting that Muslims wanted to leave Russia and Christians sought to depart from the Ottoman Empire, the official suggested to the military governor of the Kuban region in the north Caucasus that a “double resettlement” take place. The idea, however, was never followed up, and it is unclear if the Ottomans ever heard of it.

The Crimean War marked an important turning point in the approaches of both empires to Muslim migration. In the Ottoman Empire, the massive and sudden waves of immigration during and after the Crimean War contributed to the emergence of a major public health crisis. Swamped with refugees, Ottoman officials responded with the creation, in 1860, of the Refugee Commission (Muhacirin Komisyonu). The commission was designed to keep incoming Muslims out of the capital and other major cities, and steer them toward regions of the empire that had been targeted for industrial and agricultural development. Later, ethnic and religious considerations would also become factors with regard to where incoming Muslims would be sent. The Ottoman government gave out land to immigrants, usually about twenty-six acres per incoming family, and in some cases exempted refugees from military service. While the Refugee Commission would lead a relatively short life, there would be successor institutions. This approach to settling Muslims would continue to be a feature of the empire until its final days.

18 Sherry writes that “from 1860 to 1865, at least 370,000” people from the northern Caucasus departed for the Ottoman Empire, with another 74,000 to 100,000 resettled inside Russia. “Social Alchemy on the Black Sea Coast,” 77–8. According to the records of Russian military figures in the north Caucasus, 398,000 Muslims left for the Ottoman Empire, and 106,000 remained in Kuban. SSSA, F. 545, ll. 219–23–ob. “Survey about the number of highlanders leaving for Turkey.” May 9, 1864. Estimates using Ottoman and Turkish sources are considerably higher. Karpat, for example, puts the number of Muslims leaving the northern and southern Caucasus between 1859 and 1879 at 2 million, with half a million deaths. Ottoman Population, 69. On explanations behind these discrepancies, see Jersild, Orientalism and Empire, 26.
19 SSSA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2872, ll. 21–5. April 21, 1873, from Russian Consulate in Istanbul to Baron Aleksandr Pavlovich Nikolai.
20 SSSA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2872, l. 21.
22 On settlement policies, see Cuthell, “The Muhacirin Komisyonu,” especially 165–213. Also see Fuat Dündar, İttihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanlara iskan politikası, 1913–1918 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).
24 A Muslim immigrant from Şeki, having settled outside of Bursa, wrote that the refugees (muha- cirin) in his area had been told they would be exempt from conscription for seven years. ADTA f. 45, op. 1, d. 35, ll. 22–3. Dündar also remarks upon this, but states that such practices occurred only in the case of married men, İttihat ve Terakki, 225.
25 On the death of the Refugee Commission in 1865, see Cuthell, “The Muhacirin Komisyonu,” 248. On successor institutions to the Muhacirin Komisyonu, see 249–51. Many of these same policies—accepting large numbers of non-Turkic Muslim refugees, especially—have carried over into the
The Crimean War led to a recalibration among many tsarist officials with regard to how they would approach the issue of Muslim emigration. Stunned by the crushing impact of this population exodus upon the economic and social life of the peninsula, local officials in Crimea began to make it very difficult for Muslims to leave legally. This policy was pursued not because officials were necessarily enthralled by the idea of having large numbers of Muslims living within the empire’s borders, but rather because a large population was considered necessary for growing sufficient quantities of food, developing the country industrially, and maintaining a large tax base and labor force. Muslims may not have been the ideal choice of population, at least as far as tsarist officials were concerned, but such human resources—no matter what their religion—were highly prized for their productive value by officials working on both sides of the frontier.

Consequently, Muslims wishing to emigrate after 1860 were required to first purchase a foreign travel passport. Obtaining this document was a complicated undertaking, and often involved traveling to an administrative office located in a faraway town or city. The passports were, moreover, expensive, and valid for only three weeks after their issue date. Muslims attempting to emigrate without passports were punished, often exiled to regions located deep within the Russian interior. During periods of heavy demand, police officials responsible for processing passport applications would simply stop issuing them to Muslims altogether.

Turkish Republic. Such was the case with Bosnian Muslims and Chechens in the 1990s, and Syrian refugees today.

Although it is often assumed that Russian officials sought out every opportunity to rid their empire of its Muslim communities, this was usually not the case. See, especially, McCarthy’s take on these migrations in Death and Exile, which McCarthy describes as the result of Muslim “expulsion” (see esp. 1, 14–17). Other important studies on Muslim immigration into the Ottoman Empire include Karpat, Ottoman Population; Pinson, “Russian Policy and the Emigration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire;” and Williams, The Crimean Tatars.

As Robert D. Crews has pointed out, state policies regarding Muslim migration varied from one region of Russia to another. “Empire and the Confessional State,” 77–8.

A. Markevich, “Pereseleniia Krymskikh Tatar v Turtsiu v sviazi s dvizheniem naseleniia v Krymu,” Part One, Vestii akademii nauk SSSR (otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk) 1928 (Moscow), 400–1. On the “great migration” following the Crimean War, also see Williams, The Crimean Tatars, 160–7.

By 1902, these passports cost 10 rubles. A. N. Zorin estimates that factory workers in central Russia at this time were earning between 3 and 9 rubles a month, see Goroda i posady dorevolyutsionnogo povolzh’ia: istoriko-etnografcheskie isledovanie naseleniia i poselencheskoj struktury gorodov rossiiskoi provincii vtoroi poloviny XVI-nachala XX vv (Kazan: Izd-vo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2001), 205.


From the districts of Simferopol’ and Yalta, regarding fifteen Tatars trying to leave without passports for the Ottoman Empire. 1861. State Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (GAARK), f. 26, op. 1, d. 24345, ll. 1–2.

See, for example, GAARK, “Regarding Tatar Emigration,” 1893–97. f. 26, op.2, d. 3407, ll. 138, 222, 229–229-ob. In 1902, Russia scored a major diplomatic victory when the Ottoman Empire announced that it would stop accepting Crimean Tatars who arrived in the country without a Russian exit passport. GAARK, f. 26, op. 3, d. 194, l. 161. All the same, Russian Foreign Ministry officials frequently complained that the Ottoman government was not living up to this pledge—a charge denied by Ottoman bureaucrats. See BOA, HRH 575/40.
Prospective applicants complained that they had been told by the police that “Tatars are absolutely forbidden from going abroad.”

Government officials in Russia sought to convince Muslims to not emigrate by appealing to them through respected Muslim interlocutors. Following such an approach often meant sending messages to Muslim communities through the official ulema of Russia, the Muslim spiritual assemblies. The four Muslim spiritual assemblies—known as the Orenburg Assembly, the Crimean Assembly, and the Sunni and Shiite assemblies of the Caucasus—were responsible for matters pertaining to the religious concerns of their communities and the administrative concerns of state authorities. They formed an important means of one-way communication from tsarist officials to Muslim communities. When local officials needed to pass on a message to Muslims in the region, they would usually contact the assembly’s leader—either a müfti or the sheyh ul-Islam—to request that a circular be sent to the members of the local ulema residing in the villages and districts across a given region. These religious personnel were then instructed to read the contents of the circular to their communities after the noon prayers on Friday.

In 1886, Müfti Hüseyin Gayipov of the Sunni Muslim Assembly of the Caucasus issued a circular to the imams and akhunds working under his authority in the region. The müfti denounced Muslim emigration, and invoked Islam in his efforts to dissuade Muslims from emigrating to the Ottoman Empire. The missive, which was cleared with officials working in the Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg, framed its argument in terms of Islam, with Gayipov lamenting in the circular that “some ignorant individuals who do not understand when emigration is required” had been making the argument that Muslims were obliged by


34 In the eyes of tsarist officials, religion was the major cause of the exodus, so in order to fight the migrations it would be necessary to invoke religion. On religion as a factor, in the eyes of tsarist officials, see Williams, The Crimean Tatars, 165.

35 The term “ulema” comes from Islamic civilization, but official correspondence referred to the four bodies of ulema as part of the empire’s spiritual (dukhovnoe) administration. The terms spiritual administration, spiritual assemblies, and ulema all refer to the same institutions in this book.

36 The Orenburg Assembly was based in Ufa, about 800 miles to the east of Moscow. The official name of the Crimean Assembly was the Tavridian Muslim Authority, named after the province into which Crimea was incorporated in Russia (Tavrida, or “Tauride” in some studies). Since most Muslims simply referred to this institution as the Crimean authority, I have done likewise. The two assemblies for the Caucasus were only responsible for Muslims living in the southern region or “Transcaucasia” (Zakafkaz’ie), including today’s Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

37 The three Sunni Muslim assemblies, located in central Russia, Crimea, and Tbilisi, were each run by a müfti. The title of the head of the Shiite assembly in Tbilisi was sheyh ul-Islam.

38 The terms imam, akhund, and müezzin all referred to titles held by lower-level spiritual personnel in Russia, usually presiding over a mosque or prayer-house in a village or district of a town. Danil’ Azamatov reports that in 1835 there were 2,039 members of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, which was responsible for managing Muslim affairs in European Russia and Siberia. Orenburgskoe Magometanskoie Dukhovnoe Sobranie v kontse XVIII—XIX vv (Ufa: Gilem, 1999), 97.
Sharia to emigrate. Not only, wrote Gayipov, was emigration from the “motherland” (vatan)—by which he meant Russia—not required, but those people attempting to convince Caucasian Muslims to needlessly undertake the hardships of emigration were themselves acting contrary to Sharia.

A few years later, officials in the Kazan branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs would similarly employ the local ulema in an effort to discourage Muslims from leaving the region. In 1894 they contacted Müfti Muhammadyar Soltanov of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. Officials in the Ministry were concerned about rumors regarding an alleged agreement between the tsar and the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II. According to the rumor, the agreement had allowed the Russian government to forcibly baptize all of its Muslim subjects, in exchange for giving the Ottoman government a free hand to act against its own non-Muslim populations. Officials working in the Kazan branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had heard rumors that Muslims in central Russia were planning a massive exodus from the region. Determined to stop this from happening, they contacted Müfti Soltanov. Soltanov agreed to produce a message to dissuade Muslims from attempting to leave. The müfti’s circular to the Orenburg ulema reminded Muslims that “the government allows us to freely confess Islam, to carry out our religious practices, and construct mosques openly and without constraint.”

As in the Caucasus and central Russia, tsarist officials working in Crimea sought to stifle Muslim emigration by appealing to them through influential voices. Such was the case in 1902, when an estimated 10,000 families departed for the Ottoman Empire. As the crisis wore on, the governor of Tavrida province, in which the Crimean peninsula was located, dispatched a desperate missive to the one man who could reach a broad audience of Muslims through his newspaper: İsmail Gasprinskii. “In my capacity as Governor of the province of Tavrida,”

40 In Russian historiography, the Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del is also sometimes referred to as the “Interior Ministry.”
41 Gayipov’s announcement can be found in the files of the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Faiths. RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 599, ll. 292–5. Also see Selim Deringil, “The Ottoman Empire and Russian Muslims: Brothers or Rivals?” Central Asian Survey 13:3 (1994), 409–16. For an Ottoman report on these events, see BOA, YA HUS 203/20, s. 11–13. Also see Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 17–18.
42 National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (NART), f. 1, op. 3, d. 9603, ll. 7, 9, 17, 23, 48, and 64. These are various reports about rumors taking place in the province in the early 1890s, which were submitted to the governor of Kazan province on March 25, 1894. This is from Il’dus Zagidullin, “Tatarskie krest’iane Kazanskoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX v. (60-90-e gg.)” (Kand. Dissertation, Kazan Scientific Center, RAS Institute of Language, Literature and History, 1992), esp. 169. My use of “central Russia” includes Volga-Ural cities such as Kazan, Nizhni Novgorod, Chistopol’, and Ufa, as well as other central imperial populations such as those of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vilnius.
43 Soltanov’s language was almost identical to that employed in an anti-emigration article published by İsmail Gasprinskii four years earlier, which had similarly reminded Muslims that “nobody prevents us from confessing our religion. Our religious practices are not constrained.” "Ob emigratsii," Tercüman, March 18, 1890. For Soltanov’s circular and the surrounding correspondence, see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 9603, ll. 142, 208–9 ob. A copy of the circular can also be found in Sbornik tirkul’arov i inykh’ runovodiashchikh’ rasporiadzhenii po okrugu Orenburgskogo Magometanskago Dukhovnogo Sobraniia 1836–1903 (Ufa: Gubernskaia tipografia, 1905), 112.
44 Estimating these family units at four members each, the 40,000 individuals would have constituted one-fifth of the Crimean Tatar population of 200,000.
wrote the governor, “I respectfully request you, dear sir, to notify and warn” Tatars wishing to emigrate of the dangers which lie ahead. In particular, the governor wanted Gasprinskii to tell Tatars that they should not sell off their property until they had received official permission to leave the country—permission that local authorities had already stopped granting.45

The governor was not asking Gasprinskii to do anything that ran counter to the activist’s beliefs, as Gasprinskii had campaigned against Muslim emigration from Crimea for decades. Indeed, the issue of Muslim emigration was just one of several points on which the Muslim activists and tsarist officials shared common ground. On earlier occasions, Gasprinskii had sought to gain influence with tsarist officials with respect to government policymaking toward Muslims in Crimea and elsewhere in Russia.46 Now, with the governor asking for his help, Gasprinskii jumped at the chance to establish better credentials with the local administration. He ran four articles in Tercüman railing against emigration in the months following the governor’s request, and his work did not go unnoticed.47 Later in the year, during the visit of Tsar Nicholas II to Crimea, Gasprinskii was presented with a golden cigarette case in recognition of his “service to the empire.”48

Persuasion could only go so far, however. Tsarist officials also employed force, and the threat of force, to intimidate Muslims into staying. In 1896, 395 families from the central Russian provinces of Ufa and Samara appealed to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs for permission to immigrate to the Ottoman Empire. When their request was declined, fifty-two of these families left anyway, traveling south toward the city of Rostov in southern Russia en route to Istanbul. Learning of their plan, officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered the families transported back to their home region. “Decisive steps,” wrote Ministry of Internal Affairs officials in St. Petersburg, “must be taken to put a stop to Muslim migration” from the region.49 Indeed, such steps were taken at times, such as in 1898 when Russian soldiers in the Black Sea port of Batumi opened fire upon local Muslims as they ran toward a boat headed for the Ottoman Empire.50

Tsarist officials also sought to prevent Muslims from traveling to the Ottoman Empire for purposes of pilgrimage—religious journeys to Sunni and Shiite holy sites in the Ottoman Empire that were almost always discouraged and frequently

45 Letter to İsmail Gasprinskii from governor of Tavrida province. 22 May, 1902. GAARK, f. 26, op. 3, d. 194, ll. 133–133 ob.
46 In 1892 Gasprinskii sent a memorandum to Governor-General Vrevskii of Turkestan on Muslim educational institutions in Crimea. As Adeeb Khalid reports, Gasprinskii was seeking to influence policy and argued in favor of Muslims learning Russian. The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 78–9.
47 Cafer Seydahmet Kırımer cites the following four articles and dates: “Lazim bir nesihat, gafil olma!” 15 Mayıs, 1902; “Hicret,” 21 teşrin, 1902; “Hicret pasaportu,” 3 ikiinciteşrin, 1902; “Dost davuşu,” ikiinciteşrin 11, 1902. Also see Kırımer, Gaspiralı İsmail Bey: Dilde, Fikirde, işte Birlik (İstanbul: Matbaacılık ve Neşriyat Türk Anonim Şirketi, 1934), 163–4.
48 This information can be found in GAARK, f. 26, op. 3, d. 237, l. 211. Also see Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 18–19.
49 This was part of a report written in 1910. RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 469, ll. 225–6. For a view into Ottoman reactions to the plight of these families, see BOA, YA HUS 391/87.
50 BOA, Y. Mtv. 188/127.
banned.\textsuperscript{51} From 1865 to 1881, St. Petersburg prohibited Muslims from going to Mecca and Medina altogether, and throughout the late nineteenth century this ban was sporadically reintroduced. Believing that the participation of “a significant number of Caucasian Muslims in the pilgrimage is far from being in conformity with our political interests,”\textsuperscript{52} tsarist officials obliged pilgrims to leave their families behind, lest they decide to settle permanently in Ottoman lands.\textsuperscript{53} Throughout, state officials viewed the undertaking by Russian Muslims of the pilgrimage into Ottoman lands as “extremely harmful and undesirable” to Russia’s interests.\textsuperscript{54}

The only times in which tsarist officials seemed to relent in their efforts to prevent Muslims from traveling to the Ottoman Empire for pilgrimage was when they stood to make money from the venture. The hajj was big business, after all, involving extensive arrangements for transportation and lodging. In 1865, an enterprising Foreign Ministry official based in Tehran contacted his superiors in St. Petersburg to ask permission to open up Muslim pilgrimage routes to Ottoman Iraq to private enterprise. The official had found a partner that he wanted to work with, but was rebuffed by his superiors in the capital.\textsuperscript{55} In Odessa, local officials actually did go into business with Muslim entrepreneurs in developing hajj infrastructure after the ban on pilgrimage was lifted, but this effort was also short-lived in the face of official resistance to the plan.\textsuperscript{56}

Despite the best efforts of tsarist officials in St. Petersburg and on the frontier, it was relatively easy to slip past border posts undetected. Whether by boat or through the mountains, Muslims and others were able to cross easily and illegally. The statistics were enough to throw some into despair. In 1895, Russian consular officials in Baghdad concluded that in 1894, 98.25\% (out of a total of 1,923) of Muslim pilgrims to Ottoman Iraq had done so without official permission from the Russian government.\textsuperscript{57} Traveling along the sparsely populated Russian–Iranian frontier, illegal crossers had encountered few obstacles. Redoubling their efforts to close these illegal crossings, these officials were eventually able to report some success. By November and December 1895, illegal crossings had reduced to just over half of all cross-border traffic in the area.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{51} On Muslim pilgrimage from Central Asia, see Can, “Connecting People.”
\textsuperscript{52} SSSA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2570, ll. 2–3. Letter from the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, January 10, 1872, addressed to the office of the vice-regency in the Caucasus.
\textsuperscript{53} SSSA, f. 5, op, 1, d. 7142, ll. 1–5. 1872. Correspondence from the administrative head of the Kuban region to the Minister of Internal Affairs.
\textsuperscript{54} SSSA, f. 12, op. 2, d. 271, ll. 15-ob. Copy of a report by the Office of the Russian Imperial Consulate in Baghdad, 1896.
\textsuperscript{55} In particular, it seems that the official was interested in opening routes to Shiite pilgrimage sites in Karbala and elsewhere. RGIA, 821–8–1173.
\textsuperscript{56} Eileen Kane has discussed a “khajikhane,” or inn, built by a Muslim merchant in Odessa with state credits and insider connections for the 1908 pilgrimage, “Odessa as a Hajj Hub: 1880s to 1910s,” NCEEEER Working Paper, March 10, 2011, 18–19.
\textsuperscript{57} On Central Asian pilgrims to the Ottoman Empire, see Can, “Trans-Imperial Trajectories,” esp. 102–48.
\textsuperscript{58} Or 51\% and 55\% of total crossings, respectively. SSSA, f. 12, op. 2, d. 271, ll. 15-ob. Copy of a report by the office of the Russian Imperial Consulate in Baghdad, 1896.
The Russian and Ottoman states had very different approaches to the concept of subjecthood. Not unlike the policies of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Jewish refuseniks in the 1970s and 1980s, the Russian government relinquished its Muslim subjects only with great difficulty. The Ottoman government, meanwhile, granted subjecthood to incoming Muslims quickly and easily. But if becoming an Ottoman subject was a rather straightforward undertaking, keeping one’s Russian subjecthood was even simpler. When combined, these two conditions allowed for the creation of a large group of Muslims who became de facto subjects of Russia and the Ottoman Empire simultaneously.

The relative ease with which a foreign Muslim could become an Ottoman is reflected in a letter written in 1901 by a Russian Muslim recently arrived in the Ottoman Empire. The message, which was intercepted by tsarist officials, described the individual’s travels from Şeki, in today’s Azerbaijan, to Istanbul, where the letter-writer was accepted as a refugee (muhacir) by Ottoman authorities. He was given money and, eventually, land outside the city of Bursa.

I went to the station near Şeki and from there boarded a train. Within 24 hours I had arrived in Batumi. Once there, I was left with just 9 rubles. After 5–10 more days of waiting and travel we arrived in the Ottoman city of Rize. From there I boarded a boat and, without paying anything, traveled to Trabzon. This is the seat of the regional governor’s office. In the ports of both Rize and Trabzon there were a number of Ottoman policemen looking for refugees. They separated the muhacirin from the non-muhacirin, and once they got a look at our clothes they put us in among the muhacirin. In Trabzon we met up to 70 other muhacirin. Some of them were Tatar, some were Çerkez, some were Georgian, some Dagestani. Some of us had money, some of us didn’t. They gave us free transport to Istanbul and bread for 7 days.

Dual subjecthood could have its advantages, and in some cases Muslims from Russia were able to develop strategies that allowed them slip through the cracks appearing between the two imperial bureaucracies. After the prohibition against pilgrimage to Mecca was reinstated by the Russian government in 1897, for example, police working in the Crimean cities of Kerch, Sevastopol, Yalta, and Yevpatoria noted that there had been a “several-fold” increase in the number of Ottoman subjects claiming that their passports had been lost or stolen. Many of these Ottoman subjects were actually native Crimean Tatars who had left Russia without renouncing Russian subjecthood, then obtained Ottoman subjecthood prior to returning to Crimea with both passports. On this and other forms of dual subjecthood, see subsequent sections of this chapter.

59 I use the term “subjecthood” instead of “citizenship” because I wish to refer simply to the question of which passport they carried, rather than discuss a more theoretical relationship connected to participatory politics.

60 Muhacirin is the plural of muhacir.

61 This letter was attached to a police report sent to the office of the governor of Baku. ADTA, f. 45, op. 1, d.35, ll. 22–3-ob. Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 26.

62 Many of these Ottoman subjects were actually native Crimean Tatars who had left Russia without renouncing Russian subjecthood, then obtained Ottoman subjecthood prior to returning to Crimea with both passports. On this and other forms of dual subjecthood, see subsequent sections of this chapter.
Trans-Imperial People

Ottomans reporting missing passports were actually selling them. Russian Muslim subjects, it seemed, were buying these Ottoman passports for between 10 and 50 rubles apiece. After selling the passport, the Ottoman subjects would get a replacement from the Ottoman consulate in Simferopol. The buyers, who were Muslims "primarily from the provinces of Kazan, Simbirsk, and Astrakhan," would then travel to the Ottoman Empire posing as Ottoman subjects. As this was a time when passports had no photographs on them, and carried only the most basic description of the bearer's physical appearance, it was relatively easy to assume another person's identity.

The orderly and subsidized fashion through which Russian Muslims could gain Ottoman papers was a long-standing bone of contention for the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Russian embassy in Istanbul complained that the Ottoman authorities recognized Russian Muslims as refugees "simply upon their declaration of a desire to settle in the [Ottoman] empire." The Ottoman government, they wrote, was allowing Muslims to enter the country and become Ottoman subjects "even if they do not possess a Russian foreign travel passport." Tsarist officials sent a note insisting that the Ottoman Empire should "never" recognize as refugees Muslims who had left Russia unless the immigrants had renounced their Russian subjecthood first. In 1902, Russia scored a diplomatic victory when the Ottoman Empire announced that it would stop accepting Crimean Tatars who arrived in the country without a Russian exit passport. Nevertheless, Russian Foreign Ministry officials continued to complain that the Ottoman government was not living up to this pledge—a charge denied by their Ottoman counterparts.

EMIGRATION AND RETURN

For many Muslims, the voyage to the Ottoman Empire was something very different from a final, one-way trip. Russia remained an option to be retained, like their passports, for future consideration and possibilities. One consequence of these circumstances was that Russian Foreign Ministry officials claimed administrative authority over a sizeable portion of Ottoman subjects. Anyone who had left Russia without having gone through the official process of renouncing their Russian subjecthood was likely to be considered by Russian officials to still be a subject of the empire. This approach by the Russian government constituted one in a series of moves between officials in the two empires working on the same question: which state had legal authority over trans-imperial Muslims?

63 GAARK, f. 26, op. 2, d. 4314, ll. 1–1 ob. Report by director of the police to the governor of Tavrida province, March 5, 1898.
64 So long as they were of the right age, gender, and basic physical appearance. GAARK, f. 26, op. 2, d. 4313, l. 6; f. 26, op. 2, d. 4314, ll. 1–1 ob, 5–6 ob.
65 BOA, HRH 575/40. BOA, HRH 575/40. Also see Can, "Connecting People."
66 This is referred to in correspondence from the governor's office of Tavrida province. GAARK, f. 26, op. 3, d. 194, l. 161.
67 BOA, HRH 575/40.
Return immigration was seen most often among the Crimean Tatars. The trip between their homeland and the Ottoman Empire was considerably shorter and easier than was the case for people coming from the Caucasus. The trip was also across relatively calm terrain, either overland through the Balkans or across the Black Sea by ship, as opposed to journeying over mountains. Moreover, the Crimean Tatars had a good reputation among tsarist and Ottoman officials alike. Unlike the Muslims of the north Caucasus, who often experienced difficulties in their relations with government officials in both states, Tatars were coveted on both sides of the imperial frontier.69

Almost as soon as the Crimean War had ended, some of the Muslims who had emigrated from the region in recent years began petitioning for the right to return. Tsarist bureaucrats in Crimea and St. Petersburg, alarmed by the departure of two-thirds of the peninsula’s Tatar population (and more than half of its total population), were amenable to the idea, authorizing a partial return of the emigrants. In June 1861 a Council of Ministers meeting in St. Petersburg acknowledged that “their return might be, to a certain degree, useful, provided it is carried out with extreme caution.”70

Not everyone benefited from the state’s new approach to Muslim returns. In authorizing Russian consulates in the Ottoman Empire to begin issuing new Russian passports to Crimean Muslims who wished to return, officials in St. Petersburg ordered that only those immigrants who owned land, or who agreed to purchase land, would be eligible to receive the passports. Landless immigrants who wished to return were, however, still allowed to petition for permission to do so.71 In all, about 10,000 Tatars were given new Russian passports and returned to Crimea during the years 1861–63.72 Many others—perhaps several thousand—who had not been able to receive new passports returned to Crimea anyway with Ottoman passports. Some of these individuals continued to live in Crimea, as restrictions limiting their stay in Russia to six months do not appear to have been carefully enforced.73

69 A Muslim from the north Caucasus was sent to Siberia in 1872 for coming back from the Ottoman Empire without permission. SSSA, f. 545, op. 1, d. 646. October 15, 1872. For similar cases, see f. 545, op. 1, d. 990. In 1869 one Matsa Gulioglu left for the Ottoman Empire, then came back to his village illegally. He was sent to Siberia for five years. Mehmed Beyoglu and his family left Russia in 1873 and came back from the Ottoman Empire three years later. Their punishment was to be sent to the interior provinces of the empire indefinitely. F. 545, op. 1, d. 1287. Tsarist officials on the border arrested hundreds of Muslims trying to sneak back into Russia. F. 545, op. 1, d. 2852, ll. 285–310, 313–23.

70 Correspondence from the governor-general of Novorossiisk and Bessarabia to the governor of Tavrida province, August 2, 1861. ADTA, f. 524, op. 1, d. 82, l. 39. Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 21.

71 Correspondence from the governor-general of Novorossiisk and Bessarabia to the governor of Tavrida province, 1861. GAARK, f. 26, op. 1, d. 24165, ll. 41–4; ADTA, f. 525, op. 1, d. 82, ll. 39–40. This is also described in Markevich, “Pereseleniia Krymskikh Tatar,” 404–5.

72 Markevich, “Pereseleniia Krymskikh Tatar,” 401.

73 Correspondence from the governor-general of Novorossiisk and Bessarabia to the governor of Tavrida province, September 30, 1865. ADTA, f. 524, op. 1, d. 82, ll. 47–8. Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 21.
While it was more common for Russian officials to seek to accommodate Crimean Muslims, there were also cases in which similar developments took place in the Caucasus. In 1906, Hasan Ağâ Menabde, a resident of Batumi, wrote to the provincial governor with a request for assistance regarding his son’s return to Russia. Hasan’s son, Mehmed Ali, had left his village outside Batumi in 1894 in order to join his sister in the Ottoman Black Sea city of Ordu. While in the Ottoman Empire, however, Mehmed Ali had run afoul of the law, and had been imprisoned. Investigating the matter, tsarist officials working in the office of the governor of Batumi discovered that Mehmed Ali had never renounced his Russian subjecthood. Approximately one month after receiving Hasan Ağâ’s petition, officials working in the Batumi governor’s office wrote to the Russian consulate in Istanbul with the request that they intervene on Mehmed Ali’s behalf, as he was a Russian subject who wished to return to Russia.74

A larger-scale endeavor took place in an effort to help former Abkhaz emigrants return to Russia. In the early 1880s, officials working in the province of Kutaisi near the southeastern coast of the Black Sea raised funds to aid the return of Abkhaz, who had left Russia for the Ottoman Empire after the 1877–78 Russian–Ottoman War. The Abkhaz were now petitioning to return to Russia, but the land they had previously lived on had been given over to colonists arriving from the interior provinces of Russia. The district governor allocated the sum of 59,305 rubles, in amounts ranging mostly between 20 and 50 rubles per family, to returning Abkhaz until the early 1890s.75

Even in the years following the Young Turk takeover in Istanbul, when tsarist officials began to see pan-Turkists hiding under every bed, pragmatism continued to shape policy regarding these issues. Shortly after the Unionists wrested power from Abdülhamid II in 1908, many Crimean Muslim families that had immigrated to the Ottoman Empire during the 1902 mini-exodus sought permission from Russia to return to Crimea.76 Most of these individuals were no longer Russian subjects, as they had renounced their Russian subjecthood upon departing the empire. Unable to receive official permission from the Russian government to go back legally, they had returned anyway, using their Ottoman passports to return to their homelands as foreigners.77 After some investigation, local officials managed to locate 541 such families.78 Russian officials gave them the option to receive

74 Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (AARA), f. 1, op. 1, d. 255, ll. 1-2-2-ob, 8.
75 Report by Sukhumi district chief to Kutaisi military governor, December 8, 1883. Kutaisi Central Archive (KtSA, Kutaisi, Georgia), f. 186, d. 767, esp. ll. 1–13. Also see KtSA, f. 186, d. 775.
76 A noticeable increase in the number of formerly Russian—and currently Ottoman—Muslims applying for residence permits or Russian citizenship can be detected after the 1908 Unionist takeover in Istanbul, and particularly from mid-1909 onward. See GAARK, f. 27, op. 7, dd. 6434, 6447, 6461, 6468, 6493, 6494, 6495, 6553, 6568, 6573, and many others. Also see ADTA, f. 524, op. 1, d. 83, l. 67.
77 Indeed, even in 1902 police in Crimea had begun to investigate the “noticeable” increase in Ottoman subjects living in the region permanently and without registration. GAARK f. 26, op. 3, d. 262, l. 2.
78 ADTA, f. 524, op. 1, d. 83, ll. 79. Letter from the Executive Council of the Provincial Legislature (zemstvo) of Tavrida province, to the governor of Tavrida province, August 27, 1912. These documents from Crimea, which are copies of originals, were apparently shipped to the Baku archive in the 1970s.
Russian subjecthood again and stay in Crimea legally. Roughly two-thirds of those asked accepted the offer, but those not wishing to become Russian subjects appear to have been allowed to stay in Crimea anyway.\textsuperscript{79}

Location meant everything. As was the case with most aspects of tsarist policymaking toward the empire’s Muslim communities, conditions varied greatly from one region to another with regard to policies surrounding migration. While the Crimean Tatars and the Abkhaz were permitted to return to Russia and resettle, not everyone was given this chance. In the years following the mass exodus of Muslims from the northern Caucasus in 1858–64, many Chechens attempted to return to Russia from the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the Crimean Tatars, however, Chechens were apprehended in the border region or else punished with exile to the interior provinces of the empire, frequently to Siberia.\textsuperscript{80}

**SUBJECTS OF THE SULTAN?**

Russian subjecthood did not end at the border. Even Muslims from Russia who stayed in the Ottoman Empire and never went back to Russia were able to benefit from their status as Russian subjects. As dual subjects, they could break certain laws in the Ottoman Empire without facing punishment. Even Muslims who had arrived from Russia as refugees claimed Russian subjecthood when they found themselves under arrest, conscripted, or otherwise in trouble with Ottoman authorities. As subjects of Russia, they had special rights which had been granted to them as a result of the capitulation treaties, and which made it particularly hard to prosecute foreign subjects living in Ottoman territories. Holding more than one passport carried some very important practical benefits.

Tsarist officials stationed in the Ottoman Empire almost always supported the claims of trans-imperial Muslims to still be Russian subjects, even when years had passed since these individuals had left Russia. In most cases, tsarist officials working on these cases would refuse to help only if no record existed that the individual had ever been Russian, or if documents existed showing that they had renounced their Russian subjecthood. If, however, the individual in question could prove Russian subjecthood and there was no record of renunciation, then Russian

It was around this same time that documents pertaining to the ulema in the Caucasus were reportedly transferred from Tbilisi to Baku.

\textsuperscript{79} “Survey of the Number of Crimean Tatar Emigrants Brought on to the List.” ADTA, f. 524, op. 1, d. 83, ll. 5-8-ob, 91-91-ob.

\textsuperscript{80} See the various petitions from individuals punished for having tried to leave Russia illegally in SSSA, f. 545, op. 1, d. 645. Ll. 21–2, correspondence from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, November 6, 1872; ll. 24–7, February 18, 1873. More on Chechens attempting to return—and being punished for these efforts—can be found in SSSA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2202; 2872, ll. 47–92; f. 545, op. 1, dd. 646; 990; 1214; 1287.
Foreign Ministry officials would tenaciously do battle with their Ottoman counterparts in claiming the subjecthood of these individuals for Russia.

Such practices fit in perfectly with what Russia was doing with respect to other religious communities. Since the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774, tsarist officials had been claiming that they had been given the right to protect the interests of Orthodox Christians who were Ottoman subjects.⁸¹ Jews who had fled Russia for Palestine and other parts of the Ottoman Empire were also the subjects of tug-of-wars between Russian and Ottoman officials, with the tsarist Foreign Ministry seeking to register Russian-born Jews as Russian subjects.⁸² In terms of population, however, the numbers of trans-imperial Jews and Christians were small relative to Muslims.

In 1907, a man named Nebi İsmailoğlu received assistance from the Russian Consulate in Erzurum and the embassy in Istanbul when he faced the charge of murdering his wife. Nebi, a Russian-born Muslim who had lived in Erzurum for seven years, had initially been treated by Ottoman authorities as one of their own subjects. He had informed jailers that he was from Russia, and therefore a Russian subject, but still he had not been released. When the Russian embassy learned about the event, they sent a note to Ottoman Foreign Minister Tevfik Pasha, specifically complaining about the behavior of the Erzurum governor, one Nuri Bey. The embassy demanded that Nebi be recognized as a subject of Russia and allowed to receive Russian consular assistance to help with his defense.⁸³

Tsarist officials in the Ottoman Empire similarly assisted one Derviş Mehmed in his battles with Ottoman authorities following his arrest on unspecified charges. Having arrived in the Ottoman Empire from Russia four years earlier, Mehmed had quickly received identification documents (tezkere-i Osmaniye) from the Ottoman authorities.⁸⁴ While Ottoman officials considered him to now be an Ottoman, they were challenged by the tsarist counterparts and Mehmed himself. Russian embassy officials in Istanbul challenged their Ottoman interlocutors to examine a folded document that had been attached to Derviş Mehmed’s tezkire (papers) by the Russian Consulate in Bursa. This paper would constitute Mehmed’s get-out-of-jail-free card, because it stated that the Russian government continued to recognize him as a subject of Russia. Embassy officials insisted that he be immediately placed in the custody of the Russian consulate in Istanbul.⁸⁵

Even the dead were fought over. Such was the case with Muhammed Kasumbaev, who had emigrated in 1884 from Russian Central Asia to Jeddah, where he had

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⁸² Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 186. Campos writes insightfully on the unsuccessful efforts of Ottoman authorities to reclaim control over Ottoman subjects who were foreign born or “protected”; that is, claimed by foreign states. *Ottoman Brothers*, 62–4.
⁸³ Correspondence from the Russian embassy, Istanbul, to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, April 10, 1907. BOA, HRH 576/41, s. 1–2.
⁸⁴ Can reports that it was similarly easy for Central Asian Muslims to obtain Ottoman papers in the Hejaz. “Trans-Imperial Trajectories,” 257.
⁸⁵ Correspondence from the Russian embassy, Istanbul, to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, BOA, HRH 574/49.
passed away some nine years later. Almost a decade after Kasimbaev’s demise, Russian and Ottoman officials were still arguing over his possessions. The Russian Foreign Ministry insisted that Kasimbaev’s personal items be given to Russian consular authorities for remission to his relatives in Russia. The Ottoman Foreign Ministry refused to permit this, arguing that Kasimbaev had been a subject of the Ottoman Empire and that the Russian government had no right to claim his belongings. The Ottomans eventually kept the expired pilgrim’s possessions.

Russian Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire often contacted Russian consular officials in moments of personal necessity, requesting and receiving assistance regarding a variety of legal and financial matters. Heyti Latifoğlu, a Dağestani rug merchant who had been living in Istanbul for “many years,” was aided by the Russian consulate in 1896 in getting some articles he was importing released from Ottoman customs. A year later, one Abdül Kerim and three of his friends got in touch with the Russian consulate for help regarding a dispute involving the purchase of some property. When Istanbul resident Gül Mehmet and his son Hüseyin were imprisoned in 1896 for one week for theft, the Russian consulate in Istanbul protested vigorously to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry on their behalf.

Policies varied from one region to another, but in most cases the goal was to retain human resources, no matter what kind. There was relatively little emigration of Muslims from central Russia, who at any rate were much closer to Warsaw than Istanbul. In Crimea, meanwhile, many government officials may have initially been content to allow Muslims to leave in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but after the mass Muslim departure from the peninsula following the Crimean War, measures were taken to control and, if possible, reverse the tide. Even in the Caucasus, where some of the most violent encounters between the Russian Army and Muslim communities took place, the objective was to retain Muslims and use them as efficiently as possible, rather than to simply give them away.

TRANS-IMPERIAL ACTIVISTS

Gasprinskii, Akçura, and Ağaoğlu all grew out of this trans-imperial context. In this respect, their lives paralleled those of a much larger population of border-crossers. İsmail Gasprinskii, the best-known of all the Muslim reformers from Russia, grew up in the aftermath of destruction. Born in 1851 in the village

86 Correspondence from the Russian embassy, Istanbul, to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, BOA, HRH 571/31, s. 1–2.
88 Correspondence from the Russian embassy, Istanbul, to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. May 21, 1896, BOA, HRH 572/19.
89 Correspondence from the Russian embassy, Istanbul, to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. BOA, HRH 572/54, s. 1–2.
90 Correspondence from the Russian embassy, Istanbul, to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, October 26, 1897. BOA, HRH 572/21, s. 1–6.
91 Kazan is approximately 1,800 miles overland from Istanbul and 1,200 miles from Warsaw.
of Avcıköy, Gasprinskii was forced to relocate with his parents during the course of the Crimean War. These years of destruction, loss, and depopulation made up the environment surrounding Gasprinskii’s childhood. As a young man, however, Gasprinskii looked abroad—a path that his parents seem to have encouraged as well. The future activist and campaigner against Muslim emigration spent much of his youth trying to get away from home.

No one expected Gasprinskii to stay in Crimea, nor would he. Compared to the pre-war Crimea into which Gasprinskii had been born, two out of three Muslims were now gone. The populations of entire villages had suddenly vanished. Their inhabitants had, after the war, set out for the Ottoman Empire. While some who departed would eventually make their way back to Crimea, most would not. The disappearance of so many people had a devastating impact upon the remaining population. Schools and mosques stood empty. There seemed to be little future in a place like this, amid a constantly shrinking population.

İsmail’s parents believed in the value of integrating with tsarist society. They also felt strongly about providing their son with skills that would allow him to leave Crimea and make a life elsewhere if necessary. Gasprinskii’s father, who, at the time of İsmail’s birth, had recently been ennobled, was once a protégé of M. S. Vorontsov, the governor-general of the Caucasus from 1844–54. The family was of mirza class, which placed them within the lower ranks of the Crimean Tatar gentry. Early on, İsmail had been exposed to Russian education and culture, studying the Russian language and attending a Russian gymnasium in the regional capital of Simferopol’. At age twelve, Gasprinskii was sent to a military academy in Voronezh, located approximately 600 miles north of Simferopol’. After two years in Voronezh, Gasprinskii moved even further away from home, to Moscow, where he continued his education at another military academy for two more years.

In 1867, Gasprinskii left Moscow for good. When school let out for the summer, Gasprinskii and a classmate named Mustafa Davydovich decided to make a run for the Ottoman border. Like so many of Gasprinskii’s fellow Crimean Tatars, İsmail and Mustafa saw a future for themselves in emigration. The two boys traveled more than 600 miles from Moscow to Odessa, where they had hoped to catch a ship to Istanbul. Their plan was thwarted, however, when neither was able to produce an exit passport.

As had been the case with many other Muslims in Russia, and especially Crimea, İsmail and Mustafa had become caught in Russia’s anti-emigration net. Soon, İsmail was back home in Bahçesaray. There would be no return to the military school in Moscow.

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93 Kırımer, Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, 13.
96 Mustafa Davydovich was a Tatar from Lithuania. Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 2.
97 Indeed, during this time it was especially difficult for Crimean Tatars to legally leave Russia.
98 Kırımer, Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, 13–16; Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 3. Davydovich remained friends with Gasprinskii, and played a role in Muslim community leadership politics in Crimea in 1905. See Chapter 3.
Having already received several years of education in Russian schools, İsmail had developed his foreign language skills. His skill set did not, however, match up easily with the teaching opportunities on the peninsula. Having dropped out of school, Gasprinskii was unqualified to teach in Russian–Tatar institutions. In Muslim medreses, meanwhile, Gasprinskii would have little outlet for his strengths: teaching the Russian language and various other subjects—geography, history, science—that he had learned in Simferopol’ and Moscow. Perhaps owing, somewhat, to his family’s mirza status as well as to his noticeable résumé, Gasprinskii managed to find several jobs. He appears to have been unable to establish himself in any one place.

For eighteen months he worked as a Russian-language teacher at the Zincirli Medrese in Bahçesaray, and then in 1869 began a two-year tenure at a Muslim elementary school in Yalta. After another year back at the Zincirli school, Gasprinskii was out of a job. Having received an education that was distinctly different from that to which his students and colleagues were accustomed, Gasprinskii struggled in the classroom. In the words of one of his biographers, Gasprinskii “incurred the wrath and enmity of both students and faculty alike” with his unorthodox teaching style.

Still single at age twenty, Gasprinskii was a man of some means but not particularly wealthy. He needed a job, but had a difficult time fitting in. Unable to find a future that suited him at home, Gasprinskii went elsewhere. Following in the footsteps of hundreds of thousands of other Crimean Muslims before him, he left home. In 1872 he set out for Paris, where he would live for two years, supporting himself through a series of odd jobs. Using the Russian émigré community as his employment network, he scored a position as secretary to Ivan Turgenev, copying out drafts of the famous novelist’s writing.

After two years in Paris, Gasprinskii had managed to add French to the list of languages that he knew, alongside Russian and Tatar. He had also come to certain decisions about his future. Seven years removed from his aborted escape attempt with Mustafa Davydovich, Gasprinskii undertook his second siege of Istanbul. Traveling from Paris down to Marseille in the fall of 1874, he set sail for the Sublime Porte. He arrived by year’s end.

In Istanbul, İsmail stayed with relatives on his father’s side, at the home of his Uncle Halil. Gasprinskii had come to the Ottoman capital with a purpose: he wanted to apply to the Ottoman War College (Harbiye), the prestigious military school.

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99 These were state-run Russian-language schools created especially for Muslims. See Chapter 4 of this volume.

100 While in contemporary English the term “medrese” is often used in relation to Muslim religious schools, in the Russian Empire the word “medrese” referred to a school where students learned both religious and secular subjects. Medreses could be either new method or traditional.


102 According to Cafer Seydahmet Kırımer, İsmail Gasprinskii originally wanted to travel to Istanbul at this time, but then decided that Paris would be a better place to learn French. Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, 19.

103 Halil was a translator for the official newspaper of the Ottoman Army, the Ceride-yi Askeriye. Kırımer, Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, 21.
Trans-Imperial People

academy where Yusuf Akçura and Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) would both later study. Despite his knowledge of Russian and French, and his personal familiarity with Crimea and Russia, Gasprinskii was unsuccessful in gaining admittance.\textsuperscript{104} For the second time in less than a decade, his efforts to make a new life for himself in Ottoman service had ended in failure.\textsuperscript{105} He decided to head back to Bahçesaray.

Gasprinskii left Istanbul in the winter of 1875, and returned home a well-traveled individual who was knowledgeable in foreign languages and cultures.\textsuperscript{106} In other words, he was a better-traveled and better-educated version of the unemployed Gasprinskii from three years earlier. At the same time, however, he had no job. Unsuccessful in landing a position in Ottoman service, he lacked the education needed to advance far in the tsarist system. Gasprinskii was twenty-five, single, and apparently destined to work as a village schoolteacher for the rest of his life. Looking to settle down, he got married in 1877. The union ended in divorce after two years. Little is known about his first wife, although Gasprinskii’s first biographer writes that her intellectual level (\textit{fikri seviyesi}) was too far below that of her husband for the marriage to work.\textsuperscript{107}

After the divorce, Gasprinskii seemed to be at loose ends. He spent a great deal of time hanging out in local coffee houses, reading Russian newspapers.\textsuperscript{108} Beginning in 1878, he worked as the town administration in Bahçesaray—a position he would hold for four years. Here too, he struggled, finding nothing but contention with the “old ignoramuses” in town who opposed his every proposal.\textsuperscript{109} While Gasprinskii was interested in teaching, he had been unable to hold a job as a teacher. Now, his attempts at family life and community administration had likewise ended in disappointment. Undaunted, he looked in new directions.

Gasprinskii’s thoughts turned to newspapers. He was an avid reader, and starting in 1879 he petitioned local officials for permission to open a Tatar and Russian-language newspaper of his own.\textsuperscript{110} This was something of an audacious request, and carried some risk. Prior to Gasprinskii’s \textit{Tercüman}, there had been

\textsuperscript{104} Kirmer writes that Gasprinskii knocked on a number of doors in pursuit of a job, but that it was Russian Ambassador Ignatiev who prevented his becoming an Ottoman officer. \textit{Gasprali Ismail Bey}, 21. It would have been unusual for the ambassador to become involved in cases of this nature, but Gasprinskii’s Russian subjecthood and \textit{mirza} status may have invited such attention.

\textsuperscript{105} Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 5.

\textsuperscript{106} Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 6.

\textsuperscript{107} Kirmer, \textit{Gasprali Ismail Bey}, 22.

\textsuperscript{108} “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 6. Lazzerini writes, “During this period he developed the habit of making the rounds of the local coffee houses with a stack of Russian newspapers from which he would present oral Tatar translations of pertinent articles to the assembled imbibers.”

\textsuperscript{109} Lazzerini writes that Gasprinskii was “mayor” of Bahçesaray—a term which is a bit grandiose-sounding for the realities of Gasprinskii’s position. Writing in Turkish, Kirmer uses the title “\textit{reis},” which can mean a number of different things (head, chair, leader, president, in addition to mayor). Bahçesaray was not a municipality, however, so it did not have an actual mayor. Most likely, Gasprinskii was chosen to play some sort of managerial role in the administration of the town’s finances, working alongside a group of elders. \textit{Gasprali Ismail Bey}, 22.

\textsuperscript{110} Kirmer reports that Gasprinskii first applied for permission in 1879. An application for permission, dated in 1882, can be found in GAARK, 26-2-1595, ll. 1–2.
only a few newspapers published in the languages of Russia’s Muslim communities. In most cases they were produced directly by tsarist authorities. An exception had been *Ekinci*, which had been legally published by Hasan Bey Zerdabi in Baku from 1875 to 1877. In the face of war breaking out between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1877, however, the project went awry. The governor of Baku, who had given permission to Zerdabi to publish the newspaper, was replaced. Soon after, *Ekinci* was closed and Zerdabi was exiled for five years to the city of Stavropol, in the north Caucasus.

While he was waiting for a response to his request, Gasprinskii produced a Russian-language pamphlet called “Russian Islam” (*Russkoe Musul’manstvo*). In this booklet, printed in 1881, Gasprinskii argued in favor of the benefits that the tsarist state and Russian civilization could bring to Russian Muslims, as well as for the study of the Russian language by the empire’s Muslims. Within Muslim communities, particularly in central Russian cities such as Kazan, the idea of studying Russian was extremely controversial at this time. Gasprinskii could not have chosen a better way to prove his loyalty to tsarist educational policymaking than to champion this particular cause in print.

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111 As was the case with *Turkestan Wilayetining Gazeti* in Tashkent and *Şark-i Rus* in Tbilisi.
112 Zerdabi is now considered to be one of the greatest intellectuals of his era in this region. On Zerdabi, see Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 29–32. Stavropol is approximately 200 miles east of Sochi.
114 “Musul’manstvo” relates not simply to Islam as a religion or faith, but also as a practice in the lives of Muslims. Otherwise, Gasprinskii would have simply called the booklet “Russkii Islam.”
116 See Chapter 2 of this volume.
Having studied in Russian schools and lived alongside Russians, Gasprinskii knew something about how to speak to tsarist authority. In this pamphlet, Gasprinskii described the problems of Muslims in terms that would make perfect sense to Russian administrators in Crimea. Yes, it was true, acknowledged Gasprinskii, “the Muslims of Russia do not realize, do not feel the interests of the Russian fatherland; they are practically ignorant of its sadness, of its joys, they do not understand its ambitions, its ideas.” This was because, he wrote, Muslims did not know the Russian language, and “[i]gnorance of the Russian language isolates them from Russian ideas and literature, not to mention their complete isolation from general culture.”

“Russian Islam” would hardly be Gasprinskii’s last foray into encouraging the benefits of Muslim–Russian engagement. Five years later he would publish “Russian–Eastern Accord” (Russkoe–Vostochnoe Soglashenie). Printed in 1886, this pamphlet differs somewhat from “Russian Islam” in that it is chiefly concerned with Russia’s relations with Muslim powers like the Ottoman Empire and Iran. As was the case in “Russian Islam,” however, Gasprinskii emphasized the points of interest that Russia had in common with the East. He outlined the prospective military, financial, and cultural strengths of a combined “Russo-Islamic” world, and used terms—such as sblizhenie (mutual engagement)—that could have come straight out of the mouths of tsarist administrators.

After several years of difficulty, Gasprinskii’s luck had begun to change. In 1883, the 100th anniversary of Russia’s takeover of Crimea, he finally received the good news for which he had been hoping. Gasprinskii was told he could begin publishing, at his own expense, a Tatar/Russian newspaper that he would call Tercüman/Perevodchik (“The Interpreter”). He had, moreover, recently remarried, and his wife, Zühre Hanım, was the wealthy daughter of the Iunusovs of Kazan, one of the most prestigious families of central Russia. She had a large dowry, which İsmail used as a means of paying for Tercüman.

