

“Pillars of the Nation”:

The Making of a Russian Muslim Intelligentsia and the Origins of Jadidism

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Historians who study imperial Russia’s Muslims have long used the term “intelligentsia” as well as the corresponding Turkic words such as “*ziyâlılar*” and “*aydınlar*” (enlightened ones) to refer to or in relation with a turn of the twentieth-century phenomenon that is otherwise known as “Jadidism” (*cedîdcilik*), which might loosely be interpreted as modernist or progressive reformism among the tsarist empire’s Muslims.¹ The Kazan Tatar-origin Turkish scholar Akdes Nimet Kurat, for instance, describes “Jadidism” in a seminal 1966 article as a social and cultural movement with political

¹ “*Cedîd*” means “new,” and the suffix “*-cilik*” corresponds to “-ism.” While Jadidism has been the subject of many studies, Adeeb Khalid’s interpretation of the subject, based on a study of Central Asian Jadidists, has largely defined the field since 1998; see Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For more recent contributions focusing on the Volga-Ural region, see Mustafa Tuna, “Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process: A View from the Late Russian Empire,” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2011 53(3): 540-70; Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s Muslims: Islam, Empire and European Modernity, 1788-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 146-94; and Danielle M. Ross, “Caught in the Middle: Reform and Youth Rebellion Russia’s Madrasas, 1900-1910,” in *Kritika*, 2015 16(1): 57-89

implications that emerged from the introduction of “*usûl-i cedîd*” (the new method), or modern education, among Russia’s Muslims by the famous Crimean Tatar publisher and activist İsmâ‘îl Bey Gasprinskiy (1851-1914) in the 1880s. Thereafter, Kurat uses “intelligentsia,” “*ziyâhlılar*,” and “aydınlar” interchangeably to refer to a network (*kitle*, lit. “mass”) of activists who helped spread the “new method” or were products of it.² The eminent Kazan Tatar historian Mirkasym Usmanov concurs and he also uses “*ziyâhlılar*” and “*intelligentsia*” interchangeably.³ Edward Lazzerini uses “intelligentsia” to refer to educated elites while distinguishing between Islamic scholars as the “religious intelligentsia” and Jadidists as the “secular intelligentsia.”⁴ And, in her more recent work, Danielle Ross further qualifies Lazzerini’s “secular intelligentsia” with ideological

² Akdes Nimet Kurat, “Kazan Türklerinin ‘Medeni Uyanış’ Devri,” in *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1966 24(3-4): 103, 111-13, 116, and 120

³ Mirkasım A. Usmanov, *Gasırdan Gasırğa* (Kazan: Tatarstan Kitap Nâşriyatı, 2004), 178, 187, 234, and 260-65

⁴ Edward J. Lazzerini, “Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism in Russia, 1878-1914” (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1973), 39, 89, and 208.

designators such as “liberal,” “nationalist,” and “revolutionary,”⁵ a position which I have also emphasized although with less emphasis on the term “intelligentsia.”⁶

Thus, the existence of a Russian Muslim intelligentsia, and its correspondence to or connections with Jadidism as a progressive reformist movement among Russia’s Muslims, seems to be taken for granted in the literature with few exceptions, which we shall discuss below.⁷ However, while the conceptual history of the term “intelligentsia”

⁵ Danielle M. Ross, “From the Minbar to the Barricades: The Transformation of the Volga-Ural `Ulama into a Revolutionary Intelligentsia” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2011).

⁶ Mustafa Özgür Tuna, “Imperial Russia’s Muslims: Inroads of Modernity” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2009), 135, and 245-95; and Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s*, especially 184-85.

⁷ For other examples of references to a Russian Muslim intelligentsia, see Daniel Evan Schafer, “Building Nations and Building States: The Tatar-Bashkir Question in Revolutionary Russia, 1917-1920” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1995), e.g. 103, and 419; Rāfik M. Möxämmätšin ed. *Tatar ziyahları: tarixi portretlar* (Kazan: Māgarif, 2003); Rāfyk M. Möxämmätšin, “The Tatar Intelligentsia and the Clergy, 1917-1937,” in *Devout Societies vs. Impious States?*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon (Berlin: Klaus Schvarz Verlag, 2004), 29-38; and Norihiro Naganawa, “Tatarskaia intelligentsia novogo tipa v Povolzh’e i Priural’e: rassuzhdeniia o poniatii ‘natsiia,’ milliat posle pervoi rossiiskoi revoliutsii,” in *Slavic Studies*, 2003 (50): 33-63. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2), subtitled “Beyond Modernism: Rethinking

has been a fruitful topic of research in the context of the Russian and especially Polish intelligentsias,⁸ a similar study in the context of Russia's Muslims has not yet been undertaken. Even the otherwise remarkable *Tatar Encyclopedia* does not offer an entry on “*intelligentsia*” or its likely Turkic equivalent “*ziyâhlar*.”⁹ In this article, I would like to trace the emergence and early evolution of the concept of intelligentsia among Russia's Muslims, with a focus on Russia proper as distinct from the later colonized territories of the Caucasus region and Central Asia.

In addition to marking the birth of the Russian Muslim intelligentsia during the Revolution of 1905, this conceptual history provides important insights about the self-perception and societal positioning of the Russian Muslim intelligentsia. Most

Islam in Russia, Central Asia and Western China (19th-20th Centuries),” challenges and offers an exception to this consensus.

⁸ See for instance, Ivanov-Razumnik, *Chto takoe intelligentsiia?* (Berlin: Skythen, 1920); Martin Malia, “What is the Intelligentsia?,” in *The Russian Intelligentsia*, ed. Richard Pipes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 1-18; Daniel R. Brower, “The Problem of the Russian Intelligentsia,” in *Slavic Review*, 1967 26(4); Andrzej Walicki, “Polish Conceptions of the Intelligentsia and Its Calling,” in *Slavica Lundensia*, 2005 (22): 1-22; M. L. Gasparov, “Intellectually, intelligenty, intelligentnost’,” in *Russkaia intelligentsia*, ed. M. Kniazevskaia (Moscow: Nauka, 1999); and Jerzy Jedlicki ed. *A History of the Polish Intelligentsia* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014).

⁹ *Tatarskaia entsiklopediia* (Kazan: Institut Tatarskoi Entsiklopedii, 2002-14).

importantly, it highlights how Muslim intellectuals modeled themselves after the Russian, Polish, and, other intelligentsias in conceiving themselves as an intelligentsia, partly due to Gasprinskiy's notable role in translating Russian conceptions of the intelligentsia into the Russian Muslim context. It also documents how the early Russian Muslim intelligentsia perceived themselves as a secular societal force responsible for and in charge of bringing progress to Russia's Muslims and, importantly, as distinct from the *ulama*, or the network of Islamic scholars. Therefore, although one might conceptualize the Russian Muslim intelligentsia for purposes of historical analysis as broadly including at least some Islamic scholars, this has to be done with caution, because the early-twentieth-century Russian Muslim language of practice designated the "intelligentsia" as a more specific cohort of lay activists. This designation did not automatically exclude individuals with an Islamic education – especially since opportunities for lay education remained significantly limited for most Muslims in the empire. For inclusion, however, it required commitment to a modernist and secularist mode of progress as promoted by Gasprinskiy, his likes, and their followers among Russia's Muslims.¹⁰ The term "Jadidism" would inherit this connotation from its precursor "intelligentsia" when it became popular in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1905.

An understanding of the conceptual history of "intelligentsia" among Russia's Muslims becomes even more critical in light of a relatively new intervention in the field that aims to enable alternative pathways of study in the historiography of Eurasia's

¹⁰ On this secularist and modernist mode of progress, see Lazzarini, "Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism", 144-281; and Tuna, *Imperial Russia's*, 146-170.

Muslims by undermining the reified image of Jadidism. We should first grant that the term “Jadidism” and the phenomena it has come to designate have indeed been reified in scholarship repeatedly to warp public discourse in politically charged ways.¹¹ We should also acknowledge that explorations beyond what its critics have called the “Jadidocentric scholarship” have actually enabled invaluable contributions to the field.¹² Yet, perhaps

¹¹ See critiques of this scholarship in the above-mentioned journal issue: Devin DeWeese, “It was a Dark and Stagnant Night (‘til the Jadids Brought the Light): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of “Central Asia,” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2): 37-92; Jeff Eden, Paolo Sartori and Devin DeWeese, “Moving beyond Modernism: Rethinking Cultural Change in Muslim Eurasia (19th-20th Centuries),” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2): 1-36; and Allen J. Frank, “Muslim Cultural Decline in Imperial Russia: A Manufactured Crisis,” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2): 166-92. Also see Mustafa Tuna, “Zapadnaia literatura istorii Tatar 18go-nachala 20go vv.,” in *Istoriia Tatar s drevneishikh vremen*, ed. Il’ dus Zagidullin (Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani, 2013), 42-46.