While Tercüman was not widely read, Gasprinskii relished the opportunity to publish. Now raising a family, his wealthy in-laws likely supported him, as his

118 Particularly with regard to mutual hostility for the British Empire, İsmail Gasprinskii, “Russkoe-vostochnoe soglashenie: myсли, заметки i pozheleiania,” in Rossia i vostok, 63.
119 Sblizhenie means “mutual engagement,” but tsarist officials often employed the term as a polite way of discussing assimilation. İsmail Gasprinskii, “Russkoe-vostochnoe soglashenie,” esp. 60–2, 65–8, and 70–2. This term was also used to express hopes for Jewish assimilation. See Eugene Avrutin, “Racial Categories and the Politics of (Jewish) Difference in Late Imperial Russia,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 8:1 (Winter 2007), 13–40, here 23. On tsarist officials and sblizhenie, also see Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 86.
120 Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 15. After the Revolution of 1905, Gasprinskii would drop the word Perevodchik from the newspaper’s masthead.
121 On the Iunusovs, see Chapter 2 of this volume. Yusuf Akçura’s mother was a Iunusov, and so Akçura was related to Gasprinskii’s wife. On Akçura and the Iunusovs, see Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 388. Karpat refers to the Iunusovs as the “Yunusoğulları,” a Turkish translation of the name.
123 Circulation was less than 1,000 prior to 1905, but quickly shot up to 5,000 after the revolution. Kırımer, Gaspıralı İsmail Bey, p. 62. Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay list subscription
only other evident source of income was through the sales of subscriptions to *Tercüman*.\textsuperscript{124} He could devote his time, in the 1880s and 1890s, to nurturing *Tercüman* as well as his new daughter. From his platform at *Tercüman*, Gasprinskii was still quite limited regarding what he could write prior to 1905. Most of his editorializing during those years took the form of arguments that tsarist officials would approve of, such as advocating the study of Russian and denouncing emigration. Nevertheless, editing the only independent Turkic-language newspaper for twenty years gave Gasprinskii a platform that no one else had in 1905, at least not at first. Partly as a result of this, he would appear—at least to the Muslim merchants in Kazan who would fund İttifak—a natural fit to lead the Muslim political movement.

Yusuf Akçura’s life had resembled Gasprinskii’s in a number of ways even before 1905. Like Gasprinskii, Akçura was the scion of a provincially famous family. The Akchurins, as they were known in Russia, were based in Simbirsk, a central Russian city located about 100 miles down the Volga River from Kazan.\textsuperscript{125} The family had long served in local administration and in the ulema, and Yusuf was related through his mother to the İunusov family of Kazan.\textsuperscript{126} When he was still a baby, however, his family fell suddenly into turmoil. Hard economic times had befallen Yusuf’s father, Hasan Efendi, whose finances were in a “mixed-up” (*karışık*) state. In 1878, when Yusuf was two years old, his father died a sudden and “unnatural” (*gayri tabii*) death.\textsuperscript{127}

In the years that followed her husband’s unexpected death, Yusuf Akçura’s mother, Bibi Fahri Banu, made important decisions that would affect Yusuf for life. Money was tight. Once Yusuf was old enough to travel, Bibi Fahri Banu decided to emigrate, so at age seven, Yusuf and his mother set out together to begin a new life in Istanbul, where she had family connections.\textsuperscript{128} The two left for the Ottoman capital in 1883, initially moving in with relatives in the seedy district of Aksaray. A few years after arriving in Istanbul, Bibi Fahri Banu remarried. The daughter of İunusovs and one-time spouse of an Akçurin, Bibi Fahri Banu now became the

numbers by region, including 300 in Crimea, 300 in central Russia, 150 in Dağestan, fifty in Siberia, and 200 in Central Asia. See Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La Presse*, 41.  
\textsuperscript{124} As Gasprinskii’s subscriptions were in the low hundreds at this time, it seems unlikely that this activity proved very lucrative.  
\textsuperscript{125} Lenin was born in Simbirsk, so now it is named Ulyanovsk in his honor.  
\textsuperscript{126} On the Akçurins of Simbirsk, see Nail’ Tairov, *Akçuriny* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2002). Regarding Akçura’s mother’s side of the family, see Muharrem Feyzi Togay, *Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı* (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Basımevi, 1944), 20.  
\textsuperscript{127} “Efendi” is a polite title for men. Togay, *Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı*, 22. Muharrem Feyi Togay, Akçura’s biographer, was himself an interesting trans-imperial figure. Born in 1877 in Crimea, he emigrated to Turkey in the 1920s. In 1933 he founded the Turan Society in Turkey, and later was sent to Japan in what may have been a form of exile at a time when the Turkish government was looking to appease its Soviet neighbor by cracking down domestically on people associated with pan-Turkism. On Togay, see Sinan Levent, “Japan in Muharrem Feyi Togay’s Words: Togay in Japanese Archives,” *Turkish Yearbook of Asia-Pacific Studies* 4 (2009), 12–31, here 13.  
wife of a fellow Muslim immigrant from Russia named Dağestanlı Osman Bey ("Osman from Dagestan").

As was the case with many Muslims coming from Russia, Yusuf and Bibi Fahri Banu traveled back to their homeland on a number of occasions. From Istanbul to central Russia, mother and son would travel by way of Crimea, where Bibi Fahri Banu had relatives. From there they would continue by train as far as Nizhnii Novgorod, then proceed to Simbirsk by boat. Arriving in Simbirsk in early summer, they would visit family and take care of business matters, such as claims relating to the late Hasan Efendi’s estate. A trip that Yusuf took through central Russia during his teenage years reportedly made a deep impression upon him, spurring a strong interest in his birthplace and background.

Yusuf and Bibi Fahri Banu were able to return to Russia from Istanbul relatively frequently and easily because of another decision that Yusuf’s mother had apparently made. As would be expected in this situation, Bibi Fahri Banu seemingly had not renounced her Russian subjecthood. Such a decision, which was common among trans-imperial Muslims, would provide Bibi Fahri Banu and Yusuf with the opportunity to return to Russia without having to endure the expense and hassle of obtaining a Russian visa. Retaining Russian subjecthood would also have made sense for someone who, like Bibi Fahri Banu, had a legal case pending in Russia. The fact that Yusuf, after finishing his studies at the Sorbonne, would be able to return to Russia twenty years after initially leaving, is an indication that subjecthood was most likely never renounced.

In Istanbul, Yusuf grew up studying in the military schools—a common route for talented but financially strapped youth looking to receive a first-rate education. He was seemingly on his way to a stellar career in the military, studying at the famed Ottoman War College, when Akçura’s life would reach a sudden turning point. In 1896, the twenty-year-old Akçura was arrested and charged with participating in an allegedly seditious student organization. Such charges were hardly uncommon in the Ottoman Empire of Abdülhamid II, where there was a highly developed network of internal spies whose jobs depended upon their ability to uncover plots against the government. Nevertheless, the charges were serious, and

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129 “Bey” is a way of referring to men. Togay mentions that Dağestanlı Osman was a loving father to Yusuf. Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 25.
130 On Akçura’s youth, see Georgeon, Aux Origines, 12–16; Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 34–8. On Akçura and his mother’s travels, see Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 27.
131 On one occasion, for instance, Yusuf and his mother returned to Simbirsk after Yusuf’s grandfather passed away, in order to participate in the division of his property. Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 26–7. Georgeon writes that they also needed to repay debts in Russia. Aux Origines du Nationalisme Turc, 12.
132 Togay says that it was during this trip that Akçura first began paying attention to cultural connections between Istanbul and Kazan. Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 27. Karpat writes, somewhat inscrutably, that “Akçura’s anti-Hamidian feelings developed mainly after his visit to Kazan.” The Politicization of Islam, 389.
133 The Russian authorities without question considered Akçura a Russian subject in later years.
Akçura soon found himself facing the prospect of imprisonment and exile to the outer fringes of the empire.

Akçura found himself behind bars, jailed in the Kışlalı barracks in Istanbul. After a mass trial, Yusuf and seventy-nine other defendants were exiled in perpetuity to Trabulsarp, in Ottoman Libya. At first, Akçura and his cohorts were imprisoned in Fezzan, a desert region of Libya's southwest. In 1898, however, an amnesty was issued which allowed Akçura and some of his fellow prisoners to be reinstated as officers while continuing to serve in Libya. Akçura moved to Tripoli to take up the duties of an officer-in-exile. While still technically serving out a sentence for sedition, he appeared to be well on his way to working his way out of disgrace. He was still young, just twenty-two years old. If he wanted to, he could probably repent and make his way back into the Istanbul of Abdülhamid II.

For two years, Akçura worked as an officer-in-exile in Libya. In 1899, however, he and his friend and future Turkic Hearths cofounder Ahmet Ferit (Tek) made their move. Sneaking down to the port one night, the two friends jumped a Maltese-flagged ship. This ship took Yusuf and Ahmet to Tunisia, which was a French colony and likewise beyond the reach of Ottoman authorities. From Tunis, the two sailed north to Marseille and then traveled to Paris, their ultimate destination. In making their way to the city of light, the two officers on the lam seemed to be burning their bridges with the Ottoman Empire. They were throwing away their chance at official redemption.

Where did Akçura get the money to support himself in Paris? There is relatively little information available on this subject. François Georgeon has written that Akçura received assistance from anti-Hamidian exile groups based in Paris, while Muharram Feyzi Togay reported that Akçura had access to money in Russia from the estates of his father and grandfather. In any event, he would spend four years in Paris, studying law and politics at the Sorbonne. He also got his start in writing at this time, publishing several articles in Young Turk-affiliated newspapers such as Mesveret, which was printed in Paris, and the Cairo-based Şura-yı Ümmet.

In 1903, Akçura left Paris after finishing his studies at the Sorbonne. With the Ottoman Empire closed to him, he returned to the land of his childhood: Russia. He had maintained contact with his relatives in Russia, and stayed with them upon arriving in Simbirsk at the end of the year. In March 1904,

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134 Site of today's Gezi Park.
136 Due to the Ottoman Empire’s capitulation agreements with various countries, Ottoman police were not allowed to board certain foreign-flagged ships.
138 Or much attention to practical matters more generally.
139 Georgeon, Aux Origines, 15.
140 Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayattı, 39.
142 Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayattı, 42. Georgeon, Aux Origines du Nationalisme Turc, 23.
after several months of unemployment in the freezing winter weather, Akçura decamped to a house owned by one of his uncles in the village of Zoya, just outside of Simbirsk. There he would write “Three Types of Policy” (Üç Tərz-ı Siyaset), the series of articles that today stands as his best-known work. Shortly thereafter, Akçura found a job in Kazan, working as a teacher of history and geography at the new method Muhammadiye Medrese, one of the best-known jadid schools in central Russia. Unmarried and nearing age thirty, Akçura threw himself into his teaching. When the revolution broke out a little more than a year later, he would suddenly find himself thrust right into the middle of the excitement.

Ahmet Ağaoğlu was also part of this trans-imperial generation. Born in 1869 in a town called Şuşa, in today’s disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, Ağaoğlu was in some ways very similar to Gasprinskii and Akçura. As was the case with Akçura and Gasprinskii, Ağaoğlu hailed from the provincial elite, and young Ahmet similarly received a privileged education. At age eighteen he enrolled for one year (1887–88) at a Russian gymnasium in St. Petersburg. According to an account he provided later in life, he was failed in an exam by an anti-Semitic professor who mistook him for a Jew. Enraged, Ahmet wired his father for money to travel to Paris. His father complied, but apparently was not happy with the news that his son, already far away in St. Petersburg, was venturing to even more distant locales. Of course, Ahmet knew absolutely no French at the time, so perhaps his father had good reason to worry. In any case, he gave him the money he needed to move to Paris, which is what Ahmet did in January 1888. He was nineteen years old.

Ahmet was completely alone at first, but soon befriended some Georgians via a hotel concierge whom he had met. Having spent most of the money his father had sent him for transportation to Paris, he had almost no money. Nevertheless, he somehow managed to survive for months in Paris. People who had not even known his name a few months earlier were helping him and lending him money, or providing credit. He lived on a half-franc’s worth of food a day that he bought on credit from the grocery store below the room that he rented. Writing to his father frequently with requests for more funds, Ağaoğlu spent his free time studying French.
Every day, he committed to memory five to ten of the satires of Alfred de Musset. Given the fact that he was able to make so many friends in such short time in Paris, perhaps he was also quite unselfconscious about speaking French. In any case, he fell into a network of mostly non-Muslim Caucasians who appear to have embraced him.

Finally receiving 400 rubles from his father to pay off his debts, Ağaoğlu began a course of studies at the Collège de France. It was here that he got to know the well-known Orientalist scholars Ernest Renan and James Darmesteter. Through Darmesteter, who was a Persianist, Ağaoğlu became a minor figure in the scholarly world of Persians and other Orientalists in fin-de-siècle Europe. In 1891 he published a three-part article entitled “Persian Society” in a Parisian journal called La Nouvelle Revue, as well as another piece called “Confessions of a Dervish” in the venerable Journal des débats. The following year, he attended the ninth International Congress of Orientalists in London, presenting a paper on the origins of Shiism.

Ağaoğlu’s brief career as a Persianist raises some interesting questions relating to the supposed identity conceptions of the future pan-Turkist. Coming from the southern Caucasus, which until 1813 had been part of Persia, Ağaoğlu was a Shiite Muslim who probably studied Persian as a schoolboy. Given the fact that his mentor Darmesteter was a Persianist and Ernest Renan had contributed significantly to late-nineteenth-century ideas connecting certain character traits

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150 Shissler, Between Two Empires, 64-5.  
151 Between Two Empires, 65–7.  
153 Shissler, Between Two Empires, 66.
to “Semitic” and “Aryan” peoples, there were good reasons for Ağaoğlu to focus upon Persian culture at this time. He was giving his prospective mentors what they wanted, writing on Persian culture for a larger academic community. This enabled him to find outlets for his interests and writing. People were interested in Persia, so that is what he wrote about.\(^{154}\) It would by no means be the last time that he would associate himself with a certain concept of civilizational identity.

In 1894, Ağaoğlu returned to the Caucasus, where he found work as a teacher. He also began writing articles for a Russian-language newspaper called Kaspii. This paper was published in Baku by the millionaire Zeynalabdin Tagiev, who would go on to sponsor a number of other community-oriented projects in the southern Caucasus.\(^{155}\) Ağaoğlu was considered a bit of an oddball in his hometown of Şuşa, where people were fond of calling him “Frankish Ahmet” due to his style of dress and general reflection of European ways.\(^{156}\) Whereas in Paris he had been a Persian, in Şuşa Ağaoğlu became a Frenchman.

The pan-Turkists resembled other trans-imperial Muslims in three principle ways. First, they all traveled back and forth, defying the unilateral paths that have often been laid out for them by scholars working on the pan-Turkists and the subject of Muslim immigration more generally. Second, they benefited from and exploited a de facto dual subjecthood resulting from the differing approaches to subjecthood taken by the Russian and Ottoman governments. Third, they developed skills, experiences, and strategies for going between states and seeking out opportunities that helped them to find success in both empires.

Without this trans-imperial context, pan-Turkism never would have existed. The trans-imperial context was the basis for what would become pan-Turkism, but it was also an important part of the late imperial era more generally. Enveloping Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and other states in the region, the routes of trans-imperial Muslims were many. Muslims had opportunities that were often unavailable to other groups because the Ottoman government was willing to accept incoming Muslims, while Russian officials would allow them to return. In an age when power was understood in terms of size and numbers, the approaches of the Russian and Ottoman states to trans-imperial Muslims help to tell a larger story about the nature of this era. Far from living outside the experiences of most other Muslims during these years, the pan-Turkists were very much a part of their time.

\(^{154}\) Shissler, Between Two Empires, 119.
\(^{155}\) On Kaspii, see Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 31–2.
\(^{156}\) Shissler, Between Two Empires, 117.
In February 1883, Vassily (“Wilhelm”) Radlov, scholar of Oriental Studies and inspector for Muslim schools in the province of Kazan, sat down to write a letter to his superiors in St. Petersburg. At issue was a somewhat delicate question. Nine years earlier, in 1874, Radlov had been charged with the task of informing local Muslims that their schools were about to come under the supervision of the newly created Ministry of Education. Now, in 1883, Radlov was facing questions about whether or not he had actually done so. Did local Muslims even know that their schools were now under state supervision?

Radlov was a fascinating figure. He had emigrated to Russia at age twenty-two, in 1859, and then worked as a teacher of German in the Siberian city of Barnaul for eleven years. While in Siberia Radlov traveled frequently around the region, visiting Kazan on a number of occasions in the 1860s. It was during these years that he became acquainted with the well-known Orientalist Nikolai Il’minskii, who had come to the region in the late 1860s to oversee the development of Tatar-language Orthodox Christian missionary education in Kazan. Kazan was booming as a center of Oriental Studies in Russia, and before long Radlov would find employment there.

As was the case with most individuals who worked in Oriental Studies in Russia, Radlov wore the hats of a scholar, teacher, and government official. In addition to working as Muslim school inspector since 1872, he taught at a Tatar-language teacher training school that had recently been set up in Kazan by the Education Ministry. Radlov was also on his way to becoming a noteworthy figure in the developing field of Turkology. His multi-tome Dictionary of Turkic Languages would...
become a classic of Russian Orientalism, rendering Turkic languages of Russia into a modified Cyrillic script that he dubbed the “Radlovskii Alphabet.”

In composing his response to his superiors in St. Petersburg, Radlov adopted a legalistic tone. Perhaps unsurprisingly for someone so devoted to teaching and learning languages, Radlov’s defense hinged upon wording, and the way in which he had interpreted the instructions that had been issued earlier from St. Petersburg. He explained that he had begun, in 1873, to carry out a statistical survey of Muslim schools in the province, just as he had been instructed, and encountered no opposition from Muslims while doing so. However, he wrote, after the promulgation of new laws decreeing that Muslim schools come under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, that he had decided to stop work on the survey. Having heard the news that their schools were now under state supervision, explained Radlov, local Muslims were too angry for the survey to proceed safely.

Ending the survey, explained Radlov, was thus in keeping with the instructions he had received from his superiors in the capital. After all, these instructions had advised him to proceed with “extreme caution” (krainiataia ostorozhnost’). Throughout the course of his letter, the Orientalist referred to these instructions no fewer than three more times in explaining why, by demonstrating a caution St. Petersburg had insisted upon, he had kept his contacts with Muslims to a minimum.

When, for example, Radlov’s superiors had ordered the Orientalist, in February 1882, to “immediately get to work on the survey,” he had done so. However, he had refrained from sending printed versions of the new regulations to the schools. “According to the decrees of your imperial Excellency, i.e. that I needed to be careful,” he wrote, sending out “the very text” of the regulations had seemed like an unnecessary provocation. In any case, the regulations “were known to all Muslims,” so there seemed to be no good reason to ask for trouble by distributing printed copies of unpopular rules. “Because of the instructions regarding extreme caution” and due to the “fanaticism” of the Tatars, Radlov decided to follow his own instincts and ignore the demands emanating from the capital.

Radlov’s interactions with his superiors in St. Petersburg help to illustrate two important changes taking place during these years in central Russia. The first of these related to the late imperial administrative model in Russia. As Paul Werth has observed, the middle of the nineteenth century constituted a transition from “an imperial model,” which emphasized dynastic loyalty, to a new model of a “unitary national state, which aspired to a higher degree of integration of its diverse population.” In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Muslims in Kazan and elsewhere in central Russia repeatedly and actively resisted this new state model, carrying out a series of protracted and sometimes violent protests against a series of new laws designed to more closely integrate their communities into more direct

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7 See V. V. Radlov, Opyt slovaria Tiurksikh narechii (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911). For Radlov’s report, see NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, February 26, 1883.
8 St. Petersburg is located almost 900 miles to the west of Kazan.
9 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 7. Steinwedel makes a similar point in “Invisible Threads of Empire,” 6.
forms of rule. Radlov’s fate was to serve on the administrative front lines in the culturally complex region of central Russia during this era of turbulence.\footnote{Muslims saw this as a takeover, but, as Geraci explains, the measures were almost impossible to enforce. Moreover, the concept of state “supervision” itself changed over time. \textit{Window on the East}, 142. Ultimately, many Muslim schools simply functioned without official permission, as I discuss in Chapter 4.}

The German-born Turkologist’s behavior vis-à-vis his superiors and their orders also underscores the degree to which the locus of administrative authority shifted in Russia during the final decades of empire. In the 1880s it was much easier for a local official like Radlov to ignore repeated orders from his superiors, all the while claiming that he was following their advice. Radlov’s local expertise, as someone who could speak the language of local Muslims and whose job involved interacting with their community, provided him with a sense of entitlement to follow his own ideas about what needed to be done. By the early twentieth century, however, such incidents would be much less common, as policymaking toward Muslims increasingly became the domain of St. Petersburg—a development that would also have repercussions for Muslim–state relations in the region.

Beginning with a discussion of provincial power magnates and spiritual (\textit{dukhovnoe}) administration in Russia, this chapter examines a series of developments that took place in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The events that I look at occurred mainly in central Russia, in Muslim-populated areas in Kazan and its environs.\footnote{Usually, this area is called “the Volga region,” “Middle Volga,” or “Volga-Ural” region. By calling the region “central Russia” I wish to underscore the region’s proximity to the empire’s political center.} Just as Muslims living on the periphery both benefited and suffered for their proximity to the frontier, Muslims living in central Russia reaped similar advantages and disadvantages deriving from their relatively high level of integration into state institutions.

If Chapter 1 provided the trans-imperial context of the pan-Turkists, this chapter looks at the political one. The events I discuss took place decades before the 1905 Revolution, but help explain why issues pertaining to administration and education mattered so much to even non-activist Muslims in the early years of the twentieth century. While most accounts of Muslims in revolutionary Russia begin with 1905, Muslims in central Russia had, by that time, already been engaged in a cycle of protest vis-à-vis local officials for many years. The complicated political dynamic linking tsarist officials, the ulema, and Muslim communities in central Russia was also a long-developing phenomenon before the revolution. After the revolution, the events discussed in this chapter would play a large role in shaping the direction of Muslim politics in Russia.

\textbf{PROVINCIAL POWER MAGNATES}

Geography mattered. The nature of encounters between Muslims and government officials in Russia varied considerably depending upon the region in which one lived. As was discussed in Chapter 1 of this study, in peripheral regions of
the empire like Crimea and the Caucasus proximity to the border shaped many of the concerns held by state officials and local Muslims in their mutual interactions. In central Russia, however, the late imperial era was dominated by the issue of bureaucratic centralization. This issue would form the background for many of the political and cultural disputes taking place in the region after 1905.

Russia’s interactions with the Muslims of central Russia had a long history. After the Russian conquest of Kazan Khanate in 1552, relations between the Russian conquerors and the defeated Tatars had initially been horrific, involving mass expulsions of Muslims from the city of Kazan and the destruction of mosques and other sacred buildings. Over time, however, the Kazan Tatars would become the most trusted of Muslims living under tsarist rule, mainly due to the eventual expansion of Russian territories into other Muslim-populated regions. In the centuries following the Kazan Khanate’s incorporation into Russia, Kazan gradually became part of the empire’s heartland. Kazan Imperial University, today known as Kazan Federal University, was established in 1804, attracting students such as Leo Tolstoy and Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin). By the second half of the nineteenth century, Muslim communities in central Russia were among the most socially and administratively integrated of the entire empire.

The passage of time—and the conquest of new Muslim territories to the south and east—had transformed the Tatars of central Russia into “insider Muslims,” trusted interlocutors who would facilitate the expansion of Russia’s empires even further into Muslim-inhabited territory. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, tsarist officials repeatedly employed Muslim religious figures from central Russia in efforts to Islamize indigenous populations of the Kazakh Steppe. Following the Russian conquest of the Caucasus in the early nineteenth century, state authorities turned again to the Kazan ulema for assistance in managing new Muslims. Officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs named Mustafa Tazetdin, a religious scholar from Kazan, müfti of the newly conquered Russian Caucasus. By importing the alim from central Russia...

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12 On early policies toward Islam and Muslims following the 1552 conquest, see Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire*. Also see Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*, 37–42; Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 16–18.

13 In which I include central Russia; that is, the province of Kazan and its environs.

14 Neither of whom graduated. Tolstoy flunked out of the Oriental Studies department, apparently due to too much partying. Lenin was expelled. The author of this book also studied at Kazan University, similarly without graduating.

15 Kazan’s integration into imperial administration began in earnest in the eighteenth century during the reign of Catherine the Great. Many of the details surrounding this integration have been outlined in A. N. Zorin, *Goroda i posady dorevoliutsionnogo pivol’.*

16 The term “insider Muslims” refers to the relative closeness of Muslim elites and tsarist officials in central Russia, and is meant to underscore the roles that Muslims in this region have played in mediating relations between tsarist officials and Muslims in the empire’s periphery.


18 An alim is a member of the ulema. Mention is made of Tazetdin in both government archives and local (Muslim) print. See SSSA, f. 2, op. 1, d. 3793. ll. 32–9, esp. l. 32. Report, Müfti Mustafa...
to head the regional ulema in the Caucasus, they demonstrated a clear preference to work with Muslims they knew, rather than with the local ulema.\textsuperscript{19}

The importance of Muslims from central Russia to the development of Russian imperial rule in Muslim-populated regions to the east and south was also seen in other ways. In the late nineteenth century, Kazan Tatar merchants played an active role in the development of trade between Moscow and Russia’s newly created Turkestan colony, helping to connect Central Asia’s economy to that of the Russian heartland.\textsuperscript{20} After the Revolution of 1905, moreover, the leaders of the self-professed “All-Russian Muslim” İttifak movement would almost all come from central Russia. Mediating between Russians and other Turkic-speaking Muslims was something that the Muslims of central Russia had been doing, in one way or another, for centuries.

There were several important family dynasties playing a role in the administration of Muslim communities in central Russia. A particularly prominent family was the Iunusov clan, which I have referred to already in this study in the context of Yusuf Akçura and Ismail Gasprinskii’s second wife.\textsuperscript{21} The fortunes of this and other important families in the region had followed the expansion of tsarist administrative offices in central Russia in the nineteenth century. The founder of the Iunusov dynasty, Muhammadrahim Iunus uli (1743–1820), had been a tanner, while his son Gubaydullah Muhammadrahim uli (1776–1842) expanded the family enterprise to include dealings in soap products. Over time, the business grew further, with fortunes waxing under the oversight of brothers İbrahim Gubaydullah uli (1806–1886) and İs’hak Gubaydullah uli (1814–1885).\textsuperscript{22}

In the early to middle nineteenth century, the Iunusovs began their history of service to the Russian Empire. This began with İbrahim Efendi’s tenure as the chairman of the Kazan Tatar ratusha, a separate municipal council that served the administrative needs of urban Muslim gentry.\textsuperscript{23} Several years later, İbrahim’s

Tazetdin to Minister of Internal Affairs, where Tazetdin’s salary and position are briefly discussed. Tazetdin is also mentioned in a history of central Russia penned in 1883. Mehmed Zarif Mollah Hüseynoğlu, \textit{Tuvarih Bulgarie: Intihap min altuvarih almutaid deumin al-risale al-mutaid} (Kazan, 1883), 44.

\textsuperscript{19} On the use of the Orenburg Assembly in Ufa as a model for the creation of the spiritual assemblies in the Caucasus, see ADTA f. 289, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 60-63-ob.


\textsuperscript{21} See Introduction and Chapter 1 of this volume.

\textsuperscript{22} “İunísoyvar,” \textit{TATAR Entsiklopediiia Süzlege} (Kazan: Tatar entsiklopediia institutı, 2002), 797.

brother İshak served in the Kazan city Duma, as would several other members of the family over the ensuing decades. As was common among merchants and businessmen of all faiths, wealthy Muslims like the Iunusov brothers gave tens of thousands of rubles to charities such as soup kitchens, shelters, and mosques in Kazan and elsewhere in central Russia.

The Apanaevs were another prominent family. A longtime mainstay of Muslim society in Kazan, members of the Apanaev family held numerous positions in the civil and spiritual service in the second half of the nineteenth century. Musa İsmail uli (1766–1827) had been a judge in a “conscience” (vidzhdan or sovest’) court, a forum for hearing minor disputes within families. His son, Muhammad Musa uli (1804–1877) was, during 1838–41, the head of the Kazan Tatar ratusha, while Muhammad’s son, Yusuf Muhammad uli, was a member of the Kazan city Duma from 1879 to 1887. Like the Iunusovs, the Apanaevs began the nineteenth century working mostly in leather goods, then eventually expanded into dry goods and soap.

Based in the central Russian city of Simbirsk, the Akchurins also played an important role in the affairs of Muslim communities and administration in the region. This was Yusuf Akçura’s family. The Akchurins had first become involved in small-scale trade and manufacturing in the early nineteenth century, and opened a number of factories in the region in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Other family members, such as İbrahim Kuramsha uli Akchurin (1859–1933), were involved in municipal, guild, or other forms of community administration. Families such as the Iunusovs, Apanaevs, and Akchurins were well represented in municipal administrative institutions such as the ratusha and the Duma, as well as in spiritual administration, as members of the ulema; that is, the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. While Muhammed Bedretdin Abdulkerim uli Apanaev (1867–1937) was on the Kazan city Duma from 1898 to 1917, his older brother Abdullah Abdulkerim (1862–1919) was an imam and a member of the Orenburg Assembly. During the Revolution of

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24 This was the municipal council. E. V. Cherniak and A. B. Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani, 1870–1892 gg. (Kazan: Izdatel’stvo “Dom pechati,” 2003), 115.
27 “Uli” is the Tatar form of “son of,” although the appearances of “uli” in this book come in the form of surnames. Because it was usually written apart from the rest of the surname, I have employed that convention. “Uli” is similar to the Turkish “oğlu.”
28 “Apanaevlar,” Tatar Entsiklopediia Süzège, 41.
29 Cherniak and Madiiarov, Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Kazani, 117–19.
30 Dimitrieva, Ismagilov, Sharangina, et al., U miloserdiia drevnie korni, 24, 95, 162.
32 İbrahim was a member of the Simbirsk city Duma as well as the chairman of the Simbirsk Textile Manufacturers Association. “Akchurinnar,” 25–6.
33 “Apanaevlar,” Tatar Entsiklopediia Süzège, 41.
1905, Abdullah Apanaev would become one of the founders and leaders of the İttifak movement, which similarly sought to represent Muslim interests to tsarist authorities. By becoming involved in İttifak at this time, families such as these were seeking to continue in their roles as intermediaries between Muslims and tsarist authorities.

With the sons of these families active in business, civil administration, and the ulama, the fates of these and other insider Muslim families in central Russia were deeply entwined with local expressions of tsarism. If the system failed, there was much to lose. While representatives of these families were often critical of the leadership of the regional ulama and the policymaking priorities of civil administrative officials, they were by no means revolutionaries. On the contrary, these were wealthy merchants who sought stability, but who also supported retaining the administrative autonomy that they felt was taken away from Muslim communities in the final decades of the nineteenth century. This was especially the case with respect to the management of the regional ulama, the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly.

RULING SPIRITUALLY

The most important Muslim-specific institutions of administration in Russia were the Muslim spiritual assemblies. As was the case with the millet system of the Ottoman Empire, tsarist administrators managed their complex polyglot empire through a system of confessionally based institutions. These bodies, known as spiritual assemblies (dukhovnye sobraniia), existed for a number of recognized religions in imperial Russia. In addition to those serving Muslims, there were also spiritual authorities monitoring the religious and administrative affairs of Jews, Buddhists, Lutherans, and Catholics. For Muslims, a total of four institutions of spiritual administration existed.

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34 On the millet system and confessional administration in the Ottoman Empire, see Roderic H. Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 114–35.
35 All four of the institutions of “spiritual” (dukhovnoe) administration were referred to as an “assembly” (sobranie), with the exception of that of Tavrida province in Crimea, which was simply known as a “spiritual authority” (dukhovnoe pravlenie) but which had similar responsibilities. For documents pertaining to the creation of all four institutions, see Dmitrii Arapov, Sistema gosudarstvennogo regulirovaniia Islamа v Rossiskoi imperii (posledniaia tret’ XVIII-nachalo XX vv.) (Moscow: Moskovskii gos. universitet. istoricheskii fakul’tet, 2004).
37 They were located in Ufa, Simferopol’, and Tbilisi, which housed two.
The spiritual assemblies were religious in form but bureaucratic in content. Officially, these official bodies of ulema held a monopoly on performing religious tasks such as the reading of sermons and the conduct of ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and prayer meetings. Members of the ulema also worked as teachers, which is how they mainly earned their living. Spiritual personnel were also responsible for applying, on behalf of Muslim communities, to government authorities for permission to construct, repair, or enlarge a mosque. In the Caucasus and Crimea, the spiritual assemblies also managed the pious foundations (vakıflar, or evkaf) of their communities.Spiritual personnel arbitrated disputes between Muslims, and all four of the Muslim spiritual assemblies maintained appellate courts that Muslims could petition, with or without the assistance of local spiritual personnel. Cases heard in these courts included those involving marriage, divorce, the division of property, and other matters generally relating to the family. The cases that these courts heard were adjudicated according to Sharia.

The spiritual assemblies that the Russian government established during the reigns of Catherine and her successors had developed out of a synthesis combining Islamic and Russian ruling traditions. On the one hand, the assemblies appear to have been modeled in part upon the Ottoman example, which itself was part of an Islamic tradition going back to the time of the Prophet. On the other hand, the centralizing nature of multi-confessional rule in Russia was not unlike Peter the Great’s takeover of Orthodox Christianity through the creation of the Holy Synod. Meanwhile, the practice of leaving matters of Koranic interpretation to Muslim religious authorities had begun in Russia even before the creation of the Muslim spiritual assemblies. From 1784 onward, Muslims in Kazan had been able to marry, divorce, and will property in accordance with “Muhammadan law” through the Tatar ratusha. In 1897, the alim Mehmedselim İşmuhammad ulı
Ümitbayev traced the history of state-sponsored Sharia courts in the Ufa region back to 1767, a full two decades prior to the founding of the Orenburg Assembly. Catherine the Great has often been described as an “enlightened” monarch due to her policies toward minority religious groups, among other reasons. Of concern to Catherine and her advisors, however, were not only Enlightenment values but also the prospect of imperial expansion. The creation of Muslim spiritual administration in Russia coincided with an unprecedented era of growth of the empire into Muslim-inhabited lands to the south and east. In the late eighteenth century the Russian Empire had extended about as far to the west as it would ever go. The future for Russia lay in territories populated mainly by Muslims, in lands held by the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and the Khanates of Central Asia.

The four institutions of state-based ulema were based in the regions most heavily populated by Muslims in the empire. The largest of the four assemblies, the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, was first established in the city of Ufa in 1788, just five years after the Russian conquest of Crimea. The Orenburg Assembly was responsible for the administration of Muslims living in the territories of European Russia and Siberia. In 1794, the Crimean ulema—the existence of which had preceded the Russian conquest—was transformed into the Tavridian (Tavricheskoe) Muhammadan Authority, a state-based body similar to the Orenburg Assembly. In the southern Caucasus, provincially based spiritual assemblies were created for Muslim communities in the region shortly after the Russian conquest, in the first decades of the nineteenth century. These were eventually reorganized into separate Shiite and Sunni assemblies in 1870. Plans for the creation of more Muslim spiritual assemblies in the northern Caucasus and in Russia’s Turkestan colony in Central Asia were occasionally proposed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but never realized.

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42 Mehmedselim İşmuhammad uli Ümitbayev, Din-i Muhammedyenin Orenburgskii dukhov-noi sobranie mabkemesinin yüz yıldızı bayramı hem ol karında bulunan amirlerinin kıska tuvarihi otchet yizünden (Ufa, 1897), 19.
43 Fisher, “Enlightened Despotism and Islam under Catherine II.”
44 It began operating the following year.
45 On the formation of the Tavridian Spiritual Authority (which I often describe in this book as the “Crimean Spiritual Authority”), see O’Neill, “Between Subversion and Submission,” 63–77.
46 The two assemblies in the southern Caucasus were formally known as the “Trans-Caucasian” (Zakafkazskie) assemblies. On these institutions, see Kulieva, Rol’ i pozitsiia, 15–43; Mostashari, On the Religious Frontier, 86–90; Dana Sherry, “Mosque and State in the Caucasus, 1828–1841,” Caucasus and Central Asia Newsletter 4 (Summer 2003), 3–9. Since the 1820s there had existed predecessors to the Shiite and Sunni assemblies which carried out similar tasks of administration and community mediation. For information regarding the pre-1870 activities of the sheyh ul-Islam, see the 1854 report written by “Müfti of the Caucasian Region,” Mehmet Efendi Müftizade, ADTA f. 289, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 1-2-ob. For a similar report, written in 1861, see ADTA f. 289, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 26–41. Dmitrii Arapov’s Sistema gosudarstvennogo regulirovania Islam v Rossiskoi imperii discusses the creation of all four Muslim spiritual authorities.
47 There were discussions in St. Petersburg involving then Finance Minister Sergei Witte and relating to the idea of creating new Muslim spiritual assemblies in Turkestan. RGIA 821-150-409, response of Finance Minister S. Iu. Witte to the proposal “Temporary Rules on the Administration of Muslim Spiritual Matters in the Region of Turkestan.” In the 1860s and 1870s, government officials
Conditions varied considerably for those working at the top and bottom levels of these institutions. The müftis and sheyhs ul-Islam who led the assemblies received generous salaries, medals, and other forms of recognition from state authorities. For the thousands of imams, akhund, and müezzin who worked in the districts and villages of an assembly’s territories, on the other hand, there was no salary whatsoever. Instead, these lower-level “spiritual personnel” (dukhovnye litsa) lived off the charity of the community in which they were placed, surviving mainly through the cash or in-kind payments they received in exchange for teaching the community’s children. Many of the ulema (or “spiritual personnel”) were respected within their communities, but the archives of the empire’s spiritual assemblies nevertheless contain a multitude of villager complaints claiming that their local spiritual personnel were incompetent, liars, drunkards, or thieves.

The official ulema were not without competition for religious authority. Popular traveling preachers attracted audiences and invited the investigation of authorities. Often, members of the ulema were the first to report these individuals. In the Caucasus, the Shiite and Sunni religious authorities regularly corresponded with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and various other agencies of civil administration regarding alleged “zikrist” and “muridist” activities taking place in the region. In many cases, these were investigations initiated by the Russian civil authorities, but individual mullahs would also frequently take the initiative in reporting suspicious activities to the regional assembly with which they were affiliated. The müfti or sheykh ul-Islam would then pass on this information to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the governor’s office, and other departments in the provincial administration.

in the northern Caucasus discussed the idea of creating Muslim spiritual assemblies there. SSSA, f. 416, op. 3, d. 173, esp. ll. 10-13-ob.

The three Sunni assemblies were each led by their own müfti. The Shiite Assembly of the southern Caucasus was led by a sheykh ul-Islam. Salaries for senior officials in the ulema grew to more than 2,000 rubles annually by the early twentieth century, but actual compensation for service was usually considerably more lucrative, often taking the form of gifts of land presented by the tsar. For discussion of the finances of Orenburg müftis from the nineteenth century, see Azamatov, Orenburgskoe Magometanskoe Dukhovnoe, 54–5.

These were all terms used to describe the lower-level members of the Muslim assemblies in Russia.

On these examinations, see Danil’ Azamatov, “Russian Administration and Islam in Bashkiria (18th–19th Centuries),” in Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries, ed. Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen, and Dmitriy Yermakov (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1996), 101–2; Azamatov, Orenburgskoe Magometanskoe Dukhovnoe, 11–12.

Crews, “Empires and the Confessional State,” 74.

Zikrist, whose name derives from the Arabic word for “recitation” or “repetition” (zikr), refers to the Sufi practice of endlessly repeating a word or phrase in a state of spiritual exultation. The term was used frequently by Russian bureaucrats operating in the regions of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly to refer to heterodoxical Muslim movements generally. Muridism refers to the religious–political–military groupings formed around various individuals in the Caucasus. The term “murid” means “follower” in Arabic, and the most famous case of “muridism” was the movement that coalesced around Shamil in the early nineteenth century. On “muridism” in the Caucasus, see Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 33–41. For government crackdowns on zikrist, see Crews, “Empire and the Confessional State,” 68–9.

See, for example, ADTA f. 524, op. 1, d. 51, ll. 30–4; f. 524, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 1–4. For a report on muridism and zikrist in the Caucasus based largely on intelligence from the Sunni Spiritual Assembly, see f. 524, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 48–55. Also see ADTA f. 524, op. 1, d. 10, especially ll. 37–45.
Such was the case in November 1884, when the müfti of the Sunni religious assembly of the southern Caucasus, Huseyin Efendi Gayipov, dispatched a letter to the office of the governor of the province of Baku. Gayipov needed help, asking the governor’s office to “quickly take the necessary measures” against the “intrigues” of a group of murids uncovered by one of his kadıs. The kadı in question, Makhmud Efendi Rahim Efendizade, had reported to Müfti Gayipov that Haci Mahmud Efendi Koranoğlu and his family, residents of Gökchai district, were practicing various kinds of behavior that were “forbidden by the Koran.” For example, he wrote, in the villages of Zarbad, Karahali, and Mosesli, the group in question was “playing flutes, drums, and various other instruments, the playing of which are forbidden by Sharia.” Ultimately, a decision was reached to allow Koranoğlu and his family to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire.

Shiite and Sunni spiritual personnel in the Caucasus filed long reports to the provincial governor of Baku, discussing the activities of individuals suspected of muridist activity. The activities of the murids were considered to be of great importance to spiritual personnel and tsarist bureaucrats alike, and their numbers were thought to be high. In 1903, Müfti Gayipov sent a report to the governor of Baku in which he reported that in the Caucasus “most of the population practices muridism,” by which he meant that most Muslims were engaged in some sort of heterodoxical practice. The report was accompanied by a list of dozens of names of individuals the müfti had heard were involved with prohibited religious activities. In this case and others, tsarist civil officials and the official ulema teamed up to fight a common enemy: non-licensed practitioners of Islam.

In central Russia as well, religious heterodoxy in the Muslim community was viewed as a problem whose solution required state intervention. In 1862, for example, the Orenburg Assembly under Müfti Abdulvakhid Suleimanov ordered Muslims in the village of Tatar Kanadı to desist from “pronouncing prayers aloud,” declaring that those who did not refrain from vocalzikr would be barred from the mosque as “apostates from Sharia.” Over a period of nearly half a century, meanwhile, tsarist authorities repeatedly prosecuted the Vaisov sect, which did not accept the authority of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. In 1889, police in the district of Sviazhskii reported that they had begun an investigation into up to 130 people in the village of Karasham, where “fanatic” followers of the Vaisovs were engaged in various types of suspicious behavior, including participation in “study groups” at the homes of group members.

54 A kadı is a judge schooled in Sharia. 55 ADTA f. 524, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 8–11.
56 ADTA f. 291, op. 1, d. 618, ll. 1–4; f. 291, op. 10, d. 6232, ll. 1–9; f. 288, op. 1, d. 5, ll. 1–2.
57 Many activities could fall under the definition of “heterodoxy,” including not only the playing of musical instruments but also the practice of visiting local pilgrimage sites.
58 ADTA f. 291, op. 10, d. 6232, ll. 1–9.
59 Central State History Archive of the Republic of Bashkortostan (TsGIARB), f. I–295, op. 3, d. 5048, ll. 9–9 ob. Crews writes on the roles of the spiritual personnel and state intervention into Islam in “Empire and the Confessional State.”
61 NART f. 1, op. 3, d. 7629.
Insider Muslims

Muslim spiritual personnel were important mediators in the resolution of disputes among Muslims. Issues that could not be resolved by local religious personnel, and issues involving religious personnel themselves, were sent to the centers of these administrative communities in Ufa, Simferopol', and Tbilisi. Muslims could write their own petition (often through a scribe), or on some occasions travel to the center to appeal personally. Such matters could often involve the most intimate details of an individual’s life. In 1882, one Abdullah Mehmedoğlu petitioned the Sunni Spiritual Assembly of the Caucasus with regard to what he described as the “abduction” (kaçırma) of his wife. Mehmedoğlu’s petition to the assembly stated that his wife had been abducted “several months” earlier by one Mahi Hüseyinoğlu, with whom she had been living ever since. After the woman’s abduction, Mehmedoğlu wrote, he had approached his local religious judge (kadi), Arif Efendi, with a request for a divorce. But Arif Efendi had not felt the matter to be urgent and had told Mehmedoğlu that the problem would be taken care of “in due time” (zaman mururinda). In the meantime, however, Mehmedoğlu’s wife had become pregnant, making the situation more urgent.

The official status of the Muslim spiritual authorities notwithstanding, their authority within Muslim communities with regard to questions of Koranic interpretation was hardly absolute. Particularly in the decades immediately following the creation of the spiritual assemblies, a number of Muslims ignored or resisted the new institutions, which represented a synthesis of religion and bureaucracy that was largely foreign to Islam. In central Russia, ulema who were opposed to the creation of an official Islamic hierarchy attached to the Russian state were often known as part of the “Abîzlar movement,” while many Sufi and Sufi-influenced Muslims branded by the Russian government as “heterodox” also resisted the new institutions. Although opposition to the spiritual assemblies became less pronounced toward the middle of the nineteenth century, the widespread practice of “unofficial”

62 Abductions of unwilling women often occurred in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Having spent the night under the same roof as a man, the woman would usually consent to marry her abductor. In other cases, women would be willingly abducted, and this was often considered a form of elopement.

63 ADTA f. 291, op. 1, d. 490, ll. 1–2. For another wife-stealing incident, see ADTA f. 290, op. 2, d. 2639, l. 31.

64 On the Abîz, see A. Khabutfdinov, Millet Orenburgskogo Dukhovnogo sobrania v kontse XVIII-XIX Vekakh (Kazan: Iman, 2000), 29–30; Also see A. Khabutfdinov, “Dvizhenie abyzov i nekotorye aspekty funkcionirovaniia Islama,” in Islam i Muslim’iankaia kul’tura v srednem povol’zhe (Kazan: Institut istorii akademii nauk Tatarstana, 2002), 102–9; “Abizlar khäräkäte,” Tatar Entsiklopediia Süzlege, 10. Also see Allen J. Frank, Islamic Historiography and the “Bulghar” Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 37–8.

65 “Heterodoxy” meaning, in this case, any Muslim practices not officially sanctioned by the Russian state through the spiritual assemblies.

66 Indeed, opposition to the spiritual assemblies—who represented the state-supported authority on “Islamic Law” in Russia—was by definition “heterodoxical.” On Sufism in central Russia, see Kemper, Sufis und Gelehrte in Tartarien und Baschkirien, 81–212. Also see Thierry Zarcone, “Sufizm v tatarskom mire v nach. XX v,” in Islam v Tatarskom mire: istoria i suvremennost’, 117–32. Väliulla Iag’kub, Tatarstanda räsmi bulmagan Islam: khäräkätlär, ağîmnar, sektalar (Kazan: Iman, 2003).
variants of Islam continued to exist alongside the spiritual assemblies until the end of
the empire itself and well into the Soviet period.67

While the religious authority of the spiritual assemblies was not uncontested, the
administrative importance of the spiritual authorities was considerable. In addition to
their other responsibilities, the ulema were the bureaucrats-in-chief for their commu-
nities. In all three of the regions where the Muslim spiritual assemblies existed in Russia,
the official ulema kept metricheskie knigi, or metrical books.68 These were books that
recorded the births, deaths, marriages, and divorces of Russian Muslims, as well as their
place of residence.69 After universal conscription was adopted in Russia in 1874, the
records kept in these books were also employed for military recruitment campaigns.70
These and other responsibilities of spiritual personnel would contribute to their deep-
ening association, in the eyes of many in their communities, with state power.

Over time, many elite and non-elite Muslims came to see the assemblies as an indis-
penensible component of their community administration. As the institutional roots of
state-sponsored ulema deepened in central Russia, Muslims increasingly identified
with the bodies and fought for their preservation and expansion. Time and again in
the nineteenth century, elite and non-elite Muslims petitioned state officials in efforts
to establish regional branches of the assembly.71 Muslim petitioners also frequently
asked to be allowed to elect their müfti themselves,72 a matter which would be raised
again by Muslims after the 1905 Revolution. When the position of müfti sat vacant—
such as when Orenburg Müfti Tevkelev died in 1885 but was not replaced until a full
year later—Muslims wrote to state officials with suggestions for a successor,73 or to
request that, at the very least, the state fill the post quickly.74

Whatever the shortcomings of the Orenburg Assembly, many Muslims considered
it a better alternative to direct administration by Russian civil authorities. It was a
system that was at least nominally “Islamic,” and which had given Muslims virtu-
ally complete control over their schools until the late nineteenth century. Moreover,

67 Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet
Union (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Largely destroyed during the Soviet periods,
syncretic and Sufist influences have gained considerable ground in the region since the late 1980s.
68 This sort of record keeping was the norm for all of Russia’s confessional communities, includ-
ing Russian Orthodox Christians. See Paul Werth, “In the State’s Embrace? Civil Acts in an Imperial
Order,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 7:3 (Summer 2006), 433–58.
69 For more on the metricheskie knigi, see Nail’ Kamilevich Garipov, “Politika rossiiskogo gos-
udarstva v etnokonfessional’noi sfere v kontse XVIII-nachale XX vv.: opyt dukhovnogo upravle-
nia musul’man” (Kand. Dissertation, Kazan State University, 2001), 123–4. Also see Azamatov,
70 The ulema had been responsible for keeping these records since 1829, when the vice-governor
of the province of Orenburg, N. Khanykov, set aside 700 silver rubles for the task. Azamatov,
Orenburgskoe Magometanskoie Dukhovnoie, 84.
72 Danil’ D. Azamatov, “The müftis of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in the 18th and 19th centuries:
The struggle for power in Russia’s Muslim institution,” in Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th
to the Early 20th Centuries: Volume 2, Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations (Berlin: Schwarz, 1998), 373–4.
73 Azamatov, “The Müftis of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly,” 364–5, 368–9, 373–4. Also see NART,
f. 1, op. 3, d. 4468, ll. 4–6. Correspondence from governor of Kazan to Minister of Internal Affairs.
74 Tatarskaia ASSR: Materiiali po istorii Tatarskii vtoroi poloviny XIX veka nastoiat’ pervaya: Agrarnyi
vopros i krest’ianskoe dvizhenie 50–70-x godov XIX v. (Moscow and Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk SSSR,
1936), 166; Azamatov, Orenburgskoe Magometanskoie Dukhovnoie, 132–4.
administration through the Orenburg Assembly was also practical for the large number of Muslims who did not speak Russian. This was the case even in relatively integrated regions such as central Russia. Administration through the Muslim spiritual assembly meant, among other things, that Muslims could conduct state business in their own language. Beyond concerns about religion in particular, there were many practical reasons for Muslims to support the continued existence of a system of administration that was staffed by their fellow community members, operated according to a Sharia-based system that was familiar to them.

**SPEAKING SHARIA**

The lexicon of official Muslim–state communications in Russia was Sharia. The official institutions of ulema mediated these communications, and formed a ready-made network of one-way communication through which state authorities could pass on messages to Muslim communities. Believing that “the entirety of a Muslim’s cultural life is regulated and directed as clear expressions of the rights and laws of Sharia,” state officials spoke to Muslims through the ulema and in so doing employed a discourse of confessional rule that was rich in references to Islam, Sharia, and “Muhammadan Law.”

Local officials used the Muslim spiritual assemblies and their personnel as go-betweens, passing along messages from the state to Muslims. Government agents wishing to communicate with Muslims living in a particular region would contact the leader of the spiritual assembly. Invoking Islam and Sharia, the leaders of the spiritual assemblies would send a circular to local spiritual personnel, carrying the message that was to be passed on to the community. Local spiritual personnel would then read the message to their communities, usually after the noontime prayer on Friday.

Throughout the nineteenth century and up to the empire’s final days, the Russian government appealed in this way to Muslims to contribute food, medical supplies, and money to various causes. Muslims were called upon, in the name of Sharia and Islam, to give assistance when other regions of the empire were struck by natural disasters such as earthquakes, epidemic, or famine. In 1905, the Tavridian Muslim Assembly in Crimea raised money for the Russian Navy, likewise invoking Sharia and Islam.

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75 NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, l. 71. Report by the director of public education in the province of Kazan, 1909.
76 Crews describes circulars exhorting Muslims to send their children to university and work diligently in the fields, “Empire and the Confessional State,” 69.
78 KFU, T-1623, “Orenburg mäkhkâmiä shârğiaä taraffinnan imamnarga iazîlgan khatlar,” 1913, ll. 4-4-ob. Also see similar documents in which state authorities employ regional spiritual assemblies.
in the wake of the empire’s declaration of war against Japan in 1904, just as they were told to offer prayers of thanks in their mosques to mark the 300th anniversary of Romanov rule in 1913.\textsuperscript{79} The anti-emigration messages that Müftis Gayipov and Soltanov issued in the final decades of the nineteenth century, discussed in Chapter 1 of this volume, similarly invoked Islam in asking Muslims to not leave for the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{80}

Even tsarist officials working in civil administration sought, at times, to administer Muslims in a manner they considered “Islamic.” In 1888, Russian authorities contacted the Ottoman Foreign Ministry with a request for advice regarding Islamic jurisprudence. The Russian Foreign Ministry wanted to learn the opinion of the Ottoman sheyh ul-Islam on whether or not it was permissible “under the laws of Sharia” for the paternal grandfather to become the custodian of an underage girl and her estate after the death of her parents. The Ottoman sheyh ul-Islam responded, through the Ottoman Foreign Ministry, by saying that such an arrangement was appropriate provided the grandfather was “known to be a man of good character.”\textsuperscript{81}

In 1890, the governor of Kazan mandated the wearing of headscarves for Muslim women going outdoors in the city of Chistopol’. This decision came in the wake of a petition sent by a group of thirty-two Muslim men who had written to Orenburg Müfti Soltanov criticizing what they described as the fast growing number of Muslim “prostitutes” in the city. These prostitutes, alleged the petitioners, were “walking the streets with uncovered faces,”\textsuperscript{82} and so the petitioners asked the müfti to use his powers “according to both Sharia and the civil code” to take these women off the streets.\textsuperscript{83} Müfti Soltanov forwarded the petition to the governor, who contacted the Chistopol’ director of police, inquiring into the number of Muslim prostitutes in the city and asking if their presence was indeed creating a problem. The police chief responded by stating that there was only one Muslim listed among the thirty–one prostitutes currently registered in the city, and that there had never been more than three or four Muslim prostitutes working in the city at any given time. “Tatar women,” wrote the police chief, “have never been prohibited from working as public women, and there is no plan to take any sort

\textsuperscript{79} On Russia’s declaration of war against Japan, see KFU manuscript T-1206, “Müfti Soltanovdan mullalarga tsirkuliar,” 1904. On the anniversary of Romanov rule see KFU T-1623, “Orenburg mâkhkâmâî shârgüusî tarafînna iman orqalâa iätzâlqan,” 1913, l. 9.

\textsuperscript{80} On Gayipov’s announcement, see RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 599, ll. 292–5. Also see Deringil, “The Ottoman Empire and Russian Muslims,” 409–16. For Soltanov’s declaration, see NART , f. 1, op. 3, d. 9603, ll. 142, 208–9 ob.

\textsuperscript{81} Correspondence from Russian embassy in Istanbul to Ottoman Foreign Ministry, February 26, 1898. BOA, HRH 572/64, s. 1.

\textsuperscript{82} See the correspondence between the petitioners, the governor, and the police chief in the governor’s papers. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 7615, ll. 5–7.

\textsuperscript{83} Crews writes of this incident in the context of “Muslims solic[iting] police intervention.” Muslims did not, however, send this petition to the police, but rather to the Orenburg müfti. “Empire and the Confessional State,” 73–4.
of official action regarding this matter now."84 The governor, however, ignored this recommendation. In January 1890 he wrote to the müfti to inform him that he had ordered the police chief "to forbid Muslim women in Chistopol' from engaging in prostitution and also from appearing on the streets with their faces uncovered."85

Just as state authorities sought to communicate with Muslims through their invocations of Islam and Sharia, so too did Muslims invoke Islam in their dealings with state officials.86 Muslims seeking favors or state intervention would frequently cite “Sharia,” “Islam,” and “Muhammadan Law” in their petitions to state authorities, describing the state in precisely the same Islamic terms that state authorities would use when communicating with Muslims.87 This was the case when Muslims denounced rule-breakers who had acted “in violation of the Muslim faith,” or when Muslims sought to resist measures they believed to be “contrary to our law.”88

Islam and spiritual administration were separate from civil administration, and Muslims used whatever terms were available to them to have a case moved from one type of court to another.89 Muslims likewise invoked Islam and Sharia when they sought to convince state officials of the worthiness of a proposal, such as when Muslim merchant families in Kazan requesting permission to open a printing press described their effort as an important step toward the dissemination of “truthful knowledge of the Muslim religion.”90

Numerous battles took place over jurisdiction, with Muslims and tsarist civil officials often finding themselves locked in disputes over the boundaries of Islamic administration. In 1887, an official from the bureau overseeing the sales of alcoholic spirits in the province of Kazan wrote to the governor in connection to the complaints of Muslims in the district (uezd) of Chistopol’ regarding sales in their villages. The official stated in his letter that he had informed the petitioners that they, “just like the inhabitants of Christian villages,” had the right to regulate such matters on their own by issuing a prigovor, or local regulation. According to the official, however, the Muslims did not wish to issue one, because doing so would constitute an “infringement” (posiagatel'stvo) of their religious practices. Instead, they

84 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 7615, l. 5. 85 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 7615, l. 14.
86 Most of these petitions were written by professional scribes—individuals in a position to know what kind of language would work best in persuading state authorities. They were usually written in Arabic-script Tatar, and then were (often imperfectly) translated into Russian by local officials.
87 Robert D. Crews argues that Muslims in Russia viewed state officials as “agents” of Islam. For Prophet and Tsar, 165.
88 Crews, For Prophet and Tsar, 120–1, 130. Crews cites many other such invocations by Muslim petitioners, viewing them as support for the argument that Muslims saw state authorities as protectors of Islam. See, for example, For Prophet and Tsar, 120–1, 125–31, 133–6, 138–40, 170, 173–4, 184–5, 187–8, 236–9. Similar arguments are made in “Empire and the Confessional State,” especially 73–8, 82.
89 In 1887, a Muslim businessman in Tbilisi, Ali Ağa Askər İsmail, sought to retrieve money he claimed was owed to him by the Shiite Assembly, whose officials unsuccessfully lobbied to have the case heard in their own Sharia courts, rather than in a tsarist civil court. SSSA, F. 26, op. 2, d. 2375, ll. 1–7–ob., November 11, 1887.
90 Petition to the governor of Kazan, December 13, 1893. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 9126, l. 2. State authorities considered accurate and “truthful” dissemination of Islam to be indispensable in the fight against heterodoxical religious movements, which is probably one reason why the petitioners framed their arguments in this way.
wanted the commission regulating alcohol sales in the province to ban the sale of alcohol for them, relieving the Muslims of the responsibility “of enforcing laws other than Sharia.” This proposal, however, was not acceptable to the bureaucrats working on the case, who emphasized the principle of bureaucratic universalism with regard to all subjects of the empire. As far as the state was concerned, it was up to the petitioners to understand that the issuance of such prigovor “constitutes no infringement whatsoever on their religion.”

In a multi-confessional state where Muslims were nominally ruled according to Islamic principles, Sharia and Islam were not only expressions of faith, but also of law, administration, and state power. State authorities spoke to Muslims in an Islamic-bureaucratic vernacular that Muslim subjects likewise used when addressing state officials. “Speaking Sharia” was thus an essential component of Muslim–state communication in Russia, and was employed in a wide variety of circumstances. When conditions in the region were relatively stable, the use of Islamic discourses occurred mostly in the form of mundane, quotidian interactions between state officials and Muslim subjects. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, however, Muslim protests against state policymaking would likewise employ these discourses. The invocation of Islam during the course of a protest would contribute to the emergence of an increasingly complicated relationship between regional authorities and Muslim communities, particularly with regard to the place of Islam in their mutual interactions and communications.

POLITICIZING CONFESSION

Tensions over the place of Sharia in the administration of Muslims played a critical role in a series of Muslim–state conflicts in central Russia during the final three decades of the nineteenth century. This series of clashes between state officials and local communities stemmed from a number of factors. On the one hand, large-scale events like the Russian–Ottoman War of 1877–78 and the emergence of a severe economic crisis in the region contributed to increasingly unstable conditions. At the same time, however, there were also a number of conflicts that were much more local in nature. These related not only to Muslim Tatars in central Russia, but also (officially) Christian Tatars in the region.

One of the most important developments taking place in central Russia during these years related to the efforts of Christian Tatars to be recognized

91 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 6847, ll. 1–2.
92 “Multi-confessional” is an insightful term that Crews has employed in discussing imperial Russia.
93 In his account of the 1878–79 protests and violence taking place with regard to the instruktsiia, Mökhämäd al-Mökhämädbshahi Äkhmad ulî (Mehmediyev) wrote that “after the Russians won a big victory in the War of 1877 they began to feel emboldened and entertain various ideas,” including ones that were “harmful to Islam.” “Ianga zur dähshätle vakïïga,” 1878. Manuscript document, KFU, T-1044.
94 To call the Krâshen Tatars “Christians” is to accept a state view of matters, because many Krâshens described themselves as Muslims in every way but the official sense.
as Muslim. In 1866, more than 10,000 Kräshens—Christian Tatars descended from Muslims who had, often forcibly, been baptized into Russian Orthodox Christianity in earlier centuries—petitioned state authorities for permission to be reclassified administratively as Muslims. Kräshens had approached state authorities regarding this matter on numerous occasions throughout the nineteenth century, usually prior to the coronation of a new tsar. In this case, the events took place seemingly in response to news relating to the emancipation of the serfs. The mass “apostasy” of 1866 was by far the largest such event to have occurred thus far.\footnote{In 1905 more than 50,000 Kräshens would officially be recognized as Muslim by state authorities in the aftermath of the Russian government’s decision to allow its subjects to “convert” from Christianity to other recognized religions. On the “apostasy” of 1866, see Werth, \textit{At the Margins of Orthodoxy}, 147–76. I put “apostasy” in quotation marks because Kräshen protesters did not present themselves as apostates, but rather as Muslims who simply wanted their official religious status to mirror their actual faith. It was tsarist officials who saw these individuals as apostates.}

As would be the case with protesting Muslims in later years, the Kräshen “apostasy” was not simply a battle over religious faith. Rather, the petition campaigns often grew out of concerns that related to people’s daily lives. Kräshen petitioners were often quick to point out that they had been living as Muslims their entire lives. They were not looking for the state’s blessing, but rather the advantages that \textit{administrative} recognition as Muslims would confer upon them.\footnote{Indeed, if anything, Kräshen petitions requesting permission to be officially recognized as Muslim reflected the degree to which Kräshen Tatars were able to live as Muslims and practice Islam without state recognition.} State recognition that they were Muslim would simplify the bureaucratic lives of Kräshens, particularly those who had illegally married Muslim Tatars and produced children with them, as well as for Kräshens living illegally within Muslim villages.\footnote{On cohabitation between Muslim and Kräshen Tatars, see Werth, \textit{At the Margins of Orthodoxy}, 162–3.}

Officials working in the region’s local branch of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, however, tended to view Kräshen demands in terms of religious extremism. As far as tsarist officials were concerned, the “apostasy” of 1866 only confirmed the degree to which Islam could turn even (officially) lapsed Muslims into “fanatics.”\footnote{On the tendency of state officials to view Kräshen demands in terms of Islamic fanaticism, see Werth, \textit{At the Margins of Orthodoxy}, 137, 161, 178, 180–4, 190–1.} Tsarist responses to Kräshen petitions therefore focused primarily upon limiting what state officials viewed as the pernicious influence of Islam in the region. Local officials sought to separate Kräshens from Muslim Tatars and Islamic civilization.\footnote{On state efforts to separate Kräshen Tatars from Muslims, see Werth, \textit{At the Margins of Orthodoxy}, 148–50. State officials feared the ability of Kräshens to “pick up Muhammadanism” (163).}

It was at this time that the famous Orientalist Nikolai Il’minskii, and his system of indigenizing Christianity among non-Russian communities by spreading the Christian gospel in Tatar, began to assume a position of special influence in the region. Just one year after the Kräshen “apostasy” of 1866, Il’minskii received permission to begin the clerical training of Kräshen Tatars. He played
a major role in founding a new Christian mission in Kazan, replacing one that had lain dormant since the last missionary there retired in 1859. Government objectives in founding these schools appeared to be focused mainly upon consolidating Christianity among the Kräshens, rather than winning new converts from among the Muslims. Many Muslims in the region, however, would come to see the schools as symbols of a hostile attitude in the Russian state toward Islam.

STATE EXPANSION AND CENTRALIZATION

Like the Ottoman Empire, Japan, and many of their contemporaries in the nineteenth century, government officials in Russia embarked upon a major project of administrative reform, known as the Great Reforms, which took place in the 1860s and 1870s. While the Great Reforms are best known for the emancipation of serfdom, another important consequence was the considerable expansion of the size of the state and the roles the reforms played in the lives of its subjects. In fact, much of the state expansion that took place during these years was the direct result of serfdom’s abolition, as new state institutions were created in order to take over many of the tasks which had previously been the responsibility of individual landowners. New departments of government and institutions of administration were created for Russian subjects of all faiths.

The expansion of the Russian state and the formation of new institutions like the provincial legislatures (zemstva) and municipal councils (dumas) would bring Muslims in central Russia into more frequent and intimate contact with tsarist civil administration than ever before. As was the case with tsarist policy-making in Russia’s western borderlands—but, notably, quite unlike the situation in Muslim-populated regions on the periphery such as Crimea, the Caucasus, or

100 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 224. On Il’minskii and his system, also see Geraci, Window on the East, 47–85.
103 This was the case, for example, with the creation of peace mediators, which was a component of the Judicial Reforms of 1864. See Natalia F. Ustiantseva, “Accountable Only to God and the Senate,” in Russia’s Great Reforms, 162.
Turkestan—state officials in St. Petersburg adopted a series of new laws that brought Muslims living in central Russia under much more direct forms of state administration.\textsuperscript{104} The passage of these laws, and Muslim resistance to them, would play an enormous role in politicizing both elite and non-elite Muslims in central Russia over the course of the final three decades of the nineteenth century.

In 1870, the Ministry of Education decreed that “Russification” (\textit{obrusenie}) and “assimilation” (\textit{sliianie}) would now constitute two goals for the education of non-Russian communities in the empire.\textsuperscript{105} They mandated that Muslim medreses opening in the territories of the Orenburg Assembly would henceforth begin teaching the Russian language.\textsuperscript{106} In 1874, Muslim schools were put under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education,\textsuperscript{107} and in 1888 it became necessary for Muslims wishing to become spiritual personnel in the Orenburg Assembly to pass an exam in the Russian language.\textsuperscript{108} None of these provisions were implemented in Muslim-inhabited regions of the empire outside the territories of the Orenburg Assembly, even though other non-Russian populations in the western borderlands of the empire were often exposed to similar policies.\textsuperscript{109}

Without question, assimilation was a goal of tsarist officials in some regions of the empire like the western borderlands. In central Russia, however, government policies toward Muslim populations appear to have been derived mainly from a desire to centralize these communities administratively and establish Russian as the language of administration.\textsuperscript{110} With more direct contact than ever before taking place between tsarist officials and local communities, conflicts over language, education, and matters of daily governance became increasingly pronounced. Muslims were by no means the only people in the empire protesting at this time.\textsuperscript{111} When, however, the relatively assimilated Muslims of central Russia sought to articulate their grievances to state officials, they relied upon the same discourse that officials had been employing for decades: Islam.

\textsuperscript{104} On similar developments taking place among the empire’s Jewish communities, see Dolbilov, \textit{Russia Krai, Chuzhiaia Vera}, 137–8.

\textsuperscript{105} Steinwedel, “Invisible Threads of Empire,” 112.

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Sbornik zakonov o Musul’manskom dukhovenstve v Tavricheskom i Orenburgkom okrugakh i o Magometanskikh uchebnykh zavedeniakh} (Kazan: Tipografiia P.K. Kidalinskago, 1899), 29.

\textsuperscript{107} Steinwedel describes similar policies adopted in Ufa, which was also within the territories of the Orenburg Assembly. “Invisible Threads of Empire,” 144–221.

\textsuperscript{108} See Dolbilov’s discussion of these years in central Russia. \textit{Ruskii Krai}, 146–7.

\textsuperscript{109} In this respect, the “Russification” of Kazan Tatars can, in some ways, be attributed to the expansion of the tsarist state during the post-reform years.

\textsuperscript{110} Rorlich, for example, who describes “Russification” as “the ultimate goal” of Russian–Tatar schools in the nineteenth century, never explains what this term means. \textit{The Volga Tatars}, 47.

Over the course of the final decades of the nineteenth century, Muslim communities in central Russia repeatedly expressed their opposition to state initiatives in the region in a number of ways. The production of mass petitions, sent to a variety of state officials by dozens—sometimes even hundreds—of villages constituted one of the most common modes of registering protest. On other occasions, groups of Muslims openly confronted public officials, in some cases beating up (Muslim) representatives of tsarist administration working at the village or district level. Throughout, these events demonstrated the complex set of relations that existed during these years between Muslim communities, state officials, and the leaders of the Orenburg Assembly.\footnote{The protests and petition campaigns which occurred during these decades are mentioned by Crews in the context of a single petition campaign, taking place in 1888. \textit{For Prophet and Tsar}, 313–14. For critical discussions of Crews’ use of Muslim petitions, see Adeeb Khalid, “Tolerating Islam,” \textit{London Review of Books} 29:10, May 24, 2007.}

As was the case with subjects across the empire, communities of all faiths in central Russia had at times shown resistance to tsarist policymaking.\footnote{See, for example, tsarist reports on Muslim and Christian resistance to military recruitment in the 1860s in NART, f. 1, op. 3, dd. 58–9. In these reports, no mention is made of Muslim resistance differing in any way from Christian resistance.} There were, however, three important differences between earlier protests and those that occurred among the region’s Muslims in the late nineteenth century. First of all, the protests of the late 1870s onward were big, involving at times hundreds of villages from across the region. Second, the frequency and duration of these events are also striking, with protests taking place for more than two decades and frequently occurring on an annual basis. Third, unlike earlier protests involving the region’s Muslims—but similar to the Krâshen protests of the late 1860s—in the late nineteenth century Muslims frequently invoked “Islam,” “Sharia,” and other Islamic terminology in pleading their cases to tsarist authorities.

The first of the major Muslim\footnote{By which I mean recognized Muslims. The Krâshens often saw themselves as Muslims already, but were officially Christian.} protests occurring during this era took place in 1877–78, in response to new regulations (\textit{instruktsiia}) adopted by the provincial legislature (\textit{zemstvo}) of the province of Kazan.\footnote{The \textit{zemstvo} as an institution was itself a product of the Great Reforms.} The regulations would entail expenses for the construction and maintenance of new buildings, including firehouses and water depots. Community members would also be required to purchase insurance to protect against fire damage.\footnote{For a discussion of the protests over the \textit{instruktsiia}, see Zagidullin, “Tatarskie krest’iane,” 134–56.} The measure would prove deeply unpopular among many Muslims in the region, who regarded the insurance mandate with deep-seated mistrust. Over the course of two years, more than one hundred Muslim villages from districts across the province submitted petitions against the \textit{instruktsiia}, calling for the repeal of the new regulations. The petitions were
sent to a variety of civil and spiritual representatives of provincial administration, including the Orenburg müfti, the governor of the province of Kazan, and local police officials. A number of petitions were also sent to the Minister of Internal Affairs and the emperor.\textsuperscript{117}

Muslims were not the only ones to oppose the regulations, as Russian and Chuvash villages likewise argued that the new regulations were costly and unnecessary.\textsuperscript{118} These were the exact same arguments that Muslim petitions made. The petitions produced by Muslim communities, however, contained additional arguments pertaining to Islam in particular. They argued that the new regulations contravened Islamic law (Musul'manskii zakon)—a reference to the fact that some Muslims believe that insurance violates prohibitions against interest.\textsuperscript{119} Muslim petitioners also argued that the construction of bell towers, which had been presented by state authorities as a means of combatting fire, was “strictly prohibited by the Holy Sharia.”\textsuperscript{120} The petitions emphasized the degree to which the instruktsiia deviated from the principle of separate, confessional administration. One set of petitioners argued that the very fact that the instruktsiia was the same for Christians and Muslims indicated that it had been issued in error. “For us [the regulations] are not necessary,” wrote the Muslims of the village of Staryi Tatarskii, “as we are Muslim” (’a dlia nas, kak magometan, ne obiazatel’nye”).\textsuperscript{121}

Muslim protests against the regulations were not limited to the distribution of petitions, but also involved public demonstrations, the beating of local Muslim officials, and altercations with tsarist security personnel. This is what happened in the village of Malye Ayzy, where a group of several dozen protesters descended upon the seat of local (volost’) administration, beating up the clerk and the chairman.\textsuperscript{122} In a separate incident, the district police inspector for Kazan reported that up to 1,000 Muslims had gathered in the village of Karmish-Kazanbash, where they attacked the clerk and village elder (sel’skii starost’).\textsuperscript{123} Eventually, the Army was called in to disperse the crowds.\textsuperscript{124} Another group of soldiers fought

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{117} NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, l. 22, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Zagidullin lists more than a hundred “Tatar” villages as having been involved in the protests, as well as another fourteen villages of “other nationalities,” including Chuvash and Russian. How mixed villages were counted in this survey is unclear. See Zagidullin, “Tatarskie krest’iane,” 154–5. For samples of these petitions, see NART, f. 1, op.3, d. 4345 f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627. The Chuvash are a mostly Christian Turkic community also living in central Russia.
\item \textsuperscript{119} An Islamic version of insurance is called takaful. For petitions arguing that state policies were un-Islamic, see NART: f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, l. 1; f. 1, op. 3, d. 4466, ll. 33-34-ob; f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, ll. 41–3, 144, 175. Numerous examples of this type of language can also be found in petitions stored in TsGIA RB, f. I-295, op. 11, d. 397.
\item \textsuperscript{120} This line was used in literally dozens of petitions, as most of them were copied word for word from one of a few different models. This particular example was taken from TsGIA RB, f. 295, op. 11, d. 397, l. 47-ob. Also see, for example, NART f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, l. 45; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, l. 175.
\item \textsuperscript{121} NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, l. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{122} A volost’ is a subdivision of a district which was the primary subdivision of a province. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, 53. On the notion of collective “rights” and responsibilities in late imperial Russia, see Jane Burbank, “An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 7:3 (Summer 2006), 397–431.
\item \textsuperscript{123} This was a village-level administrative post.
\item \textsuperscript{124} NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, l. 68.
\end{enumerate}
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a pitched battle with approximately five hundred Muslim protesters outside the town of Menger. According to an account written by one Mökhämmäd al-Mökhämmädshahi Äkhmäd ulï, who took part in the fighting, “most” of the Muslims in Menger viewed the events in terms of the Russian government attacking Islam. Fights taking place between protesters and soldiers were accompanied, lamented Äkhmäd ulï, by “much shedding of blood.”

Official responses to Muslim protests over the instruktsiia involved violence, prosecution, attempts at persuasion, and ultimate concession. The fact that petitions and rumors relating to the instruktsiia frequently invoked Islam helped to shape the attitudes and responses of tsarist authorities to the unrest. As had been the case regarding the efforts of Kräshen Tatars to be recognized as Muslim, the invocations of Islam in the arguments and rumors of Muslims contributed to a tendency among tsarist officials to view Islam as the problem. When confronted with a series of complaints relating to administrative measures, government officials heard only the Islamic rhetoric in which these complaints came packaged.

Security personnel spared no effort in tracking down individuals they identified as the instigators of the unrest, arresting both the scribes who had written the petitions and individuals who were caught distributing them. At the same time, however, officials working in the region also sought to employ the Orenburg Assembly leadership as a means of reassuring Muslim communities. Such was the case in late November 1877, when the governor of the province of Kazan attempted to involve Orenburg Müfti Tevkelev in government efforts to quell disturbances taking place within Muslim villages. Writing that “the Tatars don’t want to insure their buildings, they say that [Muslim] law prevents them from doing so,” the governor asked the müfti to send a general announcement or circular to the imams, mullahs, and akhunds operating under his authority, ordering them to persuade their communities to end the petition campaign and accept the new regulations.

Rather than viewing Muslim (or non-Muslim) opposition to the instruktsiia as resulting from government policies in the region, the minister blamed the unrest on lower-level spiritual personnel in the Orenburg Assembly.

Most mullahs are not energetic or quick-witted enough to explain things to them, and some mullahs do not say anything and just keep to themselves. Of greatest necessity is that mullahs convince and impress upon people that Tatars who have always been Muslim will never be baptized into the Orthodox faith and that they freely practice their Muslim faith according to existing laws.

125 “Ianga zur dähshätle vakïiga,” l. 1-ob.

126 See the correspondence between the governor of Kazan and various officials in the regional administration, NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3539, l. 1; f. 1, op. 3, d. 4677, 93, 123, 179. Also see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4677, ll. 93-97-ob. Report from the district inspector of Chistopol’ to the governor of Kazan.

127 Correspondence from the governor of Kazan to Müfti Tevkelev. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, l. 33.

128 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4345, ll. 32–3. The minister’s reference to “Tatars who have always been Muslims” means that Muslims who had earlier converted to Christianity but who had returned to Islam would still not be recognized as Muslims by the Russian government.
As would be the case in subsequent petition campaigns, Müfti Tevkelev endeavored to avoid becoming publicly involved in the disputes. In his response to the governor, Tevkelev argued that issuing a circular was “unlikely to be successful.” Instead, the müfti suggested that the governor take “direct action”—that is, without the müfti’s involvement—by sending a personal representative to the spiritual personnel of Kazan and enlisting their support in ending the disturbances. Ultimately, the civil authorities in the province would produce their own circular and succeed in getting Tevkelev to translate it into Tatar. But nowhere on the circular would the name of either the müfti or the Orenburg Assembly appear.

Faced with the müfti’s reluctance to become personally involved in the dispute, authorities in St. Petersburg and Kazan did not devote further efforts to communicating with the protesting communities. They did, however, expend considerable energy in investigating the sources of the petitions. In late November 1878, police raided the home of Hüsnü Ata Azamatov in the city of Chistopol’. There, they maintained, Azamatov had been writing petitions to various figures in the tsarist administration for several months. After writing the petitions, Azamatov supposedly sent them to villages across the region, where they would be signed and sent to their destination. In Azamatov’s house a total of twenty-two petitions in various stages of completion were found, including thirteen addressed to the müfti, seven addressed to the zemstvo of the district of Mamadysh, and four addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg. In the end, the instruktsiia were modified—a development which perhaps encouraged Muslims in the region to return to mass petitions as a means of protest later in the century.

Between 1882 and 1884 more than two hundred petitions were sent to state officials in response to the announcement of regulations placing Muslim schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Then, in the years following the 1888 regulations mandating the study of Russian in Muslim schools, hundreds more petitions were delivered to tsarist officials. As had been the case with Muslim communications regarding the instruktsiia, the most common argument made by Muslims in the petitions from the 1880s and 1890s was that the government’s proposals were unacceptable because they violated “Sharia,” or “Muhammadan Law.”

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129 Correspondence from Müfti Tevkelev to the governor of Kazan. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, l. 233.
130 For the request that the müfti translate the Russian-language circular, which was prepared by the civil administration of the province, see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4469, l. 4-4-ob. For the müfti’s translation and a copy of the printed circular and see f. 1, op. 3, d. 4469, ll. 6-6-ob and 8-8-ob.
131 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4677, ll. 93-97-ob.
132 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4466, l. 33. Ultimately, the instruktsiia were modified to accommodate some of the complaints of the region’s Muslim communities, particularly with respect to the construction of bell towers. Zagidullin, “Tatarskie krest’iane,” 156.
133 For the petitions from this campaign, see NART f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, ll. 23–146.
134 One report indicated that 190 petitions had arrived at the governor’s office alone. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 8137, ll. 19–27.
135 Muslims resisting the mandatory study of Russian, for example, wrote a petition to the emperor stating that “Sharia forbids us from studying foreign subjects.” NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 8137, l. 8. Petition to the emperor from the Muslim population of the village of Almenev, in the volost’ of Bogorod, January 22, 1890. Also see identical petitions later in this delo, including ll. 45–9 and others.
these petitions explained that its signers had first turned to the müfti in the hopes that the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly would assist them in organizing their protest. The müfti, however, had rebuffed their requests, explaining to them that the assembly did not have the power (vlast’) to petition for the repeal of the new regulations.

Mass rumors, predicting terrible fates for Muslims, were another feature of these decades. Rumors predicted, for example, that Muslim medreses would be closed and that Muslims would have to study in Il’minskii’s schools. Other rumors alleged that state authorities would soon do away with the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly altogether. Tsarist authorities viewed these mass narratives in terms of falsehoods spread by Muslim fanatics. In fact, many allegations related to actual developments that were taking place at the time in the region. Several people in the province had also reported hearing that the closing of the Orenburg Assembly would presage the forced conversion of Muslims to Orthodox Christianity. This idea was also reflected in written accounts from the time, such as Mökhämmäd al-Mökhämmädshahi Äkhmäd ulï’s account from 1878. Entitled “A New Big Violent Event” (Ianga zur dähshätle vakïiga), Äkhmäd ulï attributed the government’s actions to a “Russian” desire to wipe out Islam and transform Muslims into “apostates” (muretid).

Even more ominously for local officials, many of the rumors circulating during these years also implicated the government’s own interlocutors vis-à-vis Muslim communities, the ulema of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. Orenburg spiritual personnel, it was alleged, would soon be ordained as Orthodox priests and made

Others argued that studying Russian meant that Muslim students could not learn Sharia correctly. See petition to governor, NART, f. 1, op 3, 5883, l. 3-ob., January 20, 1883.

136 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 8137, ll. 8–9.

138 On rumors regarding Il’minskii’s schools in the region, see NART, f. 1, op. 1, d. 4466, l. 33-ob. Correspondence between the governor of Kazan and the directors of the province’s districts.

139 For more on state views that these rumors were simply the product of “fanaticism” or “falsehoods”—rather than genuine concern among Muslims over real events taking place in their lives—see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3539, l. 1; f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, d. 179; f. 1, op. 3, d. 7798, l. 95; f. 1, op. 3, d. 9606, ll. 4–6. On rumors alleging the imminent closure of the assembly, see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, l. 144. Petition to the governor of Kazan. For state discussions regarding the wisdom of such a closure, see Azamatov, “Russian Administration and Islam in Bashkiria,” 110. Similar discussions were undertaken in the late 1860s and early 1870s regarding the scaling back of the Tavridian authority’s administrative autonomy, RGIA f. 821, op. 8, d. 605, ll. 34–49.

140 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4466, l. 33.


142 The 1896 report from the district inspector of Mamadysh to the governor of the province of Kazan in NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 10165, ll. 17–18. Also see Zagidullin, Perepis’ 1897 goda, 136.
responsible for baptizing their fellow Muslims. On one occasion Müfti Soltanov wrote to the governor to complain about rumors he had heard which contended that, “[W]ith my approval,” Muslim affairs regarding “marriage, separation, and divorce will soon be subordinated to the authority of the Orthodox Christian spiritual authorities.” These rumors had, the müfti wrote, accompanied Russian Muslims during a recent pilgrimage to Mecca. The story had prompted, lamented Soltanov, a group of outraged pilgrims to send a letter to Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II, denouncing Russia’s actions and asking the sultan to take an interest in the matter. The signatories of the petition reportedly included the müfti of Mecca.

Tsarist officials were indignant at the protests. As had been the case during the “apostasy” of 1866, officials in the region dismissed the rumors as the product of crazed fanatics. “As is well known,” began a report written for the governor of Kazan in 1894, “the Tatars of Kazan, especially the Mullahs and the merchants, stand out for their extreme fanaticism.” Common to many reports from the 1890s is the notion that “the rich Muslim-fanatics and mullahs” were the source of trouble because they wanted to create their own Muslim government. This view of Muslim demands was common among bureaucratic views, and would resemble post-1905 depictions of İsmail Gasprinskii and other activists as “fanatics,” pan-Islamists, and pan-Turkists.

From the late 1870s and deep into the 1890s, relations between regional officials and Muslim communities had been growing steadily worse. At the same time, however, state officials were growing ever more dependent upon the leaders of the Muslim spiritual assemblies to manage affairs within Muslim communities. Even as ulema leaders demonstrated a clear reluctance to jump into the fray surrounding Muslim protests and state reprisals, government agents had no one else to work with from within Muslim communities. State officials, for the most part, would continue to rely upon these ulema, even as other groups of Muslim elites demonstrated a willingness to step forward and provide input regarding the welfare of Muslim communities.

**FACES IN THE COMMUNITY**

Having relatively little success in their efforts to convince the Orenburg leadership to intercede with state authorities on their behalf, Muslim petitioners began to look elsewhere. Increasingly, the scions of Kazan Tatar merchant families like the

143 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 9603, l. 7–9, 17–20, 23, 64, 130, 209, 229–32. Correspondence between the governor of Kazan, Orenburg Müfti Soltanov, and regional district inspectors.
144 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 8601, ll. 1–3. Correspondence from Orenburg müfti to governor of Kazan, 1891. The letter of protest that Soltanov is referring to can be found in BOA, Y.MTV 57/50, s. 1–3.
145 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 7798, l. 95. Report on rumors of mandatory education in Russian, 1890. For more on fear of fanatics see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3539, l. 1, in which Muslim fears of being baptized are likewise seen as evidence of fanaticism. Also see NART f. 1, op. 3, d. 4627, l. 179.
146 For state views on Gasprinskii and others as “fanatics” and “pan-Islamists” after 1905, see NART f. 486, op. 1, d. 4, l. 29. Ministry of Internal Affairs letter discussing supporters of constitutionalism and new method education.
Apanaevs, Azimovs, Iunusovs, and Akchurins were willing to play a more public role in community affairs. These families were influential, as they were not only wealthy, but also made up much of the ruling class of both civil and spiritual administration in the region. In the decades following the abolition of serfdom in Russia, Muslim insider families in the oldest region of Muslim–Russian interaction in Russia became more outspoken than ever. No longer content with simply sending out petitions on behalf of the “Muslim Community (obshchestvo) of Kazan,” important Tatar merchants began to publicly present themselves as intermediaries between Muslim protesters and tsarist officials.148

In 1879, the governor of Kazan wrote to the Minister of Internal Affairs to report that, “once again,” the merchants Iunusov, Apanaev, Azimov, and Galiev were asking for permission to travel to St. Petersburg to personally express their opposition to a proposed law that would allow Muslims to take cases involving the division of property to civil courts.149 The merchants, reported the governor, wished to argue that such cases must continue to be heard only in the Orenburg Assembly “by imams, that is, according to Sharia, without the involvement of the civil courts.”150

The idea was to keep civil administration at bay. While this issue was a much larger concern in central Russia, where the greatest amount of administrative centralization took place in the late nineteenth century, elites in other parts of the empire were similarly worried. Like merchants in central Russia, İsmail Gasprinskii also opposed the idea of allowing Muslims to appeal Sharia rulings in civil courts. In an article published in Tercüman in 1891, Gasprinskii applauded the recent actions of the Russian Senate, which had recently decided against enforcing this law to its letter. According to Russian law, wrote Gasprinskii, Muslim litigants had the right to appeal Sharia court decisions in civil courts in order to have them re-tried under the “common laws of the empire.” However, noted Gasprinskii, this law had been interpreted in a variety of ways in different parts of the empire in the nineteenth century. In practice, he wrote, Muslims did not actually have the chance to appeal Sharia decisions. For Gasprinskii and the merchants in central Russia, the idea of allowing Sharia decisions to be appealed in civil courts was tantamount to presiding over the unraveling of one of the core functions of the ulema.151

149 Report of V. V. Radlov, February 26, 1883. NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, ll. 4–7. Also see Zagidullin, Perepis’ 1897 goda, 144.
150 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4468, ll. 4-6.
151 Crews reads Gasprinskii’s piece differently, as an example of the work of Muslims who were “looking to the state” to “safeguard the divine law against its enemies.” For Gasprinskii’s (untitled) article, see Tercüman, August 21, 1891, p. 1, from Crews, “Empire and the Confessional State,” 82.
In December 1893, a group of Kazan merchants calling themselves representatives of “the Muslim community of Kazan” (Kazanskoe magometanskoe obshchestvo) sent a petition to the governor of the province requesting permission to send a deputation to St. Petersburg. This group consisted of the Kazan merchants Muhammetdzhan Galiev, Murtaz Ibrahimov, and Yusuf Apanaev, along with Abdulkaïum Abdulvelidov, mullah of the No. 10 mosque in Kazan. These four had been chosen at a meeting of Kazan mullahs, merchants, “and other influential Muslims” held on December 12, and wished to petition the emperor regarding “a number of questions regarding Muslim education” and the abolition of compulsory Russian-language examinations for individuals wishing to become mullahs.\footnote{152 NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 9126, ll. 1–5.}

**BREAKFAST DIPLOMACY**

In February 1882, Wilhelm Radlov received the query described at the outset of this chapter. Why, asked his superiors in St. Petersburg, had Muslims not yet been informed about new laws affecting their legal status? Radlov quickly agreed to take up the issue. He would take a survey of Muslim schools in the area and announce the adoption of still more regulations. The new laws that Radlov was now obliged to inform Muslim communities about had been adopted on February 5 of that year, requiring the instruction of Russian in Muslim schools.\footnote{153 Report by V. V. Radlov, NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, ll. 5–6.} Reluctantly, the Orientalist sent off an announcement of the new regulations to Muslim schools listed on his previous school survey. However, problems started almost immediately. Radlov’s announcement of the laws—both old and new—was met with expressions of disbelief. Over the course of the year, several older teachers in the region had appealed personally to Müfti Tevkelev, asking him to intervene in the matter. The teachers wanted the new regulations requiring Russian overturned, but they were unsuccessful in gaining the müfti’s support.\footnote{154 Report by V. V. Radlov, NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, l. 6.}

On December 22 the governor of Kazan, having been informed of gathering resistance to the regulations during the late summer and fall, contacted Radlov and suggested they visit the schools together.\footnote{155 NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, l. 6.} The undertaking did not go well. “It was apparent,” Radlov would later write, “that the Tatars had been warned.” At every school, “we found the local population filled with rage.” The governor spoke with mullahs, teachers, local residents, and students at each school they visited, and all of them said they wanted the schools to remain under the authority of the müfti.\footnote{156 NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, ll. 5–6.} In response, Radlov and the governor had to tell them the bad news that their schools were now under civil, rather than spiritual, control, and had been for nine years.\footnote{157 It seems likely that this was genuinely the first time the teachers and others had learned about the 1874 laws, as the petition campaigns against them only began after the ill-fated visit paid to the villages by Radlov and the governor in 1883.}
After the governor and Radlov had visited the schools, the Kazan merchant İbrahim Iunusov informed the traveling party that he wanted to help mediate the conflict. Iunusov invited them to his house the next day for a breakfast summit. A group of Tatars from the surrounding community had also been invited. At breakfast, they informed the governor that the opposition he had witnessed the day before represented “only the first step.” Softened, perhaps, by the tea and snacks offered to him in the sumptuous Iunusov residence, the governor proposed a compromise. He promised that he would personally appeal to the Minister of Internal Affairs on behalf of the Muslims. He would not, moreover, enforce any of the laws until a decision confirming their implementation had been handed down by St. Petersburg.

The contrast between the seeming inactivity of the spiritual leaders and Iunusov’s energetic involvement seemed stark. The müftis did not want to be drawn into these disputes. They prevaricated to both tsarist civil authorities and Muslim communities, seeking mainly to avoid the pressure coming their way from both sides. Iunusov, on the other hand, had become personally involved, and had brought the governor and protesters together. Most significantly, Iunusov had actually succeeded, it seemed, in gaining concessions from the authorities. The merchant was held in high esteem in his community, and there were rumors about him too. Unlike Müftis Tevkelev and Soltanov, who always seemed to be the subject of stories involving treachery, secret deals, and selling out the Muslim community, Iunusov was the subject of far different tales. During and after the 1877–78 war with the Ottoman Empire, a popular story had circulated in the region that he had saved Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II from Russian captivity. If Iunusov could do that, why not turn to him for help with schools?

Other divisions took place in relation to audience. In 1896, a movement developed among Muslims in Kazan to petition the Minister of Internal Affairs. They wanted to ask for the lifting of compulsory military service for Muslim religious personnel. According to the official writing a report summarizing this movement, a debate ensued. To whom should they send the petition? “The better educated of the Muslims,” wrote the official approvingly, “refused to sign the petition and instead recommended that this issue either be forwarded to the Muslim spiritual assembly or to your Excellency (i.e., the Governor).” However, “the majority of them insisted upon their choice and sent the petition directly to his Excellency the Minister.”

State officials wanted Muslims to speak to them only through the Muslim spiritual assemblies, or at the very least to keep things local. Muslims in central Russia, however, no longer saw either the governor or the müfti as a serious locus of change. The spiritual assembly leaders, in particular, found themselves in a more difficult

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158 On the Iunusovs, also see “Iunısovlar,” Tatar Entsiklopediia Süzlege, 797.
159 NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 15539, ll. 6–7. Also see Chapter 1 of this volume.
160 Officials in the province had reported rumors to this effect. See the report by the inspector of the district of Sviazhsk to the governor of Kazan in NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 4012, ll. 1–2.
161 NART, f. 1, op. 4, d., 7035, l. 1.
position than ever. While civil administrators turned to them increasingly to put out fires within Muslim communities, the reputation of the ulema leaders was spotty. Although many people would continue to look to the leaders of the assemblies after 1905, many other Muslims would look elsewhere. But even by the end of the nineteenth century it was clear that the relationship between civil authorities, the assembly, and local Muslims was already highly strained and perhaps even unworkable.

CENSUS WARS

In January 1897 the Census Commission of the province of Kazan was due to begin collecting data for the first all-Russian census, a project of no small importance and prestige to officials in both St. Petersburg and the region. Aware of rumors that had been spreading across the province over the previous decade, the provincial administration took early steps to avoid a recurrence of violent protest. As usual, this was undertaken primarily through the Orenburg Assembly. In June 1896, a full six months before the counting was to take place, Müfti Soltanov was asked to write a directive to imams in the assembly informing them that the census was to be used only to count people, and not convert them.

Spiritual personnel were instructed by Müfti Soltanov to pass on the message to their communities that “No harm will come from the census either with regard to the Muslim religion, or with regard to Muslim schools.” As the count approached, in November, the governor of Kazan province insisted that “a respected mullah” be brought in to attend the meetings of the commission and take part in its planning. Census takers were subsequently informed to be extra careful in working in Muslim villages, where “Muslim customs regarding women” predicated that outsiders should not speak with female residents. When the actual count began to be carried out, moreover, many of the census takers were themselves spiritual personnel from the Orenburg Assembly.

Despite the efforts of provincial officials to address Muslim concerns about the census, fears among Muslims persisted. In December 1896 the Kazan office of the Minister of Internal Affairs reported that it had received many tips reporting that “Tatars from the villages are traveling to Kazan to consult with mullahs, notable merchants, and wealthy people there” in an effort to formulate a response to the census. By the end of the month, petitions addressed to the governor, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and other tsarist officials (though not the müfti) had begun arriving from Muslim villages in the countryside. As in previous cases,
these petitions revealed a great degree of coordination in the community, often matching one another word for word. They expressed fear in the region that the collection of data was actually the first step toward their mass conversion.\textsuperscript{167} Other petitions asked if the government planned to close Muslim schools and replace them with missionary or Russian-language schools,\textsuperscript{168} or if the Orenburg Assembly was going to be closed.\textsuperscript{169}

Many petitions, such as the one signed by “the peasants of the Muslim faith from the village of Tatarskii Aisha in the district of Mul’minsk,” posed the following very specific three questions and a request:

1) If a school is opened in our village will our children be forced to study Russian?

2) Will these schools be opened under the supervision of the Minister of Education?

3) Will members of the missionary societies be sent to us?

4) If possible, please do not compel mullahs to obtain the sort of educational qualifications discussed in the journal \textit{Pravitel’stvennyi vestnik}, No. 1, 1892 and in the journal \textit{Orenburgskii Listok} in 1892, No. 12328 and No. 35 in 1893.\textsuperscript{170}

Petitions like this one were very specific about their concerns, in this case even providing periodical citations. Far from representing a blind fanatical hatred, the petition campaigns demonstrated the high level of organization that Muslim protesters displayed during these years. As was the case with other Muslim concerns, the community’s suspicions surrounding the census project reflected a high level of distrust between the state and regional society.\textsuperscript{171}

The conflicts breaking out during the census collection represented a communication breakdown on a number of different levels. One of the biggest problems stemmed from the fact that the state’s primary interlocutors were themselves often distrusted in the community. Even as the government’s official strategy for engaging Muslim concerns revolved primarily around the Orenburg Assembly, spiritual personnel assisting in the collection of census data often received a hostile reaction from their communities. Rumors spread in Muslim communities that mullahs working for the Census Commission were assisting in the registration of Muslim boys for Russian-language schools in exchange for large sums of money.

\textsuperscript{167} NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 10495, l. 1; petition from Muslims in the village of Atadai to the provincial census commission, January 11, 1897. Also see F. 199, op. 1, d. 46, ll. 1-4-ob, report from the Kazan gendarmerie to the Kazan governor, January 3, 1897.

\textsuperscript{168} NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 10495, ll. 1, 86; NART, f. 2, op. 2, d. 12627, l.1. Report by the vice-governor of Kazan, March 20, 1897. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 10165, l. 17-18-ob. Correspondence from police chief of Mamadish district to the Kazan governor’s office, October 1, 1896.

\textsuperscript{169} NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 10165, l. 17-18-ob.

\textsuperscript{170} These qualifications involved the study of Russian language for Muslims. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 10495, l. 6. Petition from the Muslim believers of the village of Tatarskaia Aisha, January 12, 1897.

\textsuperscript{171} I therefore disagree with Robert D. Crews’ assessment that “[t]hreats to Islam,” as far as Muslims in Russia were concerned, “came more frequently from within the community” than from the state. \textit{For Prophet and Tsar}, 96.
and property.\textsuperscript{172} In the village of Bol'shye Nïrmy, Mullah Khairullah Abdulgaliev complained to the Census Commission that, after explaining to his community that no harm would come to them from the collection of census information, he was chased from the village amid accusations that he had converted to Orthodox Christianity.\textsuperscript{173}

Across central Russia, people fought back against the census. Somehow, amid decades of reports detailing Muslim concerns that the Orenburg Assembly would be employed as a means of converting Muslims en masse, no one in local administration had realized that a census campaign managed through the ulema was a particularly bad idea. In the village of Karatai, Mullah Zainullah Valgullin reported that “a Chuvash came into the village, entered the mosque, and convinced the peasants to not listen to their mullah’s advice to participate in the census.”\textsuperscript{174} In the village of Karmish-Kazanbash, which had been the site of violence in earlier protests, soldiers were dispatched to combat rioting villagers.\textsuperscript{175} In Bakïrchï, soldiers clashed with more than three hundred Muslims.\textsuperscript{176} Dozens of mullahs refused outright to work as census takers, leading to their being stripped of their status as licensed (\textit{ukazannye}) mullahs and ejected from the Orenburg Assembly.\textsuperscript{177} When the collection of data began to take place, opposition only grew. In mid-January, several census takers had appealed to the gendarmes for protection, stating that their participation had put their lives in danger.\textsuperscript{178} In all, active resistance to the collection of census data—ranging from simple harassment of census takers to mass demonstrations—took place in more than four hundred villages in ten districts in the province.\textsuperscript{179}

The decades following the Great Reforms witnessed a veritable transformation in the ways in which the tsarist state interacted with many of its subjects. For Kazan elites, this form of centralization created great concern, even if the protests and petition campaigns actually began in rural communities. After the protests and petitions had already been taking place for several years, elites in Kazan and elsewhere in central Russia became increasingly outspoken regarding them as well.

How had a series of disagreements over administration and education become transformed into a war over religion? State officials communicated with Muslims through an Islamic discourse, and through the institutions of Islamic administration,
the ulema. Muslims spoke back to state authorities in that very discourse. In arguing legal cases, they invoked Islam and Sharia—referring to state-based definitions of both. When Muslims employed these discourses in non-confrontational situations, tsarist officials did not appear alarmed. When, however, Muslims began using these same discourses in articulating grievances against the state, police and civil attitudes toward Muslims and Islam hardened. Although state officials had seen nothing strange in invoking Islam and Sharia during the course of their own interactions with Muslims, when Muslims used these same tropes to make complaints, their arguments attracted no attention. Instead, all tsarist officials could pay attention to were the references to Islam and Sharia. The petitioners had used Islamic discourses specifically to get the attention of their bureaucratic interlocutors, but it was of the wrong kind. All state officials could hear on these occasions was an angry shout of Islamic fanaticism.

The events discussed in this chapter would contribute to the emergence of two sets of issues that would dominate Muslim political discourse after 1905. The first concerned administration, and united Muslims from a variety of social and political viewpoints. The second set of issues related to education, and divided Muslims bitterly. In both cases, the individuals concerned with these developments were not only elites. In fact, a wide cross-section of people cared about their schools, taxes, and forms of local administration. Largely because issues pertaining to administration and schooling were already so politicized in central Russia, Muslim activity in that region after 1905 was considerable. This would be the case with respect to both formal and informal politics within Muslim communities, which are the subjects of the next two chapters. After the Revolution of 1905, the emerging political agendas spilling out across the empire's Muslim-inhabited regions would demonstrate one more way in which the pan-Turkists were embedded within their communities and era.
Activists and the Ulema after 1905

In his tell-all account of the İttifak movement published in Petrograd in 1915, Musa Carullah Bigi, an activist mullah from Penza, described the jostling that took place among Muslims in the early days of the Revolution of 1905. Russia had been the scene of increased political unrest for months. Demonstrations—and brutal police crackdowns—were spreading beyond the western industrialized centers where they had begun. Subjects of all faiths had begun to organize unions (soiuz), which they would use for sending lists of demands for reform to Tsar Nicholas II, Prime Minister Sergei Witte, and local authorities. In central Russia, a disparate group of merchants, ulema, teachers, lawyers, and others decided to create a similar organization, which they called the Union of Russian Muslims, or İttifak al-Müslimin.

Initially involving mainly the merchants, activists, and ulema of Kazan, Ufa, and other cities in central Russia, İttifak's leadership would soon claim to speak in the name of 20 million Russian Muslims. While the organization's actual support across the empire was far below that number, İttifak would nevertheless become by far the largest Muslim-specific political movement to emerge during...
the revolution. It was during this time, in 1904–05, that the majority of the individuals most closely associated with pan-Turkism first began to make a public name for themselves.⁵

According to Bigi, the early meetings were often rather tense. Arguments raged among the delegates about who, if anyone, should have the right to speak in the name of Muslim communities in communications with tsarist officials. While the heads of the Muslim spiritual assembly had traditionally played the role of passing on messages and information from state authorities to Muslim communities, there was no precedent in Russia for deciding who should talk to state officials on behalf of Muslims.

These tensions also occurred at the individual and personal level, such as at an early meeting held at the home of Kazan merchant Äkhmätdzhan Saidashev. One of the local peasants who knew Saidashev nominated the merchant to be the chairman (reis) of the proceedings, and the sixty-five-year-old Saidashev stepped up to the podium to accept the job. “Shouts and cries” broke out on the floor. Sadık Efendi Galigayef, a member of the Orenburg Assembly, had seen enough. “A peasant calls out for you to be chairman and, shamelessly, and standing in front of the entire ulema, you step to the podium!” The whole room sat in astonished silence. “What kind of chairman can you be? Step down from the podium! For shame!”