¹² See for instance the classics Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789-1889: der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1998); and Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: the Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2001); as well as the recent contributions in the above mentioned issue, Rozaliya Garipova, “The Protectors of Religion and Community: Traditionalist Muslim

expectedly, the self-conscious attempt to debunk the “Jadidocentric scholarship” has also produced its own biases and blind spots. Most conspicuously, some of the most forceful articulations of this incipient anti-Jadidist literature obfuscate – if not disregard – the origins of both the term “Jadidism” and the phenomena it has come to represent. They identify “Jadidism” almost exclusively in Central Asia, almost completely divorced from its Crimean, Volga-Ural, and indirectly Ottoman Westernist precursors. And while trying to link it to transregional Muslim puritanist movements, they downplay – if not completely ignore – the Westernist, positivist, and secularist agendas of both the Russian and Central Asian Jadidisms.¹³ The literature on Jadidism has already identified religious and secularist versions of Russian Muslim reformism as two intertwined but otherwise distinct intellectual pathways.¹⁴ Additionally, the findings of this article demonstrate that

Scholars of the Volga-Ural Region at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2): 126-65; and Nathan Spannaus, “The Ur-Text of Jadidism: Abū Naṣr Qūrṣāwī’s Irshād and the Historiography of Muslim Modernism in Russia,” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2): 93-125.

¹³ See for instance DeWeese, “It was a Dark”; Eden, Sartori and DeWeese, “Moving beyond”; and Paolo Sartori, “Ijtihād in Bukhara: Central Asian Jadidism and Local Genealogies of Cultural Change,” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2016 59(1-2): 193-236.

¹⁴ In addition to Edward Lazzarini’s above-cited work, see Ahmet Kanlıdere, *Reform within Islam: The Tadjid and Jadid Movement among the Kazan Tatars, 1809-1917*:

a Russian Muslim intelligentsia, as the precursor to what later became known as the “Jadidist movement,” was born at the turn of the twentieth century in European Russia. Moreover, Gasprinskiy’s late-nineteenth-century publications about a lay societal vanguard to lead Russia’s Muslims into secularly-defined progress played a crucial role in the self-identification of the members of this intelligentsia.

Preparing for a Russian Muslim Intelligentsia

The earliest reference to a Russian Muslim intelligentsia that I was able to identify belongs to Gasprinskiy. This is not surprising for two reasons. First, Gasprinskiy had received most of his education in Russian schools and developed intimate familiarity with the Russian intellectual circles at a time when the Russian intelligentsia gained striking visibility. And second, while narrative sources in manuscript form demonstrate an intellectual revival among the Islamic scholars of Russia’s Muslims beginning in the mid-eighteenth century and continuing into the Soviet era,¹⁵ censorship requirements limited contributions to this revival in print media at least until the late-nineteenth century. In an environment where the tsarist administration especially kept the periodical press beyond

Conciliation or Conflict? (Istanbul: Eren, 1997). Being based on the author’s dissertation with little improvement, this book lacks sophistication in many respects, but it is valuable for distinguishing between the religious and secularist versions of Russian Muslim reformism.

¹⁵ On this revival, see Frank, “Muslim Cultural”.

the reach of Muslim publishers,¹⁶ Gasprinskiy published the only long-lived and Muslim-owned periodical in the empire between 1883 and 1914.¹⁷ He was interested in the role of the intelligentsia as agents of social and cultural progress. It would be misleading to suggest that Islamic scholars were disinterested in improving the circumstances of their coreligionists, but they saw improvement in the revival of existing Muslim institutions,¹⁸ whereas Gasprinskiy pursued the adoption of new institutions and modes of thinking with European origins. And unlike other lay Muslim intellectuals who could also have been interested in the idea of an intelligentsia as agents of secular progress, Gasprinskiy owned a periodical by which to promote his ideas.

¹⁶ A few exceptional Muslim-owned periodicals published in the late-nineteenth century prove the rule in this regard, for they were soon closed by censorship. See Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La presse et le mouvement national chez les musulmans de Russie avant 1920* (Paris: Mouton, 1964), 21-33.

¹⁷ On *Tercüman*, see Edward J. Lazzerini, “Ismail Bey Gasprinskii’s Perevodchik/Tercüman: A Clarion of Modernism,” in *Central Asian Monuments*, ed. Hasan B. Paksoy (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992), 143-56. A longer-lived periodical for Muslims was published by the governorship of the Turkestan Gubernia in Central Asia: *Turkestanskie Vedomosti/Türkistan Vilayetiniñ Gazeti* (1870-1917). It was owned and edited by tsarist authorities, but Muslim authors could submit contributions, and therefore it would be interesting to see if the idea of the “intelligentsia” ever appeared in this journal.

¹⁸ Garipova, “The Protectors”.

Gasprinskiy named this periodical *Tercüman*, meaning “translator,” which he simultaneously published in a parallel Russian edition to satisfy censorship requirements until 1905 under the name *Perevodchik*, again meaning “translator.” In 1886, he wrote an editorial in this periodical where he expressed his hope for the formation of an “intelligentsia” among Russia’s Muslims.¹⁹ Early on in his career, Gasprinskiy would typically write his essays in Russian and then either have someone translate them into Turkic or translate himself.²⁰ These were usually loose translations, and both his choices

¹⁹ İsmâ’îl Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem’iyet/Intelligentsia,” *Tercüman/Perevodchik*, 4 March 1886 and 7 March 1886.

²⁰ Lazzarini, “Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism”, 22. Gasprinskiy wrote primarily in Crimean Tatar, his native tongue, but aspired to create a shared language for the Turkic speaking Muslims of the Russian empire and, unless explicitly specified, he addressed this broadly-defined population from Eastern Europe to Central Asia in his writings. He often used the term “Tatar” to refer to his audience and their language, but he also used the terms “Türk” or “Türki” (Turkic), and a careful analysis would reveal that in either case, he usually meant the Turkic-speaking Muslims outside of the Ottoman Empire, not the smaller populations of the Crimean Tatars or the Kazan Tatars in the Volga-Ural region. Such ethnic designations solidified later, from the early-twentieth century on and especially in the Soviet era. Therefore, I will give preference to the terms “Turkic” and “Muslim” in this article but preserve the originals of other designators in quoting other sources. On Gasprinskiy’s conceptions of linguistic and national identity as well as the repercussions of these conceptions among Russia’s Muslims, see Lazzarini,

in translation and the differences in the Russian and Turkic versions of his essays can sometimes be quite revealing.²¹ This is the case with his 1886 editorial on the intelligentsia. He names the Russian version of the article simply “*Intelligentsia*,” but in the absence of a corresponding term in Turkic, he improvises and uses “*Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet*” (Pillars of Society). Thus, we can conclude that Gasprinskiy was not simply translating a term in this editorial; he was introducing a new concept to his Turkic-speaking Muslim audience.²²

The choice of “Pillars of Society” to denote “intelligentsia” as well as Gasprinskiy’s remarks in the body of the editorial indicate how he imagined the concept of intelligentsia at this inaugural moment. First of all, they reveal a strongly elitist approach. As Gasprinskiy writes:

“Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism”, 207-36; Mustafa Özgür Tuna, “Gaspıralı v. Il’minskii: Two Identity Projects for the Muslims of the Russian Empire,” in *Nationalities Papers*, 2002 30(2): 265-89; and Timur Kocaoğlu, “Tercüman Gazetesi’nin Dili ve Coğrafyası,” in *Ismail Bey Gaspıralı İçin*, ed. Hakan Kırımlı (Ankara: Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Yayınları, 2004), 215-27. For a collection of Gasprinskiy’s writings on issues of language and identity, see İsmâ‘îl Gasprinskiy, *Ismail Gaspıralı: Seçilmiş Eserleri III: Dil-Edebiyat-Seyahat Yazıları*, ed. Yavuz Akpınar (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2008), 25-199.

²¹ In this article, I will use both the Russian and Turkic versions of Gasprinskiy’s texts and indicate differences only when significant.

²² Gasprinskiy, “*Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet*”, 4 March 1886.

It is known that the people who constitute and organize a society are not all at the same level. They differ in wealth, intellect, morality, knowledge, and skills. Differences in circumstances confer on people different purposes in life too. Each individual thinks about themselves and their own interests, but thinking for the community belongs to and concerns only those who are more advanced in intellect and morality. These people constitute an extremely important and vital part of any given society and are usually called the ‘intelligentsia’ of a society or people (*narod*) / ([or in Turkic:] we can call them ‘pillars’ (*erkân*), ‘pole’ (*direk*), or ‘leading notables’ (*atalıq*)).