Pandemonium broke out. A hail of cries rose from the audience. Chanting “Vote! Vote! Vote!” people called out to one another to raise their hands in an effort to force a vote. Gradually the noise died down as Saidashev beat a hasty retreat from the podium. A vote was held, and the winner ended up being a Saidashev ally, Abdullah Apanaev.⁶

A veteran of the protest and the petition campaigns of the late nineteenth century, Apanaev was fairly typical among the men who would go on to lead İttifak. He was part of the Muslim establishment, and in terms of politics thought mainly in tsarist categories. He was concerned with finally winning some of the disputes that Muslims in central Russia had been waging with civil administrators for decades, as well as a jadid. Apanaev, like most of the people he collaborated with politically during these years, was by no means anti-tsarist. On the contrary, people like him constituted the “invisible threads of empire” that held countries like Russia together.⁷

Who speaks in the community’s name? The Russian Revolution of 1905 created, at least on paper, a constitutional monarchy with a freely elected parliament. On the one hand, these events created considerable optimism among some Muslims, who reasoned that the relatively large number of Muslims in the empire could help lead to gains for their communities if indeed Russian parliamentarianism

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⁵ With Gasprinskii an obvious exception. But even Gasprinskii’s audience grew exponentially after 1905, as did the range of activities in which he was able to participate.

⁶ Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 6. In Tatar he is known as “Gabdulla” Apanaev.

⁷ This term comes from the title of Charles Steinwedel’s classic dissertation, “Invisible Threads of Empire.” On the jadids, who supported educational reform, see Chapter 4.
ever amounted to anything. On the other hand, the emergence of a more open political public sphere also raised questions pertaining to community leadership. Since the second half of the eighteenth century, Muslims in Russia had been ruled as a community, with the official ulema playing a leading role in their management. In the aftermath of the revolution, however, tsarist officials and Muslim subjects were asking the same question: Who, if anyone, would now be responsible for articulating Muslim community interests in communications with tsarist officials?8

Beginning with a discussion of the Revolution of 1905, this chapter looks at Muslim community leadership politics in Russia during and after the revolution. I then look at the major players in Muslim politics: the activists, ulema, merchants, and, of course, state officials. Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu all played critical roles in the political developments taking place within Muslim communities during these years. Just as the trans-imperial context discussed in Chapter 2 formed a deeply influential context for the pan-Turkists, so too did their activist work in Russia. From the beginning of Muslim organization in late 1904 until their departure for Istanbul following the Young Turk takeover in 1908, the activists were concerned primarily with tangible issues that mattered to large numbers of people. These concerns were at the center of their agenda in Russia. Identity would not come until later.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

On the heels of protests taking place across Russia in late 1904 and early 1905, Tsar Nicholas II signed the Bulygin Rescript, which called for the establishment of a “consultative assembly,” to be known as the Duma.9 The Bulygin Rescript and other concessions failed, however, to quell the disturbances. During the course of a series of dramatic strikes and mass meetings and demonstrations, the tsar signed the October Manifesto on October 17, 1905.

Largely produced by Prime Minister Sergei Witte, the October Manifesto created new openings for people like Gasprinskii, Akçura, and Ağaoğlu in Russian society. The freedoms allowed by the October Manifesto fit well with the strengths of the activists. While newspapers of all languages became much freer after October, the impact upon Muslim communities was especially intense. After Russian Orthodox Christians, they were the second largest confessional group in the empire. If parliament really was going to matter, the Muslims stood to gain from it. The new parliament was scheduled to open in the middle of 1906. Elections to the body were due to take place in the early months of the year.10

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8 This dichotomy between “state” and “Muslims” was more complex than it looks at face value. The spiritual authorities were part of the state, based inside the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Many Muslim subjects were also state authorities.
9 Initially, this body was envisioned to play only an advisory role.
The sudden appearance of political freedoms, and a real scarcity of individuals who knew what to do with them, created “people of the revolution.” These were individuals who possessed certain types of skills and experience enabling them to benefit from the changes taking place. How many Muslims in Russia knew anything about parliament, politics, or running a newspaper? Who could even speak Russian, or feel comfortable spending long periods of time in St. Petersburg? This was the basis of the activists’ power. They knew the vocabulary of politics, and understood political rhetoric, in addition to holding linguistic and cultural advantages that cannot be underestimated. At a time when even many of the İttifak members sitting in parliament spoke no Russian or French, Gasprinskii, Akçura, and Ağaoğlu were much more effective in their communications with Russians.11

While Russian Muslims had not, for the most part, actively taken part in anti-government demonstrations prior to the October Manifesto, there was considerable determination among Muslims of many political persuasions to use the opportunities granted by the revolution to improve their administrative conditions. The movement attracted supporters beyond the elites. This was particularly the case in central Russia, where many people had participated in protests in recent decades. In an empire with a population of approximately 125 million people, it seemed to many Muslims that finally they would get an opportunity to be heard.

MAKING İTTIFAK

Russian subjects of all faiths were given the right to organize committees, publish brochures and newspapers, hold public meetings, create reading rooms and libraries, and undertake other types of organized activity which previously had required government permission. Looking to other groups that had formed “unions” to articulate their demands, the Siberian mullah Abdürreşid İbrahimov decided that Muslims should do likewise.12 The movement that he formed would become İttifak.

The term “ittifak” is usually translated as “unity” or “union.”13 Both of these renderings make sense, in some contexts. However, it also seems clear that Muslims who were invoking this term were speaking about a more general concept of community solidarity, rather than a particularly separatist or revanchist political agenda. In many cases, such as in the naming of the İttifak movement,

11 M. F. Usal mentions that many İttifak deputies did not know Russian and spent their entire time in parliament saying nothing. Birinci, ikinci ve üçüncü duma dádá müslüman deputatlar (hám alarnyq kilgan eshlere) (Kazan: Tipografiia I. N. Kharitonova, 1909), 154.
12 These “unions” (soiiez) included the Union of Academicians, the Union of Teachers, the Union for the Equality of Women, and even the “Union of Unions.” Ascher, The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray, 140–3.
13 Referring to the discourse of “unity” that pervaded the activists, Jacob Landau writes that “Gasprinsky’s basic approach in advocating Pan-Turkism was to work for a union of all the Turkic groups in Russia, under the spiritual guidance of Turkey.” Pan-Turkism, 10.
the term is obviously a translation of the “unions” that Russians and others were creating at this time. Indeed, the Russian-language publications of the İttifak movement invariably describe the organization as the “Soiuz Musul'mane” (“The Muslim Union”).

İbrahimov was a particularly vital figure in early Muslim political organization during the revolution. Born in the province of Tobol'sk in western Siberia in 1857, he had criss-crossed dozens of countries during the course of his lifetime. İbrahimov had taken several multi-year trips through Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Japan, and central Europe in the 1880s and 1890s, working as a teacher in places such as Istanbul, Ufa, and Siberia to support himself en route. Returning to St. Petersburg in 1900 after three years in the Ottoman capital, İbrahimov became involved with the publication of the Tatar and Arabic-language review Miras before setting off on another long journey the following year. He left St. Petersburg in 1901, and spent the next two years in Japan before making his way back to Istanbul. After spending several months in the Ottoman capital İbrahimov was arrested, and in August 1904 was deported back to Russia.

Returning to St. Petersburg in the fall, İbrahimov rented an apartment and, it seems, briefly went into business. Before long, however, the strikes and meetings that were heating up in the final months of 1904 captured his imagination. One day toward the end of 1904 he approached the Minister of Internal Affairs, Prince P. D. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, who was then new to his job. The peripatetic mullah asked the government minister if officials might give some consideration to a petition on reform drawn up by a Muslim union. Receiving “vague promises” that such a petition would not be ignored, İbrahimov immediately began communicating with contacts in Kazan and Ufa, where there was a number of wealthy merchants who would be willing to host meetings and help with organization and financing.

In December 1904 and January 1905, İbrahimov traveled the snowy and distant roads of central Russia. He traveled from St. Petersburg to Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg, holding meetings in the houses of wealthy Muslims such as Ahmetdzhan Saidaşev of Kazan and Ahmet Bey Hüseyinov of Orenburg. In Kazan, İbrahimov met up with Yusuf Akçura, who, as an Akchurin and an Iunusov, would have been well connected to events taking place among the merchant families of the region. When the revolution came knocking, Akçura was more than ready.

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14 İbrahimov had spent 1890–91 in Istanbul, then returned to Russia before going back to Istanbul in 1897. According to Türköğlu, İbrahimov also visited Austria, Italy and Switzerland, France, and the Ottoman Balkans in the late nineteenth century. İsmail Türkoğlu, Sibiryalı Meşhur Seyyah Abdüreşid İbrahim (Ankara: Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1997), 11–13, 17–22.
15 Türkoğlu, 41. Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 44.
16 Türkoğlu writes that İbrahimov’s arrest was at the behest of the Russian government, but it is unclear why this would have been the case. Upon his arrival from the Ottoman Empire, İbrahimov was held briefly in Odessa before being released. Sibiryalı Meşhur Seyyah Abdüreşid İbrahim, 25.
17 Türkoğlu, Sibiryalı Meşhur Seyyah Abdüreşid İbrahim, 25.
18 The quote is from Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 57.
Galvanized by İbrahimov’s assurances that their efforts would be sanctioned, Akçura set to work. He wrote to İsmail Gasprinskii, and told his brother-in-law to travel north to St. Petersburg for an all-Russian Muslim meeting to be held in March.¹⁹ İbrahimov, meanwhile, contacted Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev, editor of the Russian-language newspaper Kaspii in Baku.²⁰ İbrahimov told Topçibaşev about the upcoming meeting in St. Petersburg, and asked him to organize a delegation of Caucasian Muslims to attend. In late March and early April a series of meetings were held at İbrahimov’s apartment in the capital, concluding with a decision to hold a larger congress later in the year.²¹

The meeting that the St. Petersburg delegates had foreseen in April 1905 would take place on August 15, 1905, in the central Russian city of Nizhnii Novgorod. Located almost exactly in between Moscow and Kazan, Nizhnii Novgorod was

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¹⁹ Akçura was actually the cousin of Gasprinskii’s wife, but would have thought in Turkish of Gasprinskii as his enişte, or “brother-in-law.”

²⁰ This newspaper, subsidized by the Baku millionaire Tagiev, contained news pertaining mostly to the Muslim communities of the Caucasus. See Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 31–2. Also see Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 4. Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 58.

chosen by the meeting organizers because it was the location of an annual trade fair that large numbers of Muslim merchants always attended. However, holding a political meeting was illegal, as this was taking place prior to the October manifesto. In August 1905 special permission was still required, which the governor refused to provide because the city was under curfew.22

There was, however, a backup plan. Nizhnii Novgorod sits at the confluence of two rivers: the Volga and the Oka. One of the meeting organizers had found a boat called the Gustav Struve that was available for private rental. Rather than rent a banquet room in a restaurant and risk arrest, they decided to hire the boat and have the congress on the Oka.23 The Muslim Congress became the Congress Cruise. This last-minute ingenuity, coupled with the good idea to coordinate the meeting with the Makaria trade fair, produced an impressive turnout. A total of 108 delegates made it onto the boat.24

In holding the congress on the river, the meeting's organizers had also found a convenient way to cut out a loud and annoying constituency: medrese students. Often studying at new method schools, the students had worn out their welcome among many of the merchants and ulema during the early meetings in Kazan with their often strident demands.25 On August 15 the floating All-Russian Muslim Congress set sail at nine o’clock in the morning, but the students had been told to show up at ten o’clock. Arriving at the riverboat dock to find that their ship had sailed, the enterprising youths rented a small boat and caught up with the Gustav Struve.26 Before they were allowed upon the boat, however, the students had to promise not to talk too much at the meeting. They agreed and were permitted to board the ship at last.27 While they kept their word throughout the duration of the congress, student protests in new method schools had only just begun.28

The Congress ended, however, on a note of anxiety. Bigi reported that many of the attendees were nervous about getting into trouble with the police. No one wanted to get caught with political-looking papers on them. İsmail Gasprinskii, according to Bigi, was particularly nervous, sputtering out to the others that they should just “throw your papers into the water—I’m not taking them!”29 Finally, Abdırreşid İbrahimov agreed to take the papers, muttering to himself and others that “whatever happens, at least I’ll be able to protect them.”30

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22 Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 110.
23 Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 110; Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 167.
24 Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 111. 25 Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 110.
26 At least they had learned some critical thinking skills.
27 The students included people like Ayaz Ishaki, Fuad Tuktarov, and A. Devletshin. Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 111. Bigi writes that the boat left early because those aboard were afraid of the police. Islahat Esasları, 169.
28 See Chapter 4 of this volume.
29 Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 171. Gasprinskii is an occasional target of Bigi’s criticism, such as when he accuses Gasprinskii of being cheap and tells stories of activist stinginess. Islahat Esasları, 173–4. The potshots are interesting given the fact that Gasprinskii had died in September 1914, the year before Bigi’s book was published.
30 Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 172. These papers become one of Bigi’s sources for his book. On fears surrounding the First Congress, see Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 62.
An important component of the 1905 Revolution was the transformation that took place with respect to the Muslim periodical press. While the media revolution of 1905 affected publications produced in all printed languages of the empire, for Muslims conversant in Turkic dialects the impact was especially powerful. Prior to 1905 there had been only a handful of newspapers published in the languages of Muslim communities.\footnote{These included İsmail Gasprinskii’s \textit{Tercüman}, Muhammad Ağa Shahtakhtinskii’s \textit{Şark-i Rus}, and the \textit{Turkistan Vilayetinin Gazeti} in Tashkent. On the Muslim periodical press in Russia before 1905, see Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, \textit{La Presse}, 21–46.}

After the October Manifesto, however, the number of Muslim newspapers skyrocketed.\footnote{The print media revolution of this era was not limited to Russia alone. Joan Judge looks at print culture and journalists in early-twentieth-century China. \textit{Print and Politics: “Shibao” and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).} Between 1905 and 1917, a total of sixty-two Tatar-language newspapers were published legally in central Russia, with twenty-three founded in Kazan alone.\footnote{Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, \textit{La Presse}, 53–4.} In Baku, sixty-three newspapers were published during these years.\footnote{Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, \textit{La Presse}, 133.} Elsewhere in Russia—in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Crimea, the northern Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia—dozens of new periodicals were established, alongside libraries and reading rooms in which to read them.\footnote{On the creation of these organizations, see RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 464; f. 821, op. 133, d. 473; f. 821, op. 133, d. 474.} The great majority of newspapers produced in the languages of Muslim communities were in some form of Turkic.\footnote{Turkic-speaking Muslims represented the lion’s share of Russian Muslims generally. Non-Turkic Muslim communities include most of the peoples of the north Caucasus like Chechens and Circassians.}

Most of the well-circulated Muslim newspapers of the time were owned by individuals with close connections to both the jadid movement and İttifak. Zakir Rämiev, who had begun publishing the newspaper \textit{Vakit} and the journal \textit{Şura} after the October Manifesto, was an important supporter of new method causes and the İttifak movement. He had made his fortune in gold mining in the Ural mountains, and was an İttifak deputy in the first Duma.\footnote{Zakir Rämiev and his brother Şakir were well-known publishing and philanthropical figures in the Muslim Volga region. Bennigsen, \textit{La Presse}, 72. On the Rämievs, see “Rämievler,” \textit{Tatar Entsiklopedii Süzlege}, 516.} The people who ran Rämiev’s publications were also reformers. \textit{Vakit}'s editor was Fatih Kerimi, while \textit{Şura} was edited by the well-known jadid scholar Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin. Kerimi and Fäkhretdin were, like their patrons, deeply involved in İttifak.\footnote{On Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin, see “Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin ulî,” \textit{Tatar Entsiklopedii Süzlege}, 704.} The newspaper \textit{Beyan ul-Hak} was similarly the product of monied establishment interests. It was published by Äkhmätdzhan and Muhammaddzhan Saidashev—well-known merchants who were involved both in numerous new method projects as well as

\footnote{On the journal \textit{Şura}, see Raif Märdanov, “\textit{Şura} zhurnalı (1908–1917): Adäbiät mäs’äläläre” (Kazan: Rukhiïat nashriïat, 2001).}
İttifak. In the Caucasus, the best-known newspaper to appear in 1905 was Hayat, which was bankrolled by the Baku millionaire Zeynel Tagiev and edited by Ahmet Ağaoğlu. İrşad, the other Turkic-language newspaper with which Ağaoğlu was most closely associated in these years, was published by the wealthy philanthropist Isa Bey Aşurbeyli.

Did anyone read these newspapers? The circulation numbers varied, but estimates tend to fall between 2,000 and 3,000 copies sold per issue. Alexandre Bennigsen wrote that Vakit, one of the longest-running and best-financed papers, had a circulation of 2,500. Similarly, a 1907 report by the press censor of the province of Kazan indicated that Kazan Mukhbirı sold between 2,000 and 2,200 copies of each issue. Yöldız, another well-known and relatively popular newspaper during these years, sold between 1,600 and 2,000 copies, while Beyan ul-Hak had a circulation of between 2,200 and 2,800. In the Caucasus, Ahmet Ağaoğlu's Hayat newspaper reached a circulation of 2,500, according to Bennigsen, while İrşad's circulation was more than 3,000. These numbers may be exaggerated, however, as at the time of İrşad's closure articles in the Muslim periodical press speculated that the paper had never sold more than 500 issues.

While the circulation of the periodical press may not have been particularly high, the newspaper constituted an important institution in Muslim communities in the years following the October Manifesto. Dispersed widely in the many reading rooms and libraries established by Muslims in the years after 1905, the actual number of readers of newspapers far exceeded their circulation numbers. Editors of these newspapers, such as Fatih Kerimi, received a large amount of mail from Muslims across Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere. Although the newspapers were often known to hold certain political stances, letters to the editor printed in these newspapers reflected a variety of opinions.

The newspapers were important in other ways too. They were dispensers of information about daily events in places like Kazan, Baku, and Bəyəncəsəray. Additionally, the larger newspapers constituted an important instrument in

39 Äkhmätdzhan Saidashev was the individual who was booed off the podium at an early meeting at his own house.
40 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 107. Tagiev had also financed the publication of the Russian-language Baku daily Kaspii, whose editor was Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev, since 1881. See Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 31–2.
41 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 107.
42 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 73.
43 NART, f. 420, op. 1, d. 88, ll. 2, 67; 108–9. Russian-language newspapers were estimated at having slightly higher circulations. Kazanskii Telegraf was listed as having a circulation of 4,600, Volzhskii Listok was listed at 2,900, and Kazanskii Večer at 3,000. On the Muslim periodical press, also see R. U. Amirkhanov, Tatarskaia demokraticheskaia pechat’ (1905–1907 gg.) (Moscow: Nauka, 1988).
44 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 107–8.
45 Ağaoğlu himself wrote that İrşad’s circulation had previously been “up to 500,” but had dropped to 230 during the month of Ramadan, which Ağaoğlu blamed upon efforts by the ulema to discourage Muslims from reading newspapers. “Baku ulemasının gazette barasında muazeleri,” İrşad 255, November 1, 1906. On İrşad, also see Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse, 108–9.
46 See the establishment papers of such organizations in RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 464; f. 821, op. 133, d. 473; f. 821, op. 133, d. 474.
political organization, with editors publishing lists of which candidates to vote for, as well as providing information on the time and place at which voting would take place. While print culture was not the only location of Muslim political discourse after 1905, the emergence of these newspapers nevertheless helped to shift the nature of the Muslim public sphere in Russia. Once the preserve mainly of the government and the ulema in the form of official pronouncements, the Muslim public sphere in the empire now included a boisterous array of print voices.

AN IMPERIAL GENERATION

Who were the faces behind these changes? The individuals associated most closely with İttifak and the new Muslim media were, for the most part, establishment figures whose families had been involved in Muslim community administration for generations. Kazan-based merchants playing an early role in sponsoring İttifak activities included people such as Äkhmätdzhan Saidashev, Suleyman Aitov, Shah Haydar Sirtlanov, and Abdullah Apanaev—insider Muslims who were well known to tsarist authorities in the region for their families’ record of service to the state. The goal of these figures was not to overturn tsarism. Rather, they sought to make the Orenburg Assembly, the most important institution of specifically Muslim administration in Russia, more accountable to the preferences of Muslims.

If the merchants who had hosted the first Muslim meetings were establishment figures, so too were most of the activists who worked with them in creating İttifak. While Gasprinskii, Akçura, and their future Türk Yurdu cohort are described as having harbored “pan-Turkic organizational plans” during their time with İttifak, the activists mirrored the merchants in the manner in which they looked to the tsarist state and its institutions for political solutions. They were galvanized by constitutionalism and parliamentarianism, and in 1905 that meant that Russia was their only serious option. Far from looking to Istanbul—where Ottoman subjects continued to live under the autocratic rule of Abdülhamid II until 1908—the Muslim activists saw Russia as their best chance for playing a role in creating the sort of governmental system they wanted to live under.

Such was the case with İsmail Gasprinskii. As the publisher of the longest-running independent Muslim newspaper to have existed in Russia, Gasprinskii understood that, in order to gain influence within the tsarist system, he needed to work with the authorities. In 1889, when Muslims in central Russia were protesting

48 The quotation is from Landau, Pan-Türkism, 12.
49 For some people in the southern Caucasus, such as Mehmet Emin Resulzade, Iran was an option. Resulzade’s Persian was good enough to allow him to publish books and newspapers, which is perhaps one reason why he chose Tehran, while Ağaoğlu and Ali Hüseyinzade preferred Istanbul. On Ali Hüseyinzade, see Chapter 6 of this volume.
50 Terçüman had been banned in the Ottoman Empire for much of Abdülhamid II’s reign. See BOA DH MKT 390/49.
against a law passed the previous year obliging knowledge of Russian for members of the ulema, Gasprinskii came out with a series of articles emphasizing the benefits to Muslims of learning the language. As was the case with his efforts to stop Muslims from leaving Crimea in 1902, Gasprinskii’s public embrace of government-supported views reflected a broader alignment between the activists and tsarist officials that tends not to be recognized in most of the studies examining Muslim politics in late imperial Russia.

Like Gasprinskii, Yusuf Akçura was also part of the Muslim establishment. While Akçura had spent more than two decades abroad, he had maintained contact with his relatives in Russia during this time. As a teenager in Istanbul Akçura had visited central Russia with his mother, and after moving back to Russia at the end of 1903 he had lived at the home of his relatives outside Simbirsk. The Akchurins, like the Apanaevs and other insider Muslim families in central Russia, had long placed their sons in positions of influence in both the civil and the spiritual administration of Muslims. Despite his many years away, Yusuf was an Akchurin and a Iunusov. Playing a prominent role in the management of Muslim communities in Russia was practically his birthright.

Following up on his meeting with Abdürreşid İbrahimov in early 1905, Akçura played an early and active role in İttifak’s creation. At the end of January 1905 he headed a group of Muslim merchants and activists from central Russia in addressing a petition to Sergei Witte in the name of Muslims. The writing of this petition had coincided with a large meeting held in Kazan that had involved about two hundred merchants, activists, and ulema members. Akçura and the other petitioners, all of whom were drawn from the ranks of elite Muslim families in central Russia, identified themselves in the petition as the “Muslim Society of Kazan.”

Akçura’s petition focused mainly upon issues of quotidian administration. All of the petition’s articles related, in one way or another, to the issue of how Muslims should interact with various types of state institution. Primarily, the issues that İttifak insiders like Akçura were concerned with in 1904–05 were those about which Muslims in central Russia had been protesting for decades. The petition’s first article argued that Muslims should be able to elect their own müfti—a request that merchant families in Kazan had been making in earnest since the first half of the nineteenth century. The second article similarly reflected a focus on institutions, arguing that “all matters pertaining to marriage, family, and the division of property” needed to remain under the supervision of the Orenburg

52 Rorlich writes that “some 200 Tatars” attended a meeting to discuss a petition to send to the tsar on January 29. The Volga Tatars, 108. The petition is dated January 28.
53 Petition to Sergei Witte from the Muslim Society of Kazan, January 28, 1905. RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 631, ll. 11-16-ob. Alongside Akçura, the signatories included the lawyer Sayid Girey Alkın and the merchants Abdullah Apanaev and Äkhmätdzhan Saidashev.
54 As I discuss in Chapter 2 of this book.
Assembly—a branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The third article called for all pious foundations—or *vakıf*)—to be placed under the exclusive control of the Assembly. Other points demanded that the obligation for Orenburg spiritual personnel to know Russian be lifted, and that Krâshens be given the right to officially register as Muslims.

Politically active Muslims in central Russia were concerned primarily with issues that were practical and administrative, rather than theoretical or identity-laden. This number included Akçura, Gasprinskii, and Ağaoğlu, as well as most other Muslim activists in Russia. Over the months that would follow the Muslim Society’s petition, the desks of tsarist officials working in the provinces and St. Petersburg were swamped by thousands more. The demands made in these missives similarly revolved around the relationship between Muslims and state institutions. Far from wishing to overthrow tsarism, the İttifak leadership sought to return to an earlier era of what they perceived as simpler, and less direct, governance.

This relatively conservative approach to reform was reflected in much of the activity of the İttifak leadership in 1905 and the first half of 1906. The resolutions coming out of the First Muslim Congress on the *Gustav Struve* worked entirely within tsarist categories. The five-point document was released in Russian, and seemed intended for a Russian audience as much as for a Muslim one. The document’s first point called for the mutual engagement (sblizhenie) “of Muslims of all regions of Russia on the basis of socio-cultural political needs and problems of contemporary Russian life.” Subsequent articles called for all communities of the empire to take part in the empire’s administration (Article 2), legal equality between Muslims and Russian Orthodox Christians (Article 3), freedom to open up schools and publish newspapers (Article 4), and the ability to reconvene the Muslim Congress periodically (Article 5). The writers of this petition were not thinking outside of the categories of tsarist rule, but rather bargaining for a larger share of the administrative pie.
The ulema did not go away. While the Muslims convening at Abdürreşid İbrahimov’s apartment in early 1905 were seeking out meetings with Sergei Witte, Müfti Soltanov of the Orenburg Assembly and the empire’s three other Muslim spiritual leaders were also at work. The four of them had been contacted by Sergei Witte himself, who hoped that the spiritual leaders could take charge of the efforts to reform the institutions of Muslim spiritual administration in the empire. While Witte had impressed İttifak delegates with his willingness to meet with them, the Prime Minister was far more interested in working with the leaders of the empire’s four Muslim assemblies. Rather than trust the merchants and activists who were setting up İttifak, Witte placed the responsibility for reform in the hands of the empire’s ulema.

Of the four Muslim spiritual assembly leaders, Müfti Soltanov was most involved in the new political era. In mid-December 1904, while Abdürreşid İbrahimov was canvassing the Muslim merchant circuit in Kazan and elsewhere, Müfti Soltanov had submitted a petition of his own to Witte, listing a series of suggested reforms. Delivered on December 12, the müfti’s missive explained that Soltanov had written the document on behalf of “the holders of the Muslim faith” of Russia. Soltanov’s suggestions were rather limited in scope, even compared to those submitted by Akçura and other İttifak figures. His petition requested that Muslims be allowed to work as science teachers, and that all barriers to Muslims receiving higher education (and educational stipends) be lifted. These were issues that İttifak’s leaders would no doubt have supported, but not ones that seemed designed to resonate greatly with a broad cross-section of Muslims.

Soltanov was no fierce conservative, but he was very much a government man. In twenty years of service as müfti, he had learned how to survive difficult times. He had made it through the firestorm of the 1880s and 1890s, but he knew that his reputation among Muslims was not sterling. Nevertheless, he had the confidence of Witte and other officials. The support of Witte gave him power, and was an important reason why İttifak’s leadership never sought to take on the müfti directly. Rather than publicly take on Soltanov, İttifak’s leaders asked Soltanov for favors even as many in the movement hoped to eventually unseat him by transforming his position into an elected one.

On one occasion during the January meetings that İbrahimov hosted, a delegation of Muslims from Moscow visited Soltanov. They wanted the müfti’s help in arranging a meeting with the tsar. “The tsar isn’t meeting with anybody,” responded Soltanov, who recommended the group try to see Witte instead. In response, a member of the Moscow delegation named Zahidullah Efendi Shefiha

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62 The literature on Muslim politics in late imperial Russia tends to pay little attention to the political role of the ulema after 1905, focusing instead upon the jadids. See Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 104–22, especially 106–7, 113; Kırımlı, National Movements and National Identity, 56–72, especially 61–2, 67.

63 “Petitsiia Orenburgskago müftiia v komitet ministrov,” Tercüman 28, April 12, 1905.
pointed out that the tsar had just met with a delegation of workers. If the emperor were meeting with workers, why not with Muslims? The müfti, who had been meeting with delegations for several days at this point, exploded with rage. "I'm no worker!" he shouted. "Get out of here, you peasant!" The delegation quickly left the müfti's chambers, and word of the scandal spread fast. Within a few days, however, Zahidullah Efendi was persuaded to apologize to the müfti at a peace summit held in the restaurant of St. Petersburg's Nikolaevskii train station.

Although he had lost his temper with the Muscovite Muslims, Soltanov was an important powerbroker whose influence was sought out by activists and government officials alike. In March 1905, Sergei Witte contacted Soltanov, and gave him instructions to go back to Ufa, where the Orenburg Assembly was located, and "assemble a number of suitable men from the ulema, and write a petition regarding your needs." Witte wanted to put Soltanov in charge of articulating the direction of Muslim administrative reform in Russia, rather than leave the process up to the people at İttifak.

Within a few weeks, Müfti Soltanov was back in Ufa and ready to convene a select meeting of the ulema. Taking Witte's advice, the müfti invited "twenty to twenty-five" members of the Orenburg assembly, a fraction of the Orenburg Assembly's membership of more than 2,000 to a meeting in Ufa between April 10 and 15. On the invitations that were sent out, the meeting's significance was camouflaged, as those receiving the note were blandly informed that they were to come "for an explanation about work related to service."

**UFA IMBROGLIO**

Müfti Soltanov appeared to have been taken by surprise by Witte's request. While Soltanov had long served as a mediator between the civil administration and the Muslim populations of the Orenburg territories, he had rarely been called upon to take such a proactive role in community leadership. Instead, Soltanov's understanding of managing Muslim communities was largely administrative in nature. More comfortable working through bureaucratic, rather than political, channels, the müfti did not seem to have a clear idea of what he was expected to do. Nevertheless, he made an effort to adapt to the new vernacular of reform and mass politics.

In his opening comments to the spiritual personnel gathered at the Ufa meeting, Soltanov indicated that he felt a desire for change. In remarks that reflected the
liminal place he held between the state and his community, Soltanov noted that “if the public shows that they believe that undertaking reform is necessary, then of course the government will accept it, to the extent that this is possible.”

He was careful to avoid distancing himself too far from the government administration, of which he was an important component.

Asked by Witte to find a mechanism for articulating the wishes of Muslims in the empire, the müfti retreated to what he knew best—the statutes and regulations of the empire’s four Muslim spiritual assemblies. Remarking to those gathered that “reform must begin with issues pertaining to religion,” Soltanov announced that he had provided everyone with copies of the laws and regulations pertaining to the four institutions of ulama. Their task, Soltanov announced, was to go through all four of them as a group. They decided to begin with the Sunni Assembly of the Caucasus, so for the next several hours the müfti and those assembled read, “one by one,” hundreds of statutes pertaining to the Tbilisi-based body, over which the Orenburg Assembly had no control or authority. At the conclusion of this exercise, Soltanov declared the first session over, and a motion was made to take a break.

While no effort had been made to publicize the Ufa meeting beyond those specifically invited, word of the gathering spread fast. By meeting at the headquarters of the Orenburg Assembly in Ufa, the müfti was opening the gathering up to anyone from the ulama who happened to be in town at the moment. For this reason, there were thirty-nine people present at the first session, despite the fact that, at most, twenty-five had been invited. Some of these people had shown up coincidentally without knowing there was a meeting taking place, while others had arrived because they had caught word of the events. As the day wore on, more people began to filter in and out of the Assembly’s building in Ufa. Telegrams arrived from towns and villages across central Russia, expressing indignation in response to Soltanov’s doings. One of the first petitions to arrive was written by Yusuf Akçura.

Akçura’s petition, which had been signed by Fäkhrettdin and several other İttifak figures, asked that the Ufa meeting stick to general discussions and avoid making decisions that were binding. If, however, any decisions were made, they needed

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69 Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 15.
70 The four bodies were administered independently. Bigi reports that the statutes were all read “one by one.” Islahat Esasları, 39.
71 It is possible that the müfti was simply stalling for time, particularly in light of his reluctance to be drawn into public conflicts.
72 Compared to Müfti Karashaiskii of the Crimea, who met with smaller groups of individuals at private residences, as I discuss later in this chapter.
73 Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 13–14.
74 Bozkurt states that Akçura physically attended the Ufa meeting. Bigi does not mention Akçura’s presence, but an arrangement may have been made by which Akçura was allowed to stay and present a petition, but not speak, as he was not a member of the ulama. 1905–1907 Yılları Rusya Müslümanlarının Siyasi Kimlik Arayışı, 130; Ismail Türkoğlu, Ruya Türkleri Arasındaki Yenileşme Hareketinin Oncülerinden Rızaeddin Fabreddin (İstanbul: Ötüken 2000), 134.
75 The signatories of the petition included merchants such as Alsaud Ahmetov and Mahmut Hüseyinov, the lawyer and publisher Sayid Girey Alkin, and the millionaire businessman and publisher Mehmetzakir Rämiev. Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 49.
to be advertised publicly. “The records should be dated,” explained Akçura, “signed by those involved in making the decision, and recorded.” He then presented no fewer than forty-five recommendations for reform to the Muslim spiritual administration. If the ulema were going to debate priorities for reforming Muslim community, Akçura was prepared to give them a subject that everyone had an interest in: the future of the Orenburg Assembly itself.

Akçura went directly after Soltanov, recommending that the position of the müfti become an elected one. He also provided a quite convoluted proposal for the form that such an election would assume. Akçura proposed giving Muslims the right to choose between one and three electors (sailaudzhï) in every district (mahalle) in the empire where Muslims lived. The electors from every fifty districts would then assemble to choose a second level of elector known as a mukhtar. The mukhtars, in turn, “would meet in a city, and would nominate three candidates.” The names of these three candidates would be forwarded to the emperor, who would appoint one of them for a fixed, though not yet determined, period of time.

Müfti Soltanov did not greet this proposal with particular enthusiasm, but insisted he was not personally concerned about this question. Renouncing any claim to self-interest in the matter, Soltanov argued that he opposed limiting the müfti’s term because such a condition would limit the position’s authority. “For

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76 These points were made at the beginning of the petition. Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 42.
77 Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 43.
Activists and the Ulema after 1905

me it makes no difference, but for the person who becomes müfti it will be vital
to appear significant in the eyes of the government. The government isn’t going
to pay any attention to someone who is elected for only a fixed period of time.”

In the final version of the petition that Soltanov sent to Witte post-Imbroglio,
the müfti indeed recommended that the position become an elected one for the
term of nine years. Soltanov added, however, a postscript to the message. Stating
that he personally disagreed with aspects of this innovation, Soltanov complained
to Witte that Akçura’s proposal was not representative enough of the community’s
desires. If the position of müfti, wrote Soltanov in his letter to Witte, were to
become an elected one, then “rather than adopt the complicated electoral sys-
tem specified in the petition,” the müfti should “be elected by all of the people”
directly. This could be done by holding elections not simply in a handful of large
cities and behind closed doors, but rather through votes held at or near mosques.
Perhaps starting to realize that the votes were probably on his side, the müfti was
coming around to the idea of allowing Muslims to choose their leaders.

The aftermath of the Ufa Imbroglio was bitter. Muslim activists were outraged
by what they saw as the secretive approach of the müfti to organizing the Ufa meet-
ing in the first place. In the months that followed the Ufa meeting, dozens more
telegrams were sent to the Assembly and İttifak, complaining about the small num-
ber of people involved in the discussions. In one telegram, Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin
chastised the müfti’s behavior. “Articulating the religious and social needs of all
Russian Muslims is a very serious and important task,” wrote Fäkhretdin. “It was
necessary to have people elect representatives to undertake it. Why were only
thirty-six people invited?”

İsmail Gasprinskii was also angry about the way the matter had been handled.
Writing in Tercüman two weeks after the conclusion of the Imbroglio, he criticized
the lack of publicity preceding it. He published the names of the attendees who
had been invited by Soltanov. Downplaying the degree to which İttifak had man-
aged to ultimately penetrate the meeting, Gasprinskii observed that “it would be
nice to know what they talked about and what decisions were made.”

The Ufa Imbroglio highlighted the tenuous position of İttifak in 1905. While people connected to the movement controlled most of the newspapers in

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78 Bigi, İslahat Esasları, 78.
79 Bigi, İslahat Esasları, 140. A copy of Soltanov’s recommendations to Witte in the wake of the
Ufa meeting can be found in NART, f. 1370, op.1, d. 2, ll. 4-7-ob. Müfti’s report to Witte, May 12,
1905, here l. 7-ob.
80 Bigi, İslahat Esasları, 78
81 Bigi, İslahat Esasları, 144–5. The “thirty-six” here is apparently a reference to the number of
people who attended, rather than those who were actually invited.
82 “Ufa,” Tercüman 33, April 29, 1905. Later in the year Abdürreşid İbrahimov similarly criti-
cized the müfti for having called the meeting in the first place, and especially under the seemingly
innocuous (and, he argued, deceptive) pretext of attending to “service” (po delam sluzhby). Abdürreşid
İbrahimov, “Bize ait,” Hayat 74, September 29, 1905. According to Bozkurt, the invitations were writ-
ten only in Russian. 1905–1907 Yılları Rusya Müslümanlarının Siyasi Kimlik Arayışı, 128.
circulation, the leaders of the spiritual assemblies still constituted an influential sector of the public sphere. The ulema made up the main network of communication between state officials in Russia and Muslim communities. Whereas prior to 1905 this communication had been mostly in one direction, Sergei Witte and other officials in tsarist administration were now willing to use the Muslim spiritual assemblies in order to receive, rather than simply provide, information and advice. For İttifak, the challenge lay in finding a way to insert themselves into this conversation.

CRIMEAN TENSIONS

In Crimea, relations between İsmail Gasprinskii and the Crimean spiritual leadership resembled the complex interactions taking place in Ufa between Müfti Soltanov and İttifak’s leaders. As he had done with Müfti Soltanov, Sergei Witte had asked Crimean Müfti Karashaiskii to poll the senior ulema for advice on how to proceed with the question of reforming the Tavridian Authority. In April 1905—the same time that Orenburg Müfti Soltanov was presiding over the invited spiritual personnel in Ufa—Müfti Karashaiskii held a meeting at his house in Simferopol regarding similar issues. The purpose of this gathering was to coordinate a list of suggestions for Witte.83

Unlike Müfti Soltanov, who had invited only spiritual personnel to the meeting in Ufa, Müfti Karashaiskii had originally included a number of people from outside the spiritual assembly in this project. According to İsmail Gasprinskii, when the Muslims assembled at this meeting decided to send a delegation to St. Petersburg, both spiritual personnel and non-spiritual personnel were chosen. Alongside ulema like Müfti Karashaiskii, kadi Ömer Efendi from Simferopol’, and Imam Haci Amir Efendi from Bahçesaray, non-assembly figures would also take part, such as Gasprinskii, Mustafa Mirza Kipchakskii (a member of the zemstvo of the district of Simferopol’), Mustafa Mirza Davyдович (a member of the city Duma of Simferopol’ and an old friend of Gasprinskii), İsmail Mirza Müftizade (a military officer), and “three students.”84

Over the next six weeks, however, relations between Gasprinskii and Karashaiskii deteriorated considerably. In an open letter to the müfti, Gasprinskii accused Karashaiskii of failing to live up to their earlier agreement. The müfti, Gasprinskii charged, had assembled a new delegation of representatives consisting entirely of members of the ulema. This smaller group then traveled to St. Petersburg without Gasprinskii or anyone to represent İttifak’s position. Writing from a train en route to Central Asia, Gasprinskii accused the müfti of ignoring the interests of

83 “Postanovlenie sobraniiia musul’mian krymskago poluostrova.” Tercüman 31, April 22, 1905.
84 Mustafa Davydovich was Gasprinskii’s friend from the Moscow military school with whom İsmail escaped as a teenager. On Davydovich, see Kırımlı, National Movements and National Identity, 33, 61, 64, 70, 105, 182.
the community (millet)\(^{85}\) and betraying his word to the representatives who had assembled at the müfti’s residence the previous April.\(^{86}\)

Gasprinskii accused both the müfti and Ömer Efendi of turning their backs on the interests of the community.

The müfti and the kadıs initially had worked together with the people (cemaat), and even invited them to his house for discussions. The müfti and Akmescit\(^{87}\) kadı Ömer Efendi agreed to electing a deputation and sending it to St. Petersburg. However after that . . . after that I don’t know what kind of mischief they got themselves into. They turned their backs on the promises they had made and began working against a community project (millet proyekti).\(^{88}\)

The scandal surrounding this incident caused a permanent rift between Gasprinskii and Karashaiskii. Nevertheless, the müfti continued to be involved in the efforts of non-spiritual personnel to organize politically. İttifak leaders understood the value of the ulema, and sought to employ the spiritual leaders in discussions with the tsarist authorities. This was the case at the Second Muslim Congress, held in St. Petersburg in January 1906, when the organizers of the congress turned to Karashaiskii in their effort to get official permission to hold the meeting. The müfti agreed to speak to the Minister of Internal Affairs on their behalf, but permission was nevertheless denied.\(^{89}\)

One issue on which Karashaiskii, Soltanov, Akçura, and many other political figures were all in agreement was the need to literally redraw the map of Muslim spiritual administration. At the Ufa Imbroglio, Akçura and Soltanov had both expressed the view that the four Muslim spiritual assemblies should be combined into a single ulema.\(^{90}\) Later in the year, Crimean Müfti Karashaiskii would likewise propose a reform plan in which Muslim spiritual administration in the empire would be centralized into just two principle offices of administration, one in Ufa and the other in Simferopol’.\(^{91}\)

Everyone liked the idea of centralizing, so long as they could be at the center.

In central Russia and Crimea, the dynamics between the local leaders of İttifak and the spiritual assemblies were complex. On the one hand, İttifak leaders needed the heads of the spiritual assemblies to speak on their behalf to government officials. At the same time, however, many in İttifak wanted to replace the spiritual leaders, or at least create a system in which people like the current ulema heads

\(^{85}\) While the word millet is often translated into English to mean “nation,” I prefer to use the word “community,” as the latter term provides more flexibility. For more details, see my discussion of the term in Chapter 4.

\(^{86}\) Gasprinskii claimed that he had only learned of the new Crimean delegation while on the train from Orenburg to Tashkent. “Kırım Müftisine (açık mektup),” Tercüman 43, June 3, 1905.

\(^{87}\) “Akmescit” is the Tatar name for “Simferopol.”

\(^{88}\) “Kırım Müftisi ve dukhovnileri,” Tercüman 41, May 27, 1905.

\(^{89}\) Yet they held the congress anyway. On the congress, see Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 208-10. Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 13–14. On Karashaiskii’s involvement in trying to persuade the Russian authorities to permit the meeting, also see NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 22, ll. 3–4. Letter from Fatih Kerimi to his parents, January 17, 1906 (from St. Petersburg).

\(^{90}\) Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 39–42.

\(^{91}\) Müfti Karashaiskii’s proposal, see KFU, Document T-1209. Letter from Karashaiskii, 1905. L. 1.
would never be chosen in the first place. Within such tensions, however, there were opportunities to collaborate. Although there was much public griping by İttifak leaders in the wake of the Ufa Imbroglio and its Crimean equivalent, there was something more important than settling scores with Soltanov or Karashaiskii. They had their eyes on a new prize: the Duma.

A COALITION OF INTERESTS

With the October Manifesto of 1905, the leaders of İttifak suddenly had something to hope for. For as long as parliament retained possibility as a future source of power, the İttifak movement’s leaders could hope to one day hold influence of their own. Whereas prior to October Gasprinskii and other İttifak figures had been content to attack the spiritual leaders in print, the prospect of upcoming elections encouraged them to work alongside the spiritual leaders. Politics brought solidarity. In order to win over Muslims, and get them to come out to vote, the ulema’s participation would be necessary.

İttifak’s leaders needed to broaden the movement’s base. While there were already many members of the ulema who were jadids, from late 1905 onward İttifak’s leadership worked hard to bring in non-jadid ulema to the movement. In the run-up to the elections, İttifak’s leaders vowed to fill whatever seats they won with “one intellectual, one merchant, and one mullah.” This was how Fazıl Minglibaev, the last-place finisher out of sixteen candidates chosen in Kazan’s second district, wound up in parliament.

Another prominent non-jadid who nevertheless worked with İttifak was Mullah Hayrullah Usmanov. Usmanov was a well-known teacher from Orenburg who was close to Müfti Soltanov and active in the politics of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. A member of the ulema, he had been one of the people invited to Soltanov’s Ufa Imbroglio. In June 1906, Usmanov was appointed to the high-ranking position of kadı, a choice that angered some of the activists writing in the periodical press who had been lobbying for Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin’s appointment. In the elections to the second Duma, Usmanov was chosen to be one of İttifak’s two representatives from Orenburg. In parliament, he served as a secretary of İttifak, and throughout 1907 worked closely with the movement’s leadership.

92 Draft materials of İttifak fundraising letters from 1906 also reveal an intention to include a reference to such a coalition. See KFU document T-907, l. 1.
93 Usal, Birinci, ikinci, ve üçüncü Duma’da müslüman deputatlar, 94. A lower-ranking member of the ulema, Minlglibaev was sent to the first Duma in St. Petersburg alongside the lawyer Sayid Girey Alkin and the merchant Gafir Bademshin.
94 This list is provided in Bigi, Idahat Easlari, 13–14.
95 This is mentioned in “Dukhovnoe Sobranie,” Kazan Mukhbiri 105, June 23, 1906.
96 Usal, Birinci, ikinci, ve üçüncü Duma’da müslüman deputatlar, 161–2.
97 Working with jadid–İttifak figures like Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin, Abdürreşid Ibrahimov, and Fatih Kerimi in organizing party activities. Letter from Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin to Fatih Kerimi, September 1907, NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 30, l. 27; letter from Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin to Fatih Kerimi, October 15, 1907, NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 30, ll. 37–40.
years he also contributed articles to the jadid press, including Fatih Kerimi’s *Vakit* newspaper,98 as well as to the conservative journal *Din ve Mağişet*.99

In 1905 and 1906, İttifak seemed to be going places.100 Prior to the elections to the first Duma, Yusuf Akçura had taken the lead in negotiating an electoral alliance with the Constitutional Democrats (or Kadets). The Kadets would go on to form the majority bloc in the first Duma, and İttifak elected twenty-five of its members.101 While Russia’s system of collective representation in parliament would have guaranteed Muslim membership in any event, İttifak managed to associate itself, through its Muslim Faction grouping in the Duma, with almost every Muslim in parliament.102 In the elections to the second Duma, which were held in January 1907, İttifak increased its parliamentary representation to thirty-five members.103 While these numbers were rather small in a parliamentary body with more than five hundred seats, İttifak’s leaders were hoping that their movement’s status as the sole voice of Muslims in parliament would give them standing to negotiate with tsarist officials.104

On a handful of occasions, leaders of İttifak worked alongside the heads of the ulama to reach positive ends. Such was the case when İttifak and the senior figures from the Orenburg Assembly joined forces to help overturn government proposals relating to Muslim education in the territories of the Orenburg Assembly. On March 31, 1906, the Ministry of Education had released a new set of regulations concerning Muslim education in Russia. Among the proposed rules was a ban on using books published outside of Russia in Muslim schools.105 Other suggestions envisioned the adoption of a modified Cyrillic script for Turkic languages. In response to these proposals, the İttifak leadership produced a petition arguing against the regulations, which it then passed on to Müfti Soltanov.

The result was one of the few occasions in which a real coalition was achieved in order to bring about change. Soltanov, along with İttifak figures such as

98 “Duma azalarından mektup,” *Vakit* 156, May 7, 1907.
99 Muslims opposed to the jadids are usually described as “kadims,” but only rarely referred to themselves in such terms. For more on the kadims, see Chapter 4 of this volume. *Din ve Mağişet* is the best-known conservative journal of the era, routinely printing columns that denounced jadidism, yet just as consistently publishing the advertisements and meeting announcements of İttifak. See, for example, “Müslüman fraksiyası,” *Din ve Mağişet* 15, 1907, 257–8. Usmanov also published “question-and-answer” articles in *Din ve Mağişet* in which he would occasionally answer questions from spiritual personnel regarding the activities of the Muslim Faction in parliament. “Orenburg Haberleri,” *Din ve Mağişet* 12, 195–7.
100 Although participation in Crimea, the Caucasus, and elsewhere was often far lower. Abdürreşid İbrahimov singled out Crimea, Astrakhan, and other areas for failing to vote in sufficient numbers to elect Muslims. “Duma saylaşı,” *Ülfet* 24, May 18, 1906.
101 On Akçura’s leading role in creating an alliance with the Kadets, see Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*, 113.
103 On the makeup of Muslim representation in all four dumas, see Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*, 181–7. Also see Usmanova, *Musul’manskie predstavitel’i*, 554–67.
104 There were 524 seats up for election, but by the time the Duma was dissolved only 478 of these seats had actually been filled. Usmanova, *Musul’manskie predstavitel’i* 149.
105 This was a particularly sensitive issue as it had only recently (with the October Manifesto) become possible to publish non-religious books in the languages of Russia’s Muslims. For this reason, many of the new method schools relied upon textbooks published in the Ottoman Empire.
Akçura and Topçibaşev, held negotiations with the Education Ministry for much of 1906. These talks produced a compromise, with most of the articles from the March regulations that Muslims had found most objectionable—particularly the proposal to create a new alphabet—overturned. Ittifak and the Orenburg Assembly had consulted one another and managed to ward off unpopular proposals, a real contrast from the impotence of the protest movements of the late nineteenth century. In the eyes of Muslim activists in Russia, social and political ittifak—solidarity—seemed to be bringing genuine results to Muslim communities.

At the same time, however, there were painful reminders of how distant the prospect of real change could be. In January 1906, Akçura had led the charge for İttifak to participate in the elections. Allying with a Russian party, the Kadets, had been his idea. Eight weeks later, Akçura would be sitting in jail. He was arrested by the gendarmerie on March 8, 1906 on the charge of belonging to a revolutionary organization. In his account of the time he spent behind bars, which he published as a book in 1907, Akçura described in detail the horrible sights and smells he encountered. Akçura’s cell was “not a room,” he lamented, “but a toilet!” His frequent struggles with the hygiene in his surroundings notwithstanding, Akçura ended up making friends. In fact, he wrote, the rough conditions of the jailhouse water closet had even helped spur on his sense of activism. He and some of the other Tatars organized themselves into a cleaning brigade, a development that appears to have improved everyone’s morale.

Nevertheless, prison wore Akçura down physically and mentally. Despite rumors of an amnesty, nothing seemed to be happening. Inmates repeatedly asked one another if they had heard anything yet. As he sat for weeks of enforced inactivity, a whole series of events and images floated in front of him. He was, by turns, indignant and depressed, galvanized and fatalistic. He wrestled with boredom and frustration, reflecting in his jail house writings upon both grand themes and mundane details. On one occasion, a bouquet of flowers suddenly arrived for him. “Who are they from?” asked Akçura. “A young woman,” replied the guard. “She didn’t leave a name.”

106 Bigi, Islahat Esaslari, 242–51. Indeed, Müfti Soltanov was careful to include İttifak leaders in his discussions with tsarist officials with regard to this matter. See, for example, the müfti’s invitation to Fatih Kerimi to attend a meeting with a group of officials from the Education Ministry. Letter from Müfti Soltanov to Fatih Kerimi, August 27, 1907. NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 23, l. 17.

107 The list of articles that were changed as a result of these negotiations is published in “31 mart pravilası,” Ural 5, January 21, 1907. On the March 31 Regulations, also see Bigi, Islahat Esaslari, 236–8. For a copy of a letter sent from Müfti Soltanov to the Minister of Internal Affairs regarding the March 31 Regulations, see NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 2, l. 25, January 16, 1907. For petitions by various Muslim groups opposing the March 31 regulations, see NART 1370, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 26–9.

108 Another victory was that of April 1905, when the state allowed Kräshens to be officially Muslim. On this development, see Werth, At The Margins of Empire, 249.

109 Akçura, Mevkufyet Hatıraları, 10.

110 Akçura, Mevkufyet Hatıraları 27.

111 Akçura, Mevkufyet Hatıraları, 36, 38.

112 Akçura, Mevkufyet Hatıraları, 38.

113 Akçura, Mevkufyet Hatıraları, 40.
In the Caucasus, there were similar patterns of cooperation and estrangement between the activists and the local ulema that were exhibited elsewhere. There were also, however, some important differences between the Caucasus and central Russia. In the Caucasus, İttifak and politics were not as high a priority as they were in central Russia. Much of this had to do with the fact that while Muslims in central Russia were struggling to receive administration autonomy, in the southern Caucasus people were fighting for their lives.

Prior to 1905, Armenians and Muslims had generally lived in peace in the southern Caucasus. Nevertheless, there were tensions that had been building in the region for some time. In recent decades, a large number of Armenians had immigrated to Muslim-populated regions of the Russian southern Caucasus from Iran and the Ottoman Empire. With the emergence, from the early 1870s onward, of a booming petroleum industry in the region, Armenians had managed to benefit from changes taking place in the local economy at a much high level than most Muslims. Due to the fact that incoming Armenians and their descendants often lacked access to high-quality agricultural land, many had been drawn to cities. By the early 1900s, Armenians far outpaced Muslims with respect to the number of skilled positions they held in industry. They also held a much larger share of positions in local branches of civil service. Muslims, meanwhile, held an overwhelming percentage of unskilled and low-skilled positions, particularly in fast-growing cities such as Baku.

There was also a growing conflict taking place between Armenian separatists and Russian officials in the southern Caucasus. Since 1890, the Dashnaksutiun—an Armenian separatist movement—had been waging a low-level war against the Ottoman government. More recently, however, the actions of the Governor-General of the southern Caucasus, Prince Grigorii Golitsyn, aroused the animosity of the Dashnaks. Golitsyn, who had been appointed in 1896, sought to greatly reduce the number of Armenians holding positions in the civil service, and in 1903 he confiscated the properties of the Gregorian Church. Within months, Golitsyn was targeted for assassination, and survived an attack by the Dashnaks. While the immediate causes of the Armenian–Muslim fighting that broke out shortly thereafter are still quite murky, the broader context of the conflict indicates that the Muslims and Armenians who would die in the fighting were victims of a larger struggle taking place between the Dashnaks and local government authorities.

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114 Tadeusz Swietochowski writes that while Armenians constituted only 17.5% of workers in Baku, they held one-quarter of highly skilled jobs, Russian Azerbaijan, 39.
115 Ibid, 39.
116 Swietochowski, Russian Azerbaijan, 40.
117 Ibid, 39.
118 On these events, see Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 54–5.
119 This occurred in October 1904. Swietochowski, Russian Azerbaijan, 40.
120 On the Muslim–Armenian fighting of 1905, also see Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 84.
The fighting had begun in early February 1905 with Armenian and Muslim attacks against one another in Baku. These had allegedly taken place in response to the murder of a Muslim at the hands of the Dashnaks. Soon, the killing had spread to the province of Yerevan. By the end of summer, Muslim–Armenian bloodshed had spread to Nagorno-Karabakh, where the Armenian and Muslim populations were particularly mixed. Overall in 1905, an estimated 128 Armenian villages and 158 Muslim villages had been seriously damaged or destroyed. By early 1906, up to 10,000 individuals are estimated to have died.121

Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s hometown of Şuşa was particularly hard-hit, with entire districts destroyed. A British correspondent passing through Şuşa wrote: “It was indeed a deplorable sight. Street after street was in ruin, absolutely nothing left but the bare walls.”122 In late January 1905, Ahmet Ağaoğlu had been in St. Petersburg, attending the early İttifak meetings at Abdürrəşid İbrahimov’s apartment. Midway though, he received word that there was fighting on the streets of Baku. He returned home by train as fast as he could, wondering what was happening to his family in Nagorno-Karabakh.123

State officials in the Caucasus responded to this crisis by working through the region’s spiritual leaders. Illarian Vorontsov-Dashkov, the emperor’s emissary to the region, contacted the Shiite Sheyh-ul Islam Akhundzade in December 1905 with the request that he assemble a group of representatives from the Shiite population to participate in peace negotiations with the Armenians, to be held in Tbilisi the following month.124 Akhundzade was unsure of whom to choose, and changed his mind several times about this decision. Initially, Ahmet Ağaoğlu and other Muslim activists were on his list.125 Subsequent drafts, however, indicate that the activists were later replaced, at least temporarily. Nevertheless, Ağaoğlu made his way back into the group. He would end up attending the peace conference as a representative from the Shiite side while simultaneously reporting on the event in Hayat.126

After the fighting had subsided, moreover, the vice-regency established a system of indemnification that further relied upon the Shiite Assembly.127 Material losses suffered as a result of the fighting would be compensated by money obtained through vakıf revenues. Shiite spiritual authorities were, moreover, made responsible for compiling and assessing the worthiness and accuracy of the claims of Muslims,

121 Swietochowski, Russian Azerbijan, 40–1.
123 Bigi reports that alongside Ağaoğlu was Ali Merdan be Topchibashev. Islahat Esasları, 10.
124 ADTA, f. 290, op. 2, d. 2639, ll. 15–16.
125 Kaspii editor Ali Merdan Bey Topçıbaşev, who continued to be deeply involved in İttifak’s activities in the Caucasus, was also on the first draft of the list.
126 In a letter sent on March 29, 1905, the governor of the province of Elizavetpol credits the Armenian and Muslim spiritual authorities with putting an end to the violence, writing “[t]hanks to the intervention of the Armenian and Tatar spiritual assemblies and gentry, Armenians and Tatars have made peace.” ADTA, f. 290, op. 2, d. 2639, l. 3.
127 The Sunni Assembly does not appear to have been involved in either the peace negotiations or the indemnification process. The reason for this is that probably relatively few Sunnis had been involved in the fighting. Sunnis mostly live in the northern regions, on the foothills of the mountains, far from where most of the Armenians of the southern Caucasus were living at the time.
while the Armenian Spiritual Assembly was likewise responsible for undertaking these tasks in the Armenian community. Among these claims was a letter written to the sheyh ul-Islam from future pan-Turkist figure Ali Hüseyinzade, who was working as a doctor on the scene, on behalf of some of the refugees he had met.

There was another way in which Ağaoğlu was connected to these issues. Local officials in Baku thought that Ağaoğlu was a ringleader in Difai, a Muslim paramilitary movement that was set up in early 1905 to combat Armenian fighters. The group was also suspected of having carried out a number of assassinations, including that of a Russian police chief. At the time of Difai’s greatest activity, Ağaoğlu was frequently traveling around the isolated villages in the hilly regions between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh, writing on the condition of these communities for Hayat. At the same time, it is worth remembering that tsarist officials routinely passed on rumors and charges pertaining to Muslims that made little or no sense.

As was the case with müftis Soltanov and Karashaiskii, the leaders of the ulema in the Caucasus were also approached by Witte in early 1905 with requests to hold meetings for administrative reform. These meetings were indeed convened but, as Ahmet Ağaoğlu and others would later claim, they broke up before any of the issues had been resolved. Not a single petition, wrote Ağaoğlu, had been sent to the government as a result of the ulema’s meetings. This was different from central Russia and Crimea, where Müftis Soltanov and Karashaiskii had, in their own ways, been much more active in the petition-writing process.

Ağaoğlu’s relations with the ulema in the Caucasus, meanwhile, were considerably more volatile than was the case in central Russia and Crimea. When the suggestion was made at the St. Petersburg meetings to unite the four Muslim spiritual assemblies, Ağaoğlu sharply criticized the idea. In fact, he argued, “[t]here is no clergy in Islam. Anyone who is respected enough to be granted the title can become an imam, even a kadi if necessary.” Ağaoğlu made it clear that he was against the idea of maintaining the assemblies. “It makes no sense,” he said to those gathered in St. Petersburg, “to abandon this approach and instead adopt from Christianity a system of spiritual administration.”

Eventually, Ağaoğlu came around to the idea that it was more important to take over the spiritual assemblies than abolish them. In his later writings in Hayat and İrşad, he echoed Gasprinskii and Akçura in calling for the direct election of individuals to the positions of müfti and sheyh ul-Islam. However, even as Ağaoğlu came to value the potential importance of these institutions to Muslim

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128 ADTA, f. 290, op. 2, d. 2634, l. 12. Hundreds of claims for compensation submitted to the sheyh ul-Islam’s office can be found in ADTA, f. 290, op. 2, d. 2725. For Ali Hüseyinzade’s claim, see ADTA, f. 290, op. 2, d. 2725 L. 8. Compensation paid to Armenian victims of the fighting was likewise paid out of the coffers of the Armenian Assembly.


130 Shissler, Between Two Empires, 127–8.

131 On Difai, see Michael A. Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 84–86.


133 Bigi, İslahat Easları, 11. There was little tradition in Islam for the hierarchical state-based ulema that had been created in Russia.
communities, he attacked the leaders of the assemblies. In one column, Ağaoğlu characterized the spiritual leadership as primarily a group of “government civil servants (nachalniklar), totally ignorant of religious rules and customs.”\textsuperscript{134} This piece had prompted Sheyh ul-Islam Akhundzade and other spiritual personnel to write into the newspaper to complain about their treatment in Ağaoğlu’s columns.\textsuperscript{135} Undaunted, Ağaoğlu later charged the spiritual leadership with incompetence and wrote that they were “ready to sell out Muslims for the next thousand years,” even as they dared to “speak in the name of the community.”\textsuperscript{136}

Ağaoğlu’s connection to the region was different from that of Gasprinskii and Akçura. While Akçura focused on reforming Muslim administration, Ağaoğlu wrote plainly about the suffering he saw. He was often overwhelmed by the pathetic state of the community he felt himself to be a part of. Even if Ağaoğlu was not closely involved in İttifak after the initial meeting, he played an important role in virtually all of the major developments taking place in the region during the revolutionary years. He may not have been the most popular Muslim in the Caucasus, but he was very much a part of what was happening politically in the region.

Long before pan-Turkism, İsmail Gasprinskii, Yusuf Akçura, and Ahmet Ağaoğlu were activists. Their concerns were not related, mainly, to identity, but rather focused upon tangible, concrete interests that mattered to large numbers of people. For as long as İttifak was a successful organization, the movement’s leadership focused upon a series of issues that had mattered to central Russian Muslims for decades. In central Russia, the Crimea, and the Caucasus, the future pan-Turkists were at the heart of some of the biggest developments taking place within Muslim communities during the course of İttifak’s rise.

For as long as it looked like parliament could one day mean something in Russia, İttifak was relevant wherever people cared about tsarist institutions more generally. The future pan-Turkists were not part of a radical separatist movement. Rather, they constituted a collection of insiders—Muslim establishment figures who were much more closely integrated with tsarist administration and society than was the case for even most Russians in the empire. Rather than look to the Ottoman Empire or the Turkic world for salvation, these individuals were focused squarely on Russia.

\textsuperscript{134} “Rusya’nın hal-i hazırı,” \textit{Hayat}, June 12, 1905.


\textsuperscript{136} “Sebep gene özümüzün,” \textit{İrşad} 76, May 25, 1907.
The Great Muslim Teacher Wars

In March 1909, Fatih Kerimi received a letter from an imam in Tiumen’ named Selim Girey bin Khayri al-din Gabidov. Tiumen’ was a remote locale, stuck midway between the Ural mountains and Siberia. Nevertheless, Kerimi’s faraway correspondent felt himself to be part of a larger community. Young Gabidov was a jadid, part of a movement of reform-minded Muslims who saw themselves as the vanguard of Muslim cultural self-strengthening in Russia. Gabidov’s life on the cultural front lines had hardly been easy, but his enthusiasm was unabated. Eager to get started on a new project, Gabidov wanted to know more about how jadidism worked in practice. Fatih Kerimi—one of the most famous jadids in the country—seemed to Gabidov to be the right person to ask.

In his letter, Gabidov described in some detail his personal background as a teacher and cultural reformer in Muslim Russia. After studying at a medrese in Kazan, Gabidov had worked for a while at a new method school alongside a mullah by the name of Kazimdzhani. The school, however, soon shut down. Unable to find employment in Kazan, Gabidov headed for the provinces, finding a position 350 miles to the southwest of Kazan in Penza.¹ There Gabidov taught according to the new method until a coalition of “old rich people” (kart baylar) and “old mullahs who were trying to close the school” managed to convince enough people to withdraw their children, forcing the school to close.

Undaunted, Gabidov moved again. This time, he went east, over 800 miles past Kazan and beyond the Ural mountains. In a vast Tatar diaspora that extended from the Baltic Sea to China, someone with Gabidov’s skills would be an attractive candidate somewhere.² As Gabidov was discovering, it was often easier to find good positions outside of Kazan, where everyone wanted to work, by seeking out opportunities in the provinces. Teaching at a new method school in a village outside Tiumen’ Gabidov had begun to turn things around for himself. He had developed seven groups of students and was earning a living that was sufficient for village life. His pay, he told Kerimi, was between 5 and 10 rubles per month. One parent gave him 20 kopecks per month to give lessons to his four children, while others paid in kind. Gabidov’s wife taught three classes of girls, bringing in still more money. Yet

¹ This school had been sponsored by the Akchurins of Simbirsk, Yusuf Akçura’s relatives.
² Cities like Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vilnius also had populations of several thousand Muslims, mostly Tatars from the Volga region. On the Tatars of St. Petersburg, see Il’dus Zagidullin, Islamskie instituty v Rossiskoi imperii: Musul’manskaia obshchina v Sankt-Peterburge XVIII-nachalo XX vv. (Kazan: Izdatel’stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2003); F. A. Asadullin: Islam v Moskve (Moscow: Logos, 2007).
again, however, Gabidov encountered local hostility. Villagers began to harass him, and on one frightening occasion a mob of “forty to fifty” people descended upon Gabidov and demanded he leave town immediately.  

He soon took their advice.

Once again on the move, Gabidov left the village for Tiumen’. A man named Sabridzhan Efendi had donated 120 rubles to open a library and reading room there. While this was a paltry sum when compared to the salaries that jadid teachers were earning at some of the famous new method schools in Kazan, 120 rubles could still go a long way. Gabidov had been made responsible for setting up operations, and he had questions that no one in Tiumen’ could answer. “Does it make sense to open a charity, library, or reading room in a place like Tiumen’” he asked, “where there aren’t very many Muslims? Is it appropriate to put the library and reading room in the mosque? Are mullahs allowed to operate a library and reading room? What kind of paperwork is required?”

Jadidism was a literacy-based system of learning that was first devised in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat era, and became increasingly popular among Muslim cultural reformers in Russia towards the end of the nineteenth century. The main innovation of jadidism was the movement’s emphasis upon the value of reading and writing in the local Turkic vernacular. Traditional schools taught the alphabet and helped students memorize sections of the Koran and other religious books written in Arabic, but usually offered little in the way of functional literacy.

New method schools, by contrast, sought to prepare their students for a literacy-based world, in addition to teaching secular subjects and the Russian language.

In his path-breaking book on Muslim cultural reform in Central Asia, Adeeb Khalid argues that at the heart of divisions between jadids and their opponents was a conflict “over the possession and redefinition of what Pierre Bourdieu has called ‘cultural capital.’” Without question, cultural capital was an important part of the struggle over educational reform. At the same time, however, actual capital—in the form of the compensation that teachers could earn in supporting themselves and their families—also constituted a vital concern for jadids and traditional teachers alike. Battles over educational reform were not only over ideas about pedagogy, nor were the people waging them drawn exclusively from the circle of intellectuals and activists who wrote about these issues in the newspapers. Rather, the controversies surrounding jadidism in early twentieth-century Russia stemmed largely from economic and political factors.

3 Letter from Selim Girey Gabidov to Fatih Kerimi, NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 21–2.
4 An uttav is a form which needed to be completed prior to setting up a charitable organization. NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 21–3.
5 Adeeb Khalid’s nuanced characterization of traditional education in The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 22–6.
6 Khalid, The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 5.
7 Perhaps especially for the scholars and intellectuals situated at the center of Khalid’s study.
Many of the fiercest battles over new method education were fought far beyond the margins of the periodical press.

EDUCATION AND THE STATE

Educational reform had been a growing concern of modernizing states in Europe and elsewhere for several decades. In the Ottoman Empire, policymakers took steps to modernize, centralize, and standardize public education during both the Tanzimat (1839–76) and Hamidian (1876–1908) eras. In Ottoman schools, curricula emphasizing the acquisition of skills related to reading and writing became increasingly common during these years, and by the end of the nineteenth century these schools had become a model for Muslim educational reformers in Russia.

Debates within Muslim communities over education often resembled those of other confessional communities in the Russian and Ottoman empires. Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire were often at odds among themselves over controversies stemming from education. The Ottoman government granted these millets their own constitutions at a time when the Ottoman Empire as a whole did not have one, in part because it was easier to leave such thorny matters to the communities themselves. In this respect, the approach of Ottoman authorities to confessional education differed from that of the Russian government, as the Russian government was determined to bring Muslim schooling more closely in line with that of the state. The Russian government had also become increasingly active in the field of public education since the onset of the Great Reforms. In an empire in which a growing bureaucracy and developing economy demanded the development of

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8 On the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire, see Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, especially 52–171. Benjamin Fortna, Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9–10, 12. Also Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 98–100.

9 The Ottoman origins of jadidism call into question Allen Frank’s depiction of cultural reform as “essentially a nativized form of Russian education.” Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia, 250. An important study on Ottoman education policy is Benjamin Fortna’s Imperial Classroom. See esp. 9–10, 12, 22, 36. Also see Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 98–100.

10 Nobuyoshi Fujinami writes about divisions taking place within the Orthodox Christian community during the Young Turk era. “Church Law’ and Ottoman-Greeks in the Second Constitutional Politics, 1910,” Etudes Balkaniques, 1/2007, 107–32. Eugene Avrutin discusses similar conflicts within Jewish communities in Russia over educational reform, Jews and the Imperial State, 45. On education and non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire, see Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 115.

11 As was discussed in Chapter 2 of this book, state authorities targeted Muslim communities in central Russia for various projects designed to teach Russian to Muslims and put their schools under state supervision.

12 On Russian educational reform in the nineteenth century, see A. M. Lipchanskii, Stanovlenie v Rossii obshcheho massovogo skol’nogo obrazovaniia v period sozial’no-ekonomicheskikh preobrazovanii: 1861–1941 gg. opyt, uroki (Astrakhan: Izd-vo Atrakhsanskogo gos. pedagog. universiteta, 2001), 68–131. Also see T. G. Kiseleva, Narodnoe obrazovanie i proveshchenie v Rossii: real’nost i
a literate population, teaching people how to read and write in Russian became an increasingly pressing priority. This was the case not only for people whose first language was Russian, but also for selected non-Russian populations of the empire. Especially in the western borderlands and in central Russia, tsarist statesmen placed particular focus upon establishing Russian as a language of bureaucratic communication between state authorities and non-Russian subjects. While studies of non-Russian populations in the empire have frequently described tsarist policymaking during these years in terms of “Russification,” it is important to bear in mind that practical considerations formed the basis of Russian educational policy during these years.\textsuperscript{13} Russian policymakers were pursuing objectives similar to those of their counterparts in other imperial and non-imperial states at this time.\textsuperscript{14}

Between 1830 and 1870 there were a number of efforts to establish Russian-language educational institutions for Muslims of the empire. Most of the measures were ad hoc, however, with little overall plan developing, and the number of Russian-language schools for Muslims in the empire remained relatively low. In 1870, the same regulations that placed Muslim schools in the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly territories under the supervision of the Ministry of Education also provided for the creation of “Russian-Tatar” schools in areas of the empire where large numbers of Muslims lived.\textsuperscript{15} These institutions emphasized the teaching of the Russian language, but attracted relatively little interest among Muslim populations.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, in central Russia the opening of these schools also generated widespread concern among Muslims, who frequently identified them with missionary schools that were also opening in the region in the second half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} For examples of how this topic has traditionally been treated in the historiography of the Muslim borderlands in Russia, see Rorlich, \textit{The Volga Tatars}, especially 44–7, 86–7, 151–3; Kırımlı, \textit{National Movements and National Identity} 4, 9, 26, 29, 32, 38–9, 48, 194, 198, 213, 215; Swietochowski, 12, 15–16, 148. On the historiography of “Russification” in recent decades, see Andreas Kappeler, “The Ambiguities of Russification,” \textit{Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History} 5:2 (Spring, 2004), 291–7. Theodore R. Weeks has insightful views on this subject, \textit{Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914} (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996).


\textsuperscript{15} On placing Muslim schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, see Chapter 2 of this volume.

\textsuperscript{16} In 1908 there were eighteen such schools in the province of Kazan. See NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, l. 71. On Russian-Tatar schools, also see Kırımlı, \textit{National Movements and National Identity}, 28; Rorlich, \textit{Volga Tatars}, 44–5; Swietochowski, \textit{Russian Azerbaijan}, 24; Geraci, \textit{Window on the East}, 136–8.

\textsuperscript{17} As I discuss in Chapter 2 of this volume.
Jadidism in Russia resembled cultural and intellectual movements taking place in Muslim communities throughout the Middle East and beyond. In places like Cairo, Baghdad, Bengal, and Aleppo, Muslim and non-Muslim activists championed causes related to a series of issues that identified them as “supporters of the new.” Questions regarding the place of women in the public sphere, anti-colonialism, and educational reform became central concerns of activists. Although to some degree the jadids in Russia constituted part of this broader generation of activism taking place in the colonized world during these years, they also thought locally. Their emergence had as much to do with Russia specifically as with international trends.

While “jadidism” and “jadids” are terms that are used to describe Muslims who supported cultural, and especially educational, reforms, the opponents of these reforms are usually described as “kadims.” “Kadimism” is generally presented as if it were a coherent intellectual ideology or “camp,” like the jadids. In fact, “kadims” were simply people who were opposed to jadids, and their reasons for opposing new method projects tended to vary. Indeed, Muslims who were opposed to jadidism rarely described themselves as “kadims.” More often than not, the terms “kadim” and “kadimism” were used as epithets, hurled by jadids against supporters of traditional education.

İsmail Gasprinskii was the best-known jadid in all of Russia in the late nineteenth century. He not only wanted to change the manner of education through the teaching of literacy, but also the entire culture of Muslim education in Russia. The jadids shared, alongside tsarist officials working in the Ministry of Public Education, an abhorrence for what they considered the disorder and lack of hygiene endemic to traditional Muslim schools. As was

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18 This is the term in which many of these individuals applied to themselves, and it was from this perspective that a number of older studies likewise presented the jadids prior to the publication of Khalid's *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform.*


20 İbrahim Maraş, *Türk Dünyasında Dini Yenileşme, 1850–1917* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2002), 22. While there were some people who considered themselves “kadims,” they did not seem to have the same esprit de corps of the jadids. On kadimism as an intellectual “camp,” see Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars,* 88–90; Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 24–9; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan,* 30–1.

21 As Khalid insightfully points out, this way of talking about traditional Muslim schools has carried over into much of the scholarship relating to Muslim education. *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform,* 24–5. Kırmılı, for example, frequently notes the “discomfort,” “lack of hygiene,” and “lack of space” of traditional Muslim schools, discourses about traditional education taken directly from the jadids themselves. *National Movements and National Identity,* 22–5; Rorlich similarly takes the jadid critique of traditional education at face value in *The Volga Tatars,* 88–90.
the case with state authorities seeking to modernize Muslim education, jadids envisioned a Muslim population that would one day be able to read and write in Russian.

At least in theory, the differences between new method and traditional education were stark. In traditional medreses, children of varying ages and levels of education often worked in pairs or in groups, with the teacher being assisted by various older students. In Gasprinskii’s ideal classroom, by contrast, children sat in rows facing a teacher who stood before them. Jadids also sought to regulate time by dividing the day up into class periods. Unlike traditional schools, where groups studied at different paces according to the work of the assistant they followed, in modern education students were supposed to sit silently, face their teachers, and listen. In reality, however, conditions in new method schools could vary greatly, just as the quality of traditional education likewise differed from one teacher to another.

Even though there were some similarities linking the objectives of Muslim activists to those of tsarist officials, there were also some important differences. The jadids worked outside the state and were publicly dedicated to providing a dynamic education that would prepare Muslim students for the modern world. Tsarist education officials, meanwhile, wanted Muslims to learn the Russian language and study secular subjects but did not trust the independent nature of new method schooling. Indeed, government agents were suspicious of just about any movement that had developed outside the auspices of the state. In their eyes, the jadids were little better than the murids and wandering mystics whose activities the government likewise tried to reign in. Independent operators like Gasprinskii were not trusted.

The final two decades of the nineteenth century constituted a time of slow but steady expansion for Gasprinskii and his new method system. In the 1880s and 1890s he traveled frequently across Crimea, central Russia, and Central Asia in his efforts to popularize new method education, occasionally managing to convince a wealthy Muslim merchant or two to sponsor the establishment of a new school. Other early jadids such as Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin Galimdzhan Barudi, and the Bubi brothers opened schools during these years in central Russia, mostly in urban areas such as Kazan, Chistopol’, and Orenburg. In the Caucasus, a smaller number of new method schools were opened in the largest of cities such as Tbilisi, Baku, and Yerevan. Altogether, estimated Gasprinskii, there existed just over a hundred new method schools in all of Russia by 1895.

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22 Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 188.
23 Abdürreşid Ibrahimov wrote that a lot of the young committed teachers were nevertheless untrained and ineffective in the new method. Hayat, “Bize ait,” November 11, 1905. Also see Borhan Sherif, Gani Bey (Orenburg: İzdatel’stvo “Vakit,” 1913), 48.
It was only after the October Manifesto of 1905 that the number of new method schools began to rise rapidly. In 1909, for example, the director of Tatar, Bashkir, and Kyrgyz education in the province of Kazan reported that the “fermentation” (brozhenie) of new method education in the province had begun in earnest only in 1906. In the district of Chistopol’, where several new method schools had recently been established, he wrote that new method education had started there only “recently, about 3–4 years ago.” Many other such schools were created, moreover, when traditional schools founded years earlier switched over to teaching the new method with the arrival of a new teacher.

In the southern Caucasus as well, there were relatively few new method schools prior to 1905. In 1901, for example, the governor of the province of Baku reported to the Minister of Internal Affairs that the entire new method movement in the Caucasus consisted of “a number of Muslims in the city of Baku.” Outside of Baku, he wrote, there was just one new method school in the entire province. While the number of schools teaching literacy in the Caucasus would also grow considerably after 1905, these were not all “jadid” schools per se, as they were often traditional schools which had simply agreed to allow an outside teacher to provide lessons in Turkic-language literacy on a part-time basis.

The opening of new method schools was facilitated after 1905 by the types of community organization that became possible only in the wake of the October Manifesto. Overnight, Russian subjects of all faiths were given the right to publish newspapers, hold public meetings, create reading rooms and libraries, and undertake other types of organized activity which previously required government permission. While İsmail Gasprinskii had waited for more than two years during the 1880s to receive permission to publish a newspaper, after the October Manifesto such permission became, for most newspapers, a mere formality.

With the number of new method schools increasing so rapidly after 1905, government officials rarely had a good idea of how many new method schools there actually were. Indeed, estimates of new method schools were often contradictory or just plain wrong. In 1909, officials in Orenburg indicated that there were no new method schools operating in their province. In fact, the province of Orenburg was one of the major centers of new method activity, and the Hüseyinov Medrese in the village of Kargalı, just outside of the city of Orenburg, had been one of

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27 Which liberalized laws concerning the non-Russian language press in Russia.
28 Nevertheless, government estimates were frequently off the mark.
29 NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, ll. 68–71, November 29, 1909.
30 Among the thirteen new method schools reported to be operating in Astrakhan and the Kyrgyz steppe in 1913, for example, seven had originally opened as traditional schools in the first half of the nineteenth century. RGIA, f. 821, op., 133, d. 466, l. 283. Correspondence from the office of the Governor of Samara, December 18, 1913.
31 ADTA, f. 45, op. 1, d. 35, ll. 34-36. See later in this chapter.
33 As can be seen in RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 473; f. 821, op. 133, d. 474.
34 Report, Department of Alien Religions, Ministry of Internal Affairs RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 472, l. 49.
the best-known new method schools in central Russia since it opened in 1905.\textsuperscript{36} Another report, written in 1909, stated that in the province of Kazan there were only 191 new method schools out of a total of 913 Muslim schools.\textsuperscript{37} This finding contradicted the opinion of another report, also written in 1909, which stated that “up to 90% of all Muslim confessional schools [in the province of Kazan] are currently run according to the new method.”\textsuperscript{38}

Bureaucratic confusion regarding the number of new method schools operating in Russia was facilitated by the fact that a great number of Muslim schools, both new method and traditional, had been opened without official permission. In 1908, tsarist officials in Crimea—working with Crimean Müfti Karashaiskii—undertook a survey of schools in the province and uncovered a virtual hotbed of illegal education. Many schools were operating without a license. In one of the peninsula’s districts “only eight out of one hundred and twenty-six mekteps were operating with the permission of Muslim spiritual assembly.”\textsuperscript{39} In August 1910, the journal \textit{Sotrudnik} reported that there were “more than six hundred” unlicensed Muslim schools in Crimea alone.\textsuperscript{40} These numbers mirrored those of central Russia, where in 1912 a study on new method education in Kazan province acknowledged that the great majority of new method schools opened since Muslim schools had been put under the authority of the Ministry of Education in 1870 had done so illegally.\textsuperscript{41}

\section*{The Economics of Muslim Cultural Reform}

The divisions between new method teachers and their traditional rivals have often been explained in terms of differing ideas about education. While the polemics that scholars and intellectual figures engaged on the pages of Muslim periodicals in late imperial Russia constituted an important component of these divisions, there were also more material interests at stake. Although there were many new jobs to be found at newly opened new method schools, there were far more medrese graduates being produced every year than could be accommodated by these positions. Among both students and teachers, the economic reality of working as a teacher produced considerable anxiety.

\textsuperscript{36} A 1912 report published in the jadid journal \textit{Ang} in 1913 reported that “there are more new method schools in the province of Orenburg than anywhere else.” See Borhan Sherif, “Orenburg gubernasında möselmanlar,” \textit{Ang}, June 2, 1913, 29–31.

\textsuperscript{37} RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 472, l. 49. \textsuperscript{38} RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 826, l. 85

\textsuperscript{39} GAARK, f. 100, op. 1, d. 2360, ll. 230–1. In Crimea, unlike the territories of the Orenburg Assembly, schools were under the direct supervision of the Muslim spiritual assembly leadership. Mekteps were religious schools designed to train future members of the ulema, whereas at medreses both religious and secular subjects were often taught.

\textsuperscript{40} “Türetskie prosvetiteli v Krymu,” \textit{Sotrudnik} 40, August 8, 1910, 630–2, 631 here.

\textsuperscript{41} NART, f. 160, op. 1, d. 1576, l. 203. This file contains a series of reports on illegally opened schools in central Russia.
The revolution had exposed a number of tensions within jadid institutions. During the political upheaval of 1905, a series of protests took place among Muslim students in Kazan and elsewhere in central Russia, with the great majority of these events taking place at new method schools. While accounts of the Muslim student protests tend to focus upon their alleged revolutionary and nationalist focus, student petitions produced during the course of these events tell a different story. Protests taking place within new method schools focused less upon revolutionary ideals, and more on the material and other concerns relating to the school’s physical condition and reputation.

For many protesters, quality of education was a principal concern. In April 1905, a group of twenty khulfe and beş kademner students at the prestigious new method Apanaev Medrese in Kazan submitted a petition to school authorities. The petition explained that many of the well-known school’s students were concerned by what they viewed as the declining reputation of their medrese. “While at the time of its establishment ours was the greatest and most prestigious of medreses in Kazan,” they wrote, standards had slipped steadily in recent years First of all, explained the students, “the medrese’s building is much too small for the number of students studying here.” The older students slept four to a room while younger students slept six to a room. Because the school had so little space, moreover, the rooms of the khulfe and beş kademner were used as classrooms for the youngest children at the medrese during the daytime. This form of accommodation, alleged the petitioning students, made for unpleasant encounters with the neighboring community. In recent years people in the neighborhood had begun to complain about students “hanging around aimlessly in the streets.” Even if the older students tried to study inside the school while waiting for the younger students’ classes to end, the smaller children nevertheless made so much noise that it was impossible to concentrate.

The student petitioners at the Apanaev Medrese by no means constituted an isolated case. The Tatar-language newspapers of Kazan and elsewhere reported during these years frequent cases of student protests occurring in the region. There were also large numbers of student expulsions. In late 1905 and early 1906, fifty students from the new method Galiye Medrese in Ufa and eighty-five students from

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42 For a discussion of the political ideas surrounding the protests, see Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*, 106–7.
43 Khulfes and beş kademner were older students who assisted in the education of the younger ones.
44 The “others” referred to here were the younger students at the school. KFU, Document T-1399. Medrese ilâhi turında şäkertlär garizası. Kazan, April 5, 1905.
45 The newspaper *Kazan Mukhbiri* also published an article in 1906 in which it complained about rowdy medrese students making a bad impression on the community neighboring their medreses. See “Kazan Möselmanları và şäkértlär,” *Kazan Mukhbiri* 63, April 5, 1906.
46 Also making life difficult was the fact that the “air” at the school was so bad “that someone used to living somewhere else would never be able to stand it here.” This may have been a reference to the stagnant and mosquito-infested Bolaq canal, located only a few blocks away from the Apanaev Medrese.
the jadid Hüseyiniye Medrese in Kargalı—sponsored by the Hüseyinov brothers—were expelled for having participated in strikes during this time.48 Vocal student contingents became a regular feature at the Muslim meetings, where their demands often put them at odds with other participants.49

If conditions were difficult for students, they were sometimes even worse for teachers with families to take care of. This was especially the case for traditional teachers. Muslim spiritual personnel, who made up the ranks of almost all of the traditional teachers working in central Russia, often lived in desperate circumstances, dependent upon their villages for their very survival. Such was the case for one Abdullah, who wrote to the Orenburg authorities in Ufa in April 1900 to complain about his treatment. Having worked as a licensed akhund in a village outside Orenburg since 1893, Abdullah explained in his letter that the inhabitants of his village were too poor to pay him for his teaching and other services. He had therefore reached an agreement with them whereby he could grow crops on an extra parcel of land. In recent months, however, a group of rowdies had begun to bully him, taunting him with words they were “forbidden by the Sharia” and stealing the wheat that he had grown. Without financial or material support from the village, Abdullah feared he would not be able to feed his family.50

Not all teaching jobs, of course, came with the same conditions. The contrast between the miserable conditions of spiritual personnel teachers like Abdullah and the salaries that some of the best new method school would pay could be considerable. While spiritual personnel living in villages often subsisted on charity or less than a few rubles per month, the better-known new method schools paid good salaries. Even smaller new method schools provided cash wages that would have seemed enormous to traditional teachers working in the countryside. State officials responsible for monitoring Muslim education had noticed the disparity as well. As one bureaucrat in the Department of Spiritual Affairs observed in 1910, “[u]nlike teachers in traditional schools, all of the teachers [in new method schools] receive a predetermined salary, ranging from 100 to 700 rubles per year, or even more, depending on the specific qualifications and experience of the teacher.”51

While the grandiose salaries of new method teachers were often more imagined than real, some of the stories were true.52 Salaries for teachers at the Hüseyiniye Medrese in Kargalı, created by Ahmet Bey Hüseyinov in 1903, averaged 336 rubles per year in 1903–05, and nearly 400 rubles per year in 1913–14.53 In a 1908 job

48 Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*, 94.
49 Such as when they sought to board the *Gustav Struve*. See Chapter 3.
50 TsGIA RB, f. I-295, op. 10, d. 205, ll. 130–1.
51 RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 626, l. 12. Meyer, “The Economics of Muslim Cultural Reform,” 255. Reports on new method schools written by various branches of tsarist administration generally estimated the salaries of teachers as between 200 and 600 rubles per year. See NART, f. 160, op. 1, d. 1576, l. 3.
52 A petition circulated by Rizaetdin Fäkhretdin at the April 10, 1905, Ufa meeting chaired by Müfti Solтанov envisioned pegging the salaries of teachers associated with the Orenburg Assembly at 240 rubles per year, Bigi, *Islahat Esasları*, 76.
advertisement issued by the Usmaniye Medrese in Ufa, new method teachers were told they could expect to receive monthly salaries ranging from 10 to 25 rubles, depending on the applicant's qualifications. Philanthropists like the Hüseyinov brothers also provided generous stipends for other types of new method activities, such as paying 500 rubles for the writing of new textbooks.

Even Selim Gabidov, the lowly jadid from the village outside Tiumen' who wrote to Fatih Kerimi at the outset of this chapter, was doing better than most traditional teachers could have ever dreamed of. Gabidov and his wife had earned cash salaries at his earlier job, and even when they had been forced to leave town it had not been too difficult to find a new position. As a jadid, Gabidov also had the opportunity to tap into an extensive network of teachers, patrons, and cultural powerbrokers who could help with finding work. This allowed Gabidov and others to move from one position to another. Smart young jadids would make contact with people like Kerimi as a hedge against future unemployment. For those willing to pull up stakes and move—as Gabidov had, from Kazan, to Simbirsk, and then to multiple locations around Tiumen’—finding new kinds of employment was easier than it was for traditional teachers. Not only did jadids have networks extending across Russia and the Ottoman Empire, but there were also different types of work available to them. In addition to teaching jadids could find employment working in related fields, like writing textbooks or managing a reading room.

Competition for students could be fierce. In late 1906, an imam named Mehmed Zakir Abdürrahim ulî, from the village of Bik Shikte in the central Russian province of Simbirsk, wrote to the Orenburg Assembly to complain that his group of pupils had been stolen from him. While Abdürrahim ulî had been in Ufa on business pertaining to the assembly, he wrote, the village müezzin, Mehmed Arif Alim ulî, had set up a new method school in his absence.

"On the 18th of January," explained Abdürrahim ulî, "I traveled to a meeting in order to take part in discussions pertaining to the Muslim people [the Orenburg Assembly], where imams from all over were taking part. When I came back from this meeting, I found that [Alim ulî] had spread false rumors among the villagers, telling them that I had been removed from my position, and that permission had been granted to build a new school. Alim ulî, wrote Abdürrahim ulî, had set up his own school, where he taught according to the new method. Even though Abdürrahim ulî had by now returned to his village, Alim ulî’s school continued to operate, and he refused to give Abdürrahim ulî his students back. Now Abdürrahim ulî wanted the Orenburg Assembly to close down his rival’s school.

The arrival of a new method school could divide a village. This was the case in 1909, when the central Russian village of Sair-Novyi was split over complaints.

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54 Mağlumat 15, August 15, 1908, 333.
55 Rakhimkulova, Medrese "Khusainiia" v Orenburge, 9–10.
56 Letter from Selim Girey to Fatih Kerimi, NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 21–2.
57 Technically a müezzin is the person who does the call to prayer in a mosque, but in practical terms this was a lower-level position in the Muslim spiritual assemblies, similar to imam or akhund.
58 Alim ulî petition can be found in TsGIA RB, f. I-295, op. 11, d. 205, l. 279.
regarding the teaching by Imam Beyazitov. The school in the village, alleged the complaint, had been constructed on the specific condition that new method education would not take place there. Habibullah Hüseyinov, an imam in the village, had already driven away two teachers for using the new method, and had then attempted to drive away Beyazitov as well. In 1909, Hüseyinov joined forces with "the wife of İmankulov," the widow of the previous teacher, who had run the school according to traditional methods. The two opponents of jadidism appealed to the Orenburg Assembly to remove Beyazitov from the school. In his defense, Beyazitov acknowledged that he had indeed originally taught according to the new method. However, he said, he had switched to traditional methods of teaching in the face of opposition from the community. The assembly concluded that, while "it is not the place for the Orenburg Assembly to determine the correct style of education for children, the complaints of Hüseyinov and the wife of İmankulov do not appear to be well founded," and ruled that Beyazitov should be allowed to stay at the school.\(^{59}\)

Tensions ran high when jadids attempted to open a new method school in a community where a traditional school already existed. In the Crimean city of Karasubazar, an organization calling itself the "Muslim charitable organization of Karasubazar" requested, in 1906, permission from the Simferopol inspector for non-Russian education to open a new method school "with the goal of teaching Russian language." The new institution, they wrote, would be located in the building where a government-operated Russian–Tatar school currently existed.\(^{60}\) Students attending the existing school, it was envisioned, would become students at the new one. In response to this plan, a group of twenty-three "Tatar residents of the city of Karasubazar" petitioned the inspector to prevent these plans, arguing that they could not afford to pay money for their children’s education, something which was required at the new method school. The fees that were demanded for new method education, they argued, were too high, as the new method school would "serve only a small portion \[neznachitel’naiia chast’\] of the population."\(^{61}\)

The stakes surrounding these issues were critical. Famine struck central Russia in the years after the 1905 Revolution, prompting Orenburg Müfti Soltanov to intervene in an attempt to save members of the ulema from starving. Between 1909 and 1912, Müfti Soltanov appealed on numerous occasions to tsarist officials, requesting money from the government to buy food for starving spiritual personnel, and in 1912 authorities agreed to lend 50,000 rubles to the Assembly for this purpose.\(^{62}\)

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\(^{59}\) TsGIA RB, f. I-295, op. 11, d. 523, especially ll. 152–9.

\(^{60}\) Petition from the Tatar residents of Karasubazar, October 21, 1906. GAARK, f. 100, op. 1, d. 2374, l. 87.

\(^{61}\) GAARK, f. 100, op. 1, d. 2374, ll. 79–81. Frank writes that jadidism “was by no means fully embraced by the Muslim communities of Novouzensk district, and as late as 1910 was evidently faring badly in competing with the more traditional forms of Islamic education.” *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia*, 250.

\(^{62}\) For the original document detailing the plans for assistance, see KFU, Document T-1235, “Orenburg duxhovnoe sobraniesneng khökumet tarafinnan birilmish ssudalarnï mokhtadzh
Who were the faces behind this expansion in new method education? In Russia’s new post-1905 climate of optimism for the future, Muslim philanthropists donated fortunes to foundations that built new schools, established newspapers, and contributed to other projects related to the spread of literacy and jadidism. Among the most notable of these figures were the Hüseyinov brothers of Orenburg.\textsuperscript{63}

Ahmet Hüseyinov (1837–1906) and his brothers Mahmut (1839–1910) and Gani (1839–1902) were different from the provincial notable families discussed in Chapter 2. Unlike the Apanaevs, Galievs, and Iunusuovs, the Hüseyinovs had been born poor. Starting off in the streets selling scraps, they had made a remarkable ascent to great wealth through their management of trade between Moscow and Russia’s new Turkestan colony in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{64} Beginning in the 1880s, the now-millionaire brothers turned increasingly to philanthropic work, leaving the management of their businesses to professionals. They became legendary for sponsoring the construction of more than sixty schools and mosques in Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, and elsewhere in central Russia. The Hüseyinov brothers had also stepped in, at times, to provide financing for the cash-strapped Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, most recently in 1909.\textsuperscript{65} After Mahmut’s death in 1910, his will would provide financing for the establishment of Türk Yurdu as well as the construction of a student dormitory in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{66}

People like the Hüseyinovs needed assistance spending their money, and the Revolution of 1905 created opportunities for individuals looking to work in this capacity. Fatih Kerimi (1870–1937), the recipient of the young jadid’s letter with which I began this chapter, was one such person. A native of the village of Bögelmä, near the central Russian city of Chistopol’, Kerimi was the son of a village mullah. He was also a member of the ulema, licensed through the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. Following the completion of his education in Istanbul, Kerimi spent the first half of the 1890s in Crimea, where he worked as a teacher in a number of schools and wrote a novel, \textit{Mirza Kızı Fatma}.\textsuperscript{67} In the latter half of the 1890s, Kerimi became increasingly involved with the philanthropic and educational

\textsuperscript{63} On the merchants also see Tuna, “Imperial Russia’s Muslims,” 138–85.
\textsuperscript{64} On the Hüseyinovs, see “Khıseaevülăr,” \textit{Tatar Entsiklopedii Süzlege}, 736. Also see Tuna, “Imperial Russia’s Muslims,” 173–81.
\textsuperscript{65} This is discussed in a letter from Hasan Gali Gabaishev to Fatih Kerimi, May 3, 1912. F. 1370, op. 1, d. 23, l. 6.
\textsuperscript{66} Mahmut Bey therefore provided for the establishment of not one “yurt” but two—that of Türk Yurdu (the Turkish yurt) and of a student dormitory, which is known as a student yurt, \textit{öğrenci yurdu}, in Turkish. On the creation of Türk Yurdu, see Chapter 6.
\textsuperscript{67} “Fatma, the Mirza’s Daughter.” On Kerimi, see “Fatıık Kärımı,” \textit{Tatar Entsiklopedii Süzlege}, 327. Also see Mirkaşın Gosmanov [Usmanov], Raif Märdanov, Rämil Mingnullin, et al., \textit{Fatıık Kärımı: fänni-biografik zhiénük} (Kazan: Rukhiiat, 2000).
activities of the Hüseyinov brothers Ahmet, Mahmut, and Gani, operating a
teacher training school in Orenburg financed by the brothers.\textsuperscript{68}

From 1906 onward, Kerimi worked as editor of the Orenburg-based newspaper
\textit{Vakit}, one of the longest-running and best-financed Turkic-language newspapers
in Russia at that time. The paper was sponsored by the Rämiev brothers, Shakir and
Zakir, another set of wealthy Muslim philanthropists who, like the Hüseyinovs,
were at the forefront of providing financial aid to jadid projects. Acting as an
employee of the Hüseyinovs and the Rämievs, Kerimi was in a position to help
people find jobs, get published, or find assistance for their projects.

People wrote to Kerimi from a vast array of locations, often looking for favors of
some sort or another. After moving to Istanbul in 1908, Yusuf Akçura wrote Kerimi
looking to get a job for a protégé studying in the Ottoman capital, as did others
from as far afield as Turkestan.\textsuperscript{69} Everyone, it seemed, wanted Kerimi to “recom-
mend the[ir] young man to a rich person in Russia” to find him employment.\textsuperscript{70}

Many of these letters invoked the \textit{millet}, a term that I have translated as “commu-
nity.” More frequently, however, scholars working on Muslim communities
in Russia have translated \textit{millet} to mean “nation.”\textsuperscript{71} While \textit{millet} can, in some

\textsuperscript{68} On the Rämievs, also see Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, \textit{La Presse}, 72. In 1901 Kerimi’s
father opened a publishing house and bookstore called the Kitaphane-i Kerimi, with the financial
support of Gani Bey Hüseyinov.

\textsuperscript{69} NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 24. Letter from Yusuf Akçura to Fatih Kerimi, March 10, 1909.
For other job-seekers, see incoming letters to Fatih Kerimi in NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 21–22;
f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 61–62; f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 63–65.

\textsuperscript{70} NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 23–4. Letter to Fatih Kerimi, March 12, 1908.

\textsuperscript{71} See Landau, \textit{Pan-Turkism}, 45. Khalid and Karpat both translate \textit{millet} as “nation,” but acknowl-
edge the complexity of the term. \textit{The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform}, 184, 190–7; Karpat, \textit{The
Particization of Islam}, 119.
cases, mean "nation," this term may also refer to other forms of community. In translating the word *millet*, I prefer to use "community" for three reasons. First, the term *millet* has long-standing connotations in Islamic society that referred specifically to confessional groups, not nations. Second, *millet* was invoked in a wide array of contexts, not all of which would make sense if interpreted in strictly national terms. Third, in Ottoman Turkish there already was a word for nation, *milliyet*, which Akçura and others used when they were referring specifically to nationalism.

In any case, the terminology that jadids employed in their correspondence with Kerimi was connected to the main purpose of these missives, which usually involved some sort of financial or labor transaction. Such was the case, for example, when a retired jadid named Bekir Emekdar wrote Kerimi from Yalta to ask for financial support. The old jadid informed Kerimi that throughout his life he had "only thought about the community [millet] and never paid any attention to my own future." Now, however, he was destitute. "I have served the community [millet] for many years," he wrote, "and I am still awaiting the community's reply."

Money and the *millet* frequently crossed paths as new method sympathizers invoked the community as a means of accessing private capital. Such was the case with the Kazan jadid Habib Zebiri, who wrote to Kerimi, asking for financial support to aid the poet Gabdulla Tukai. Zebiri explained in his letter that he was writing to Kerimi about "both a community [milli] and a material [maddi] issue." He suggested that Kerimi provide writing work for Tukai, so that he could support himself by publishing in *Vakit* or *Şura*. Meanwhile, Selim Girey bin Khayri al-din Gabidov—who wrote the letter to Kerimi that I discussed at the outset of this chapter—divided the world into two groups. There were those who aspired to perform "usefulness to the community" (*milletning faydası*) and those who were the community's enemies (*milletke dushmanar*). In writing to Kerimi as a means of procuring advice, and perhaps a connection, Gabidov was similarly well aware of the ways in which one had to speak to power.

Others who wrote to Kerimi were looking to get their stories, or themselves, into the paper. In 1909, one Abdulrakhman Saidev wrote to Kerimi from Turkestan, full of news regarding the tribulations endured by new method teachers in Bukhara.

Dear Fatih! No schools have opened in Bukhara . . . Although there is some desire for "new method" schools to be opened, people are afraid to petition the Emir for this.

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72 The Ottoman Empire had established its "millet system" of confessional rule long before the era of nations and nationalism.
74 Letter from Bekir Emekdar to Fatih Kerimi, October 4, 1908, NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 68–69.
75 Tukai is today the most famous Tatar poet of the twentieth century.
76 NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24, ll. 21–22. Letter from Habib Zebiri to Fatih Kerimi.
77 NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 21–3.
In other news, articles in the newspapers are having a definite impact. The ulema isn’t interested in telling the newspapers about their own faults.

Saidev continued in this vein for two more paragraphs before concluding that “it wouldn’t be a bad idea if articles relating to Bukhara appear on the pages of Vakit.” Indeed, it was through letters such as this one that Vakit acquired much of its material regarding Muslim communities elsewhere in the empire. Saidev wanted Kerimi to “say everything to the whole world” about the situation in Bukhara. The publicity, he hoped, would pressure the emir into allowing new method schools to open.78

Others contacted Kerimi to register protest, such as when a group of jadids from Kokand wrote to express their disgust at the journal Din ve Mağişet. “At a time when we must quickly engage the most important tasks facing us,” the letter began, “we cannot afford to waste a single minute of these important days.” The supporters of Din ve Mağişet, they wrote, were “dividing the public in two” with their “perpetuation of unconscionable wars” against jadids and their supporters. The writers of the letter asked Kerimi to publish their letter as a “declaration of loathing” (ilan-i nefret).79

Kerimi was a true man of the revolution, taking advantage of the new opportunities he was given. While he was by no means poor, Kerimi was not the sort of person who would have normally been particularly influential within Muslim communities. His family did not have the sort of connections that would have allowed Kerimi to expect a future in administration, or as a high-ranking member of the ulema. Instead, his future appeared to be that of a village teacher. Rather than follow that path, however, he took advantage of the opportunities provided him by the changes taking place after 1905.