A society without this elite, in Gasprinskiy’s opinion, is like a “helpless orphan” or “corpse without head.”²³ He expects the “pillars of society” to have a concern for ordinary people and to have knowledge, understanding, goodwill, and wealth that they could put in the society’s service. He also wants them to be willing to make sacrifices, by “braving personal harm and exertion,” in order to help society acquire the “necessary circumstances, education, and ideas for its prosperity and progress.”²⁴

Students of the Russian intelligentsia will recognize in Gasprinskiy’s language references to the discourse of the Russian Populists who wanted to “go to the people” in the 1870s, to the activism of the “small deeds liberals” in the 1880s, as well as to the

²³ Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet”, 4 March 1886.

²⁴ Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet”, 4 March 1886.

Russian intelligentsia's overall trope of self-sacrifice for societal improvement.²⁵

Gasprinskiy was certainly looking up to the Russian intelligentsia as a model. First of all, as we have already mentioned, he was intimately familiar with Russia's intellectual environment. He had studied at the Moscow Military Academy in 1865-67 and befriended the family of the famous Panslavist Mikhail Katkov (1818-87), who at this time was editing the conservative newspaper *Moskovskie vedomosti*.²⁶ And second, Gasprinskiy himself refers to the Russian intelligentsia as the model for his conception of the "pillars of society" among Muslims. He writes that until Peter I, the Russians did not have an intelligentsia either. They had nobility, clergy, merchantry, and peasantry but not

²⁵ For an overview of Russian Populism, see David Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform 1801-1881* (New York: Longman, 1992); and for the history of the movement by one of its ideological leaders, see Pëtr L. Lavrov, *Narodniki-propagandisty 1873-78 godov* (St. Petersburg: Tip. T-va Andersona i Loitsianskogo, 1907). On small deeds liberalism, see George Fischer, *Russian Liberalism: From Gentry to Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 1-41. On the later appropriation of "small deeds" liberalism by Russian Muslim reformists, see Ross, "From the Minbar", 191, 234-40, and 257. On the trope of "self-sacrifice," which Laurie Manchester relates to Orthodox martyrdom, see Laurie Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 123-54 and 179-201.

²⁶ Cafer Seydahmet Kırımer, *Gaspıralı İsmail Bey* (Istanbul: Türk Anonim Şirketi, 1934), 13-15.

a distinct class in society to show others the “better way” and to think about “the common good.” Peter I changed this situation in Gasprinskiy’s opinion by giving “orders for the education and intellectual development of his country,” by opening “necessary schools,” and by bringing the “sciences and knowledge of Europe to Russia.” This gave birth to the Russian intelligentsia, Gasprinskiy concludes, and already by Catherine II’s time, its intelligentsia enabled Russia to occupy a place among the “educated” and “powerful” nations of the world.²⁷

Thus, Gasprinskiy had a particular image of the Russian intelligentsia as he was translating this concept into the Russian Muslim domain. He was not thinking about the radical revolutionaries that have otherwise come to define popular conceptions of the Russian intelligentsia, as idealized in Sergei Nechaev’s “Catechism of a Revolutionary” or Nikolai Chernyshevskii’s cult novel *What is to Be Done*.²⁸ Rather, he was referring to a competent, focused, and patriotic vanguard that in his opinion led Russian society into “prosperity and progress” through positive action. He wanted the tsarist empire’s Muslims to have their own progressive vanguard.

But who could serve in that capacity? Paralleling his analysis of the Russian society before Peter I, Gasprinskiy identifies three estates among Russia’s Muslims as potential candidates for this purpose: nobility, merchantry, and the Islamic scholars. He

²⁷ Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem’iyet”, 4 March 1886.

²⁸ Ivanov-Razumnik, *Istoriia russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli* (1907; reprint Moscow: Respublika, 1997) has had an important role in the consolidation of the anti-establishment image of the Russian intelligentsia.

thinks the Muslim nobility enjoys both the trust of the state and the respect of the broader Muslim population, and it would be “justifiable to expect them” to exert themselves in leading their coreligionists “on the path of enlightenment and prosperity.” However, he finds the Muslim nobles and merchants lacking in “progress and enlightenment” themselves. “Dear reader,” he asks rhetorically, “have you ever seen a Russian nobleman who is illiterate in Russian? ... But I assure you that there are hundreds of Muslim nobles who are illiterate in their native language!” The Islamic scholars, he writes, know what they study, but he finds what they study not to be of consequence in advancing society. “If their knowledge was broad and comprehensive,” he laments, “then their life and works would be significant.” But their exclusive focus on “religion and morality,” in Gasprinskiy’s opinion, disqualifies Islamic scholars from becoming the pillars of society.²⁹ Thus, he comes to the “sad conclusion that the Muslim society does not have an ‘intelligentsia’ yet. Nobody enlightens it, nobody points out its ailments, nobody helps it out of the sea of ignorance, and nobody sacrifices their labor or even tears for their benefit.”³⁰

However, Gasprinskiy also writes, “we cannot afford to lose our hope,” and prophesizes that “sooner or later” Russia’s Muslims will have “new people with new ideas, high character, and sufficient means” to lead the society.³¹ This last note is congruent with Gasprinskiy’s efforts as an intellectual himself. As it has been well

²⁹ Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet”, 7 March 1886.

³⁰ Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet”, 7 March 1886.

³¹ Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet”, 7 March 1886.

studied in the literature, Gasprinskiy devoted his adult life to producing those “new people” among Russia’s Muslims through his publications, such as *Tercüman*, and through his educational initiatives.³² And his efforts were quite consequential too. However, seeing the fruits of his work would require time, and time was filled with frustrations and agony. Gasprinskiy revisited the issue of intelligentsia at least three more times before the Revolution of 1905.

In an essay in 1892, he was still experimenting with the term “pillars” for a possible translation. Thus, he chose “*Nasha intelligentsia*” (Our Intelligentsia) for his title in Russian and “*Erkân-ı Milliye*” (Pillars of Nation) in Turkic. He starts the Russian version of this essay with an emphatic question: “Splendid title, isn’t it?” Then he discloses sarcastically that he will actually write about the “absence” of a Muslim intelligentsia, “because,” he explains, “the Muslim society does not have such an intellectually developed societal layer that will define the tone of life, lead the masses, and carry itself as a model for them.” “The most lamentable aspect of Russia’s Muslims is that they do not have such a class,” he adds, “of enlightened men who are familiar with

³² The best English-language work on Gasprinskiy remains to Lazzerini, “Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism”. In Turkish, see ,Kırimer, *Gaspıralı*; and the contributions to Hakan Kırımlı ed. *İsmail Bey Gaspıralı İçin* (Ankara: Kırım Türkleri Gençlik ve Yardımlaşma Derneği, 2004). A semi-autobiographical serialized but unfinished novella that Gasprinskiy published in 1905-06 also highlights his self-image as an intellectual: *Qart Agay* (İsmâ‘îl Bey Gasprinskiy), “Gün Doğdu,” *Tercüman*,” 9 November 1905-6 February 1906 (with irregular intervals).

the affairs of life and the conditions of the world or who have the time to show the way to [the people] and to help and inform them: in short, ‘pillars of nation.’” He gives credit to Islamic scholars for being the society’s pillars in religious affairs, but he desires the existence of a similar class to take care of the Muslims’ “worldly affairs.” At this point, Gasprinskiy broadens his comparative perspective and interjects: “Even the Georgians, Armenians, and Jews have already surpassed Muslims” thanks to the efforts of their “intellectual strata.”³³

Nevertheless, in this essay, Gasprinskiy parts from his position in 1886 slightly and writes that Russia actually has hundreds of Muslims with higher education and many more with secondary education who can serve as a vanguard to build “intellectual life” for their coreligionists. Presently, however, he considers these educated Muslims to be good for nothing other than “getting bored, grieving, and not being able to find anything to do.” He entreats them to “liven up and fulfill the productive and noble purpose of their lives by benefiting both themselves and the society.” Similar to Pëtr Lavrov (1823-1900) who calls on the “critically thinking individuals” among educated Russians to pay back to society in his *Historical Letters* published as a book in 1870,³⁴ Gasprinskiy asserts that “We, the advanced Muslims, ... are obliged to think about our lesser brothers ... and sacrifice ourselves for the education, progress, happiness, and wellbeing of the people

³³ İsmâ’îl Gasprinskiy, “Erkân-ı Milliye/Nasha intelligentsia,” *Tercüman/Perevodchik*, 23 April 1892.