Baku also had its share of philanthropists and cultural powerbrokers. Like the Hüseyinov brothers in Orenburg, Zeynalabdin Tagiev of Baku was of humble origin. He had already been successful in the construction industry when oil was discovered on land that he owned in the late 1870s. Instantly becoming one of the wealthiest men in the Caucasus, Tagiev began sponsoring various educational and philanthropic projects in the region. By 1880 the Muslim millionaire was bankrolling the publication of Kaspii, a Russian-language newspaper that focused upon issues relating to Muslims.80 In 1901 he established a new method school for girls in Baku. After 1905, Tagiev also began to subsidize the publication of the Turkic-language newspaper Hayat, edited by Ahmet Ağaoğlu.81

Tagiev also paid the salaries of teachers through Neşr-i Maarif, a philanthropic organization that he established in 1908, of which Ahmet Ağaoğlu was the director. Neşr-i Maarif differed from most jadid undertakings in central Russia and

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78 Letter from Hafiz Nurmukhamedov to Fatih Kerimi, 1909. NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 88–9. In Central Asia, local emirs still wielded considerable power over issues relating to education and religious institutions, as this region had not yet been closely integrated into tsarist administration.
80 On Kaspii, see Bennigesen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, La Presse Musulmane, 31–2.
81 On Tagiev, see Adil'-Girei Gadzhiev, Millioner Tagiev Gadzhi Zeynalabdin: (Obshchestvenopoliticheskie vzglady) (Makhachkala: Dagipress, 2000); Okan Yeşilot, Haci Zeynelabidin Tağıyev: Azerbaycan için bir yok ilki gereçləşirilmiş efsanevi petrol kralının hazin sonu (İstanbul: Kaktüs, 2004); Neriman
The Great Muslim Teacher Wars

Crimea with respect to the Baku-based organization’s approach to spreading literacy. Rather than open up brand-new schools that competed with traditional teachers, Neşr-i Maarif supplied instructors of Russian and Turkish to traditional schools. In 1908 the organization also operated a teachers’ school, a literacy course for adults, and three other schools in Baku. All of these were opened officially, and all paperwork regarding the teachers working there and the types of classes taught at the school was passed on to the inspector for Muslim schools in the province.

Salaries for teachers employed by Neşr-i Maarif were good, but not as high as in new method schools in central Russia. Whereas the higher paying jobs in Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg paid 700–800 rubles per year, teachers working for Neşr-i Maarif earned between 400 and 500 rubles annually. The language of reform was also different from that of central Russia. Unlike petitioners writing to Fatih Kerimi, prospective teachers who contacted Ağaoğlu did not invoke the community, but rather emphasized their teaching qualifications and need for employment. Community reformers in the Caucasus did not emphasize the expansion of jadidism per se, but rather literacy in both Russian and Azeri Turkish. Nevertheless, one point that Kerimi and Ağaoğlu did have in common was that both of these cultural powerbrokers were in the business of connecting jadids to teaching positions and other jobs associated with the burgeoning new method sector.

Tsarist bureaucrats working in the Caucasus considered the schools opened by Neşr-i Maarif to be “Russian–Tatar schools,” rather than new method schools. This semantic distinction, rooted in regionally based administrative rule-making, facilitated the approval of Neşr-i Maarif schools and teachers by government officials. Due to the greater powers afforded to the vice-regency of the Caucasus in the aftermath of the labor unrest and armed Armenian–Muslim conflict of these years, far more controls were placed upon organized activity than was the case in central Russia. While heartland jadids opened schools without permission,

Nerimanov, Hacı Zeynaləbdin Tagiyanın elli yılının maşqığı ve cemaate bidəmesleri esər (Baku: Matbaa-ı Akhundov, 1900).

This can be seen in the petitions for opening the schools, and the description of them in state correspondence. Neşr-i Maarif fond, ADTA, f. 312, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 1–5; f. 312, op. 1, d. 39, l. 1; f. 312, op. 2, d. 5, ll. 2, 4, 6; f. 312, op. 2, d. 1, l. 2; f. 312, op. 2, d. 12, l. 3; f. 312, op. 2, d. 16, l. 9.

These petitions can be found in ADTA, f. 312, op. 2, d. 5, l. 3; f. 312, op. 2, d. 8, ll. 10, 12; f. 312, op. 2, d. 9, l. 1; f. 312, op. 2, d. 10, ll. 1, 3.

In the forms they filled out for government permission, Neşr-i Maarif officials referred to Azeri Turkish as “the Turkish language” (“Türk dili”), while tsarist officials tended to refer to it as “Tatar.” For examples of how teachers and Muslim school administrators referred to the language they spoke, see ADTA, f. 312, op. 2, d. 10, l. 10; f. 312, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 3–6; f. 312, op. 1, d. 63, l. 8. For examples of how these schools were described to tsarist officials in the region, see ADTA, f. 312, op. 1, d. 39, l. 1; f. 312, op. 2, d. 9, l. 3; f. 312, op. 8, l. 2; f. 312, op. 1, d. 30, l. 1.

ADTA, f. 312, op. 1, d. 39, l. 1.
supporters of new method education and community reform in the Caucasus were more closely monitored. They therefore made a point of following the rules that had been laid down for them. Rather than open schools illegally in the manner of their less closely monitored colleagues in central Russia and Crimea, supporters of literacy-based education in the southern Caucasus worked more closely with state authorities in order to meet their objectives.

### THE TAKEOVER

It was the summer of 1906, and Yusuf Akçura was ready to make a move. He wanted to shake up İttifak, and planned on making the most out of his chance at the upcoming Third Muslim Congress. Akçura was currently one of the rising stars in the İttifak movement. In 1905 he had been transported overnight from teaching geography and history to Tatar teenagers in Kazan to helping to organize for İttifak. Thanks to his contacts, knowledge of French, and familiarity with parliamentary systems, Akçura had instantly found a home within İttifak, and was playing an increasingly large role.

By contrast, the aging Gasprinskii appeared to be retreating from political life. When the revolution had begun, the Crimean activist had been one of the only Muslims in Russia with an imperial-wide reputation, and it had seemed natural for him to play a large role in the initial organization of İttifak. Now, however, the organization had grown considerably, and there were others willing to play a more prominent role in İttifak’s affairs. In 1906, Gasprinskii began to focus more upon Tercüman and Crimea, devoting less time to the empire-wide political movement. Not only was he considerably older than people like Akçura, he also lived far from St. Petersburg and Kazan. His disengagement grew as the year passed.

Akçura, meanwhile, had big plans for the upcoming Third Congress. Held in Nizhnii Novgorod from August 16 to 21, the Third Muslim Congress brought a hardening of attitudes in the culture wars taking place over jadidism. It was at this meeting that İttifak, which had previously constituted a broad-based movement, became considerably narrower. Yusuf Akçura and Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev of Tbilisi were the primary figures behind the change, and Akçura had written a political platform for İttifak. The day before the Third Congress began, Akçura published an article in the newspaper Kazan Mukhbiri, stating the case for party and platform. “The first article in the party’s platform,” he noted, “reads that its goal is to ‘unite’ [birleştirmek] all Russian Muslims of the same ideas politically.”

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89 ADTA, f. 312, op. 2, d. 9, l. 3; f. 312, op. 8, d. 2; f. 312, op. 1, d. 30, l. 1.
90 Gasprinskii had found himself isolated on a number of questions debated at the Second Muslim Congress, held in St. Petersburg in January 1906. Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 113.
91 Gasprinskii would say relatively little at the Third Muslim Congress in August 1906. The transcript of this congress can be found in 1906 sene 16–21 August’ta icitma etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarmın nedvessi (Kazan: Brat’ıa Karimovy, 1906).
92 Yusuf Akçura, “Rusya Müslümanları ittifağ, programma laihasının tedkiki IV,” Kazan Mukhbiri 131, August 9, 1906. Akçura and others referred to İttifak as a “party” after the Third Congress because the movement had adopted a platform, though İttifak did not become a legally-registered party at this time.
order to do this, Akçura argued, the party needed to have some ideas. Therefore, the adoption of a political platform would be a necessity.

The platform that Akçura and his allies came up with constituted a major break with İttifak’s past. The new platform unveiled at the Third Congress included many ambitious new ideas, including a plank calling for the establishment of a standardized (umumi) program of education for Muslim schools in every region of Russia. Akçura also envisioned the creation of teacher training schools for Muslims. Perhaps inspired by the Russian government’s system of licensing religion, Akçura wanted to create a system in which the Orenburg Assembly would hold examinations in order to license teachers working in Muslim schools.

Gasprinskii’s pet project of a common Turkic language was also embedded into İttifak’s platform. The new standardized educational program accepted at the Third Congress called for Muslim schools to teach, “to the extent possible,” the “common language” (umumi lisan) Türki. For much of 1906 Gasprinskii had been campaigning on the pages of Tercüman for the adoption of a “common literary language.” Now, Türki had become part of İttifak’s proposed educational curriculum.

These moves, however, were just preliminary steps towards the major objective of the Third Congress’ organizers, which was to advance the cause of new method education. Indeed, in order to teach Türki schools would need to hire new method teachers because traditional instructors tended to use Arabic-language materials. Sure enough, Abdullah Apanaev—an Akçura ally—proposed that the new method become the basis of education “for all Muslims of Russia.” The motion was approved unanimously. Shortly thereafter, the teaching of Russian was also declared mandatory in response to a proposal suggested by Abdürreşid İbrahimov. This vote, too, passed without any dissension on the floor of the congress.

Another proposal that would prove controversial in the months to follow concerned the Muslim spiritual assemblies. According to İttifak’s new platform, the four assemblies would be subsumed within a single body. The new imperial-wide spiritual assembly would be responsible for the affairs of both Shiite and Sunni Muslims—a proposal that had been met with determined opposition among delegates from the Caucasus less than eighteen months earlier. The head of the proposed body would be called the sheyh ul-Islam, and would be elected for a five-year term. Akçura proposed that both the sheyh ul-Islam and the institution’s kadıs be

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93 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icba etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 60−1.
94 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icba etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 60−1.
95 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icba etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 76−7.
96 See, for example, “Can yani dil meselesi,” Tercüman 6, January 25, 1908. Also see Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 211−13.
97 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icba etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 85.
98 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icba etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 86.
99 In January 1905 this idea had been floated at the meetings in Abdürreşid İbrahimov’s apartment, but quickly abandoned in the face of opposition from Ahmet Ağaoğlu and Ali Merdan Bey Topçbaşev. Ağaoğlu criticized the idea of having spiritual assemblies at all. İslahat Esasları, 10−11.
100 Muslim judges, or kadıs, would also be elected to five-year terms. 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icba etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 108−9.
assisted in their duties by lawyers trained in Russian civil law—a move that seemed intended to prevent the spiritual leaders from acting entirely on their own.¹⁰¹

There were few dissenting opinions on display at the Third Congress.¹⁰² Though this was the largest meeting that İttifak had organized so far, the debates and ideological clashes that had characterized the early meetings of İttifak were part of the distant past. At the Third Congress there was no opportunity for non-jadids to make themselves heard.¹⁰³ Instead, the main opposition at this meeting would be the Muslim Socialists, who criticized the methods of the İttifak leadership but nevertheless were staunch supporters of new method education.¹⁰⁴ “We’re all fed up with our schools,” noted İsmail Gasprinskii, pointing to the need for change. No one contradicted him.¹⁰⁵

The echo chamber proved addictive. Some jadids seemed drunk with power, or delusions of grandeur, confident that İttifak could now finally lead Russian Muslims to the promised land of modernity. In the words of one delegate to the congress, a new method teacher named Akhmadzhan Mustafa, “the battle over new method [usul-i cedid] is over. No fear remains.” Dismissing the concern that non-jadids had expressed over educational reform in previous meetings, Mustafa announced that “the fantasy that usul-i cedid would harm religion once frightened people, but now they understand that it is harmless.”¹⁰⁶ Insofar as the people in that room were considered, he was right.

**OPPOSITION AND MALAISE**

Inside the Third Congress, there had been nothing but praise for jadidism and, for the most part, Akçura’s platform. Outside, however, the response was anger, disbelief, and—eventually—violence.¹⁰⁷ In the weeks which followed the Third Congress, even jadid sympathizers in the Muslim press were critical of what they viewed as the secrecy which had accompanied the meeting.¹⁰⁸ Muslims in the Caucasus complained that they had not even been informed that a Muslim Congress was going to be taking place.¹⁰⁹

Akçura’s hard line at the Third Muslim Congress was probably at least in part, a reflection of developments that had been taking place in Russia since the first

¹⁰² 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 52. Rorlich estimates that 800 delegates were present at the first session of the congress and that 80% of the membership in each commission was from central Russia. *The Volga Tatars*, 115.
¹⁰³ Such views, in any event, did not make their way into the stenographic transcript.
¹⁰⁴ The Socialists were supported by many medrese students, for whom the cause of expanding new method education—and its workforce—was a singular priority.
¹⁰⁵ 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 76–7. While some, such as Çarullah Akchurin spoke out against this, the most influential members of the İttifak leadership—Abdullah Apanaev in particular—harshly criticized him, and the resolution was easily passed.
¹⁰⁶ 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 70.
¹⁰⁷ See Chapter 5 of this volume.
¹⁰⁸ In this respect, the episode recalls the Ufa Impreglo.
¹⁰⁹ “Üçüncü umum Rusya müslüman içtimaına dair,” *İrşad* 197, August 21, 1906.
Duma was formed in April 1906. While İttifak had enjoyed unexpected success in the first Duma elections, a series of events led many to call into question the value and power of Russian parliamentarianism. On July 8, 1906, just ten weeks after the first Duma had opened, Russia’s first modern parliament was dissolved by the tsar. On the same day, Sergei Witte was replaced as Prime Minister by Pyotr Stolypin.

Stolypin’s approach to governing favored a vigorous, and often violent, response to the unrest taking place in the empire. Closing newspapers, declaring martial law, and executing more than 1,000 people during the course of the second half of 1906, Stolypin would go on to author the new electoral law of June 3, 1907. This new measure, often referred to as a “counter-coup,” increased the proportion of seats in parliament that went to the gentry. The new law targeted Muslims in particular, disenfranchising representation to the Duma from the north Caucasus and Turkestan.

The “counter-coup” of June 3, 1907 took place almost ten months after the Third Muslim Congress, but even before that it had been evident that the window of opportunity that had opened in 1905 was closing quickly. Akçura’s decision to go for broke in the August heat of Nizhnii Novgorod may have been a calculated risk. İttifak was as popular as it was ever going to be. Even after the Third Congress it took several months for many Muslims to realize what the newly-adopted platform of İttifak was. While İttifak was able to increase its seats in parliament to thirty-five in the elections of December 1906, they would never come anywhere close to meeting this total again.

For many Muslims in Russia, the Third Congress and the counter-coup would mark a double blow against the credibility of İttifak. Muslims, especially in central Russia, spoke out increasingly against the movement that spoke in their names amid reports that Muslim voters were beginning to turn to right-wing parties that were critical of parliamentarianism. The journal Din ve Mağişet, which had usually been supportive of İttifak, described the emergence of “a very strong movement” of Muslims organizing politically against İttifak. The conservative journal’s editors bemoaned the loss of Muslim support for İttifak in the months which had followed the Third Muslim Congress. Opposition, they wrote, “is coming from both the right and left.”

110 On Stolypin’s crackdown, see Riasanovsky and Steinberg, A History of Russia, 410–11.
111 Such as the “Union of Russian People,” a right-wing nationalist organization that nevertheless was reported to have found some success in recruiting Muslims. See “Protest,” Beyan ul-Hak 66, September 12, 1906; “Asıl Ruslar ve İslam,” İrşad 95, May 23, 1907; “Acip tedbirlerdir!!,” İrşad 25, February 28, 1908.
112 Despite Din ve Mağişet’s conservative and anti-jadid line, the journal had supported İttifak in 1905 and 1906, and published İttifak’s messages. See, for example, “Duma haberleri,” Din ve Mağişet No. 11, March 23, 1907, 177–179; “Duma haberleri,” Din ve Mağişet 12, March 30, 1907, 194; “Rusya Müslümanları ittifāğını,” Din ve Mağişet 15, April 20, 1907, 244.
113 The publisher of Din ve Mağişet was Mökhämmädväli Hüseyinov (Khösäenov), the son of Gani Hüseyinov, and nephew of renowned philanthropist Ahmet Hüseyinov. The journal’s first editor was Zahidulla müezzin Khäirullin, and later mullah Fäezkhan Dautov. Röstäm Mökhämmätshin, Din và Mağışbat zhurnalining bibliografiiase (1906–1918) (Kazan: İman, 2002), 3.
114 Din ve Mağişet 19, 297–299.
group of imams from villages in the vicinity of Orenburg had sent a telegram to the Minister of Internal Affairs denouncing İttifak’s tactics. For as long as it had been a big-tent movement with no platform, İttifak had succeeded in attracting the talents and support of a wide range of people. The movement fell apart, however, soon after it adopted a political platform. In the elections to the third Duma in December 1906, a total of ten Muslims were voted in to parliament. In the fourth Duma (1912) there would be only seven.

Even among İttifak activists, spirits began to flag. İttifak was losing supporters, and it was not only because of the restrictive new electoral law. In June 1912, Hasan Gabishev, an İttifak activist in central Russia, wrote to Fatih Kerimi with bad news about the upcoming vote. “With regard to the elections,” he wrote, “I feel little personal interest. Perhaps because our chances are so small in Kazan.” Acknowledging that many Muslims were now supporting Russian parties, Gabishev expressed amazement at how short-sighted they could be. “It’s impossible to explain to them that they’re wrong,” he said. Muslim voters “do not understand” the mistake they were making.

The arguments and debates of the jadids and their opponents were rooted in struggles over cultural capital, as well as a host of other interests that were often quite material. Students and teachers fought alongside and against one another in pursuit of an education, better living conditions, and a career. Although the jadids and their programs were often deeply unpopular within Muslim communities, they were still relevant to many people’s lives. This was partly because jadid merchants continued to sponsor new schools, reading rooms, and other undertakings in the villages of central Russia. The other reason had to do with İttifak.

İttifak leaders knew, especially after the counter-coup, that they would have little opportunity to influence state policymaking towards Muslims in the foreseeable future. Not everyone else necessarily understood this. To the thousands of spiritual personnel living in central Russia during the years after the Third Congress, İttifak’s big victory in the elections to the second Duma may have seemed more threatening than it actually was. İttifak stood to gain if parliament ever did play an important role in government, but the movement’s position was weak. To traditional

115 The petitioning imams, reported the journal, had told the minister turning the müftiätte into an elected position was contrary to Islam. A similar article was published in Din ve Mağîjet, 1907. See “Zamanlar üzgäre bit efendilär!” Din ve Mağîjet 19, May 25, 1907, 299–300.

116 Tables showing the total number of İttifak deputies sitting in the four Dumas can be found in Diliara Usmanova, Musul’manskia fraktsiia i problemy ’’svobody sovesti’’ v gosudarstvennoi dumy Rossii (1906–1917) (Kazan: Master Lain, 1999), 128–46. On the Muslim deputies, also see Musul’manske deputaty Gosudarstvennoi dumy Rossii 1906–1917 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Larissa A. Iamaeva (ed). (Ufa: Kitap, 1998); L. A. Iamaeva, Musul’mskii liberalizm nachala XX veka kak obschestvenno-politichesko dvizhenie (Ufa: Gilem, 2002).

117 Letter from Gabishev to Fatih Kerimi, June 3, 1912. NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 23, ll. 6–7. Gabishev also mentioned that Muslim supporters of Russian parties had been civil to him. “People who say they’re supporting rightist parties were not hostile to me. At the same time, they made no effort to hide their views.”
Muslim teachers fearful of losing their students, however, İttifak’s near-total lock on Muslim representation in parliament must have seemed alarming.

For approximately eighteen months, İttifak had looked like it was going places. The movement had elected numerous deputies to parliament, and its representatives had been able to claim at least partial credit for a couple of qualified victories.\textsuperscript{118} As long as the organization’s leadership had focused upon lessening government regulations pertaining to schools and the spiritual assemblies, Muslims had generally been happy to support İttifak. Now, however, the movement’s leadership was attempting to similarly impose rules upon Muslim schools and the spiritual assemblies. İttifak, it seemed, had turned into the very type of force that Muslims had resisted in the recent past. Just as Muslims in the late nineteenth century had revolted against tsarist civil administration, now İttifak’s leaders would face a rebellion of their own.

\textsuperscript{118} With respect to allowing Kräšen Tatars to be registered as Muslim, and regarding the overturn of the March 31 Regulations. See Chapter 3.
The Politics of Naming

In October 1905, at the very height of the revolution, Muslims in Crimea had been split over matters related to both politics and naming. The supporters of reform had fired the first shot. Allies of İsmail Gasprinskii circulated a petition to the provincial governor, demanding the firing of Crimean Müfti Adil Mirza Karashaiskii.1

Signed by approximately seven hundred people from across the peninsula, the anti-Karashaiskii petitioners criticized what they described as the müfti’s “indifference” (ravnodushhia) and “inactivity” (bezdeiatelnost’) regarding the implementation of his duties. In particular, Karashaiskii’s critics regretted the fact that the müfti had not appealed to government authorities more often for funding. They pointed out that the municipality of Bahçesaray and the provincial legislature (zemstvo) in Yalta would probably be willing to provide funding for the upkeep of Muslim community buildings. Karashaiskii had done nothing, they said, and the mosques and schools of the region had fallen into disrepair. Identifying themselves collectively as “the Muslim population of Crimea,” the petitioners wanted Karashaiskii to be replaced by a new müfti, to be chosen by Muslims themselves through an election.2

Not all Muslims in Crimea had such a negative view of Karashaiskii’s performance. Within a few weeks of the arrival of the anti-Karashaiskii missive, a second petition turned up at the governor’s office in Simferopol’. Bearing more than one thousand signatures, many of them drawn from the ranks of the provincial ulema that Karashaiskii headed, this second group of petitioners demanded that Karashaiskii remain in his position.

In addition to their disagreement with the points that the first group had made about the müfti, Karashaiskii’s supporters were also upset that the anti-Karashaiskii petitioners had signed their missive as “the Muslim population of the Crimea.” which Karashaiskii’s supporters thought was inappropriate. Karashaiskii’s adversaries, observed the müfti’s supporters, “do not represent the voice of Muslims.” Their petition “by no means constitutes the will of the ‘Muslim population of Crimea.’”3

1 By “Crimean Müfti” I am referring to the Müfti of the Tavridian Spiritual Authority. Crimea was located within Tavrida province. The Müfti, like all other spiritual heads, was appointed by the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs.
2 “Musul’manskoe naselenie Kryma.”
3 Petition to the governor of Tavrida province, November 3, 1905. GAARK, f. 27, op. 3, d. 766, l. 17-ob. For a copy of another petition signed by Müfti Karashaiskii and many official ulema in Crimea, see NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 1, l. 2. This petition begins with an explanation that it had been written “in the name of the population of Tavrida province.”
Who spoke in the name of the community? This chapter looks at the politics of naming. In talking about the politics of naming, rather than conceptions of identity, I wish to underscore the importance of the iterative act of describing oneself or someone else in a certain way. Throughout this study I have looked at different contexts—other than identity—in which the pan-Turkists fit into the broader context of their communities. In this chapter I argue that even when the pan-Turkists were writing and speaking in terms of civilizational identity, their words were embedded within larger developments taking place at the time. While the pan-Turkists might seem distant from the societies in which they lived their participation in the politics of naming connects them to their era more than any other context.

As I discuss in the introduction to this study there are three main points that I make with respect to the invocation of identity. First, I argue that invocations of identity often involve concrete and material considerations. Second, I say they are created by a wide variety of individuals, including people from outside the community in question. Third, I argue that these invocations reflect power dynamics. In this chapter, all three of these arguments are on display as I analyze the discourses of Muslim community activists, their Muslim opponents, and tsarist officials.

Beginning with a discussion with the discourses of solidarity and progress employed by Muslim activists during and after the 1905 Revolution, I then look at the different kinds of identity that Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and Gasprinskii were associated with at this time. Of particular importance to the politics of naming, I argue, is the audience. To what degree do audience expectations shape a particular message, and how are these invocations interpreted by the people receiving them? By seeking answers to these questions, I trace the final months leading up to the departure of the Muslim activists for Istanbul.

FROM SOLIDARITY TO PROGRESS

There was a discourse of embeddedness that was common to activist writings and speeches. In this regard the future pan-Turkists were not unlike activists and writers drawn from Muslim and non-Muslim communities within the Middle East, India, and elsewhere in the colonized world, who similarly spoke in the name of solidarity, progress, and the community. In Russia, Muslim activists spoke out

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4 Such as through their trans-imperial status, and their involvement in issues that mattered to people for political, cultural and economic reasons.

5 By “discourse of embeddedness” I am referring to the use, by the activists, of various terms and phrases that reflected a strong desire to use identity as a means of strengthening communities and embedding them within larger ones.

6 Such as the Young Ottomans intellectuals in Istanbul, Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, and other figures from both within and without the Middle East. See, for example, the essays written by Muslim modernists in Indonesia, India, and elsewhere in Kurzman, Modernist Islam. Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 175, 199–205; Shissler, Between Two Empires, 103–15, especially 111–12. On the uses
not only in terms of national and religious identity, but also solidarity (*ittifak*) more generally. On the one hand, the idea of regional Muslim populations being embedded within larger communities—such as Muslims or Turks—was attractive, perhaps, because Muslims in Russia had numerous options from which to choose. At the same time, a sense of insecurity, even danger, also pervaded many Muslim discussions pertaining to both identity and embeddedness at this time.

Discourses pertaining to solidarity (*ittifak*) can be seen in a number of places. For example, the striking students at the Apanaev Medrese, discussed in Chapter 4 of this volume, had described their actions as having been undertaken “in the name of solidarity.” Imams in the city of Kazan also used the term in 1905, announcing that their newly created association, “the organization of Kazan imams,” had likewise been set up in accordance with a similar spirit of *ittifak*. When problems occurred, meanwhile, they stemmed from a lack of solidarity, such as when Abdürrüşşid İbrahimov blamed İttifak’s electoral failures in Crimea on a lack of Muslim unity.

“Solidarity,” whether invoked as an abstract concept or in connection to language, was considered by Muslim activists to be important because it could lead to “progress” (*terakki*). Progress was understood primarily in terms of material and cultural progress, which Muslim community reformers felt was lacking to a dangerous degree in Muslim communities. Through progress, Muslims could reach a higher level of civilization (*medeniyet*), and would therefore be able to compete more effectively with European and other communities. The material and cultural development of imperial powers was admired by Muslim activists in Russia even as the policies of European governments and the racist attitudes of European statesmen and thinkers were frequently criticized.

Although Muslim community reformers generally considered their fellow Muslims to be “behind” Europeans with regard to knowledge and progress, this situation was not thought to be irremediable. “Progress,” wrote a contributor to *Beyan ul-Hak*, “is the striving to come into harmony with life’s new conditions.” By so striving, Muslims could take their place alongside other civilized communities of the rhetoric of unity in the Ottoman Empire, Russia, India, and elsewhere, see Adeeb Khalid, “Pan-Islamism in Practice: The Rhetoric of Muslim Unity and its Uses,” in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdağla (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2005), 203–25.

7 As I discuss in Chapter 3, *ittifak* is usually translated as “unity,” but in the political context of Russia in 1905 this term was more frequently used in a way that is more similar to “solidarity.”

8 A Muslim in the southern Caucasus, for example, would have numerous possibilities, including sect (Sunni/Shiite), language (Turk), religion (Islam), or region (Caucasian Muslim). An imperial-wide form (All-Russian Muslim) could also be a choice.


of the world. Japan and Iran, for example, were both hailed as countries that had managed to overcome backwardness. While the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 was never celebrated domestically in the Muslim press, the ability of the country to compete with European powers was nevertheless presented as a model of rapid cultural and material modernization. Iran, where there had been a constitutional revolution in 1906, was viewed as a particular inspiration to Muslims writing in the southern Caucasus. In 1908, Ahmet Ağaoğlu observed that “just five years ago” there had been “no country in the world more backward, more ignorant than Iran.” Ağaoğlu then contrasted this backwardness with Iran’s current condition and the progress it had made since the constitutional revolution. In other words, there was hope for Russia, and Muslims, yet.

Jadids had no monopoly over this discourse. Contributors to the leading conservative journal at the time, Din ve Mağişet, similarly invoked progress. In an article entitled “Progress in Civilization and the Theatre,” Gabderekhim Emini employed the language of civilization and progress to criticize the development of the Tatar theater, writing that “every populace (kavim) wants to see progress in civilization in accordance to progress in ideas. Whatever the period, when one studies the reasons behind a people’s progress, one sees that they involve industry and trade, and the knowledge which facilitates their development.” Emini wanted readers to know that, while he was against the jadids’ theater productions, he was still on the side of progress. Numerous other conservative Muslims at this time similarly made their case in the name of progress, just as their jadid rivals did.

The stakes were understood to be high. In Crimea during the Crimean War and after, as again in the northern Caucasus from 1859 to 1864, traumatic events had taken place involving mass emigrations, forced and otherwise, of local communities. Entire generations were scarred, and the possibility of extinction seemed real. In an anonymously penned article appearing in the Kazan-based jadid newspaper Beyan ul-Hak, the fate of Native Americans was raised as an object lesson to

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13 “İttifak ve birlik,” Beyan ul-Hak 1, March 13, 1906.
14 Even if it was Russia. On Japan and the Muslim periodical press in Russia, see “Yaponlar hakkında,” Kazan Mukhbiri 280, May 19, 1908. Inside Russia, however, celebrating the Japanese victory would have been a very bad idea. Aydın writes insightfully on this issue, Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia, 78–83.
16 “Medeniyette terakki ve teatr,” Dünya ve Mağişet (later Din ve Mağişet) 4, 1907, 57–9. Khalid discusses the ways in which jadid uses of music and theater in Central Asia “provoked heated debate.” The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 152. On conservative criticism of the mixing of the sexes related to concerts and theater performances, see The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 152–4.
18 For articles in Din ve Mağişet which relate to progress see “İslah-i mekatib ve mudaris,” 1 (1906), 2; “İlim ve ulum hakkında,” 2 (1907), 21–2; “Din medreseleri, fen mektepleri,” 19 (1907), 295–7; “Yegerme asır medeniyete,” 22 (1907), 349; “Bulay bulmas Terakki,” 23 (1907), 365–6; “İslah-i mudarrisin ve edeb-i mutagallimin,” 24 (1907), 376–7.
Russian Muslims. In the face of European colonization, argued the contributor, Indians had failed to adapt, and as a result they “have all but disappeared from the North American continent.” The author of this article then wrote that “even if we might be a few degrees higher” than Native Americans with regard to their general level of civilization, a similar fate awaited Muslims who did not heed the call of progress.

YUSUF AKÇURA’S THREE TYPES OF POLICY

When Yusuf Akçura sat down to write “Three Types of Policy” in early 1904, his life was at something of a crossroads. He had only recently returned to Russia after twenty years abroad. While Akçura had, as a teenager, occasionally visited relatives in Russia with his mother, Yusuf was largely a foreigner in the country of his ancestors. After finishing his studies at the Sorbonne in 1903, however, returning to the Ottoman Empire was not an option. While Akçura had appeared well on his way to getting back into the good graces of the government prior to his escape, any return to the Ottoman Empire at this juncture would probably mean a prison sentence and exile.

In March 1904, Akçura was almost twenty-eight years old. He had been through tougher times than this. After many years away, his Tatar language skills had diminished, but before long he would be able to reacclimate himself to his surroundings. He did not speak Russian, but would soon learn it well enough to read. Staying at the home of one of his uncles in a village called Zoya, outside Simbirsk, He was probably not living the life he had imagined for himself while a cadet in Istanbul or a student at the Sorbonne. Nevertheless, it had been his own exercise of choice—and the knowledge that options existed in Russia for him should he burn his bridges in the Ottoman Empire—that had led him to the frozen mud of provincial Russia.

Restless, perhaps, amid such surroundings, Akçura turned to writing. He had written a graduating thesis at the Sorbonne on Ottoman institutions, in addition to publishing in Young Turk-friendly newspapers such as Meşveret and Şura-yı Ümmet. Now, however, he turned to a much more ambitious topic: Ottoman identity. The new work, which Akçura called “Three Types of Policy,” was about the relationship between the state and identity. After months of writing in the central Russian hinterlands, he sent off his manuscript to a relatively obscure Cairene

19 Adeeb Khalid poetically writes that “death constantly stalks jadid literature.” The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, 144.
20 “Ahal-i İslamga muracaat,” Beyan ul-Hak 6, April 12, 1906.
21 Akçura writes in his prison memoirs that he could not speak Russian. However, he often cited Russian-language newspapers such as Novoe Vremia in his columns. He had been in Russia for more than two years at the time of his detention in March/April 1906. On his arrest, see Chapter 4. On his not knowing Russian, see Mevkufiyet Hatıraları, 27.
newspaper called Türk. The newspaper accepted the piece, and published the essay over the course of four issues in April and May 1904.

“Three Types of Policy” has often been characterized as a pan-Turkist “manifesto.” This is a gross overstatement. In this piece Akçura was not seeking to galvanize Turks, nor was he even addressing a popular audience. Instead, the tone of the piece was detached, even scholarly. Akçura presented three identity forms—Ottomanism, pan-Islamism, and pan-Turkism—and described the advantages and drawbacks associated with each of them. While Akçura ultimately recommended that Ottoman policymakers choose pan-Turkism, the arguments that he made were based upon interests and feasibility, rather than abstract appeals to the nation.

The most notable aspect of this work was not Akçura’s suggestion that pan-Turkism would be more workable than other forms of identity, but rather his assumption—common at the time—that some form of identity was necessary. Ottoman leaders had, since the middle of the nineteenth century, come to similar conclusions. During the years of the Tanzimat, government officials in Istanbul had worked to connect the state with an explicitly non-national and non-confessional Ottoman identity known as “Ottomanism.” Under Abdülhamid II, meanwhile, Islam and the Ottoman sultan’s position as caliph were employed as part of a broader strategy of retaining the loyalty of Ottoman Muslims at a time when the empire’s Christian population was shrinking. Akçura’s suggestion that officials in the Sublime Porte focus specifically upon Turkic communities, rather than simply Muslim ones, was not so much revolutionary as a revision of long-standing notions regarding identity and the state.

Akçura declared in the introduction to “Three Types of Policy” that “there are three separate political paths which have been roughly conceived in the interest of gaining strength and awakening the desire for progress in the Ottoman Empire.” The emergence of collective identity as a concern for statesmen was presented by Akçura as a modern phenomenon, one which had been “disseminated from the West” and into the Ottoman lands during the course of the nineteenth century. Ottomanism, pan-Islamism, and pan-Turkism were all legitimate choices worthy of comparison to one another. The focus of discussion was not how best to fulfill an abstract need to construct a specific nation-state, but rather the more practical concern of what form of identity would gain the loyalty of the most people.

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24 Türk, I/24, April 14, 1904; I/25, April 21, 1904; I/26, April 28, 1904; I/27, May 5, 1904.


26 Selim Deringil’s noted study on Abdülhamid II discusses the use of symbols, images, and discourse during the Hamidian era. The Well Protected Domains, esp. 16–67.

“Ottomanism,” wrote Akçura, had been the goal of the Ottoman government during the Tanzimat era. This was when Ottoman policymakers sought, “like in America,” to create “a new nation brought together by a common homeland.” Religious and ethnic background would be of less significance to the state and its subjects. This view of the state’s identity, wrote Akçura, fell into disfavor after France’s loss to Germany in 1870. This was because the men most associated with the Tanzimat era, Ali and Fuat pashas, had lost their biggest backer in Napoleon III. Another important reason was because Germany’s victory represented the victory of a new understanding of nationalism as something fundamentally based upon race.

Akçura then discussed the adoption by many Ottoman intellectuals (such as the “Young Ottomans”) and, eventually, by Sultan Abdülhamid II himself, of the policy of “pan-Islamism.” This ideology not only held the power to divide non-Muslim Ottoman subjects from Muslim Ottoman subjects more deeply, but also could connect the Muslim-majority empire more fully with Muslims from across the globe. The “pan-Islamism” of Abdülhamid II constituted policies undertaken both domestically and internationally.

The current ruler (Abdülhamid II) tried to spread the use of the term “caliph” in place of words like “sultan” or “padişah.” In his general politics, religion and Islam take an important place. The amount of time dedicated to studying religious subjects in the education offered in state schools has been increased. It was desired that the fundamentals of education be made religious. Religiosity—even if it was external and hypocritical—became the surest way of attracting the favor of the Caliph.

In the final section of “Three Types of Policy,” Akçura turned his attention to pan-Turkism. Continuing in the expository manner that had characterized his discussions of Ottomanism and pan-Islamism, he reported that recently, a small number of individuals in the Ottoman Empire had begun to explore “the idea of bringing about a policy of Turkish nationalism based upon race (ırk).” This idea, explained Akçura, had been articulated by several intellectuals associated with the Istanbul newspaper İkdam.

Akçura believed that pan-Turkism was the most workable of the three options because it was the most practical one. The embrace of a more Turkic-oriented identity for the Ottoman state would bring tangible benefits. Even if the adoption of this policy would alienate non-Turkish populations in the empire, the Ottoman state would stand to gain from the allegiance of Turks from outside the empire, particularly Russia. “The unification of the Turks,” he wrote, “whose languages, races, traditions, and—for most of them—even their religions are one; who in

30 Yusuf Akçura, “Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset,” Türk 27, May 5, 1904/19 Safar, 1322. Pamphlet copies of this were printed in the Ottoman Empire in 1911 and 1913.
31 Akçura mentioned Necip Asım, Veled Çelebi, Hasan Tahsin as Ottoman intellectuals currently interested in pan-Turkism.
most cases migrated from Asia to the east of Europe; will be a service to efforts to form a great political nation (milliyet) which will be capable of defending the existence of Turks alongside the other great nations.”

While Akçura argued that “racial” forms of collective identity, such as Turkism, were destined to win out over religious ones, he also believed that Islam was essential to the development of Turkism as a form of collective identity that both state and the public could embrace. Nevertheless, Islam needed to change.

We must remember, however, that the majority of Turks who would be in a position to unite are Muslim. For this reason, the Muslim religion could become an important component in the formation of a greater Turkish nation. Some of those who wish to articulate (tarif etmek) the nation (milliyet) continue to look upon religion as one such location (mevki). Islam must change in order to accept that nations would come into being within it, just as Christianity has done in recent years. Indeed, this change is a practical necessity because the races are also part of the general trend of our time.

“Three Types of Policy” did not celebrate a timeless Turkish nationalism based upon an ideal. While Akçura advocated a policy of pan-Turkism in the article, this endorsement was based upon considerations that were rooted in current conditions. Even in this “defining text of political Pan-Turkism,” the benefits and disadvantages of pan-Turkism were discussed in mainly practical terms. Akçura’s main concern related to associating the Ottoman state with a particular type of community identity form, which he considered to be an absolute necessity. While Akçura had specific recommendations for Ottoman policymakers in early 1904, his views were not presented as universally applicable or desirable for all (or any) of the world’s Turks. Like every other identity form that Akçura would associate himself with during the course of his career, the pan-Turkism of “Three Types of Policy” was fixed in a certain time and place.

The audience for “Three Types of Policy” was not the nation, but rather a collection of intellectuals and others who might be interested in politics and ideas. At the same time, the thinking in this work is very state-centric. The premise of “Three Types of Policy” was to find the best course of action for the state. Turks

32 “Azim bir milliyet-i siyasiye.” As is usually the case when Akçura (and Ağaoğlu) discuss the “nation,” the term milliyet is used, rather than millet. Yusuf Akçura, “Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset,” Türk 27, May 5, 1904/19 Safar, 1322.

33 One of Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s best-known series of columns was dedicated to this very issue. See “İslamiyette dava-yı milliyet” (I-II), Türk Yurdu, Vol. 6, No. 10, 2320–9, 1914/1330; Vol. 6, No. 11, 2381–90, 1914/1330.

34 “Din-i İslam, büyük Türk milliyetinin teşekküründe mühim bir unsur olabilir.”

35 In the original published in Türk, this says “mevki,” but in the reprint published in Istanbul in 1913, this word has been replaced by “amil.” Some English translations of Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset are based upon the 1913 edition, which is slightly different from the original.

36 “Zamanımız tarihinde görülen cereyan-i umumi ırklarındadır.” In the 1913 edition this apparent typographical error has been changed to “ırklardadır.”

37 The quotation is from Geraci, Window on the East, 279.

38 In “Three Types of Policy” Akçura is concerned mostly with the state, and assumes that Turks or Muslims will be attracted to or repelled by a state based upon its use of identity. However, Akçura does not spell out how the state is supposed to use identity, pan-Turkist or otherwise.
are an afterthought, their support taken for granted so long as the empire speaks in their name.

Concrete interests, rather than a reified people, constituted Akçura’s main concern. He thought of pan-Turkism as an option to be evaluated, warts and all, alongside other choices. While he thought pan-Turkism was the option with the best prospects, he found it necessary to argue the position. All of the reasons he provides for supporting pan-Turkism were connected to practical calculations.39

This sort of triangulating and option-weighing was something that Akçura had experienced, in one form or another, for almost the entirety of his life at this point. A traveler who, from the age of seven onward, was always a foreigner somewhere, Akçura knew too much to take nationalism at face value. He spoke instead to his readers from the perspective of one sophisticate to another. This is what you need to do, he was saying, in order to make your state right again. Transcendent principles had nothing to do with it.

Most scholarship pertaining to Akçura draws a direct trajectory between “Three Types of Policy” and the pan-Turkism of Türk Yurdu.40 However, such an approach ignores the fact that Akçura went years after 1904 without writing much about pan-Turkism again. Nor had state officials or Muslims in Russia seemed to have heard of this treatise.41 While “Three Types of Policy” would eventually become Akçura’s most famous essay, it would remain virtually unknown in Russia until after it had been republished in Istanbul in 1911. For his part, Akçura did not discuss “Three Types of Policy” in his writings or speeches in Russia either during these years.42

THE POLITICS OF UNITY

During his years in Russia, Akçura publicly described the community in which he lived in a variety of ways. These included “Tatars,”43 “Turk-Tatars,”44 and “Northern Turks,”45 although in most cases he invoked a much broader population: that of “All-Russian Muslims.”46 This was because Akçura, as one of the leaders of İttifak, was trying to appeal to the interests of 20 million Russian Muslims.

39 Rather than the call of the motherland.
40 Georgeon, Aux Origines, 23–34; Landau, Pan-Turkism in Turkey, 14.
41 Akçura’s long police files bear no mention of “Three Types of Policy,” which definitely would have been mentioned had the officers known about it. Also see Chapter 6.
42 Rorlich notes that the Constitutional Democrats with whom Akçura negotiated in 1906 on behalf of İttifak “were oblivious” to the piece and Akçura’s role in it. The Volga Tatars, 113.
45 “Şimali Türkler” (“northern Turk”) is a term Akçura used frequently after 1911. See, for example, “Suriye’den V,” Vakit 1196, May 9, 1913.
46 “All-Russian Muslims” was the basis upon which the İttifak movement had been created. See Chapter 3 of this volume.
Akçura invoked solidarity frequently, even when he carried out some of his most divisive acts. This was the case in 1906 when he justified his actions at the Third Muslim Congress by explaining that his actual goal had been “to unite most Russian Muslims.” Akçura invoked the Bulgarian Muslims, whose population had been steadily dwindling since the state’s creation in 1878. The implication was clear: if Muslims were opposed to Akçura’s İttifak program, their risk of extermination would be much higher.

“Our goal,” intoned Akçura, “is to not do what Bulgarian Muslims did by dividing themselves and losing their community and political rights.” The problem in Bulgaria, Akçura implied to his listeners, was that Muslims had not unquestioningly supported a single political party just because it spoke in the name of Muslims. “Bulgarian Muslims came out in opposition against one another. When they needed to create their own party, they joined up with the parties of Stoylov, Pinkov, and others. Because they were divided, Bulgarian Muslims were powerless, held no influence with the government, and were unable to defend their community (millî) and political interests.”

The solidarity that Akçura advocated here and elsewhere was political in character in that he was doing so as a means of stifling debate. His approach to tsarist politics was not, however, by any means separatist in nature. Akçura was not seeking to redraw borders or unite the world’s Turks, nor was his political agenda particularly anti-Russian or even anti-tsarist. He invoked solidarity (ittifak) for Muslims as part of an effort to get Muslims to engage tsarist institutions. Akçura wanted Russia’s 20 million Muslims to use their numbers to expand the community’s political power in parliament. The basis of organization was not Turkic, but Muslim in character. İttifak was a movement of Russian Muslims, not Turks.

While Akçura emphasized the importance of solidarity, Muslim critics of the İttifak leadership mocked him for presuming to speak in the name of all Russian Muslims. As could also be seen with respect to the dueling petitions relating to Müfti Karashaiskii that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, complaints over who had the right to speak in the name of the community were common. At the Second Muslim Congress in January 1906, Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev had criticized the central Russian leadership of the movement, claiming they were following their own interests while speaking in the name of all Russian Muslims. At the Third Congress, meanwhile, Socialist delegates such as Hadi Atlasi and Fuad

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47 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icirmi etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının neveis, 52. Rorlich estimates that 800 delegates were present at the first session of the congress and that 80% of the membership in each commission was from central Russia. The Volga Tatars, 115.
49 More than anything, Akçura argued, Muslims in Russia needed to save themselves “from losing all of their political power by dividing themselves politically and falling into the fate of the Bulgarian Muslims.” Yusuf Akçura, “Rusya Müslümanları ittifakının üçünche zheune,” Kazan Mukhbiri 132, August 13, 1906.
50 Bigi, Islahat Esasları, 217.
51 Hadi Atlasi (“Atlazov,” 1876–1938) was an imam in the village of Elmet, near Bögelmâ, in the province of Samara. He was also, during the years 1903 to 1909, a teacher in the medrese of this village. He was elected to the second Duma, where he sat in the Trudoviaia gruppa (“Labor Faction”) bloc.
Tuiktarrov\(^{52}\) pointed out the difficulties they had in reconciling Akçura’s expansive claims to represent all Russian Muslims and the narrow circle of individuals who had provided input into the creation of İttifak’s platform. “How,” asked Tuiktarrov, “are we supposed to accept, without having ever read or looked at it, a platform in the name of twenty million people?”\(^{53}\) In the newspaper \textit{Ural}, an article appearing in March 1907 complained that “nationalists” (\textit{milliyetçiler}) in the İttifak movement simply ignored dissent, acting “as if all Muslims were naturally one person.”\(^{54}\) In another piece appearing at this time, İttifak was accused of employing the term “Russian Muslims” for political gain. “They won’t come out and say that this is their party. Instead they’ll most likely be calling themselves the ‘Muslim Alliance’ (\textit{İttifak}) party. They do this because they think that if they call themselves ‘Muslim’ then all Muslims will support them.”\(^{55}\) This was exactly what Akçura was trying to do. For Akçura, who was not only an intellectual but also a political operator, associating İttifak with the entire community of “All-Russian Muslims” had been an easy call. There was strength in numbers. Speaking in the name of Turks, Turko-Tatars, Northern Turks, or any other identity form that occasionally appeared in Akçura’s writing would have made no sense in this context.\(^{56}\) Muslims in Russia saw themselves as Muslims, not Turks, so Akçura and the rest of the İttifak leadership sought to appeal to them as such.

**THE OVERLAPPING WORLDS OF AHMET AĞAOĞLU**

Ahmet Ağaoğlu was similarly flexible when it came to identity. Like Akçura, he emphasized in his writings the need for solidarity (\textit{ittifak}), and frequently complained that the lack of solidarity among Muslims was primarily responsible for their “ignorant and primitive” state.\(^{57}\) In an article published in \textit{İrşad} in November 1907, Ağaoğlu wrote that “[n]ine hundred and ninety-nine of us out of a thousand consider the homeland (\textit{vatan}) only in terms of ourselves, our homes, our districts (\textit{mahalle}), and at most our cities.”

Thinking of ourselves in these ways, we describe ourselves with terms like “from within the city” or “from the outskirts of the city,” this district, that district, or else we say we

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\(^{52}\) Fuad Tuiktarrov (1880–1938) was a well-known publicist who had had a number of articles printed in \textit{Tang Yoldïzï}, \textit{Kazan Mukhbiri}, \textit{Mektep}, and other newspapers and journals. After the October Revolution, Tuiktarrov briefly worked Kazan city administration before emigrating in 1919, living in Turkey from the mid-1920s onward. “Hadi Atlasov,” \textit{Tatar Entsiklopedii Süzlege}, 50.

\(^{53}\) 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’ta icimai etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarımın nedvęs, 145.

\(^{54}\) “Yınga Müslüman ittifafi,” \textit{Ural} 21, March 18, 1907. \textit{Ural} was a Socialist newspaper that would be closed by the police five weeks after this article ran. Bennigsen, \textit{La Presse}, 89.

\(^{55}\) “Muslûman ittifâﬁ,” \textit{Ural} 3, January 12, 1907.

\(^{56}\) And Akçura did not use these ethnic terms when engaged in his work for İttifak.

\(^{57}\) \textit{İrşad} 18, February 5, 1907.
Ağaoğlu contrasted the conceptions of community (millet) held by Muslims with those of Europeans, whose national conceptions of identity were credited by Ağaoğlu as contributing to the development of European countries and peoples. Unlike us, Europeans—for example, Englishmen—think about their homeland in other ways. For them, the homeland consists of a people (kavim), their language, and history. Every type of Frenchman is nevertheless a Frenchman, not someone from such-and-such district or city. No matter where this Frenchman is from, upon meeting a Frenchman from somewhere else who is involved in activities of his own, this Frenchman will necessarily be supportive and helpful.

Competition between communities was another subject that Ağaoğlu returned to frequently. While the modernization of Japan and the constitutional reforms taking place in Iran were frequently a source of inspiration to Muslim community reformers in the Russian Empire, other communities within Russia were also presented as models, or rivals, who had attained material and cultural “progress” through “solidarity.” It was for this reason, wrote Ağaoğlu, that Armenian communities had managed to be so successful in Nagorno-Karabakh and elsewhere.

“Compared to us Muslims,” wrote Ağaoğlu, Armenians “are not even one fourth our size.” Nevertheless “they are a clever, rational, and far-sighted people who understand the value of schools, science, education, knowledge, and solidarity.”

In another article, Ağaoğlu made a more direct comparison between Muslims and Armenians, pointing out the sorry state of Muslim communities in an indictment of the regional ulema. “I have seen their schools, their factories, and their workshops.” He contrasted these with the “pitiful” state of Muslim communities in the same region. Muslims, he complained, “have mosques that are closed, schools that are empty, shops with no products.”

The difference lay in the leadership of the two communities. The leaders of the Armenian spiritual community were devoted to advancing education, encouraging literacy, overseeing the growth of charitable organizations, and representing the interests of Armenians vis-à-vis tsarist authorities. For this reason, Armenians were a model community whose practices Muslims should try to emulate. Armenians displayed “complete solidarity, and deliberation,” while “our leaders only fight one another, and do nothing for the people.”

In contrast to the leaders of the

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60 Hayat 15, June 24, 1905.
61 “Bizim azime-yi hilalimiz,” İrşad 18, February 5, 1907.
62 He was referring to the leaders of the spiritual assemblies, with whom he was on bad terms. “Garibe İşler,” İrşad 28, February 17, 1907.
smooth-running Armenians, Muslim society was “in complete disorder, disunity, and lacking solidarity.”

Like Akçura, Ağaoğlu described the community in a variety of ways. As a student in France, he passed himself as an insider to Persian culture, publishing articles about Iran, and once he was back in the Caucasus people called him “Frankish Ahmet.” He now employed terms such as “Turk” and “Muslim” alongside “Caucasian Muslim” as a means of describing the community to which he belonged. As was the case with many of the activists, Ağaoğlu was a well-educated intellectual. He knew, of course, about nationalism and was familiar with contemporary thought on the issue. Nevertheless, his concerns regarding the community were practical. Living in a time of crisis, Ağaoğlu could not afford to be picky. The goal was to somehow organize the Turkic Muslims of the region, no matter what the appellation that came attached. Progress did not have to be achieved in the form of a nation-state, but rather could come in the form of a school.

İSMAIL GASPRINSKII’S LANGUAGE ISSUE

Starting in January 1906, İsmail Gasprinskii began writing more frequently about language. It was around this time, that of the Second Muslim Congress, that he also began his retreat from the İttifak leadership. Gasprinskii lobbied for newspapers in Russia to adopt a common Turkic literary language, which he called “Türki,” and which was a simplified form of Ottoman Turkish. The rationale for doing this, argued Gasprinskii, was to create a larger media and publishing market, as well as a more powerful book culture for writers and readers of Turkic. Placing the slogan “solidarity in language, in thought, in action” on the masthead of Tercüman in 1906, Gasprinskii began focusing less upon parliamentary politics and more upon language. His arguments and slogans in favor of Türki relied upon a familiar pattern of logic which couched the development of the language within the growth of society more generally.

While Gasprinskii advocated Türki, there were others who preferred to develop regional languages. Tatar, the dominant literary language in central Russia, was

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63 “Göç Meselesi,” İrşad 26, February 15, 1907.
64 While I believe Holly Shissler overstates the case in arguing that Ağaoğlu assumed a “basically Persian identity” in his French writings, it does seem clear that he was presenting himself in print as someone with insider knowledge regarding Persians and Shiite customs. Between Two Empires, 119. Also see Chapter 1 of this volume.
65 Shissler perceptively observes that “throughout his life, Ağaoğlu showed a very constant dedication to a primary group who can be characterized, for lack of a better term, as ‘his people’ or ‘his community.’” Between Two Empires, 2, 212.
67 Articles on “language unification” (lisan birleşmesi or tevhid-i lisan) appeared often in Tercüman during these years. See, for example, “Can yani dil meselesi,” Tercüman 6, January 25, 1908.
The Politics of Naming

quite different from Crimean Tatar and Ottoman Turkish. Whereas the Tatar spoken in Crimea was more similar to Ottoman Turkish, this was not the case in central Russia. Instead of supporting what they viewed as a watered-down Ottoman Turkish, writers in Kazan and elsewhere spoke out in favor of strengthening Volga Tatar as a literary language. Prior to the October Manifesto, the great majority of published works for Muslims were religious texts, often written in Arabic. Now that the revolution had come, the Kazan poet Gabdulla Tukai and his cohort wanted readers to be transported by the Tatar language. They argued that central Russian Tatars should publish in their own language, Tatar.

As was the case with Gasprinskii and his support for Türkî, advocates for building the Tatar language made their arguments according to a discourse of solidarity, progress, and embeddedness. In an article appearing in the newspaper Kazan Mukhbiri, an anonymous contributor described the process of a language developing over time, while the speakers of that language similarly created inhabitants and societies. “When the sons of Adam entered the human condition,” wrote the writer of “Civilization and the Language Issue,” “they inhabited separate regions and existed as separate peoples (kavims). Later they established villages, even cities, and although they began to trade with their neighbors.” Language was not only tied to civilization, but also community.

In an article on Esperanto that appeared in the journal Şura in 1908, an anonymous contributor wrote that “it is generally known that the most powerful impediment to the integration of peoples, to their profiting from one another’s knowledge and literature, to the development of their commerce and trade, is the existence of language differences (lisan başkalığı).” The contributor went on to argue that, through Esperanto, communities in other parts of the world were finally overcoming the problem of language.

The debate over Türkî versus Tatar was one that could potentially have a real impact upon the future of publishing and literature in the Russian–Ottoman borderlands. For Turkic-speaking Muslims in Russia, choosing between Türkî and Tatar would raise serious implications for education, as there were few Turkic-language textbooks that were printed in Russia. Debates over language mirrored a broader set of discussions taking place in the Muslim periodical press over the issue of community. Through various means, the Turkic Muslims of

71 Crimean Tatar grammar of the late imperial era closely resembled Ottoman Turkish, as did the Türkic dialects of the southern Caucasus. These languages were close to one another generally, even if the vocabulary was sometimes quite different. The Tatar language spoken in central Russia, on the other hand, was very different from these southern Türkic languages. Volga Tatar, as the Tatar of central Russia is also known today, is more similar to Kazakh than it is to Turkish.

72 Zenkovsky discusses Gasprinskii’s and Tukai’s views on the “language issue.” Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, 114–17.

73 “Medeniyet hem dil meselesi,” Kazan Mukhbiri 275, 1907.


75 Most textbooks were imported from the Ottoman Empire, which is one reason why the March 31 rules—which banned the importation of textbooks—had been so controversial. On the March 31 Regulations, see Chapter 3 of this volume.
Russia were seeking to situate themselves and their communities within a larger collective. Their goal was not specifically national, but rather reflected a broader search for embeddedness that could take them in a variety of directions either within or beyond Russia’s borders.

**TRACKING EXTREMISM**

The activists were not the only people who talked about Muslim community identity during these years. State authorities and scholars of Oriental Studies working in the employ of the state also looked at the activities of Muslims in terms of civilizational identity. Just as an earlier generation of officials tended to interpret Muslim resistance to state initiatives in terms of Islamic “fanaticism,” tsarist agents working in Muslim-populated regions in the early twentieth century likewise viewed communities and political activities as evidence of a dispute that was civilizational in nature. The problem was not tsarist policymaking, but rather pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. The actual suggestions and observations offered by Akçura, Gasprinsii, Ağaoğlu, and others were ignored, despite the fact that they would have helped state officials achieve their aim of broadening the use of the Russian language. Instead, Muslim politics, and the programs of serious people representing the Muslim establishment, were understood only in terms of identity.

In 1908, however, two developments occurred which increased the pressure that tsarist officials faced in their efforts to root out pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. The first was the Young Turk Revolution in July. The overthrow of Sultan Abdülhamid II, who had ruled since 1876, was sudden and unexpected. For decades, the Committee of Union and Progress had been an exile group, operating mainly in Paris. After a CUP cell consisting of Ottoman military officers based in Salonica was uncovered, the exposed Young Turk conspirators opted to march their army on Istanbul rather than face arrest at their base. While Abdülhamid II would remain monarch for several more months, in March 1909 an anti-CUP rebellion would give the Unionists the pretext they needed to dispense with him altogether. They forced the sultan to abdicate and sent him into exile to the CUP stronghold of Salonica, replacing the 66-year-old monarch with Mehmed V, who was little more than a figurehead for the Young Turks.

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77 One of Akçura’s police files simultaneously described him, in early 1906, as playing a prominent role in both “Social Democrat” and “pan-Islamist” circles. See report from Kazan vice-governor on Yusuf Akçura, March 14, 1906. RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 469, l. 1
78 Salonica is today’s Thessaloniki, in Greece.
79 Where the ex-sultan would remain until 1913, when the outbreak of the first Balkan war would force the CUP to bring him back to Istanbul. Abdülhamid would die there while still under house arrest in 1918.
A second important development to take place was the emergence of an anti-jadid denunciation campaign in central Russia. From the second half of 1908 onward, lower-ranking members of the ulema denounced new method teachers and well-known activists to the police and gendarmerie. In doing so, the denouncers sought to exploit government fears of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism by using precisely these phrases as a means of attracting official attention. The people making these denunciations knew exactly what their audience needed to hear, and they gave it to them.

In August 1908, a petition signed by twelve imams from the Orenburg Assembly was sent to the Minister of Internal Affairs. They wanted to report the “revolutionary activities” of new method teachers in the region. In recent years, “a number of teachers belonging to revolutionary organizations” had appeared in their villages. “Though they are ostensibly undertaking a religious duty,” in fact they were “turning the Tatar population against the Russian government.” The twelve mullahs alleged that the Muhammadiye Medrese of Kazan, one of the best-known new method medreses in the region, “is producing teachers who teach children according to the new method, who train them by filling their blood with hatred for the government.”

The complaints of the twelve imams could not have been better packaged to catch the eye of security-minded readers. They played up the degree to which the local new method teachers may have had a foreign connection, writing that the suspect mullahs wanted to recite the Friday prayer in Tatar, “in accordance with the plan of the Young Turks and Persian mullahs.” The imams made reference to the proposals of İttifak figures to turn the position of müfti into an elected one, writing that new method teachers in the area “want to put the [Orenburg] Spiritual Assembly into Muslim hands (v ruki musul'man).” The aim, they explained, was really quite clear: the new method teachers simply wanted “to create evil in Tatar society.”

The twelve imams named names, giving the first and last of ten Muhammadiye graduates as well as the village and district in which they worked. They requested that the government force the Orenburg Assembly to prevent Muhammadiye graduates from teaching anywhere.” This was the first of what would ultimately constitute a wide-ranging and well-coordinated campaign of secret denunciations concerning new method teachers and activists in central Russia. These activities were, for the most part, organized by an imam in the village of Tiunter (in the province of Viatka) named İshmöhämmät Dinmöhämmät (1849–1919). Dinmöhämmät, also known as İshmi İshan, hated new method education. He was
an antagonist of the Bubi brothers, directors of the respected new method Bubi Medrese of Tiunter. From 1908 to 1911, traditional teachers working in villages across the province of Kazan wrote letters and visited police stations, personally giving depositions denouncing their new method rivals. The denouncing imams told authorities that new method teachers were actually Islamic radicals with bad intentions toward Russia.

While most of the denunciations took place in the hinterlands of central Russia, others occurred in Kazan. In May 1909, one Khisamuddin Abdullafarov, a mullah in Kazan, denounced the Kazan jadid Muhammadzhan Galeev as a pan-Islamist, while Kazan resident Vallulla Gizzettullin informed police that Yusuf Akçura was “a revolutionary” and “Young Turk.” Alarmed by the growing number of reports on pan-Islamism, an official working in the Kazan office of the gendarmerie observed in a report that “in recent times, the number of supporters of the idea of pan-Islamism has been growing and growing everywhere.” Moreover, this official knew that the goal of pan-Islamists was violent, and revolved around “the notion of uniting all Muslims” for a battle against “Christian Europe.”

Operating out of rural districts outside of Dinmöhämmät’s base in Tiunter, dozens of lower-ranking members of the Orenburg Assembly denounced both famous jadids and local new method medrese teachers as pan-Turkists and pan-Islamists. In 1911, Ahmet Faiz Dautov and Mirsaid Iunusov, both teachers in the village of Saropol and members of the ulama, informed police officer Budagoskii that a group of people “spreading the idea of pan-Islamism” among Muslims included well-known jadid and İttifak figures such as Shakir Tukaev, Sadri Maksudi, Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev, Aliasgar Sirtlanov, and Yusuf Akçura, some two years after the Vakit correspondent had returned to Istanbul after the CUP had come to power.

The individuals named in the denunciations were usually identified as having been involved in some sort of plan to entice Muslims to separate territorially from Russia. Samigulla Makhlisullin told a police officer in the central Russian province of Viatka that some of the new method mullahs in the Malmyzhskii district were spreading rumors and agitation among Muslims there. The jadids, said Makhlisullin, were telling people that “Muslims need to have their own ruler elected in three years by Muslims.” New method teachers, he claimed, “want all Muslims to leave the subjection of the Russian Emperor and unite with Turkey.”

85 Ishmöhämmät Dinmöhämmät (1849–1919) was a mullah who ran a school in the village of Tiunter. See “İshmöhämmät Dinmöhämmät,” Tatär Entsiklopediia Süzlege, 202.
86 See, for example, NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, especially ll. 6 and 71. On complaints regarding the denunciations, see “Ülemaga garıza,” Beyan ul-hak 25, and “Mühim bir mesele,” Beyan ul-hak 32.
87 May 16, 1909. NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, l. 40.
88 May 16, 1909. NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, l. 42-ob.
89 NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, l. 48. Report on pan-Islamism, June 20, 1909.
90 Some of these denunciations can be found in NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, l. 52; f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, l. 246; f. 199, op. 1, d. 795, l. 92; f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, l. 67; NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, ll. 17–18. Also see Röstäm Mökhämmätshin, “Tatarskii tradizionalism vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX vv: sosial’nye korny i osobennosti,” (Kand. Dissertation, Kazan University, 2003), 103–10.
91 NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, ll. 33–4.
A mullah in the Orenburg Assembly named Bilal Muzafarov made a similar charge against Nazip Kemaletdinov, a new method teacher and mullah working in the village of Musa Kabak. In his 1911 deposition to the police, Muzafarov implicated both Kemaletdinov and the well-known jadid Muhammetdzhan Galiev, who had been active in promoting new method education in Kazan since the 1880s, but who had died two years earlier. "Kemaletdinov," claimed his rival, "had become familiar with the new method from a Mullah Galiev in Kazan, I can’t remember his first name. He says Tatars need to separate themselves from Russians. This came from the influence of the Kazan Mullah Galiev, who studied in Turkey, to which Galiev has traveled a number of times over an extended period of time.”

Indeed, several alims denounced the recently deceased jadid, scion of a Kazan family dynasty. None of them dared utter his first and last name together.

An imam named Samigulla Mukhlisulin reported to the police that Abdullah Apanaev had been telling Muslims at the congresses that Russian Muslims “should live under the Turkish sultan, not the Russian tsar,” and that Abdullah Bubi advocated that Tatars elect a “padishah” of their own and separate from Russia. Ishmöhämät Dinnöhämät himself informed the police that “the main spreaders of pan-Islamist propaganda” were Abdürreşid Ibrahimov, Abdullah Apanaev, Yusuf Akçura, Ali Merdan Bey Topçoğaçev, the Bubi brothers, and Fatih Kerimi.

In order to counter the illegal opening of new method schools, Russian bureaucrats began placing special emphasis upon bringing Muslim education, and new method schools in particular, under increased government control. From 1909 onward, local officials in central Russia began to take a harder line against illegal new method schools, closing them down and punishing the teachers who worked in them. At this time the Russian Internal Affairs Ministry and other branches of the security services also began stepping up efforts to identify teachers from the Ottoman Empire working in Muslim schools in Russia. Dozens of individuals tied to jadidism, both well-known and obscure, were investigated, arrested,

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92 NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, l. 67. Other denunciations naming Galiev and others can be found in NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, l. 66; f. 199, op. 1, d. 785, ll. 98, 151, 153; f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, ll. 58, 67, 69, 88, 99–101, 103, 114–18, 251–61, 288–9, 323–4, 331–4, 336–46; f. 199, op. 1, d. 795, ll. 30, 83, 92.
93 The fact that the two names to appear most frequently in the denunciations were a dead person and someone who no longer lived in Russia may just be a coincidence, or perhaps an indication of a conscious decision to implicate people beyond the reach of Russian law.
94 NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 786, ll. 33–4. NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 795, l. 92.
95 See the report from the Kazan branch of the Ministry of Education, April 25, 1908, in which the need to gain control over Muslim education is emphasized. NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, ll. 7–9.
96 For Muslim reactions to these closings, see RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 625; f. 821, op. 133, d. 469.
97 See, for example, “Bugünkü meselemiz,” Şura 8 (1909), 236–7. On July 9, 1909, the gendarmes of Kazan were investigating the following teachers and merchants: Ahmet Nustafin, Rakhim Khulfe, Fatik Zabirov, Sheir Sharaf, Mulli Zarif, Abdullah Amerkanov, Kashefutdin Terdzhimanov, Kasim Selekhuddin, Bedretdin Apanaev, Sadik Galikeev, Suleiman Aitov, and Ahmet Girey Azimov. NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, l. 63.
98 Such reports were circulated in offices across the empires. See, for example, NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, ll. 1, 10, 67; ADTA, f. 524, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 24–9, 61–2; RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 458; f. 821, op. 133, d. 463; f. 821, op. 133, d. 472; f. 821, op. 133, d. 625; f. 821, op. 133, d. 626; f. 821, op. 133, d. 629; f. 821, op. 133, d. 826. Also see GAARK, f. 706, op. 1, d. 329, dd. 6, 11, 29, 73.
removed from their teaching positions, or exiled to other regions of Russia. In
1911, the Bubi Medrese was also shut down.99

Government bureaucrats were trained to look out for discourses of embedded-
ness. Terminology relating to solidarity and the community became particularly
suspect in the eyes of these official readers, who saw them instead as appeals for a
separatist form of “unity.” “Millet” was seen exclusively as “nation,” which made the
Tatars of central Russia appear extremely nationalistic. “In all of these Tatar news-
papers, journals, and literary works,” wrote an official in the provincial gendarmerie
of Kazan, “the phrases ‘Muslim nation’ (musul’manskaia natsia), ‘national undertak-
ing,’ and ‘national spirit’ are incessantly repeated.” “This new type of Russian
Muslim nationalist,” he reported, “is growing not by the day, but by the hour.”100

Tsarist agents responsible for governing Muslim communities saw the Muslim
activists mainly in terms of identity, whether it was the old-time “fanaticism” of
Islam or the twin bogeymen of the post-1905 era pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism.101
The goal of Muslim community activists, wrote an official in the censor’s office in
Kazan in 1909, was not something achievable or practical like being allowed to
create a list of candidates of the müfti’s office or to have control over their schools.
Instead, Muslims were only capable of hatching fantastic plots for world domi-
nation. The fact that the Ottoman Empire was nearly 2,000 miles from Kazan
and in no position to seek to create a pan-Turkic or pan-Islamic empire meant
little. Instead, serious officials with experience working on Muslim communities
believed, in the early twentieth century, that what Muslims in Kazan really wanted
was “the unification of all Muslims in Russia, or at the very least a closer con-
nection with a Muhammadan government, Turkey.”102

Flummoxed by their own Muslims, tsarist officials turned to their imperial
brethren for assistance in solving the problems associated with ruling Muslims. In
1910 and 1911, the Foreign Ministry collected data on Muslim education from
various European states. Foreign Ministry officials working in Paris, Calcutta,
Romania, and elsewhere sent out questionnaires to British and French colonial
officials, as well as to Austrian officials working in Bosnia.103 These surveys were
primarily concerned with the degree to which these governments supervised
Muslim schools and how they fought against the influence of pan-Islamism.104

99 For investigations into the Bubis see NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 675, ll. 26–33; RGIA, f. 821,
op. 8, d. 826, ll. 84–94.
100 In 1916, one of the officials in Kazan would write of Muslims doing military service: “Tatars
have always been loyal subjects, and very many of them bravely fight in the Army for Russia against
her enemies regardless of their religion or nationality.” “Nevertheless,” he added, “in their souls they
are Muslim first and foremost.” Circular, office of the gendarmerie, Kazan. June 6, 1913. NART,
f. 199, op. 881, ll. 42.
102 NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, l. 69-69-ob. 1909.
103 Austria had administered Bosnia since 1879. After the Unionist takeover in 1908, the Austrian
government annexed Bosnia outright.
104 RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 468, ll. 1–36. RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 463, l. 98. Also see this docu-
ment for more on Austrian (ll. 55–62) and French (55–73) responses to the Russian survey. For more
on the French, also see RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 471.
Even the Ottoman Empire was examined, with respect to how that government dealt with the question of Christian and Jewish education.\textsuperscript{105}

Individuals associated with the field of Oriental Studies used the apparent outbreak of Islamic radicalism as part of a fundraising initiative. On November 15, 1913, the director of the Imperial Oriental Society wrote a letter to the Department of Spiritual Affairs, the division of the Internal Affairs Ministry that was directly responsible for managing the spiritual assemblies. Invoking Muslim unity, the goal of the director was to obtain a budget for the publication of a journal called *Mir Islama* (“The World of Islam”). “We must recognize,” he explained, the importance of the Muslim desire for “spiritual union on the basis of their common religion and ethnographic relationship.” He added that the issue of Muslim unity “will certainly have far-reaching effects upon not only the future of Europe, but for all of mankind.”\textsuperscript{106}

Fortunately for mankind, the Imperial Oriental Society was ready to answer everyone’s questions regarding Muslim belligerence towards Russians and other Europeans. All that was needed was some governmental support, just as Russia’s imperial rivals were doing with their support of Orientalist journals such as *Revue du Monde Musulman, Die Welt der Islams*, and *The Moslem World*.\textsuperscript{107} The approach paid off. A total of 25,000 rubles was secured for *Mir Islama* as well as additional funding for the creation of language courses pertaining to the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{108}

For Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and others, the writing was on the wall. Around them, friends and associates were being investigated, schools were shut down, and teachers were imprisoned and exiled. It was difficult to grow jadidism under such circumstances, let alone run a political movement.

The politics of naming involved concrete concerns relating to economics, livelihood, and political power, in addition to cultural capital and the lure of ideas. Naming was a shared project, and the pan-Turkists were not the only, or even the first, individuals to employ the discourses of unity. A wide array of people talked up varying kinds of Muslim civilizational identity. These acts were undertaken in order to advance interests. Government officials, Orientalists, and the rural ulema all had practical reasons for talking about pan-Turkism in the ways that they did, and their effects were numerous. The context from which the pan-Turkism of *Türk Yurdu* would eventually emerge in Istanbul was therefore not purely an intellectual one. It was also part of a more practical domain where words had consequences.

Akçura and some of the other activists had spent time in prison before. Perhaps Akçura’s experiences in a fetid cell in Kazan just two years earlier influenced his

\textsuperscript{105} RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 468, l. 18. RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 468, l. 132.
\textsuperscript{106} RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 450. Letter from Imperial Oriental Society to Department of Spiritual Affairs, November 15, 1913.
\textsuperscript{107} David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye has argued that Oriental Studies in Russia was “driven by a distinctly unpractical thirst for pure knowledge.” *Russian Orientalism*, 43.
\textsuperscript{108} RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 511, ll. 3, 26, 53, December 20, 1913.
decision to leave town. In late September 1908, Akçura set off for Istanbul to work as a foreign correspondent for the newspaper *Vakit*. His editor was his friend and cultural powerbroker, Fatih Kerimi. In January 1909, Ahmet Ağaoğlu would also arrive, and soon there would be well-known Muslim activists from Russia showing up in the Sublime Porte with some frequency. Not all of them stayed, but they would all form a part of the pan-Turkic scene.
Istanbul and the Pan-Turkic Scene

It was the middle of June 1916, and Yusuf Akçura was riding a train from Istanbul to Sofya, Bulgaria—the first stop en route to Lausanne, Switzerland. Akçura was on his way to address a meeting of an organization called the “Congress of Oppressed Peoples,” where he would appear as a representative of an organization of self-professed “Turko-Tatars.” The previous year, Akçura, alongside three other Russian-born Muslim activists in Istanbul, had established the “Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Turko-Tatar Muslims in Russia.” Since then, the committee had sent representatives to speak in a number of different countries, including neutral Switzerland and Ottoman allies such as Germany, Bulgaria, and Austria. This was Akçura’s first trip on the committee’s behalf, and now he had been detained in Bulgaria.

Akçura’s travails in Bulgaria had to do with his passport—he had none. Arriving in Bulgaria, he had been told that he would not be able to continue his journey to Switzerland until the issue was resolved. “Shooting off telegrams and racing” around Sofya, Akçura desperately tried to pull whatever strings he could to accelerate the process of obtaining the proper travel permits. He contacted an acquaintance named Ali Bas Hamba in the T eşkilat-i Mahsusa, the “so-called Special Organization used to conduct irregular warfare, espionage, and other unconventional missions,” to see if he could be of any help. Some strings were apparently pulled. Akçura managed to settle his affairs in Sofya and reach Lausanne in time for the last day of the conference, where he gave an address in the name of the “Kazan Tatars.”

Akçura’s passport difficulties were not particularly surprising, given his trans-imperial background. Since arriving in Istanbul at the end of 1908 he had traveled to Russia and back on at least one occasion, but had probably used a Russian passport in doing so. Indeed, it seems probable that Akçura, like hundreds of thousands of other trans-imperial Muslims, had remained a Russian

1 The others included Ali Hüseyinzade, the Crimean Mehmed Esad Çelebizade, and Mukimeddin Beğcen Bey from Bukhara; see Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 129.
2 According to Reynolds, “members of the committee put in appearances” in Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria, in addition to Switzerland. Shattering Empires, 129.
3 Reynolds notes ironically that the group’s “big success” amounted to getting a pamphlet condemning Russia printed by the presses of the German-language newspaper Pester Lloyd. Shattering Empires, 129.
4 The definition of the Special Organization is from Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 119.
6 Traveling with Russian documents, he would not need to purchase a visa to Russia. Akçura would also probably encounter less difficulty getting in and out of Russia as a Russian, rather than a foreign national, which makes it more likely that he was still using a Russian passport.
subject even after arriving in the Ottoman Empire. Retaining his Russian passport for the sake of future returns to his country of birth, Akçura may have simply not bothered to acquire Ottoman subjecthood during the eight years he had been living in the Ottoman capital since the Young Turk takeover. Rather than dive head first into a Turkic world based in Istanbul Akçura may have been hedging his bets, like many trans-imperial Muslims, keeping his options alive on both sides of the frontier.

The community in whose name Akçura gave his talk in Lausanne was not that of the Turkic world, but rather the Kazan Tatars. Akçura, it seemed, had traded a vast and expansive identity in exchange for a significantly more parochial one. Once again, he was adjusting his message to fit his audience, as the attendees at the Congress of Oppressed Peoples were undoubtedly expecting to hear about the plight of a small community like the Tatars rather than the exploits of an imperial power like the Turks. The shift was by no means permanent, as Akçura was still the editor of Türk Yurdu and would continue to invoke a pan-Turkic identity during the Unionist years. Rather, this temporary transformation from Turk to Kazan Tatar was just the latest in a series of moves that typified Akçura’s life and career.

This chapter discusses the activities of Akçura, Gasprinskii, Ağaoğlu, and the rest of the Türk Yurdu circle during the Young Turk era in the Ottoman Empire. Beginning with a discussion regarding the arrival of Russian-born Muslim activists in Istanbul from 1908 onward, I look at the pan-Turkic scene that developed in Istanbul after the founding of Türk Yurdu in 1911. Rebranded as pan-Turkists, the activists-in-exile quickly found themselves at the center of something far bigger than they had ever experienced in their professional lives. Turkism became a fashion, and the pan-Turkists were no longer on the outside looking in. After years of struggle, they had become stars in the Ottoman capital.

OLD FACES IN NEW MARKETS

When Akçura left Russia for Istanbul in late 1908, little fanfare had surrounded his departure. There was not much indication that the move would become a more or less permanent one. For his part, Akçura did not see his arrival in Istanbul in such terms, but rather as the latest in a lifetime of moves taking place between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. He was not emigrating—he had already done that long ago, when he arrived in the Ottoman Empire as a child with his mother. Rather, Akçura was just getting away from Russia for a while, exchanging a tense political scene for what appeared to be a more welcoming one by taking on a new assignment as Istanbul correspondent for the Orenburg-based Vakit newspaper.

7 Two years later, when Akçura would similarly need to travel through Bulgaria en route to Munich, arrangements were made to help avoid a repeat of his 1916 difficulties. See BOA, DH EUM 4. Şube, 21/37, s. 1.

8 Arai writes that Akçura had “decided to emigrate” at this point, but it seems clear that Akçura’s feelings about this issue were more ambivalent. Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era, 6.
At the beginning of his voyage to Istanbul, Akçura wrote a letter to his friend and editor Fatih Kerimi from the boat that was transporting him from Kazan to Nizhni Novgorod. He confided that he did not plan to stay long in the Ottoman capital. Writing in the Tatar dialect, a rarity for him, Akçura declared “I’m of no mind to stay in Istanbul for long.”9 Indeed, he would return to Russia before much time had passed, spending several months in St. Petersburg and Kazan in 1910 and 1914.10 Nevertheless, Istanbul would become his base of activities from late 1908 onward. Whether he knew it yet or not, Akçura’s move would prove a consequential one, if not yet permanent.

Akçura was but the first of many. Ahmet Ağaoğlu arrived in Istanbul shortly after Akçura, in January 1909. Ağaoğlu’s approach to his new home was, however, somewhat different from Akçura’s. Perhaps owing to his unhappy experiences with politics as a student in Istanbul and an activist in Russia, Akçura refrained from becoming directly involved in organized politics during these years. Ağaoğlu, on the other hand, had bigger obligations, as he had brought four children and a pregnant wife with him to Istanbul.11 Upon arriving in the Ottoman capital, Ağaoğlu had made an immediate commitment to his new surroundings, becoming an Ottoman subject and joining the CUP. He was given a position as a school inspector in Istanbul, and in 1912 became a member of parliament.12

Even for Ağaoğlu, the move from Russia to the Ottoman Empire was not a seamless one. His relative embrace of the CUP did not preclude him from seeking to maintain links to Russia. Like Akçura, who still drew almost all of his income from Russia, Ağaoğlu continued to look to Russia for readers.13 He took advantage of newly developing subscription and delivery networks to maintain an audience in the Caucasus even as he developed a new one in the Ottoman capital, continuing to publish in Russia for at least a year and a half after his departure.14

A third well-known Muslim activist from Russia making his way to Istanbul during these years was Ali Bey Hüseyinzade (1864–1940). Born in Tbilisi, where his father was an official in the Shiite Muslim spiritual assembly, Hüseyinzade

10 A report prepared in the offices of the gendarmerie of the province of Kazan in March 1914 reported that on January 27, 1910, Akçura had registered at an address in St. Petersburg, where he stayed until October 7 of that same year, at which point he again went abroad. Akçura’s column in Vakit disappears at this time. NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 948, ll. 52–4. Later in 1914 the same officer wrote that Akçura, “who has spent two thirds of his life in Turkey,” had spent two weeks in Kazan and Simbirsk in July of that year, collecting money “for the benefit of Turkey” prior to returning to Istanbul. NART, f. 199, op. 1, d. 948, l. 179. None of these reports indicate that Akçura had ever given up Russian subjecthood, which would have been a foolish and unnecessary move in any case.
11 Ağaoğlu’s fifth child would be born in Istanbul. Shissler, Between Two Worlds, 117.
12 Ağaoğlu’s position in parliament does appear to have been more of a sinecure than a popularly elected position, especially in light of the general lack of freedom associated with the “sopalı” elections of 1912 (the elections “with a stick”). See later in this chapter.
13 On Kerimi’s payments to Akçura from 1908 to 1913, see NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 82; f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 102; f. 1370, op. 2, d. 24 l. 16.
14 See, for example, “Osmanlı Ahvalı,” Hakikat 7, January 8, 1910. Also see “Osmanlı Mektubatı,” Gümüş 25, October 26, 1910, newspapers published in Baku.
studied math and physics at St. Petersburg University, before making his way to the Ottoman Empire to study at the military medical school of Istanbul. In this respect, his story is particularly similar to that of Ahmet Ağaoğlu. Today Hüseyinzade is considered one of the most important figures in the intellectual formulation of modern Turkish nationalism.\footnote{Karpat, \textit{The Politicization of Islam}, 375. Bayat, \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey} (11–12. On Hüseyinzade, also see Bennigsen and Lemerçier-Quelquejay, \textit{La Presse}, 106. Ali Bey Hüseyinzade is often referred to as “Hüseyinzade Ali.”}

Hüseyinzade’s experiences in Istanbul extended back over decades. His first stay in the Ottoman capital had begun in 1889 and lasted until 1903. During this time he apparently did not surrender his Russian subjecthood, and within a few months of his arrival in the Ottoman Empire he was also given Ottoman subjecthood.\footnote{Bayat says that Hüseyinzade left Russia “secretly” (gizlice). In February 1890 he was given his Ottoman papers. \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 11} Over the course of fourteen years of studying and working in the Ottoman capital, Ali Hüseyinzade became friends with future CUP figures such as Abdullah Cevdet, İbrahim Temo, and Dr. Nazım.\footnote{Bayat, \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 11. According to Şükrü Hanioğlu, Hüseyinzade was also one of the original founders, in 1890, of a precursor to the CUP called the “Meeting in Midhat Pasha’s Vineyard.” \textit{The Young Turks in Opposition} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 266, n. 13. Bayat, however, writes that this was not the case. \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 12.} The contacts he made in the 1890s would serve him well in the years to come.

In 1903, Hüseyinzade returned to Russia, reportedly due to police harassment related to his CUP connections. According to one source, he at first hid out at a

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\textbf{Fig. 9.} Ali Hüseyinzade.
house owned by some friends of his in the leafy Istanbul neighborhood of Nişantaşı, before stealthily making his way back to Russia. Despite having spent fourteen years living as an Ottoman subject in Istanbul, Hüseyinzade was able to pick up where he had left off in Russia, finding work as a doctor in Baku. Like other trans-imperial Muslims, he found that he could spend as much time as he wanted abroad, and still return to the Russian Empire if necessary.\footnote{Bayat, \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 13. Bayat says that Hüseyinzade had grown uncomfortable from living “under constant surveillance.”} 

Back in Russia, Hüseyinzade had spent the years 1903 to 1910 writing for newspapers and journals in the Caucasus, coediting \textit{Hayat} with Ahmet Ağaoğlu until Ağaoğlu deserted to work for \textit{İrşad} in 1906.\footnote{Bayat, \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 13–14, 16–17.} He was particularly well known for a series of articles he published in \textit{Hayat} in 1905 entitled “Who are the Turks and from whom are they constituted?” (“Türkler kimdir ve kimlerden ibaret?”). In this series, Hüseyinzade traced the backgrounds of Turkic languages and peoples, and many of his views on Turkism would influence Ziya Gökalp, who would later become an important force shaping official views on nationalism in the Turkish Republic.\footnote{The first installment of “Türkler kimdir ve kimlerden ibaret” appeared in \textit{Hayat} 4, June 10, 1905. Subsequent parts of the essay were printed in issues 9, 16, 22, 35, 52, 81, and 82. On “Türkler kimdir ve kimlerden ibaret,” see Ofelya Bayramly, \textit{Ali bây Hüseynzadâ: “Türklär kimdir và kimlärđän ibärâtür?”} (Baku: Mütärjim: 1997).} 

Like Ağaoğlu, Hüseyinzade seems to have come to Istanbul as an invited guest of the Committee of Union and Progress. After the March 31 incident of 1909, when the Young Turks used anti-CUP protests as an excuse to consolidate power and exile Abdülhamid II to Salonica, friends in the CUP had contacted Hüseyinzade and invited him to Istanbul. Prior to leaving Russia in early December 1910, Hüseyinzade went back for a week’s stay to his hometown of Salyan, about 85 miles southwest of Baku, where he bid farewell to his family and neighbors. Back in Baku the night before his departure for the Ottoman Empire, Hüseyinzade and his friends shared a melancholic last meal together, eating \textit{plov} (pilav) with their hands in the traditional fashion. Perhaps sensing that it would be years before he would return to the land of his birth, he remarked to those gathered that “this is without a doubt my last \textit{plov} in Baku.”\footnote{Bayat, \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 17.} 

Arriving in the Ottoman capital in 1910, Hüseyinzade quickly found employment working as an instructor at the Ottoman Medical College. In addition to working full time as a doctor and teacher, he was also involved in many of the intellectual and literary projects that Akçura and Ağaoğlu were helping to organize at this time.\footnote{He was one of the cofounders of the Turkish Association (\textit{Türk Derneği}), a predecessor of \textit{Türk Yurdu}.} During the Unionist era, Hüseyinzade would publish in \textit{Türk Yurdu} and other Ottoman newspapers and journals, and later on would take part—alongside Akçura and Ağaoğlu—in wartime activities on behalf of the Ottoman government.\footnote{Including \textit{Tanin}, \textit{Basiret}, \textit{İçtihat}, and the Medical College Review. Bayat, \textit{Hüseyinzade Ali Bey}, 20, 83–4.}
A number of other Muslim activists from Russia would likewise arrive in Istanbul during these years. In 1910 Abdürreşid İbrahimov appeared in the Ottoman capital after a two-year journey that had taken him from Kazan to China, Japan, and Mecca. While İbrahimov did not publish in Türk Yurdu, he did contribute regularly to other Istanbul journals, like Sirat ül-Müstakim and Sebil ür-Reşad, which similarly targeted a reading audience in both the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Arriving in the same year was an old friend of Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s by the name of Mehmet Emin Resulzade. The Baku-born Resulzade had just been expelled from Iran, where he had been editing a Persian-language newspaper called Iran-i Nev for the past two years. While working in Tehran, Resulzade had also published, in Baku, a travelogue entitled Iranian Letters. Now in Istanbul, Resulzade set to work on another series called “The Turks of Iran,” which he would later publish in Türk Yurdu. In late 1912, meanwhile, Fatih Kerimi would also show up in the Ottoman capital. During the course of his tumultuous four-month stay, Kerimi would write the series of articles that would later become his classic work, Istanbul Mektupları (“Istanbul Letters”).

In the wake of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, the publishing worlds of Istanbul, Kazan, Bahçesaray, and Baku became more closely connected than ever before. Prior to 1908, newspapers in the Ottoman Empire had been heavily censored, and Russian Muslim newspapers such as Tercüman had been prohibited outright from entering the Ottoman Empire. Now, a vast new market of educated Turkic readers had opened up for people such as Gasprinskii, Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and other activists from Russia with experience writing and editing newspapers. Newspapers such as Tercüman sold freely on the streets of Istanbul, while Ottoman journals such as Sirat ül-Müstakim and Sebil ür-Reşad listed prices on their covers for subscribers in Russia. Even with the backsliding on parliamentarianism and constitutionalism that had recently taken place in Russia since 1905, the print media market was still relatively free. Now that the media market in the Ottoman Empire had also been opened, the cross-border Turkic-language media market was healthier than ever. Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and other activists from Russia knew much more about running newspapers than most people in Istanbul, so upon arriving in the Ottoman capital they found that there was demand for their skills and experience.

24 Türkoğlu, Sibiryalı Meşhur Seyyah Abdürreşid İbrahim, 53–69.
25 Türkoğlu, Sibiryalı Meşhur Seyyah Abdürreşid İbrahim, 115–19.
26 On Resulzade’s time in Iran, see Sebahattin Şimşir, Mehmet Emin Resulzade: Hayatı ve Şahsiyeti (Istanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi, 2012), 19–21.
28 This book was first published in Russia, and then later in Turkey.
29 BOA, ZB 21/7, s. 1. Also see İrşad 38, March 4, 1907.
30 Aidar Khabutdinov writes that there were “up to 50 subscriptions” to Türk Yurdu in the city of Kazan alone. “İslamskii factor v Tatarskom obschestvennom dvizhenii nachala XX veka,” Islam i Musul’manskaia kultura v sredinem povolzhe, (Kazan: Institut istorii AN RT, 2002), 203–211, here 207.
Unlike his fellow activists, İsmail Gasprinskii did not move to Istanbul, but rather continued to live in his hometown of Bahçesaray, Crimea. Nevertheless, he interests during these years became more global than they had ever been. Largely abandoning the political struggle in Russia, he instead turned his attention to the Muslim world beyond Russia's borders.

In September 1907, Gasprinskii announced his intention to hold a World Muslim Congress, “hopefully in Cairo,” in the final months of 1908. He then began a period of intense work on the congress, traveling to Cairo in October to begin making plans. A furor broke out in England when the Hungarian Orientalist Arminius Vambery translated Gasprinskii’s announcement regarding the Muslim Congress and published it in The Times of London. “As if a bomb had burst” in the city, journalists and politicians in London demanded answers regarding the nature of the congress. Through their offices in Cairo, British newspapermen tracked down Gasprinskii at his hotel. There, they conducted an impromptu interview, in which Gasprinskii outlined his plans for the conference and provided an Arabic translation of the original announcement from Tercüman.

Gasprinskii spent about one month in Cairo, remaining until early November 1907. He then returned to Crimea by way of Istanbul, where he stopped to meet with representatives of the Ottoman government. While Gasprinskii was probably seeking to gauge the possibility of Ottoman support for a congress, he must have known that his chances of finding support from the Ottoman government were low. In late 1907 the Ottoman Empire was still under the control of Sultan Abdülhamid, who had little patience for activists like Gasprinskii. Despite the fact that Gasprinskii had already made arrangements to meet with a government official in order to discuss his plans openly, a government spy was dispatched to meet Gasprinskii’s ship as it arrived in Istanbul from Alexandria. The agent’s orders were to “secretly follow [Gasprinskii] and within twenty-four hours report on the people he meets with.”

Over the next year, Gasprinskii would travel back to Cairo on two more occasions to meet with Egyptian officials and activists who were helping him with organizing

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31 Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 108–10. The original announcement was published as “Nedve-i Umumi,” Tercüman 56, 1907, 1–2. For facsimile copies of many of the documents and articles relating to the Muslim Congress’s organization, see Hakan Kırmılı and İsmail Türkoğlu, İsmail Bey Gaspıralı ve Dünya Müslümanları Kongresi (Tokyo: Islamic Area Studies Project, Central Asian Research Series, 2002).
33 Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 111.
34 Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 115. Gasprinskii’s Ottoman interlocutor was an official named İsmail Pasha, an assistant inspector of military schools. BOA Y. PRK. TKM. 50/45.
35 Officially, Egypt remained part of the Ottoman Empire until 1914. However, Egypt had effectively been under British control since 1881.
36 Abdülhamid’s government had banned Tercüman for much of its existence. For Ottoman paper-work dealing with the prohibition, see BOA, DH MKT, 390/49.
37 BOA, ZB 391-57, 7 Teşrinisani 1323/November 20, 1907.
the congress. In February 1908 the organizing committee appeared to be making progress toward the realization of the congress, releasing a pamphlet explaining the aims of the congress, the membership and duties of its steering committee, and the regulations relating to participation.\textsuperscript{38} During the course of the tumultuous summer of 1908, however, plans changed. While the February announcement had intimated that the congress would be held in September of that year, the date was then abruptly postponed to November. Not long thereafter, the opening was postponed again, until September 1909. While in the years to follow the congress would continue to be occasionally mentioned on the pages of \textit{Tercüman}, the event never took place.\textsuperscript{39}

Before and after the Young Turk takeover in July 1908, Gasprinskii returned to Istanbul on an “almost yearly” basis, publishing in \textit{Türk Yurdu} and other Istanbul-based journals.\textsuperscript{40} A final burst of activity in 1912 took Gasprinskii to India, where he undertook a fact-finding tour of Muslim schools, visiting Istanbul again en route.\textsuperscript{41} In February 1914, Gasprinskii traveled to St. Petersburg to participate in meetings related to reviving the Muslim congresses in Russia. Falling ill during the course of this journey, Gasprinskii was diagnosed with lung disease. A decision was made to go to Istanbul, where it was thought the warmer weather and “sea air” might do him good. This trip to the Ottoman capital would be his last. Returning home to Bahçesaray in midsummer 1914, Gasprinskii’s health took a dramatic turn for the worse. Bedridden for the next several weeks, he died on September 11, 1914 at the age of 63.\textsuperscript{42}

A lifetime marked by intense bouts of travel, writing, and community activism had quietly come to an end.

\section*{Turkists and Pan-Turkists}

The early years in Istanbul were not easy. Akçura, in particular, struggled financially as he had no source of income other than the money he earned from the columns he published in \textit{Vakit}. “I have no money, as usual,” he laconically confessed to his friend Kerimi in one letter, written from St. Petersburg during a visit back to Russia in 1909.\textsuperscript{43} His demeanor masked a genuine concern for his finances that was reflected in Akçura’s frequent references to money and financial difficulties in his letters back to Russia after moving to Istanbul.\textsuperscript{44} He needed a more stable position.\textsuperscript{45}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{38} Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 121.
\textsuperscript{39} Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 122–3.
\textsuperscript{41} Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 127–9.
\textsuperscript{42} Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii,” 131–4. X-rays determined the absence of tuberculosis, so the cause of death was probably lung cancer.
\textsuperscript{43} NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 63, letter from Yusuf Akçura to Fatih Kerimi, September 21, 1909.
\textsuperscript{44} This can be seen, especially, in Akçura’s early letters from Istanbul. NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 2, letter from Yusuf Akçura to Fatih Kerimi, January 15, 1909; F. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 18, letter from Yusuf Akçura to Fatih Kerimi, February 5, 1909; F. 1370, op. 1, d. 20, l. 25, February 25, 1909.
\textsuperscript{45} Akçura would continue to write for \textit{Vakit} until 1913.
\end{flushright}
An early effort to establish some sort of Ottoman–Russian Turkic organization in Istanbul took shape in the form of the Turkic Association (Türk Derneği), founded in 1908. The Turkic Association put out a journal, also called The Turkic Association (Türk Derneği), of which seven issues total were produced in 1911–12. The Association had a total of sixty-three dues-paying members at the time that it closed.

There was already a Turkic scene in the Ottoman Empire, but it was not based in Istanbul. Nor was it pan-Turkist. The distinction I make between Turkists and pan-Turkists is that, whereas the Ottoman-born Turkists were primarily concerned with Ottoman literature, politics, and society, the Russian-born pan-Turkists were mainly interested in Russia. Genç Kalemler (“The Young Pens”) is one such example. Founded in 1910 by the Ottoman-born writers Ziya Gökbalp, Ömer Seyfettin, and Ali Canip, this journal was focused mainly upon literature. In particular, Genç Kalemler circle was associated with the “new language” (“Yeni Lisan”). This would be a simplified and more Turkic-sounding version of the Ottoman language, with fewer words of Arabic or Persian origin.

One of the best-known works to ever appear in Genç Kalemler was Ziya Gökbalp’s poem “Turan,” which was first printed on the pages of this journal in 1911. “Turan” referred to the quasi-mythical homeland of the world’s Turks in Central Asia. “For the Turks,” wrote Gökbalp in “Turan,” “Fatherland means neither Turkey, nor Turkestan; Fatherland is a large and eternal country—Turan!” As was the case with the “New Language” of the Genç Kalemler writers, Gökbalp’s Turan was one that was conjured mainly for the benefit of Ottoman Turks. While Gökbalp was referring to “the Turks” of the entire world, rather than just the Ottoman Empire, his concerns lay mainly with developments taking place in his own country, not Turkestan.

MAKING PAN-TURKISM

The money for Türk Yurdu had come from Russia. The Orenburg merchant and philanthropist Mahmut Bey Huseyinov, a longtime supporter of new method causes in Russia, had passed away in 1910. In his will was a stipulation that 10,000
gold rubles be given to the Russian Muslim community of Istanbul. The money was said to have been smuggled into the Ottoman Empire by a Muslim pilgrim from Russia, who dropped off the cash in Istanbul en route to Mecca and the Hejaz. The bequest was to be used for two purposes: the construction of a dormitory for Russian-born Muslim students, and the establishment of a journal relating to Russian Muslims. Türk Yurdu was born.

Now that there was some money behind the idea, pan-Turkism finally got off the ground. On August 18, 1911, Yusuf Akçura joined Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Ali Hüseyinzade, and several others in founding the “Türkic Homeland Society” (Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti). The purpose of the organization, explained their press release, was to manage the publication of a new journal, called Türk Yurdu (“Türkic Homeland”). Türk Yurdu, which published its first issue on November 30, represented the culmination of Gasprinskii’s dream of a trans-imperial Türkic language publication. At issue was not a plan to physically unite the world’s Turks, though the journal’s creation was nevertheless very political. Gasprinskii, and now Akçura, were seeking to develop a Türkic-language media market across borders.

With the creation of Türk Yurdu in 1911, the Russian-born activists were now situated at the center of the Türkic world that they were in the midst of creating. In this respect, Türk Yurdu resembled other Istanbul-based journals such as Sirat ul-Müstakim and Sebil ür-Reşad, which likewise marketed and sold subscriptions in Russia. Unlike the other Ottoman-based journals, however, Türk Yurdu focused mainly on developments taking place within Russian Muslim communities. They published items such as letters from İsmail Gasprinskii and other well-wishers, remarks on language studies, and information about Orientalist research into Turks.

There was nothing overtly revanchist or aggressive on the pages of Türk Yurdu, and only in the poetry was there usually much display of feeling or emotion. Rather, the tone of the journal—not unlike that of Akçura’s “Three Types of Policy” in 1904—was professorial and dry. The language seemed intended to inform, rather than galvanize, the reader. In contrast to the long, critical pieces that the Muslim activists had produced during the revolutionary years in Russia, the material appearing in Türk Yurdu was considerably blander. In Istanbul they were insiders, reluctant to upset their hosts in the Committee of Union and Progress. The stories that they covered included virtually no direct discussion of Ottoman politics, and no one was calling for Türkic unification on these pages.

Akçura was, however, nevertheless conscious of the value of the Türkic brand. Even before the creation of Türk Yurdu and the Türkic Hearths, Akçura had written to Fatih Kerimi in Orenburg, Russia, to describe a meeting that a student group in Istanbul had put on. Rather than use the term Türklük (“Turkism”), Akçura complained, the students had employed the more formal and scholarly term eturkia. This was something that Akçura had found completely unsuitable. Even though

53 Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 61.
he had used a different term, “panturkizm,” when writing “Three Types of Policy,” Akçura understood that “Turkism” (Türklük) was a winner. When Türk Yurdu and the Turkic Hearths were founded a few years later, he would get his way.

As a publishing venture, Türk Yurdu was quite a bit more revolutionary than its actual politics. The journal constituted the first Turkic-language organ to attract large audiences from both the Ottoman Empire and Russia. This was the sort of press organ that İsmail Gasprinskii and other activists in Russia had in mind when they had emphasized the need to create a common Türki-based press. The goal had never been to unify all of the world’s Turks under a common political system—a prospect that would only take options away from people. Rather, the objective was to create a market and address readers on both sides of the Russian–Ottoman frontier, and perhaps even beyond.

**HALIDE EDIP AND THE NEW TURAN**

Halide Edip (Adıvar) was another important part of the pan-Turkic scene. Born into an upper-class Muslim family in Istanbul in 1884, Edip was the daughter of a state secretary to Sultan Abdülhamid II. She studied at the American College in the district of Arnavutköy, located on the European bank of the Bosphorus strait, and spoke excellent English. Following the Revolution of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire, Edip was given a column relating to women and family life in the CUP-affiliated newspaper Tanin. Soon, she began writing psychologically themed love stories that were also commercial successes. During the course of these events Edip’s life also underwent some changes. She got divorced and remarried, and began looking for new paths in her writing. She found them in Turan.

In her memoirs, Edip described how Ziya Gökalp helped convince her to write something more serious than her previous efforts. The book she would end up writing, the one that she considered her most serious endeavor to date, was called The New Turan.

[Ziya Gökalp] influenced me not a little in my writings during those days. So far my novels had been dominated only by the ordinary psychological problems of life . . . Ziya Gökalp told me that he did not like it, and added smilingly, “She lives too much in Europe.” . . . The New Turan soon followed and was not only an outcome of events and thought trends of the day; it was also largely affected by the apostolic sincerity and austerity of Ziya Gökalp.

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56 Such as in Hungary, where numerous scholars of Oriental Studies became interested in the journal and its writers.
58 Including *Raik’in Annesi* (1909), *Seviyye Talip* (1910), and *Handan* (1912).
Indeed, *The New Turan (Yeni Turan)* constituted a significant departure from Edip’s earlier novels.\(^6^0\) The novel was set in the Ottoman Empire, and was explicitly written with present-day Ottoman politics and society in mind. Taking place in the future (the year 1928), *The New Turan* told the story of a long-simmering conflict between two political movements: the New Turan party and the New Ottomans. Whereas the supporters of the New Turan were austere in their personal habits and exemplified the simple virtues that Edip and others assigned to Central Asia, the New Ottomans believed in a strongly hierarchical state that embraced an Ottomanist identity. As the novel’s plot unfolded, “Turanist” and “Ottomanist” characters clashed both ideologically and culturally.\(^6^1\)

As was the case with Gökalp’s “Turan,” Edip’s *The New Turan* invoked Central Asia. Both writers were seeking a new aesthetic. They associated Turan—that is to say, the pre-Islamic Central Asian culture of the Turks—with values such as simplicity, community-mindedness, and egalitarian attitudes toward women.

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\(^{61}\) Halide Edip Adıvar, *Yeni Turan* (Istanbul: Tanin Matbaası, 1911).
At the same time, however, Gökalp, Edip, the Genç Kalemler circle, and other Ottoman-born Turkists who invoked the Turkic world tended to do so with the Ottoman Empire in mind.

Turkic intellectuals in Istanbul were not the only ones to display an interest in Turan during these years. In Budapest, a group of Turkologists—influenced by the great Hungarian Orientalist Arminius Vambery—decided to establish a Turanian Society of their own in 1913. As “Magyars,” a Central Asian people from whom contemporary Hungarians descend, elites in Hungary had become fascinated with Asia, and their own Asian roots, in the years following Japan’s defeat of Russia in 1905. Suddenly, Asia appeared strong and potent, something that was exciting to be associated with. The Hungarian Orientalists Paikert Alajos and Lendvay Károly wrote scholarly articles with titles such as “Asia and Modern Hungarian Architecture” and “Asia’s Future,” publishing them in a new journal, called Turán, that the Turanian Society had recently established in Budapest.