³⁴ Peter Lavrov, *Historical Letters*, trans. James P. Scanlan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), especially 107-81.

that we belong to.” And he invites those “advanced Muslims” to mobilize to this end. He reasons that if each “advanced Muslim” did “something good and useful, albeit insignificant by itself,” the sum of those small deeds would amount to a “big deal.”³⁵

In 1893, Gasprinskiy gives up “*erkân*” (pillars) to express “intelligentsia” in Turkic, and starts to experiment with “*ziyâli*” (enlightened) instead. He writes an essay titled “An Address to *Intellectual/Enlightened* Muslims” – “*Slovo k intelligentyim musul'manam*” in Russian and “*Ziyâli Müsülmanlara (Bir Hitâb)*” in Turkic. In the Russian version of this essay, he refers to “our intellectuals” (*nashi intelligenty*) without giving a definition and therefore assuming that his readers are already familiar with the term. In the Turkic version, however, he describes “enlightened Muslims” as “somewhat more knowledgeable and educated when compared to the dark masses” and also “informed about the conditions of the times, familiar with the practical sciences pertaining to life, and versed in the Russian and other languages.” Finally, in his concluding sentence of the Turkic version of the essay, Gasprinskiy also refers to “*ziyâlilar*” in the plural as a substantive, which comes closest to a one-word replacement for “intelligentsia.”³⁶

Gasprinskiy actually uses “*ziyâli*” in a less conspicuous way and in adjectival form in his 1886 essay when he translates the Russian phrase “*intelligenyi sloi*”

³⁵ Gasprinskiy, “*Erkân-ı Milliye*”, 23 April 1892.

³⁶ İsmâ’îl Gasprinskiy, “*Ziyâli Müsülmanlara (Bir Hitâb)/Slovo k intelligentyim musul'manam*,” *Tercüman/Perevodchik*, 25 March 1893. Parentheses in the original, emphases mine.

(intellectual stratum) as “*ziyâli âdemler*” (enlightened men).³⁷ Yet he does not seem to have made a conscious choice to relate “*intelligent*” (a member of the intelligentsia) and “*ziyâli*” (enlightened) at that point yet. Then, in his 1892 essay, he matches “*umstvenno razvityi*” (mentally developed) with “*ziyâli fehimli*” (enlightened understanding),³⁸ and in an 1888 installment of a serialized novel, he translates “*ziyâli*,” again in adjectival form, simply as “*dobryi*,” meaning “good.”³⁹ Therefore, Gasprinskiy’s use of “*ziyâli*” to translate “*intelligentnyi*” and of “*ziyâlular*” for “intellectuals” in his “address” in 1893 is significant to mark the introduction of a Turkic substantive for “intellectuals.”

Nevertheless, “intellectuals” in the plural is different from “intelligentsia” as a collective body with a purpose, and despite the introduction of “*ziyâlular*” as a substantive for “intellectuals” in this essay, Gasprinskiy does not seem to have changed his position from the previous year about the absence of a Russian Muslim intelligentsia. He does not think that the Muslim intellectuals in Russia had assumed social responsibility, a marker of intelligentsia status in his opinion. He writes in agreement with what he presents as a common complaint among Muslim intellectuals: “It is completely true that our Muslim people are one of the most backward,” and adds, “the level of their knowledge and the productivity of their labor and industry stagnate behind necessary and desirable levels.” But he also chastises the Muslim intellectuals for their inertia:

³⁷ Gasprinskiy, “*Erkân-ı Cem‘iyet*”, 4 March 1886.

³⁸ Gasprinskiy, “*Erkân-ı Milliye*”, 23 April 1892.

³⁹ İsmâ‘îl Gasprinskiy, “*Frengistan Mektubları*,” *Tercümân*, 14 March 1888.

Complaining from a distance and disdain from above does not confer pride to the intellectuals (*ziyâhılar*) or benefit to the ignorant ... We do not talk to them [the ordinary Muslims]. How can they listen? We do not show them the way. How can they walk? We do not advise them. How can they keep our advice?

Then, he issues one more call to action. He asks the Muslim intellectuals to write instructive books, to open schools of general and practical knowledge, to introduce technical advancements in agriculture and industry to Muslims, and in general, to improve societal affairs among Muslims.⁴⁰

Finally, in yet another essay in 1904, Gasprinskiy still does not seem to have come to the conclusion that Muslim intellectuals in Russia had fulfilled their societal obligation. His Russian-language title for this essay is again “*Nasha intelligentsia*” (Our Intelligentsia). But, although he continues to refer to “intellectuals” as “*ziyâhılar*” in the text, he chooses “*Bizim Tabaka-yı ‘Âliye*” (Our High Class) for a Turkic title, indicating that he was yet to settle for a satisfactory translation of “intelligentsia.” This ambivalence of terms also reflects his continuing doubts about the absence of an actual intelligentsia among Russia’s Muslims. He asks: “do we, the Muslims of Russia and especially the Turkic tribes, have an intelligentsia?” “From one point of view,” he answers, “we do” – and that refers to the presence of educated individuals – from another point of view, however, “if we apply to these people the least measure that determines the features and

⁴⁰ Gasprinskiy, “Ziyalı Müsülmanlara”, 25 March 1893.

meaning of ‘intelligentsia’ among all other nations and peoples, then our hundreds of intellectuals (*ziyâhilar*) do not amount to an intelligentsia at all.”⁴¹

In this essay, perhaps reflecting the growing politicization of the population in the tsarist empire, Gasprinskiy adds one more measure, which was implied but not spelled out previously, to his defining criteria for the intelligentsia status, that is, national consciousness. He remarks sarcastically:

History does not know such an original ‘type’ of intelligent as ours. He is a good, ordinary, reliable person in the capacity of a lawyer, government official, officer, physician, or engineer, but in specific terms, he does not know who he is. He knows that he is not Armenian, Georgian, or Jewish, but that is it / ([or in Turkic:] but they do not know that they belong to the Turkic nation (*Türk qavmi*)) ... There is no nation or smaller people whose intelligentsia is not interested in his native tongue, native literature, poetry and history, but our intellectuals do not want to know anything about that ... Sometimes [our intellectual] can even do philanthropy, but his philanthropy never concerns his own people. He is for himself and the people are for themselves.

“Therefore,” Gasprinskiy concludes in the Russian version, “we have educated Tatars but we do not have a Tatar intelligentsia.”

⁴¹ İsmâ’îl Gasprinskiy, “Bizim Tabaka-yı ‘Âliye/Nasha intelligentsia,”

Tercüman/Perevodchik, 20 April 1904.

Nonetheless, Gasprinskiy maintains his usual optimism and ends this essay on a positive note too: “This situation is beginning to change and signs of ideas ... as well as patriotic exertion are starting to appear. All of our affairs are at the beginning stage, but the progress and completion of an affair depends on its beginning. Thankfully, beginnings exist. We hear about them. We see them.”⁴²

One might be tempted to dismiss these four essays as isolated texts that have appeared over a period of eighteen years in a periodical the circulation of which did not exceed a few thousands at peak among the Russian empire’s near twenty-million Muslims.⁴³ That dismissal would be justified if we turned to them to prove the existence of a Muslim intelligentsia in the tsarist empire before the revolution of 1905. To the contrary, however, the point here is that Gasprinskiy’s observations and word choices indicate the absence of both a Russian Muslim intelligentsia and the concept of “intelligentsia” among Russia’s Muslims. In fact, Sultan Mecîd Ganîzâde’s Turkic-Russian dictionary and the second edition of Ğabdulqayyûm Nâsirî’s Russian-Tatar dictionary, both published in 1904, also

⁴² Gasprinskiy, “Bizim Tabaka”, 20 April 1904

⁴³ On *Tercüman*’s print count, see Diliara M. Usmanova, “K voprosu o tirazhakh musul’ manskikh periodicheskikh izdanii Rossii nachala 20 veka” (paper presented at Ismail Gasprinskii – prosvetitel’ narodov Vostoka, k 150-letiiu co dnia rozhdeniia, Moscow, 2001), 211-14. Because of a typographical error, Usmanova’s higher estimate appears as “500” instead of “5,000.”

confirm this point. Neither dictionary features the word “*intelligentsia*” or a corresponding term in Turkic.⁴⁴

The Birth of the Russian Muslim Intelligentsia

Gasprinskiy did not reach a very large audience with *Tercüman*, but until 1905, *Tercüman* was the only widely circulating periodical in a Muslim language in the tsarist empire. As such, it provided the primary medium for facilitating what came close to a reading public among Russia’s secularly educated progressive Muslims.⁴⁵ When a Muslim intelligentsia eventually emerged in the wake of the Revolution of 1905, as it has been commonly acknowledged in the historiography, it came out of this progressive network. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect Gasprinskiy’s conceptualization of the intelligentsia in *Tercüman* to have a direct impact on the self-definition and sensitivities of a Russian Muslim intelligentsia. Of course, as we have also pointed out,

⁴⁴ Ğabdulqayyûm Nâsirî, *Polnyi russko-tatarskii slovar*, 2nd ed. (Kazan: Tipografiiia İmperatorskogo Universiteta, 1904); and Sultan Mecîd Ganîzâde, *Lügât-ı Türkî ve Rusî*, 1st ed. (Baku: Tipografiia Pervogo Tipograskogo Tovarishchestva, 1904). Ganîzâde’s dictionary is more representative of South Caucasus Turkic.

⁴⁵ Kırımer, *Gaspıralı*, 62-66; and Ahmed Zeki Velidi Togan, *Bugünkü Türkili: Türkistan ve Yakın Tarihi* (Istanbul: Arkadaş, İbrahim Horoz ve Güven Basımevleri, 1942), 556. For a study about the geographical reach of *Tercüman*’s readership, see Kocaoğlu, “Tercüman”, 215-27.

Gasprinskiy was not writing in a vacuum. He was closely following and was visibly influenced by the Russian-language public discourse on the intelligentsia. And the future members of the Russian Muslim intelligentsia would also access and appropriate that discourse in their own terms, without Gasprinskiy's mediation or even in contradiction to his interpretations. However, this does not take away from the seminal importance of Gasprinskiy's preparatory work for more than two decades before 1905.

Three documents indicating the birth of a Russian Muslim intelligentsia in the revolutionary period testify to this point and also reveal the implications, limits, and utility of the concept of intelligentsia among Russia's Muslims at the moment of the birth of a Russian Muslim intelligentsia. These documents were filed in the personal archive of Fâtih Kerîmî (1870-1937), a well-connected and politically active yet moderate, progressive intellectual who owned a successful Muslim print house in Orenburg in 1905 and can in many respects be considered a mentee of Gasprinskiy.⁴⁶ The documents seem to have entered Kerîmî's archive either to be printed as flyers at his print house or because of his participation in their creation. One of the documents is typed in two slightly different copies with

⁴⁶ On Fâtih Kerîmî, see Raif Mârdanov, Ramil Miñnullin and Sülâyman Râximov eds., *Fatih Kârimi* (Kazan: Ruhayat, 2000), especially 7-14, where Mirkasym Usmanov presents Kerîmî as a "model intellectual." Also see Fâtih Kerîmî's notes on visiting the Crimea to receive Gasprinskiy's advice about how to further his education and career in Fatih Kerimi, *Kırım'a Seyahat*, trans. Hayri Ataş (Istanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat, 2004).

small corrections, indicating an editorial process, and significantly, all three documents are in Russian, perhaps because the Turkic languages of the empire had not yet acquired the vocabulary to articulate their content.

The first document is the bylaw of a certain “Muslim Circle (*kruzhok*) of Petersburg Students.” It lacks a date but was placed among other documents from 1905. The bylaw’s authors announce three sets of objectives for their circle with regard to its members, the “intelligentsia,” and “the popular mass with its clergy (*dukhovenstvo*).” The first set of objectives involves improving the cultural level of Muslim students and increasing their social and political consciousness to “present to the general mass of the Muslim intelligentsia individuals with reinforced feelings about religious and national awareness.”⁴⁷ Hence, the bylaw’s authors seem to have expected the circle’s student members to graduate into an already existing “Muslim intelligentsia.”

Most Muslim students in the Russian empire were attendees of madrasas that provided exclusively religious training, but in the 1890s, a few of these madrasas started to reform their curricula by introducing secular subjects.⁴⁸ Therefore, a small cohort of students received partly secularized education in those reformed madrasas, and some others attended government schools, including the occasional ones designed particularly

⁴⁷ Natsional’nyi arkhiv respubliki Tatarstana (NART), f. 1370 (Fâtiḥ Kerîmî’s Personal Documents), op. 1, d. 1, ll. 7-9ob (Musul’manskii kruzhok Peterburgskikh studentov).

⁴⁸ On reformed madrasas, see Röstäm Mähdiev ed. *Mädräsälärdä Kitap Kıştāse* (Kazan: Tatarstan Kitap Näşriyatı, 1992); and Tuna, “Madrasa Reform”, 540-70.

for Muslims, such as the Kazan Tatar Teachers' School.⁴⁹ As there was no madrasa in St. Petersburg, Muslim students normally came to the city to pursue lay education, and reportedly, a few recent graduates from reformed madrasas and government schools were also heading toward St. Petersburg for political activism at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵⁰

The authors of this bylaw probably targeted and were themselves lay students or recent graduates in St. Petersburg. They seem to have considered madrasa students who studied with religious aspirations and wanted to move into religious occupational positions upon graduation as belonging to the “clergy” and distinct from the intelligentsia. In the narrative of the bylaw, the “intelligentsia” stands apart from the “dark mass” with an accentuated responsibility to teach and guide it while the clergy belongs to the “dark mass,” albeit as one of its prominent constituents. Hence, the bylaw’s authors ask the circle’s members “to reinforce contacts with” the broader Muslim population, “earn the confidence and sympathy of this dark mass,” and establish active relations with the “clergy” to that end.

This sense of responsibility to the “popular mass” and to the objectives of the circle regarding the Muslim intelligentsia bears the stamp of Gasprinskiy’s precedence

⁴⁹ On Kazan Tatar Teachers' School, Rezeda Rifovna Iskhakova, “Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie v Kazanskoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine 19-nachale 20 vv.” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Russian Academy of Education, 2002), 139-90.

⁵⁰ See Salavat M. Iskhakov, *Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia i Musul'mane Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Sotsial'no politicheskaia MISL', 2007), 78-83.

and indicates that the bylaw's authors were well aware of the methods and historical background of the Russian as well as other intelligentsias. They envision the ultimate outcome of their interaction with the broader Muslim population and, therefore, the *raison d'être* of the circle along with the Muslim intelligentsia, as "serving the purpose of Muslim enlightenment and philanthropy." They write: "in the Caucasus, Orenburg, the Crimea, and Kazan, there are already people who open schools, make generous donations, build mosques, in short, serve the purpose of Muslim enlightenment and philanthropy in one way or another." In more practical terms, the authors outline aspects of "Muslim enlightenment" as "fighting fanaticism, promoting European education, improving the condition of women, detecting the local genuine needs of the population, etc." Hence, similar to Gasprinskiy's earlier position, the bylaw's authors hold the Muslim intelligentsia responsible to the broader Russian Muslim society in a patriotic sense and conceive that responsibility as inducing social and cultural transformation following European models.

The bylaw sets the student circle's primary objective regarding the Muslim intelligentsia as securing and preserving the intelligentsia's unity. To this end, the authors urge members of the intelligentsia to meet individually and with their families in private gatherings as well as in social events. Then, they encourage the circle's student members to criticize the existing Muslim intelligentsia's "old and new forms of servility" unsparingly.⁵¹ Although what the authors mean with this phrase remains somewhat unclear, it is likely that they were referring to an issue that Gasprinskiy had raised before

⁵¹ NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 7-9ob.

when he complained about the disinterestedness of educated Muslims in the empire. In his essay from 1904, the “old teacher” or the “father,” as the new generation of progressive Muslims would refer to Gasprinskiy now,⁵² criticizes the Muslim intellectuals’ unconscientious effort to excel in their professional careers or become cultivated in ways defined by a cosmopolitan high culture filtered through the sensitivities of the Russian educated society while failing to promote or even learn about their native culture.⁵³ And the criticism of this attitude of servility closely matches the tone of the Muslim student circle’s bylaw in Kerîmî’s archive.

Finally, the bylaw anticipates the emergence of “core groups” in ten to fifteen years among the members of the intelligentsia in all places with a Muslim population. If this happens, the authors promise, each “intellectual, government employee, or merchant will find moral and perhaps material support from their co-believers” in these groups. Hence, it seems that while the authors assume the existence of a Muslim intelligentsia, with Muslim government employees and merchants as its natural participants or allies, they also aspire to mold the Muslim intelligentsia into an easier-to-mobilize organization in the model of the various networks and movements that the Russian and other intelligentsias had spawned. Indicating this self-consciously emulative process and paralleling Gasprinskiy’s earlier references to the intelligentsias of other peoples, the

⁵² Tuna, “Gaspıralı v. İl’minskii”, 278.