One point that the Turkists, pan-Turkists, and even pan-Turanians had in common with one another is that they were all outsiders of some sort. They all used identity as a means of trying to overcome or mitigate this outsider status. Ziya Gökalp was Kurdish, Halide Edip was a woman. Another relatively well-known Turkist, Tekin Alp, was an Ottoman Jew named Moiz Kohen. All three of these individuals sought to efface these differences by embracing a Turkish nationalism that was inclusive and broad. The Hungarian Orientalists, meanwhile, were looking for embeddedness. Surrounded, in their minds, by Germans, Latins, and Slavs, the pan-Turanian world offered them a broader community to be a part of, but there was no serious thought of actual unity. The Russian-born pan-Turkists, while trans-imperial people who had in some cases lived in the Ottoman capital before, were to a large degree foreigners in Istanbul. For them, pan-Turkism placed them back within their homeland, at the very center of a Turkic world.

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63 Açıkuş was intrigued by the Hungarian Turanians, and tried to convince Fatih Kerimi to visit Budapest on his way back to Russia from Istanbul in 1913. “Understanding their objectives,” wrote Açıkuş to Kerimi, “will be beneficial to Russian Muslims” as well as to the Ottoman state. Kerimi declined the offer, however, and made his way back to Orenburg directly. NART, f. 1370, op. 2, d. 29, l. 8.
66 Which is the kind of Turkish nationalism that was ultimately adopted in Turkey under Mustafa Kemal; that is, one that recognizes people as Turks even if they would prefer otherwise.
67 Only an insane person would have seriously thought that the Ottoman Empire was, in 1914, in a position to unite the world’s Turkic or Muslim populations.
68 And sometimes elsewhere. In Kazan he was criticized for writing in an “artificial” style. See Selimgirey Canturin’s letter to Fatih Kerimi, in which he complains about the “artificial” (khudozhestvenny) style of Açıkuş’s writing. NART, F 1370, op. 1. d. 20, l. 75. Shissler reports that deputies would shout “speak Turkish” while Ağaoğlu had the floor of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, Between Two Empires, 198.
CENTERS AND WORLDS

In the first paragraph of his first article in the very first issue of Türk Yurdu, Ahmet Ağaoğlu set out to map the four corners of the Turkic world.

As vast as a dream, and as important as a dream, there is nothing so difficult as drawing the actual borders of the Turkish world. From the Altay mountains of Turkestan in the very heart of Asia, the Turkic people, on many occasions and at various times, got caught up in this torrent of a dream, and spread to all four corners of the globe—east, west, north, and south.\(^69\)

The pan-Turkists had set out to change the parameters of their worlds. From speaking in the name of Caucasian Muslims or All-Russian Muslims, now they saw themselves as part of the Turkic world. But even beyond specific identities such as these, the pan-Turkists employed certain tropes in an array of different contexts.

In Akçura’s public and private writing, the word “center” (merkez) came up frequently. Akçura used the word, for example, when he wrote about İttifak’s administration offices in St. Petersburg, which he often referred to as the “administrative center” (idare-i merkeziye) of the movement.\(^70\) Akçura and others, meanwhile, looked at prospective administrative reforms in the spiritual assemblies in similar terms. In the platform he proposed to the Third Muslim Congress in August 1906, Akçura described the new imperial-wide spiritual assembly he was proposing as the new “religious center” (dini bir merkez) of Muslim Russia.\(^71\) He also saw Istanbul in these terms, describing the Ottoman capital as the center of the Turkic world.\(^72\) Wherever this world traveler established roots, a new center was soon constructed.

While Akçura wrote about centers, Ahmet Ağaoğlu described worlds. In Baku, Ağaoğlu had a regularly appearing series of columns entitled the “Islamic world” (İslam alemi). This column was published regularly in the two newspapers for which Ağaoğlu wrote most frequently: Hayat and İrşad. Once, however, he began contributing columns to Türk Yurdu, the name of this column was changed to the “Turkic world” (Türk alemi).\(^73\) For Ağaoğlu, it was more important to have a world than to focus upon any single world in particular.

TRANS-IMPERIAL STUDENT NETWORKS

Russian born students were also involved in the pan-Turkic scene of Young Turk-era Istanbul. Many had been studying in the Ottoman Empire even prior to the CUP takeover, and under Young Turk rule the numbers grew even higher. They

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\(^{69}\) Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Türk Yurdu 1:1, 1911/1327, 12–17, here 12.

\(^{70}\) In the party program Akçura calls St. Petersburg the “center of administration” for İttifak. 1906 sene 16–21 Avgust’a icimiz etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi, 168–9.

\(^{71}\) Ahmet Ağaoğlu denounced the idea of a “religious center” in a speech at one of the early İttifak meetings in St. Petersburg. Bigi, İslahat Esasları, 10.

\(^{72}\) As he describes it in “Dar al-hilafetten,” Vakit 398, November 23, 1908.

\(^{73}\) See, for example, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, “Alem-i İslama bir nazar,” İrşad 118, November 22, 1907; “Alem-i İslama bir nazar,” İrşad 3, January 1908. Also see Ahmet Ağaoğlu, “Türk alemi,” Türk Yurdu 1:1, 1911/1327, 12–17.
set up clubs with names such as the “Union of Crimean Students,” the “Bukhariote Society for the Spread of Knowledge in Constantinople,” and the “Society of Tatar Emigrants from Russia.”

While these student groups have often been depicted as evidence that Istanbul “became a rallying point for pan-Turkism and for a consolidation of the forces of Turkic emigration from Russia,” their activities in the Sublime Porte were in fact much less dramatic.

Indeed, due to the fact that they were not Ottoman subjects, the Russian-born students encountered difficulties simply obtaining permission from Ottoman authorities to open their clubs, much less use them as a means of spreading pan-Turkism.

Muslim students from Russia came to the Ottoman capital for practical reasons. There were excellent institutions of Islamic education in Russia, but Muslims had a difficult time finding schools that could provide anything other than a religious education. For Russian-born students looking to receive an education that would train them to read and write in their own language, neither the traditional Muslim medreses nor the Russian-language institutions were sufficient. After graduating from schools in Istanbul, however, job candidates with an Ottoman background were especially prized by new method schools in Russia, whether or not they were Russian-born.

The student clubs constituted part of a trans-imperial network that connected students in the Ottoman Empire to wealthy merchants or cultural powerbrokers in Russia that could help defray their school expenses or find them a job. In 1911, Russian authorities intercepted a fundraising letter signed by one Haci İsmail Abdiushev, who described himself as the secretary of an organization of Tatar students in Istanbul. The letter, addressed to a merchant in central Russia, explained that the group was trying to raise money to help Russian-born Tatars in Istanbul continue their education. Abdiushev noted that the organization’s supporters were “our thinkers and merchants” from Russia, naming Yusuf Akçura and the Tatar writer Musa Akyiğit as references. Abdiushev reminded his potential patron that any funds he could provide would constitute a genuine investment in the future of Muslim communities in Russia, “for upon returning to Russia a number of us will become mullahs, others will become teachers, and we will be of benefit to the population.”

74 Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, 108. Also see Zavdat Minullin, “Fraternal and Benevolent Associations of Tatar Students in Muslim Countries at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” in Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries, Anke von Kügelgen (ed.) (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1998). A Russian-language translation of this article has been published as “Zemliachestva i blagotvoritel’nye obschestva tatarkikh uchashchikhsia v musul’mansikh stranakh (nachalo XX v.),” in Mir Islama, 1999, 135–44.

75 Quotation is from Zenkovksy, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, 108.

76 On the efforts of Russian Muslim student organizations in Istanbul to finally gain permission to open, see BOA, DH ID 132/8, s. 37; MV 211/145. On a 1909 Ottoman ruling that a foreigner could not be the head of an officially recognized group, see BOA, DH 49-1/24.

77 On Ottoman subjects teaching in the Russian Empire, see, RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 463, ll. 8, 23; NART, f. 92, op. 2, d. 8777, l. 10; BOA, HRH 574/26, s. 1–2, and Meyer, “Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship,” 21–2. Also see GAARK f. 26, op. 3, d. 362; f. 100, op. 1, d. 2360, ll. 2–5, 34–42, 164. For an account of an Ottoman subject who travelled to Central Asia during this period to work as a teacher, see A. Kemal Ilkul, Türkistan ve Çin Yollarında Unutulamayan Hatralar (İstanbul: Zarif İş Matbaası, 1955), from Khalid, The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform.

78 This letter can be found in RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 826, ll. 67–8.
One individual who spent a lot of time hanging out with the students was a man named Muhammad Ağa Shahtakhtinskii. Shahtakhtinskii was a Muslim from Tbilisi who, prior to the 1905 Revolution, had edited the Turkic-language newspaper Şark-i Rus (“The Russian East”). A man of the world who had studied at the Sorbonne and in Leipzig, Shahtakhtinskii had also been a deputy in the second Duma. Yet he was not on good terms with other Muslim activists from the southern Caucasus like Ahmet Ağaoğlu or Ali Hüseyinzade. In 1905, Shahtakhtinskii had not been invited to the early Muslim meetings in St. Petersburg, and even after his election to parliament he was isolated from the rest of the Muslim deputies.\(^79\) While politically Shahtakhtinskii was close to the other advocates, he appears to have been genuinely disliked.\(^80\)

This animosity seems to have derived, at least in part, from the fact that Shahtakhtinskii had edited Şark-i Rus, a government-controlled newspaper. At the time of Şark-i Rus’s creation in 1903, Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade were both writing, occasionally, for Kaspii, a Russian-language newspaper sponsored by Tagiev that dealt mainly with Muslim issues. At the time that Şark-i Rus was opened, newspapers produced in the languages of Muslim communities were tightly controlled, and it appears that Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade both considered Shahtakhtinskii a turncoat for having edited an official newspaper.\(^81\) Even before 1905, Shahtakhtinskii had gotten into vicious feuds in print with not only Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade, but also the more mild-mannered Gasprinskii.\(^82\)

Ali Hüseyinzade’s ill-will towards Shahtakhtinskii would never disappear. In a set of memoirs that Hüseyinzade began to write in the 1930s, he digressed into a long rant about Shahtakhtinskii in a section that was supposed to be devoted to Ahmet Ağaoğlu.\(^83\) In discussing the early days before the 1905 Revolution, Hüseyinzade went out of his way to denounce Shahtakhtinskii, mentioning that back in Russia “Shahtakhtinskii was able to publish a weekly half-Russian half-Turkish newspaper called Şark-i Rus. However this newspaper, far from helping the cause of Turkism, helped that of the tsarist regime.” Perhaps cognizant that his papers would one
day be read, Hüseyinzade spelled out Shahtakhtinskii’s name twice in this passage, writing it out as clearly as possible in both Arabic and Latin letters. These feelings were no doubt reinforced by Shahtakhtinskii’s scandalous departure from Istanbul in 1912. Starting the year before, Shahtakhtinskii had written a series of reports for the Russian consulate in Istanbul. Most of this work involved translating news stories and opinion pieces from the Ottoman press into Russian, and in this respect his job was not unlike that of the resident Orientalist in any government office in Russia responsible for managing affairs pertaining to Muslims.

Shahtakhtinskii also wrote a long report about the activities of Russian Muslim students in the Ottoman capital. His analysis is precisely what Russian-born Muslim student groups would have said to tsarist authorities were they given the chance. In his report to the consulate, Shahtakhtinskii repeatedly assured his readers that the Russian Muslim students in Istanbul were of no threat whatsoever to Russian state interests. The students, he wrote, “work hard” and “enjoy their studies.” “In total,” wrote Shahtakhtinskii, the core group of Muslim students who were active in the student clubs consisted of “no more than 60–70” people. Shahtakhtinskii also argued that the Russian government should not be alarmed that Russian Muslims would want to study in Istanbul, noting that “if in Russia there were a center where Tatars could receive, in their own language, a secular [obschechelovecheskoe] education, not a single Tatar from Russia would come to Turkey to study in Constantinople.”

In writing a report of this nature, Shahtakhtinskii was telling tsarist officials exactly what they needed to hear. There was no pan-Turkist threat, he argued, just a lot of students who enjoyed spending time in the company of other Russian-born Muslims. The students, he wrote, were involved in very benign activities that should be of no concern to Russian authorities. They attended conferences, often on Turkic or Turanic themes, “one or two times a year,” in addition to being involved with their student clubs.

Shahtakhtinskii’s activities somehow came to the attention of Ottoman authorities. There is no evidence that Ağaoğlu or Hüseyinzade denounced him, but the vituperative nature of their attacks on Shahtakhtinskii suggests that, if they had known something about his work at the consulate, they may have tipped off the authorities. In any event, Shahtakhtinskii was detained in early 1912, charged as a spy, and shortly thereafter deported back to Russia.

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84 This is from a small (two-page) and apparently uncategorized file from the private collection of Dr. Ali Heydar Bayat. The document is called “Ağaoğlu Ahmed bey Hakkında Hüseyinzade Ali Bey’in yazıkları” [“Hüseyinzade Ali’s writings about Ahmed Ağaoğlu.”] This passage is taken from the underside of page 1.

85 In this respect Shahtakhtinskii’s report was completely different from those sent to the embassy from St. Petersburg or from those written by the embassy’s staff. See, for example, Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 4226, ll. 2–8; f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 4222, ll. 1–2, 8, 11, 40.

86 For Shahtakhtinskii’s report, see AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 4226, ll. 27-30-ob.

87 AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 4226, l. 30

88 Where his trail vanishes. On Shahtakhtinskii’s arrest, also see Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 92–94, and BOA, DH SYS 56/10, s. 8. Bennigsen relates that Shahtakhtinskii was expelled back to
Istanbul had been the city of Fatih Kerimi’s youth. Kerimi had first lived in the Ottoman capital in the early 1890s, when he had studied at the Mekteb-i Müلكiye. In November 1912 he came back for a visit, traveling a distance of more than 1,800 miles each way. Ostensibly, Kerimi was in Istanbul to report on the Balkan War, which had recently broken out between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan League: a combined force comprising of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro.

With Akçura already filing stories for Vakit from Istanbul, the newspaper hardly needed a second correspondent in the Ottoman capital. Rather, it seems that Kerimi had traveled for personal reasons. His brother, Arif Kerimi, was serving in the Ottoman Army and was currently fighting at the front. Moreover, Yusuf Akçura was also in Istanbul, in a move that was beginning to look more permanent. When Akçura was working only as correspondent for Vakit, he had the time to travel to Russia and back, posting updates along the way. Now he was much busier, dividing his time between Vakit, Türk Yurdu, and the Turkic Hearths. If Kerimi wanted to see him, he would have to take a trip.

Kerimi’s journey began on November 1, 1912. Traveling through Kharkiv and Odessa en route, Kerimi arrived in Istanbul on the evening of November 9. During the trip from Odessa, everyone on board had been talking about how Istanbul could soon become a war zone if the Bulgarians decided to lay siege. The war was going badly, and the news since the moment the conflict started in October had consisted of little more than a litany of defeats for the Ottoman military. But now that their ship had arrived, everything looked much calmer and safer. This did not look like a country at war, let alone on the brink of destruction. Passing peaceful-looking gardens filled with couples and families on the banks of the Bosporus, Kerimi wondered how it was that “no one had the fear of war in their hearts anymore.” Perhaps the worst was over.

Suddenly, the sound of cannon erupted. “We’re done for!” cried one of the passengers. “We’ll all get caught under the cannon fire!” The Armenians and Greek passengers on board, however, “knew the situation in Istanbul well.” According to Kerimi, they calmed everyone else down. “Everybody, relax!” they shouted. “It’s the Feast of the Sacrifice. On the fourth day of the holiday they shoot off a cannon at every call to prayer.” The noise had not been the Bulgarians attacking. Everyone on board exhaled.

Russia for having suggested the sultan transfer the capital of the empire to Anatolia and that he went on to continue working for alphabet reform, but provides no date. La Presse, 45.
89 The Mekteb-i Müلكiye was the Istanbul-based school for those wishing to enter into Ottoman civil service.
90 Kerimi wrote that his brother entered battle four times before he was wounded in the arm. İstanbul Mektupları, 31–2.
91 Kerimi, İstanbul Mektupları, 18.
During the four months that Kerimi would stay in Istanbul, he experienced events that were good, bad, and ugly. The good involved the fascinating individuals that Kerimi was able to spend time with in Istanbul. Many of his early dispatches breathlessly detailed his experiences rubbing shoulders with the intellectual and political elites of Istanbul. Kerimi had access to senior figures in the CUP such as Enver Bey, the dashing and powerful young Minister of War. Enver Bey was a reader of Türk Yurdu and an acquaintance of Yusuf Akçura, which helped to open doors for Kerimi in the capital.\(^{92}\)

Often tagging along with Akçura, Kerimi met with and interviewed Ottoman cultural figures such as Ziya Gökalp and Halide Edip, with the latter spending an afternoon entertaining Akçura, Fatih Kerimi, and Arif Kerimi at her home overlooking the Marmara Sea.\(^ {93}\)

Kerimi also witnessed considerable political upheaval during his stay. The previous summer, the Ottoman Empire had teetered from one political crisis to another. There had been three grand viziers that year as the Unionists and their adversaries in parliament brought down one government after another.\(^ {94}\) The combination of the war and the political crisis had led to a boiling point in Ottoman politics. With defenses collapsing across the front, Kamil Pasha’s government went on the offensive against a domestic opponent: the CUP, which was now in opposition. In November 1912, the government carried out widespread arrests of Unionist figures and close CUP-affiliated newspapers.\(^ {95}\)

Among the arrested was Ahmet Ağaoğlu, who was detained in the middle of November. Fatih Kerimi reported on Ağaoğlu’s detention and the difficulties the development had created for Ağaoğlu and his young family. There were rumors, wrote Kerimi, of up to 200 people arrested, adding that “no newspaper that supported the CUP is remaining.”\(^ {96}\)

While Ağaoğlu sat in prison, the empire appeared to be on the brink of falling apart entirely. On January 17, 1913, the proposals for ending the war in the Balkans were communicated to the Ottoman government. The terms included the surrender to Bulgaria of Edirne, a former Ottoman capital populated mainly by Turks. Cornered politically, elements from within the CUP made their move. They used the peace terms agreed to by Kamil Pasha as a pretext for carrying out a coup d’état. On January 23, a group of inner-circle CUP officers, led by Enver Bey, burst into a meeting of the Ottoman Cabinet. They demanded that the government resign immediately, and put Kamil Pasha under house arrest. The rest of the cabinet was dissolved. They shot and killed the Minister of War, Nazim Pasha.\(^ {97}\)

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\(^{92}\) See Kerimi, Letter 23 “Enver Bey’in Yanında,” in İstanbul Mektuplari, 139–44.

\(^{93}\) Kerimi, İstanbul Mektuplari, 124–5.

\(^{94}\) The grand vizier was the head of government, roughly equivalent to a prime minister during these years.

\(^{95}\) Kamil Pasha, a former advisor to Abdülhamid, headed an anti-CUP coalition government. Kerimi, İstanbul Mektuplari, 37.

\(^{96}\) Kerimi discusses Ağaoğlu’s arrest. İstanbul Mektuplari, 37–8. On Ağaoğlu behind bars, see 63–5.

\(^{97}\) From this point forward, the famous “triumvirate” of Cemal, Talat, and Enver Pashas would play an outsized role in the decision-making of the Ottoman government. Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the
Supporters of the CUP rejoiced. Kerimi described the festive atmosphere that had taken over some quarters of Istanbul after the coup. Crowds and chants had filled the streets, crying “Long live the CUP! Down with the traitor Kamil’s cabinet! We won’t give up Edirne!” Freed after more than two months in detention, Ahmet Ağaoğlu emerged and briefly addressed the cheering crowd.98

Others suffered much crueler fates, such as the wartime refugees inundating Istanbul at this time. In 1912 and 1913, some 400,000 Muslims left their homes in the Balkans. Many died along the way, while the survivors inundated Istanbul and other towns in Ottoman Thrace. Kerimi reported that mosques in the capital city had been transformed into makeshift infirmaries and refugee camps. There were rumors that the refugees had brought cholera with them. In late December, Kerimi wrote again on the refugees, asking “has this much misery, poverty, and need ever been seen since earth’s creation?”99 Neither Kerimi nor his readers could know that these wretched beings constituted the vanguard of a new era of particularly intense Muslim immigration into the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Millions more trans-imperial Muslims would stream into the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic, human resources for future generations as the late imperial age crashed to an end.

It was time to start heading home. After four months in the Ottoman capital, Kerimi began the long trip back to Orenburg in the middle of March. By the end of the following year, the Ottoman Empire and Russia would be at war with one another. Within four years, the empires themselves would vanish. By the time peace came back, the world of the pan-Turkists would no longer be recognizable.

The pan-Turkist scene in Istanbul was a hub of activity. It involved a colorful assortment of individuals and projects, and connected Russian-born Muslims in Istanbul to their homes in Russia through various types of network. As was the case in Russia, pan-Turkism in Istanbul was about much more than identity. More than anything else, the scene was about pursuing connections and seeking one’s fortune, making the most out of one’s options during a time of opportunity and risk. When their moment finally arrived, the pan-Turkists had been ready.

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98 Kerimi, *İstanbul Mektupları*, 231–2. On refugee numbers from the Balkan Wars, see McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 339.
99 Kerimi, *İstanbul Mektupları*, 159.
Epilogue
The Post-Imperial Hangover

The Ottoman and Russian declarations of war against one another marked the end of the era of peace that had characterized the trans-imperial lives of the pan-Turkists. The border was sealed, and more than ever the Russian-born activists-in-exile were at the mercy of their hosts in the CUP. With the empires locked in a death struggle that would only end with the fall of both dynasties, the activists had skills that would be of use by the Unionist government. They were soon pressed into service.¹

With the collapse of the Romanov dynasty and Russia’s withdrawal from the war shortly thereafter, Akçura, Hüseyinzade, and Ağaoğlu took on new missions. All three would travel, shortly after the end of the First World War, to their homelands in the former Russian Empire. They were undertaking missions on behalf of authorities in Istanbul. In the case of Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade, who were members of the CUP, leaving Istanbul was politically advisable. Akçura had not joined the CUP, but perhaps thought it would nevertheless be a good idea, at least initially, to be elsewhere when the British arrived to occupy Istanbul.

Following the February Revolution in Russia in 1917, a small number of Ottoman officials discussed the idea of sending Akçura, Hüseyinzade, and Ahmet Ağaoğlu (“or one or two other such people”) on a mission for the state. The idea, floated by the Ottoman representative in Budapest to the Grand Vizier, was to send the three pan-Turkists to Germany and Austria in order to talk to Russian Muslim soldiers being held there. A handful of soldiers would be selected, and would then be given road money to return to Russia in order to agitate against the continuation of the war against the Ottoman Empire.² Amazingly, this plan was approved.

En route to Munich, Akçura was given special clearance from the Ottoman Ministry of Internal Affairs. This was intended to provide help at the border with Bulgaria, lest there be a repeat of the difficulties Akçura had experienced en route to Sofya in 1916.³ From March 1918 until August 1919, Akçura stayed in Moscow, Kazan, and Ufa, where he visited Ottoman prisoner-of-war camps in Russia, and also no doubt met with his friends and former comrades.⁴ He worked on behalf of

¹ See Chapter 6.
² BOA, DH KMS 44-1/50.
³ The document, written in February 1918, mentioned that Akçura would be traveling through Sofya en route to Munich and that his supporters were endeavoring to avoid any hindrance for him at the border. DH EUM SSM 6/26, s. 1. 1334, Subat 16.
⁴ Georgeon, Aux Origines, 144–5. On Akçura’s passport crisis, see Chapter 6 of this study.
the Ottoman Red Crescent—an organization that had links to the Turkic Hearths even before the outbreak of the war.\(^5\)

Akçura returned from Russia to Istanbul in August 1919 to a city very different from that which he had left eighteen months earlier. The imperial capital was now under British occupation. Sultan Mehmet V had passed away in July 1918, and had been succeeded by his brother, Vahdettin Efendi, who became Mehmet VI. Allies of the British, Greece had sent its army to occupy Anatolia. Plans were in the works to divide up Asia Minor in a manner not unlike what would happen to the Arab provinces of the empire after the war’s conclusion. In 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres mandated the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a Black Sea-based rump state. Most of Anatolia was to come under the rule of France, Italy, and Greece. An Armenian satellite state was also envisioned.

The CUP was gone, and the British sought to root out its remaining members and send them to a prison they maintained in Malta.\(^6\) Because he had not been in the CUP, however, Akçura was able to take part in occupation-era Ottoman politics. In October 1919 he became one of the founders of the National Turk party alongside Mehmed Emin (Yurdakul), Ahmet Hikmet, and other Ottoman-born figures previously part of the Turkist movement who were not in hiding.\(^7\) Akçura was one of the candidates representing Istanbul in the elections of December 1919, but was not high enough on his party’s list to gain entry into parliament.\(^8\)

In April 1919, Sultan Mehmed VI appointed Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) to organize Ottoman troops in Anatolia and assist with the handing over of Ottoman war material to the French. Instead of doing this, however, Kemal—who had been one of the empire’s leading generals during the First World War—began to organize a movement to resist the occupation of Anatolia. Kemal made contact with community self-defense militias that had been set up in the region, and created a political center in the isolated town of Ankara in central Anatolia.

Much of western Anatolia and even parts of west-central Anatolia were occupied by Greece, which had been awarded the city of Izmir and its environs according to the Treaty of Sèvres. After two epic battles in the town of İnönü—with the Greeks winning the first, and Mustafa Kemal’s forces the second—the Greek Army was eventually pushed back from central Anatolia and all the way back to Greece.\(^9\) Kemal’s forces began negotiating with the British and French, and his Ankara-based Grand National Assembly now lured many Istanbul-based supporters who escaped from the British-occupied zone to join up with the Kemalist

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\(^5\) The Türk Ocakları had connections to the Red Crescent that predated the First World War. Kerimi, İstanbul Mektupları, 175–6. According to Zeki Velidi Togan, Akçura stayed with Galimdzhan Barudi while in Ufa in 1918. Iusupov, Galimdzhan Barudi, 51.

\(^6\) The anti-CUP policies of the British helped to drive the resistance that Kemal would lead. Eighty years later, the United States would similarly fuel the Iraqi resistance by blacklisting Ba’ath Party members.

\(^7\) That is, who had not been CUP members.

\(^8\) Georgeon, Aux Origines du Nationalisme Turc, 81–2.

\(^9\) The two battles were fought in January and March 1921. Kemal’s forces took Izmir in September 1922.
forces in central Anatolia. In April 1921, Akçura joined their numbers, remaining in Ankara until the end of the war.  

Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade, meanwhile, headed east to the Caucasus. In 1918 they traveled to Baku, which they had not seen since 1909 and 1910 respectively. Shortly after they got there, the two wrote a letter to Enver Pasha in which they discussed their dire outlook for the region, observing that “the Caucasus are going to become a second Macedonia.” Originally, Ağaoğlu had been working in Baku as a representative of the Unionists, who were on the run in the wake of the British arrival in Istanbul. He sought to make contact with Difai—reputedly his old organization from the revolutionary days of 1905—perhaps with an eye towards acting as a liaison between Unionist forces and local Muslim forces in the Caucasus. Hüseyinzade, meanwhile, spent only a few months in Baku before heading back to Istanbul.

With the dispersal of the CUP, Ağaoğlu joined up with the government of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, which was established in May 1918 in the wake of the Russian Empire’s collapse. Ağaoğlu’s old friend and Türk Yardı colleague Mehmet Emin Resulzade was the president of the National Council, which for the moment held the political center of the fledgling republic. In his capacity as a member of the council, Ağaoğlu gave speeches in the name of the national interest of “Azerbaijan.” After a career of speaking in the name of Persians, Muslims, Caucasian Muslims, Russian Muslims, and the Turkic world, Ağaoğlu was back to where he had started, in Azerbaijan. Only the name had changed.

Towards the end of 1918, Ağaoğlu set out for Paris, where he hoped to represent Azerbaijan in the Paris Peace Talks. He was, however, arrested by the British while he passed through Istanbul. Britain did not recognize Azerbaijan’s independence, and Ağaoğlu’s diplomatic credentials were of no use. He was sent to Malta, where he would remain imprisoned until 1923. Several months after his arrest he was joined in Malta by his friend Ali Hüseyinzade, who had been picked up by the British in Istanbul in 1919. Back in the Caucasus, meanwhile, Resulzade had also

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10 Georgeon, Aux Origines, 81–2.
12 On Difai, see Chapter 3 of this volume. Also Reynolds, “The Ottoman–Russian Struggle for Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus,” 160–3. Notably, Naki Keykurun only mentions Ağaoğlu once during his discussion of Difai, and that was with regard to a public speech that Ağaoğlu made in Gence in 1905. Nothing else in the volume indicates that Ağaoğlu was part of an armed group. Azerbaycan istiklal mücadelesinin hatırları (1905–1920) (Ankara: İlke Kitabevi, 1998), 34. From Reynolds.
14 On Resulzade’s activities during these years, see Şimşir, Mehmet Emin Resulzade, 40–59.
15 See, for example, Ağaoğlu’s speeches in parliament in Azərbaycan xalq jumhuriyəti (1918–1920): Parlament (Stenografik hesəbatlar), 1 jild (Baku: Azərbaycan nəşrəviyyəti, 1998), 129–30; Azerbaijan State Archive (ADA), f. 895, op.1, d.1 l. 27. Also see Azerbaizhanı qəbul etdi: dökümenty i materialy (Baku: Elm, 1998), 120–1.
16 On Resulzade, see Şimşir, Mehmet Emin Resulzade. The Republic of Azerbaijan existed from May 1918 until April 1920. Resulzade would move to Germany, then Turkey.
17 Türkoğlu, Abdürrəşid İbrahim, 53–4.
been arrested. The Bolsheviks detained him when they took Baku in 1920. He had contacts among the Bolsheviks, including Stalin, so, rather than face execution he was sent to Moscow and given a job. For two years, Resulzade worked as a Turkish teacher at the University of the East. In 1922 he traveled from Moscow to Petrograd, as St. Petersburg was known during and after the First World War. From there, he escaped by boat to Finland, reportedly with the help of some local Tatars.18

After the victory of Mustafa Kemal’s forces and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, most of the old pan-Turkists became citizens of Turkey. As Kemal consolidated his power over the country, however, his old supporters increasingly found themselves pushed out of positions of responsibility. Such was also the case for the old pan-Turkists, whose public careers in the Turkish Republic would all end up being quite limited. As was the case in Stalin’s USSR, where many of the early victims of state purges were original Bolsheviks, the 1930s would prove a turning point in the lives of many of the original Kemalists.

Ali Hüseyinzade’s public life was the shortest. It was brought to a devastating end when he was arrested and imprisoned in the wake of an alleged assassination plot against Kemal that was uncovered by Turkish security forces in 1926.19 A total of 140 individuals—including many elite political and cultural figures—were arrested on specious evidence. While Hüseyinzade was found innocent, his public career had come to an end. In 1933 he would be forced to retire from his position at Istanbul University. He continued to publish—mostly memoirs of his encounters of early Republican heroes. In 1940, while visiting the home of a doctor friend of his, Hüseyinzade was reportedly expounding upon the evils of British policy in India when he suddenly died of a heart attack in mid-sentence.20 He was 76 years old.

Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s public career in Turkey would also conclude prematurely. Having served in the parliaments of both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Azerbaijan, he would also serve as a member of parliament in Turkey. For several years he worked with the Turkic Hearths, and in 1929 he became one of the founders of the Free Republican Party (Serbest Cümhuriyet Fırkası). This was an opposition party that, reportedly, Atatürk himself supported.21 Once the Free Republicans began to attract noticeable support, however, the party was closed down in 1931.22 A newspaper that Ağaoğlu launched in that year, Akın, was shut down two years later, reportedly due to government displeasure with Ağaoğlu’s criticism. That same year Ağaoğlu retired from his position at Istanbul University.23 From 1934 until his death in 1939, he published nothing.

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18 Şimşir, Mehmet Emin Resulzade, 58–9.
19 The alleged plot came in the wake of the Sheyh Said revolt of 1925, which had badly shaken the regime’s confidence.
22 On Akın, see Shissler, Between Two Empires, 198.
23 Shissler, Between Two Empires, 198.
Ağaoğlu’s friend Mehmet Emin Resulzade had a more direct fallout with the Kemalist regime. Resulzade had spent the war years in Russia, and then had become the first president of Azerbaijan in 1918. Having escaped from the Soviet Union in 1922, he arrived in Turkey later that year. After the Turkish Republic was created the following year, Resulzade’s loud support for Azerbaijani independence from the USSR led to conflicts with the Kemalist authorities, who were eager to maintain good relations with the USSR. At some time between 1928 and 1930 Resulzade was expelled from Turkey, reportedly at Moscow’s request. He would be allowed to return to Turkey only in 1947, dying eight years later, “a broken man.”

Yusuf Akçura—perhaps because he had never joined the CUP—would enjoy a somewhat longer career in Mustafa Kemal’s Turkey. In fact, in the earliest years of the republic’s existence, Akçura held positions of policy influence in Ankara. He was a deputy in the Turkish National Assembly and provided foreign policy advice to the government. Mustafa Kemal, who, like Akçura, had studied at the Ottoman War College, apparently took a liking to him. For Akçura, who had spent much of his life writing on politics and foreign policy, the Republic of Turkey initially appeared to provide new political opportunities.

In the aftermath of the “uncovering” of the assassination plot of 1926, however, Akçura’s career would likewise be irrevocably altered, and his writing career would largely come to an end. His final hurrah occurred when he was commissioned to write an almanac for the year 1928. At this point he had not published anything in three years—a far cry from the old days when he would regularly churn out five or six long articles in the span of a week. The almanac was written in the spirit of old handwritten kalendar that had been a feature of Muslim life in central Russia in the late nineteenth century. Entitled Türk Yılı (“Turkish Year”), Akçura’s almanac combined practical information with interesting facts about famous people and places.

The work then swells, however, into an enormous shower of verbiage. Realizing, perhaps, that his window of opportunity was once again closing, Akçura went for broke. The 650-page book he produced ended up delving into topics seemingly far removed from the almanac’s original purpose. He expounded at length

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24 Şimşir, Mehmet Emin Resulzade, 62–8.
25 On Resulzade’s departure from Turkey, see Şimşir, Mehmet Emin Resulzade, 68–73. On a possible Soviet role, see 78–9.
27 See Temir, Yusuf Akçura, 84, for a bibliography of Akçura’s Turkish publications.
28 Kayum Nasiri, who is today celebrated as one of the intellectual giants among nineteenth-century Volga Muslims, was a particularly prolific author of kalendar. See, for example, his kalendar for 1903, KFÜ, document T-1411. On Nasiri, see Rorlich, The Volga Tatars, 3–4, 65–8.
upon the history of the Turks, Turkish nationalism, and the Turkish Republic, creating the sort of defining history of Turkism that Kemal had done for the history of the War of Independence in his famous Nutuk (“the Speech”) in 1927. The long section that he devoted to himself and the other famous Russian and Ottoman-born Turkist figures has similarly become the standard narrative behind the role of pan-Turkism within an emerging Turkish nationalism. A writer whose audience had been taken away from him due to politics, Akçura fought to get it all in while he still had a publisher. It was his last such opportunity. Though he would live for another ten years, Akçura never published again.

Even though Akçura was silenced as a writer after Türk Yılı, he was allowed to continue working in state employ. He held positions in the state-controlled sector of publishing and teaching for the rest of his life. In 1931 he was given the job of creating what would become the Turkish History Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu). In 1933, the same year that Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade would be forcibly retired from Istanbul University, Akçura was given a job at the school.

He would continue to teach history and foreign politics until his death in mid-March 1935. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Akçura was traveling when he passed away. Returning one night from his job at Istanbul University on the European side to his home in Göztepe on the Asian side, Akçura suffered a heart attack. He was crossing the Bosporus by boat at the time, and took his last breaths en route between two continents. His lifeless body completed the journey for him.

The Ottoman-born Turkists went on to become well remembered in Turkish literature and history. Ziya Gökalp died in 1924, a year after the republic was created. Today, alongside Namik Kemal, he is considered one of the greatest minds ever in Ottoman and Turkish history. Although he is still revered in Turkish society, many have forgotten that early Kemalists such as Gökalp and Mehmet Akif were much more willing to invoke Islamic imagery than would be the case for most Kemalists today. In 1999, then-Istanbul mayor (and subsequently prime minister and president) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was sentenced to prison for five months for having read, in public, a poem by Ziya Gökalp that evoked minarets as bayonets and mosques as barracks.

Halide Edip’s life post-imperial was long and exciting. In 1919, she and her husband, Dr. Adnan (head of the Red Crescent), left Istanbul to join Mustafa Kemal in Ankara. After the opening of the National Assembly in 1920, Adnan served as the deputy speaker and Edip worked as an information and public relations officer for the Kemalist government. During the War of Independence, Edip volunteered for the military, serving as a sergeant on the Western Front.

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29 An official institution.
30 Within Haydar Bayat’s archive of Hüseyinzade’s papers there are many letters from Akçura and Ağaoğlu prior to 1933, and virtually nothing afterward.
31 Not a bad way to go. Togay, Yusuf Akçura’nın Hayatı, 92. Also see Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 390.
32 The “Soldier Poem” (Asker Duası). The poet Akif wrote the Turkish national anthem.
34 Shaw and Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire, 360.
Soon, however, relations with Kemal would change. In 1925, Adnan became one of the founders of the Progressive Republican party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*)—a political party that was closed down by the government. The leaders of the party were put on trial for sedition, but Adnan and Edip were instead sent into exile in 1924 before the trial began. They would return to Turkey only after Atatürk’s death in 1938.\(^{35}\) Edip (now known as Halide Edip Adıvar) would then become a professor of English literature at Istanbul University from 1939 to 1950, and again from 1954 until her death ten years later.\(^{36}\)

Not everyone ended up in Istanbul. In the wake of the Ottoman surrender, the occupation of Istanbul, and the revolutions taking place in Russia, Abdürrəşid İbrahimov decided to return to Siberia. He would stay in Russia from 1918 until 1923, when his falling out with the Bolsheviks put the 63-year-old mullah’s life in danger. While agreeing to provide İbrahimov with sanctuary in Turkey, Ankara was mindful of antagonizing its neighbor to the north. As part of the asylum agreement he was obliged to stay within the boundaries of Böğrüdelik, a village outside of Konya. İbrahimov did not travel for a decade, except for short trips to Mecca for the pilgrimage. In 1933, however, he was given an offer to return to Tokyo. He would live there until 1944, when he died of natural causes.\(^{37}\)

Some of the old activists stayed in the Soviet Union. This was the case with Rızaedtin Fâkhretdin, who had teamed up with Yusuf Akçura to crash the Ufa Imbroglio in 1905. Fâkhretdin became the second müfti of the Soviet Union, serving for thirteen years until his (apparently peaceful) death in 1936.\(^{38}\)

Fatih Kerimi would likewise stay in the Soviet Union. In 1925 he got a job in Moscow, in the Tatar bureau of the Central Publishing House of the People of the USSR, which specialized in non-Russian works. He was also a teacher of Turkish language at the Community University of the Laborers of the East.\(^{39}\)

During the purges of the 1930s, however, Kerimi’s formerly trans-imperial status would return to haunt him. In 1937, eleven years after Ali Hüseyinzade had been jailed in Turkey, apparently on trumped-up charges of plotting to assassinate Mustafa Kemal, Kerimi was charged with involvement in a similarly complex conspiracy. The prosecutor argued that he was a member of a gang that had allegedly sought to kill Stalin.\(^{40}\) These and other charges, based upon secret denunciations linking him to Yusuf Akçura, led to Kerimi’s arrest and imprisonment in Moscow.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{38}\) The spiritual assemblies were, in Soviet times, centralized under a single müftiáte, just as many Muslim activists had advocated in 1905. Today, there are institutions of spiritual administration all over the former Soviet Union.

\(^{39}\) Fazıl Gökçek, introduction to *Fatih Kerimi İstanbul Mektupları* (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2001), xii. Also see “Fatîikh Kârimi,” *Tatar Entsiklopediia Sûzlege*, 327; Gosmanov [Usmanov], Mirkasım; Märdanov, Raif; Mingnullin, Rämil, et al., *Fatîikh Kârimi: fänni-biografik zhîenitk* (Kazan: Rukhiiat, 2000), 290.

\(^{40}\) In Tatarstan alone, 2,519 people were executed in 1937. *Fatîikh Kârimi*, 291.

\(^{41}\) *Fatîikh Kârimi*, 291.
Perhaps, as Kerimi sat in his cell, he thought a little about the crimes of which he had been accused. After so many years he was to be executed over pan-Turkism, and his life was going to end thanks to his supposed connection to Yusuf Akçura and the Republic of Turkey. On September 27, 1937, some twenty-five years after that intoxicating afternoon with his brother Arif and Akçura at Halide Edip’s house overlooking the Marmara Sea, Fatih Kerimi was shot to death in Moscow at the KGB’s notorious Lubyanka prison.

As Kemal Karpat has noted, there is a wide discrepancy regarding the ways in which the Ottoman-born Turkists and the Russian-born figures are remembered today. Any citizen of Turkey who has been through school has heard of Ziya Gökalp and Halide Edip. Across the country there are schools, parks, and streets named after both of them. This recognition of the Ottoman-born Turkists stands in stark contrast from the Russian-born pan-Turkists, after whom hardly nothing is named and very little known among non-scholars. Despite the fact that the Russian-born figures controlled Türk Yurdu and dominated the pan-Turkic scene in Istanbul, the Ottoman-born figures are the ones who made their way into the canon. Claimed by multiple states—Crimea, Tatarstan, Azerbaijan, Turkey—the pan-Turkists are embraced by no one.

42 Fatih Kârımı, 291.
43 On Kerimi’s execution, see Fatîkh Kârımı, 293. Also see Gökçek’s introduction to his Latinized/Turkified version of İstanbul Mektuplari, xii. Other references to İstanbul Mektuplari in this volume are from the original 1912 version.
44 Karpat, The Politicization of Islam, 388.
45 See, for example, Hanioğlu’s discussion of “Turkism,” which is devoted mainly to Ottoman-born Turkists such as Ziya Gökalp and says very little about the Russian-born pan-Turkists. Brief History, 147, 187–8.
46 While Akçura is recognized as a Volga Tatar, he is generally not seen as part of the pantheon of Tatar nationalism. Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinзадe are likewise claimed by Azerbaijan, but not well remembered. For a while in the 1990s, Resulzade’s face graced the 1,000-manat note in Azerbaijan, but now his image has been replaced.
Conclusions

Turkic Worlds

The pan-Turkists were the products of elite education and other kinds of experience that were unusual for their age. While their specific agendas changed with the times, they were deeply a part of important developments taking place during the late imperial era. They were trans-imperial people, and they were at the heart of the political and cultural conflicts taking place among the Muslim communities of central Russia, Crimea, and the Caucasus. Like many others, moreover, the pan-Turkists invoked Muslim religious and national identity, and in that respect likewise resembled many other people of their day. Their manner of marketing Muslim identity was particularly overt, but involved no less salesmanship than the various projects hatched by Russian and Ottoman officials, scholars in search of funding, or desperate Muslims looking to crush new method education. All of these people, as well as others discussed in this study, invoked Muslim identity in a multitude of ways, and in most cases managed to find buyers for their wares.

Who is marketing Muslim identity today? As was the case in the late imperial era, there are many people looking to sell Muslim identity to an often uninformed public. Just as tsarist officials were able to write off specific Muslim complaints as nothing more than expressions of a fanatical Islam, so too are many analysts willing to take the discourses of Muslims at face value. It is easier to assume that civil war in Iraq is the consequence of eternal hatreds, rather than choices made in places like Washington, DC and Brussels. Many prefer to think of September 11 as a consequence of religious hatred rather than a response to American policymaking.

Learning how to read invocations of civilizational identity, and discern the issues behind the rhetoric, is therefore a vital skill in the age of post-Cold War cultural politics. During a time when invocations of identity are once again becoming near-constant features of geopolitical turmoil, analysts of international politics need to develop the skills to separate the political content from civilizational discourses. Throughout this book I have sought to provide examples that demonstrate the degree to which such discourses contain political substance.¹ Rather than ignore or fetishize these discourses, contemporary geopolitical analysts need to become literate at reading them.²

¹ Stephen Kotkin establishes a dichotomy between “institutions” and “identity,” but these two categories may be more closely linked than Kotkin’s analysis allows for. “Mongol Commonwealth? Exchange and Governance across the Post-Mongol Space,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 8:3 (Summer, 2007), 487–531, esp. 531.
² They could call it “new method” analysis.
As was the case in the late imperial era, there is no single Turkic world today. Now, like then, there are Turkic worlds, between which people may share ethnic and linguistic similarities but which are divided in other ways. Nevertheless, networks connecting these worlds are growing today at a pace unseen since the late imperial era. In Baku, Simferopol’, Kazan, Ufa, and other Turkic cities of Eurasia, colonies of Turkish businessmen and workers congregate in the kebap shops and teahouses that cater to them. Brand new and often enormous Turkish consulates adorn the streets of these cities, keeping watch over the activities of merchants, students, pilgrims, teachers, spouses, and other modern-day border crossers.

After the collapse of the Ottoman and Russian empires, the regions discussed in this study have become national republics or independent nation-states. Tatarstan became an autonomous republic, with Kazan as its capital, within the Russian Federation in 1922. After the USSR broke up in 1991, Tatarstan joined Chechnya as one of two Muslim-majority republics of Russia to declare their right to secede from Russia. Whereas Chechnya suffered two devastating wars in the 1990s and 2000s, Tatarstan’s independence movement was quietly coopted by Tatarstan’s president, Mintimer Shaimiev. Rather than fight a war with Moscow, the insider Muslim elites of Kazan once again sought to split the difference with Russia and get on with the business of empire. With Russia having now annexed Crimea, it remains to be seen what role the Tatars of Tatarstan might play in the reintegration of Crimean Tatars into Russia.

In Crimea, some of the patterns seen in the late imperial age have similarly reemerged post-empire. In 1944, the entire Crimean Tatar population was forcibly expelled from the peninsula to Siberia and Kazakhstan. The impact upon the population of almost 200,000 was crushing, with thousands dying during the expulsion and after. The Crimean Tatars were only allowed to return to Crimea in 1989, just when the USSR was starting to break up. Nevertheless, thousands of Crimean Tatars have returned to their ancestral homeland, often living in the simplest of shanties. Today, the population of Crimean Tatars in Crimea is approximately 200,000—about 13% of the peninsula’s population. During the time of Ukrainian administration, Crimean Tatars had managed to form a partnership of sorts with Kiev, in opposition to the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea. However, the reincorporation of Crimea into Russia may have a profound effect upon the future of the Crimean Tatar minority. A community that has spent more than two centuries experiencing a cycle of emigration and return again finds itself at an historical

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3 “National republics” are nationally based but non-independent republics, such as today’s Crimea and Tatarstan.

4 In Tatarstan, a referendum on sovereignty with a right to secede was approved with 61% of the vote (with 82% reported turnout) in 1992. On the political machinations surrounding the referendum, see Shafiga Daulet, Kazan and Moscow: Five Centuries of Crippling Coexistence under Russian Imperialism (Hudson, NH: Kase Press, 2003), 154–5.

5 Moscow’s controversial decision to end direct elections for the position of president in the central Russian republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan recall the efforts of late imperial Muslim elites to elect their own müfti. See Chapter 2 of this study.

6 Williams, The Crimean Tatars, 390.
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crossroads. While Crimean Tatars have generally opposed the 2014 annexation, the 
future of their administrative and community organizations seems precarious.

In the Caucasus, there have also been developments that seem to echo late imperial 
times. In the north Caucasus, a devastating war in Chechnya led to tens of thousands 
of deaths, while in the southern Caucasus, conflicts between Armenians and Azeris 
over Nagorno-Karabakh led to the ethnic cleansing of Muslims from the region. Today, 
a proxy republic supported by Armenia occupies almost 15% of Azerbaijan’s inter-
nationally recognized territory, including Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s hometown of Şuşa, which 
has now been emptied of Muslims. Alongside Georgia and Armenia, Azerbaijan once 
again is sandwiched between powerful regional players such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

The politics of citizenship remain a feature of the region. As was the case with 
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, passports and citizenship have 
again emerged as important tools of Russian foreign policymaking. Tsarist officials 
employed subjecthood as a way of declaring authority over hundreds of thousands 
of people living inside the borders of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, mean-
while, the Russian government has distributed passports to citizens of Georgia in 
Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, as well as to citizens of Ukraine in Crimea. Similar 
practices could well be exploited by Russia in the Baltics, where governments have 
steadfastly refused to make it easy for local Russians to become citizens. Perhaps, 
like successful empires of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, today’s 
smaller nation-states will come to the conclusion that they need to see incomers as 
resources, and not only as risk.

To a large and generally unacknowledged extent, Turkey is an immigrant coun-
try. In the years following the First World War, more than a million Muslims 
streamed into the newly created republic’s frontiers from the Balkans and Russia, 
while all but a miniscule portion of the pre-war Christian population was now 
gone. The impact of these immigrants on the country’s demography has been sig-
nificant. In a country with a population of approximately 13 million in 1923, the 
number of people who had themselves immigrated or who were descended from 
immigrants was literally in the millions.7

While many of these newcomers spoke a Turkic language upon arriving, many 
others were not even Turkic, let alone Turkish. How to transform these diverse 
communities of Muslims into the Turkish nation constituted one of the most 
important projects of the early republic. In the early 1930s, the government 
embraced a new slogan: “How happy to call oneself a Turk!” (Ne mutlu Türküm 
diyene). The adoption of this slogan, which coincided with the passage of a 1934 
law requiring the adoption of surnames, reflected the attitude of the government 
toward these newly arrived migrants, not to mention the rest of the country. Just 
call yourself Turkish, the government seemed to be saying, and we will give you no 
additional reasons to be unhappy.8 People did as they were told, and the ethnically

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8 Today, the number of Kurdish people from the southeast with the surname “Türk” is par-
ticularly high. Mountains in southeastern Turkey, where most people are not ethnically Turkish,
varied Muslim communities of the new republic were quickly rebranded as Turks. In the face of state efforts to encourage people to think of themselves in terms of national uniformity, yesterday's trans-imperial Muslims have become today's Turks across empires.\footnote{Even after the creation of the Turkish Republic, successive generations of Muslims have continued to find refuge in Turkey, fleeing war or persecution in places such as Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Chechnya, and Syria.}

The pan-Turkists are often seen as figures ahead of their time, as the far-sighted proto-nationalists who envisioned the Turkish Republic before its creation. Once the age of nation-states arrived in the region, however, the pan-Turkists would find themselves persecuted for the very trans-imperial experiences that had once brought them opportunities. This harsh new post-imperial world had little use for the former pan-Turkists, who were jailed, fired, suppressed, exiled, and murdered in the years that followed the end of empire. One by one, the erstwhile pan-Turkists were picked off, disabled, deleted. While some historians have remembered them, the pan-Turkists are unknown to the general public of Turkey today. To the extent that they are recalled it is not as trans-imperial people, but rather as precursors of much narrower forms of nationalism. The pan-Turkists were finally reined in.

As if in a game of musical chairs, most of the former pan-Turkists grabbed Turkey as the last alternative remaining. They were hardly alone in making this choice. Broken and bewildered, the final remnants of the trans-imperial Muslims made their way across the border and were soon remade into Turks. Too tired to resist, they acceded to the peculiar demands of their new government. They called themselves Turks, and tried to be happy. The Republic of Turkey may not have been their homeland, but from now on it would be their home.

\footnote{frequently adorn the slogan about being happy to call yourself Turkish. On the act of calling oneself a Turk in the wake of the surname law of 1934, see Meltem Türköz, “The Social Life of the State’s Fantasy: Memories and Documents on Turkey’s 1934 Surname Law” (PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2004).}
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