⁵³ Gasprinskiy, “Bizim Tabaka”, 20 April 1904.

authors write that “the examples of the Jewish, Polish, and other circles” inspire them with hope for “the complete realization of their ideas.”⁵⁴

The second document in Kerîmî’s archive with a reference to the “Muslim intelligentsia” is an address “To All the Muslims of Russia.” It also comes from St. Petersburg and some references in the text date it to May 1905. The St. Petersburgian origin of the text and its language suggest that it may have been written by the same authors who had prepared the above bylaw, but this is not explicitly stated in the document. The text sounds like a political appeal pronouncing all the grievances that Russia’s Muslims had accumulated against the tsarist regime until 1905 in hopes of mobilizing the Muslim elites to claim their “rights.” However, what stands out from the point of view of the present essay is that the authors of the address call themselves the “organizing circle (*kruzhok*) of the *Muslim intelligentsia* in St. Petersburg.” They write:

Taking [the principle that] ‘power is in unity’ as their maxim and with a burning desire to help the awakening of Muslims, Muslim intellectuals from the Caucasus, the Crimea, Siberia, Ufa, and other places founded an organizing circle of the Muslim intelligentsia in St. Petersburg in May 1905.⁵⁵

The address pronounces some of the objectives and principles of this circle as serving the cultural development of Muslims in Russia, acting legally,

⁵⁴ NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 7-9ob; and Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s*, 181-82.

⁵⁵ NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 21-23ob (K vsem Musul’manam Rossii); second copy in 24-26ob. Emphasis mine.

working for the achievement of unity among Muslims, and bringing other Muslim intellectuals from all parts of the empire to the circle. Once again, we can notice that while the authors of the address assume the existence of a Muslim intelligentsia, they expect it to evolve beyond an aggregate of individual intellectuals – similar to Gasprinskiy – to fulfill its functions. This fulfillment requires a capacity to mobilize and act for change, and therefore the authors want the existing Muslim intellectuals to organize into a more coherent structure.⁵⁶

Lastly, the third document from Kerîmî's archive is a petition to the then mufti of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, Muhammedyâr Sultanof. While the first two documents appear to have been prepared by unnamed and relatively young progressive Muslims from St. Petersburg, the authors of this petition were thirty-five Muslim notables, primarily merchants, aristocrats, and landowners, from various gubernias under the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. The occasion leading to their initiative had started with a request by Sergei Witte, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1905, from Mufti Sultanof. Witte had asked the mufti to prepare, in consultation with the Islamic scholars under his jurisdiction, a report about issues concerning the Spiritual Assembly. To this end, the mufti had invited prominent Islamic scholars to a conference in Ufa. But since the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly – along with other spiritual assemblies in the Crimea and the Caucasus region – was the primary administrative institution through which the tsarist state governed its

⁵⁶ NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 21-23ob; second copy in 24-26ob.

Muslim subjects, what concerned the Spiritual Assembly concerned Russia's Muslims broadly. Therefore, the petitioning Muslim notables wanted to be included in the process as well. In their appeal to the mufti, they first provide him with an outline of various issues that they deemed worthy of being discussed at the conference, then they add that "all the Sunnite Muslims in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly demand the participation in this Special Conference of representatives from the *Muslim intelligentsia* and from the trading and producing class alongside the representatives of the clergy." To highlight the importance and necessity of their participation, the Muslim notables explain that "the trading and producing class" and the intelligentsia stand "close to all segments of the Muslim population, are familiar with the Muslims' life, customs, and occasions, and can express the Muslims' needs and wishes."⁵⁷

In the end, the mufti declined the lay Muslim notables' request, and they managed to participate in the conference only as observers.⁵⁸ For the purposes of this article, however, the petition remains significant as it indicates that by 1905, in addition to the self-proclaimed and anonymous Muslim intellectuals, prominent Muslim notables had also recognized the existence of a Muslim intelligentsia

⁵⁷ NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 8-9ob (Ego vysokostepennestvu Gospodinu Orenburgskomu Muftiiu). Emphasis mine.

⁵⁸ For a detailed account of this conference, see İsmail Türkoğlu, *Rusya Türkleri Arasında Yenileşme Hareketinin Öncülerinden Rızaeddin Fahreddin* (Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2000), 127-47.

distinct from both the merchants and the Islamic scholars. This was rather an amorphous group of individuals in terms of their social origins and occupations, as were the Russian or other intelligentsias in the empire, but it was tangible enough to claim a voice on the future of Russia's Muslims. Importantly, as some educated Russian Muslims were now self-identifying as members of an intelligentsia, as a distinct group with obligations to society, they were presuming their own ability to represent that society too.

With the collapse of censorship in the Russian empire in 1905, Gasprinskiy stopped publishing *Perevodchik* and continued to publish *Tercüman* only in Turkic. As a result, we do not have the opportunity to learn from comparing the Russian and Turkic versions of his writings after this point. However, he continued to make several references to “*ziyâhlılar*” and “*ziyâhî Muslims*” in the revolutionary years. A reading of these references does not provide much original content, since in some cases he even copies entire paragraphs from his earlier writings into the new ones. But the unequivocal repetition of the term “*ziyâhlılar*,” it seems, had gradually introduced it to the empire's progressive Muslim reading public as the equivalent of both “*intellectuals*” in the plural and “*intelligentsia*” as a collective body.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ For some of Gasprinskiy's references to “*ziyâhlılar*” between 1906 and 1908, see “Qart Agay (İsmâ'îl Bey Gasprinskiy), “Gün Doğdu,” *Tercüman*”, 1 February 1906 and 6 February 1906; İsmâ'îl Gasprinskiy, “Zamanımız Mes'eleleri,” *Tercüman*, 12 May 1906;

The titles of two of the earliest – yet short-lived – Turkic journals in Russia were *Ziyâ* (1879, *Light*) and *Ziyâ-yı Kavkazya* (1880, *The Light of the Caucasus*).⁶⁰ The light metaphor carries a deep legacy in the Islamic tradition, going as far back as the Qur’an⁶¹ and often signifying divine guidance or divinely inspired knowledge in reference to the quality of light to make things manifest.⁶² In the substantive form that Gasprinskiy used, “*ziyâli*” was probably a calque for the French “*illumine*” (enlightened),⁶³ and its choice – as opposed to a direct translation of the Russian “*intelligent*” or French “*intellectuel*,” both from the

“Mezheb-i İştirakiyyûn,” *Tercüman*, 12 July 1906; “Üçüncü Şûra-yı Ümmet,” *Tercüman*, 1 September 1906; and “Tarihçe-yi Zaman,” *Tercüman*, 1 February 1908.

⁶⁰ Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La presse*, 30.

⁶¹ For instance, see Qur’an, 2:257, 4:174, and 24:35.

⁶² *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1st ed., s.v. “nûr”. For an authentic treatment of the subject by the eleventh-century Islamic scholar Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058–1111), see Al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1998).

⁶³ The Turkish word “*münevver*,” meaning “illuminated,” also acquired the connotation of “intellectual” in the Ottoman Empire in the early-twentieth century. Whether this is related to Gasprinskiy’s “*ziyâli*,” possibly through the mediation of the journal *Türk Yurdu* published by the Kazan Tatar-Ottoman activist Yusuf Akçura, or is also a direct translation of “*illumine*” needs to be explored.

Latin “*intellegere*” (to understand) – brings the positive connotations of the light metaphor in the Islamic tradition to the Muslim intelligentsia’s claim for a leadership role among Russia’s Muslims. As Gasprinskiy’s 1886 essay already implies and as the petition of Muslim notables to Mufti Sultanof in 1906 explicitly pronounces, members of the Muslim intelligentsia considered themselves as knowing what was best for the society and were willing to work toward that goal out of a sense of patriotic commitment as an indispensable part of their societal function.

In the Volga-Ural region, “*ziyâli*” soon started to indicate qualities of erudition, enlightenment, and devotion to society. Opposing factions among educated Volga-Ural Muslims agreed that being “*ziyâli*” was a good thing, but they accused each other of claiming it falsely.⁶⁴ In 1908, for instance, the famous Kazan Tatar poet Ğabdullah Tuqay disliked an anonymous essay on Muslim education that he read in a Kazan-based Turkic journal. To satirize the author for haughtily assuming the appearances of an intellectual without the concomitant depth, he published a poem starting with the line: “He is an intellectual (*ziyâli*), you know: he sells knowledge and wisdom.”⁶⁵ In 1910, in another illustrative

⁶⁴ For Gasprinskiy’s defense of the progressive reformists in response to such an attack in 1906, see Gasprinskiy, *Fikrî Eserleri*, 349-50.

⁶⁵ Ğabdulla Tukai, *Äsärlär: biş tomda*, vol. 1 (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo), 255. The anonymous author who Tuqay satirized in his poem was actually Zeki Velidî Togan, indeed an erudite progressive reformist, as Tuqay would also acknowledge upon

example, Halîl Ebulhanef, a progressive reformist intellectual with seemingly positivist or scientific inclinations, would underline the positive connotations of being “*ziyâli*” further and write that the progressive and conservative factions among Volga-Ural Muslims were both against the “contemporary Tatar intelligentsia (*ziyâlılar*),” that they actually “feared reform,” and that it was time “to reform all of the old life fundamentally.”⁶⁶

Twentieth-century historians writing in Turkic languages, both in the Soviet Union and among the Volga-Ural Muslim diaspora, also used “*ziyâli*” to refer to a Russian Muslim intelligentsia in the tsarist era, sometimes also glossing it with the word “*intelligentsia*” for emphasis.⁶⁷ The Russian-Tatar dictionaries of

learning the situation. The problem was the omission of a part of Togan’s essay in print by mistake. Zeki Velidi Togan, *Hatıralar: Türkistan ve Diğer Müslüman Doğu Türklerinin Milli Varlık ve Kültür Mücadeleleri* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), 52.

⁶⁶ Halîl Ebulhanef, *Usûl-i Cedîdge Qarşı Birinci Adım* (Kazan: Ürnek Matba‘ası, 1910), iii-viii quoted in Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s*, 182-83. Besides Tuna’s work, see Ross, “Caught”, especially 79-83 on these generational divides.

⁶⁷ In addition to Kurat and Usmanov’s already cited works, see L. V. Sagitova, “Tatarskaia intelligentsiia i ee rol’,” in *Tatary*, ed. R. K. Urazmanova and S. V. Cheshko (Moscow: Nauka, 2001), 522-31; Gabdrakhman Khafizov, *Kul'turtrigerskaia deiatel'nost' tatarskoi intelligentsii v XIX-pervoi chetverti XX vv* (Kazan: Izd-vo Kazanskogo universiteta, 2003), especially 9; Möxämmätşin ed., *Tatar ziyalıları*; Răfyq

the Soviet era eschewed the Turkic “*ziyâhlılar*” and introduced “*intelligentsia*” directly into Tatar⁶⁸ – probably following the political mood that emphasized Russian over non-Russian languages after the early-1930s. But the Tatar-Russian dictionaries during and after the Soviet era, and the Russian-Tatar dictionaries after it, featured both “*ziyâhlılar*” and “*intelligentsia*” as synonyms.⁶⁹ Thus, whether in Turkic as “*ziyâhlılar*” or in Russian as “*intelligentsia*,” tsarist Russia’s Muslims recognized the emergence of a Russian Muslim intelligentsia at the turn of the twentieth century, and later specialists of Volga-Ural Muslim history have repeatedly acknowledged and investigated the significance and legacy of this phenomenon.

Möhämmätshin, “The Tatar Intelligentsia and the Clergy, 1917-1937,” in *In Devout Societies vs. Impious States?*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2004), 29-38; and Galiia Shakhmukhammad kyzy Karmysheva, *K istorii tatarskoi intelligentsii: 1890-1930-e gody: memuary*, ed. B. Kh Karmysheva (Moscow: Nauka, 2004).

⁶⁸ *Russko-Tatarskii Slovar*’, 1956, s.v. “intelligentsia”; and *Russko-tatarskii slovar*’, 1984, s.v. “intelligentsia”.

⁶⁹ *Rusça-Tatarça Süzlek*, 1966, s.v. “intelligentsia and ziyahlılar”; *Russko-Tatarskii Slovar*’, 2000, s.v. “intelligentsia”; and *Tatarça-Rusça Süzlek*, 2002, s.v. “intelligentsia and ziyahlılar”.

Discussion and Conclusions

Writing about the Russian and Polish intelligentsias, Andrzej Walicki and Jerzy Jedlicki both relate the emergence of intelligentsias to the leadership role of educated elites in pre-modern and agricultural societies whose states failed to live up to the challenges posed by the globalization of European modernity in the long-nineteenth century.⁷⁰ The situation was more complicated for Russia's Muslims for two reasons. First, they had ready models to follow in the examples of the fully-formed intelligentsias of several other peoples. The Russian and Polish intelligentsias had models to follow in the examples of European intellectuals too,⁷¹ but here, the question is one of degree. The societal and political clout of the Russian and Polish (as well as Jewish, Georgian, and Armenian) intelligentsias was much more noticeable when Russian Muslim activists began to deliberate upon the subject in the late-nineteenth century. These Muslim activists improvised to find solutions to the problems that they identified among their

⁷⁰ Walicki, "Polish Conceptions", 2-3; Jerzy Jedlicki, "Foreword," in *Birth of the Intelligentsia: 1750-1831 (A History of the Polish Intelligentsia, Part 1)*, ed. Maciej Janowski (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), especially 11-12. On the globalization of European modernity, see Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publications, 2004).

⁷¹ On the early evolution of the concept of intelligentsia in Europe, see Otto W. Müller, *Intelligencija: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte eines politischen Schlagwortes* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1971), 27-85.

coreligionists, but they also studied, interacted with, and emulated the intelligentsias of other peoples, especially the Russian intelligentsia, as they developed their programs. Therefore, similar to the evolution of other non-Russian intelligentsias in the empire, the evolution of the Russian Muslim intelligentsia was a less organic development than that of the evolutions of the Russian and Polish intelligentsias.

Second, in many of their societal affairs, Russia's Muslims interacted with the Russian state through the mediation of the spiritual assemblies and therefore the Islamic scholars.⁷² Gasprinskiy expressed frustration at the Russian state's failure to provide public services to its Muslim subjects as early as 1881 and asked it to support Muslims in the field of education.⁷³ Yet government investments in Muslim schooling would remain minimal until the end of the tsarist regime.⁷⁴ The spiritual assemblies and the network of Islamic scholars presented the next authority structure that Gasprinskiy or other Russian Muslim reformists could turn to. Almost every Muslim village had a mullah, and mullahs were already closely involved in the education and governance of the Muslim population. If we think of how a rapprochement between Russia's early intellectuals and the tsarist

⁷² On the mediation of Islamic scholars in the governance of Russia's Muslims, see Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), especially 92-142; and Tuna, *Imperial Russia's*, 37-56.

⁷³ Ismail Bei Gasprinskii, *Russkoe Musul'manstvo: mysli, zametki, nabliudeniye musul'manina* (Simferopol: Spiro, 1881), especially 5 and 30-31.

⁷⁴ Tuna, *Imperial Russia's*, 80-81, 100-101, and 220.

bureaucracy in the latter part of Nikolai I's reign provided the grounds for Russia's Great Reforms in the 1860s, as Bruce Lincoln tells us,⁷⁵ the analog to this collaboration among Russia's Muslims would have been a cooperation between secularly educated progressive Muslims and the Islamic scholars. However, while the tsarist bureaucracy and early Russian intellectuals shared European-inspired ideas and models as their points of reference despite differences in political orientation and professional attitudes, secular intellectuals and Islamic scholars among Russia's Muslims derived from two fundamentally different points of reference as European modernity and the Islamic tradition.⁷⁶ Of course there were gray areas where scholars benefited from reformist ideas or otherwise secular intellectuals maintained religious concerns, but in general, the birth of the Muslim intelligentsia marked a split from the existing Muslim authority structures. This split needs to be kept in mind as we examine the conflict that became highly visible in Russia's Turkic-language print media in the years following the Revolutionary period of 1905 between the progressive reformist intelligentsia, who came to be known as the "Jadidists" (proponents of the new), and the traditionalists, who were mostly Islamic scholars and came to be known as the "Qadimists" (proponents of the old).

⁷⁵ W. Bruce Lincoln, "The Genesis of an Enlightened Bureaucracy in Russia," in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 1972 20(3): 321-30; and W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-1861* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982).

⁷⁶ On Islamic tradition being a primary point of reference for Islamic scholars even as they pursued societal progress, see Garipova, "The Protectors".

Adeeb Khalid's *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform* remains the most detailed analysis of this split. Khalid focuses on colonial Central Asia and conceptualizes the matter as a challenge that the progressive reformists posed to the established authority of Islamic scholars as well as wealthy community notables, with a new reading of Islam, that is, from within Islam. In Khalid's view, the progressive reformists, or *Jadidists*, of Central Asia had "never disowned Islam in the way that many Young Turks [of the Ottoman Empire] had done."⁷⁷ A similar observation about the continuing relevance of Islam in defining Central Asian Jadidism also informs the emerging anti-Jadidist literature's unwillingness to distinguish the secularist and religious pathways of Muslim reformism. Perhaps, this was a peculiarity of Central Asian Jadidism, which developed after that of Russia proper. I have highlighted elsewhere that Islam was indeed relevant as a point of reference for the early Muslim progressive reformists of Russia proper too, especially before the Revolution of 1905, but this changed over time. And the position of a younger generation of progressive intellectuals among Russia's Muslims – whom we can now call the "Russian Muslim intelligentsia" – was actually closer to that of the Young Turks, therefore posing a challenge to the authority of Islamic scholars from without.⁷⁸

The documents examined in this article suggest that Gasprinskiy and other Muslim intellectuals from European Russia perceived themselves as establishing a new authority structure in the Russian Muslim society that was deliberately secular and

⁷⁷ Khalid, *Jadidism*, quote from 113, see especially 114-54.

⁷⁸ Tuna, "Madrassa Reform", 540-70.

distinct from that of the Islamic scholars. The secular-religious divide that the progressive intellectuals took for granted is untenable in the view of the various societal and administrative functions that Islamic scholars fulfilled among Russia's Muslims.⁷⁹ Regardless, however, the progressive intellectuals (or the Jadidists) did not deem the Islamic scholars to have the necessary credentials to conceive and carry out societal improvements as necessitated by "the conditions of the times." If the scholars helped with the intellectuals' reform projects, that was fine. But the scholars' position in giving direction to society had to follow the intelligentsia's secularly designed lead as justified by the claim that the intelligentsia was "close to all segments of the Muslim population ... and [could] express the Muslims' needs and wishes" – by implication – unlike the Islamic scholars.⁸⁰ Yet, being close to the Muslim population in villages and urban neighborhoods, as well as giving direction to and expressing the Muslims' needs and wishes, were precisely what the Islamic scholars had historically been doing among Russia's Muslim communities.

Thus, as the lay secularist intellectuals tried to carve out a new sphere of influence for themselves in the Muslim society, they inevitably intruded on the purview of Islamic scholars. The outcome was a "parting of ways" similar to that of the Russian intellectuals and the tsarist state that, as Nicholas Riasanovsky suggests, had evolved in the first half of the nineteenth century, simultaneously while the Russian intellectuals and bureaucrats

⁷⁹ For the societal and administrative functions of Islamic scholars, see Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions*, 99-160 and 218-55.

⁸⁰ NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 8-9ob. Emphasis mine.

were working together to plan the Great Reforms.⁸¹ The effects of this split became starkly visible in the Russian case when the intellectuals began to conceive their “selves” as individually capable of and responsible for ameliorating their environments, thereby self-consciously assuming the intelligentsia status in the aftermath of the Great Reforms.⁸² That perception and the evolution of a concomitant sense of social responsibility were what Gasprinskiy longed for until the Revolution of 1905 and what eventually gave birth to a Muslim intelligentsia in the Revolution’s aftermath.

A tendency in the scholarship to explain the split between the Muslim intelligentsia and Islamic scholars based on socioeconomic analysis and structural considerations deserves one last comment at this point. Stéphane Dudoignon leads the way in this regard with a seminal article he wrote in 1997, and Norihiro Naganawa as well as James Meyer and Danielle Ross in their more recent studies have notably furthered his line of thinking.⁸³ These are all insightful works that have expanded our

⁸¹ The phrase belongs to Nicholas V. Riasanovsky. See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A Parting of Ways: Government and the Educated Public in Russia, 1801-1855* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

⁸² On the emergence of the intelligentsia through self-conception, see Laurie Manchester, “Harbingers of Modernity, Bearers of Tradition: Popovichi as a Model Intelligentsia Self in Revolutionary Russia,” in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 2002 50(3): 321-44; and Manchester, *Holy Fathers*, especially 155-201.

⁸³ Stéphane A. Dudoignon, “Qu’est-ce que la qadîmiya? Éléments de sociologie du traditionalisme musulman, en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane (au tournant des XIX^e et

understanding of the circumstances in which the Russian Muslim intelligentsia evolved and interacted with the rest of the Russian Muslim society including its Islamic scholars. However, we should beware of taking such structural analysis too far to the extent of relegating the intellectual content of the various parties to the controversies spurred by the Muslim intelligentsia's emergence to the level of a byproduct of structural and socioeconomic circumstances. In the case of the Polish intelligentsia, for instance, Maciej Janowski provides a very detailed and substantive outline of the institutions, venues, and broader structures that made the birth of the Polish intelligentsia possible in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. But it is clear in his analysis that what made this birth possible was different from what the Polish intelligentsia stood for in its

XX^e siècles),” in *L’Islam de Russie: conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l’Oural depuis le XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Stéphane A.

Dudoignon, Damir Iskhakov and Rāfyq Möhämätshin (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997), 207-25; Norihiro Naganawa, “Maktab or School? Introduction of Universal Primary Education among the Volga-Ural Muslims,” in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (Hokkaido: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 65-97; James H. Meyer, “The Economics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Money, Power, and Muslim Communities in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Asiatic Russia: Imperial Power in Regional and International Contexts*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (New York: Routledge, 2012), 252-70; and Ross, “Caught”, 57-89.

demands and ideological convictions.⁸⁴ Similarly, understanding what the Russian Muslim intelligentsia stood for requires paying attention to their intellectual genealogy and ideological convictions, which Ross as well as I have done elsewhere.⁸⁵

One line of the intellectual genealogy of the Russian Muslim intelligentsia takes us to the nineteenth-century reformist Islamic scholars of the Volga-Ural region such as Ebunnasr Ğabdunnasîr el-Qursâvî (1776–1812), Ğabdurrahîm bin Ğusman Utız İmenî (1754–1835), and with more immediate relevance, Şihâbuddin Mercânî (1818–89). As also emphasized in the recent anti-Jadidist literature, the contributions of these scholars fit in the global context of a puritanical Islamic revival since the seventeenth century.⁸⁶ They are important for legitimizing critical approaches to the region’s Islamic traditions by using the possibilities of the Islamic tradition’s broader confines per se, for laying the groundwork for the foundation of reformed institutions of Islamic education, and in the case of Mercânî, also for introducing Eurocentric conceptions of history and identity

⁸⁴ Maciej Janowski, *Birth of the Intelligentsia, 1750-1831 (A History of the Polish Intelligentsia, Part 1)*, ed. Jerzy Jedlicki (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014).

⁸⁵ See Tuna, “Madrasa Reform”; Ross, “From the Minbar”, especially 220-381; Danielle M. Ross, “The Nation That Might Not Be: The Role of Iskhaqî’s Extinction After Two Hundred Years in the Popularization of Kazan Tatar National Identity Among the ‘Ulama Sons and Shakirds of the Volga-Ural Region, 1904-1917 “, in *Ab Imperio*, 2012 (3): 341-69; and Tuna, *Imperial Russia’s*, 146-94.

⁸⁶ DeWeese, “It was a Dark”, 71-82; Eden, Sartori and DeWeese, “Moving beyond”, 20-23; and Frank, “Muslim Cultural”, 186-87.

among Volga-Ural Muslims, although at a preliminary level.⁸⁷ This is worth keeping in mind while we try to understand the ideological positions of the Russian Muslim intelligentsia. However, the documents analyzed in this article suggest that another line in their genealogy, the secularist and deliberately Westernist line that is most visibly represented by Gasprinskiy, had a more definitive impact in the process of the Russian Muslim intellectuals' self-identification as members of an intelligentsia at the turn of the twentieth century.

To conclude, the Russian Muslim intelligentsia was born around 1905 when we can first document secularly educated progressive Russian Muslim intellectuals conceiving themselves as a distinct intelligentsia. Gasprinskiy's over two decades of preparatory work was crucial in this conception and he ended up coining the Turkic word "ziyâlılar" to correspond to "intelligentsia" in the Russian language too. Gasprinskiy and the Muslim intellectuals who gave birth to the Russian Muslim intelligentsia at the turn of the twentieth century followed the example of the Russian, Polish, as well as other

⁸⁷ Uli Schamiloglu, "The Formation of a Tatar Historical Consciousness: Shihabuddin Marjani and the Image of the Golden Horde," in *Central Asian Survey*, 1990 9(2); Michael Kemper, "Şihâbaddîn al-Marğânî als Religionsgelehrter," 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: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996); Michael Kemper, "Entre Boukhara et la Moyenne-Volga: 'Abd an-Naşîr al-Qursâwî (1776-1812) en conflit avec les oulémas traditionalistes," in *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, 1996 37(1-2); and Kanlıdere, *Reform*, especially 33-76.

intelligentsias in the tsarist empire in fashioning themselves as a Muslim intelligentsia. A patriotic sense of social responsibility, or commitment to improving the lives of their coreligionists by reforming what they perceived to be the secular aspects of life such as education, industry, agricultural production, and ability to interact in non-Muslim contexts, was the defining core of the Muslim intelligentsia's self-definition. Realizing these goals required them to carve out a sphere of influence among the empire's Russian Muslim population. However, their effort for social and cultural improvement overlapped with the Islamic scholars' historically established societal and administrative functions. That overlap could have led to some form of cooperation, similar to the cooperation of Russian intellectuals and tsarist bureaucrats before the 1860s, but in the end, the intelligentsia's (or the Jadidists') secularist mode of thinking spurred conflict instead, similar to the clash between the Russian intelligentsia and the tsarist state in the aftermath of the Great Reforms.