

# **DIVISION AND ALLIANCE: MASS POLITICS WITHIN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AFTER 1905**

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## **Executive Summary**

It has become axiomatic to observe that the Russian Revolution of 1905 did not attract the participation of the empire's Muslim communities. While it is true that Muslims did not participate widely in anti-government demonstrations and strikes taking place in 1904 and 1905, it was also the case that the revolution of 1905 precipitated a series of "mini-revolutions" taking place inside Muslim communities across the empire. Muslim communities in Russia reacted to the onset of parliamentary rule in a variety of ways, and it is possible to detect important regional differences pertaining to the types of issues which emerged as salient within Muslim communities in the months and years which followed the revolution. While the historiography of Muslim political activity in late imperial Russia tends to emphasize "Muslim" political opposition to "Russian" rule, in fact Muslims were often divided against themselves, and indeed sometimes sought political alliances with non-Muslim organizations and groupings.

## Introduction

The years 1905-1917 have traditionally received a great deal of attention from scholars working on the Muslim regions of the Russian and Soviet “borderlands.” “Muslim politics,”<sup>1</sup> in the scholarship of the region, is typically discussed as an extension of jadidism, and the *İttifak* (“Alliance” or “Unity”) party<sup>2</sup> is often presented as the sole representative of Muslim political views in the empire.<sup>3</sup> Yet Muslims in Russia looked to a number of different locations of political leadership and subscribed to a variety of political ideologies. While the leadership of *İttifak* was made up almost entirely of jadids (Muslim cultural reformers) and their sympathizers, the movement attracted a large number of Muslims who were less enthusiastic about, or even hostile towards, the jadidist cultural and educational views of *İttifak*’s leadership.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in the early months of the 1905 Revolution, *İttifak* constituted a broad-based coalition of Muslims from regions across the empire who held a variety of views on political and cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Adeeb Khalid defines this term more broadly to “denote contests over authority in Muslim society.” This is the way in which this term will generally be discussed in this study. See Khalid, “Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan.” *Slavic Review* Vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer, 1996), 270-297, especially p. 272. However, the term “Muslim politics” in the historiography of Muslims in Russia more generally tends to refer to the activities of the *İttifak* party alone.

<sup>2</sup> The first meetings of what would become the *İttifak* party were held in the last months of 1904. From April 1905 onwards, politically active Muslims had begun to refer to the movement as *İttifak*. In the first Duma (April-July 1906), *İttifak* was known officially as the “Muslim fraction” and sat in parliament as a bloc within the Constitutional Democratic Party (or “Kadets”). Prior to the elections to the second Duma in the fall of 1906, *İttifak* became a formal political party. It is thus referred to as both a “movement” and a “party” in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Alan W. Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978); Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1986); Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1987); Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present: A Cultural History* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1990); Audrey Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1992); Two other books that adopt a similar approach to the question of “national” identity and “Russian” rule are Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Hakan Kırımlı, *National Movements and National Identity among the Crimean Tatars, 1905-1916*. (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Christian Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im Russischen Reich* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> The early organizers of *İttifak* included Abdürreşid İbrahimov, İsmail Gasprinskii, Yusuf Akçura, Ali Merdan Bey Topçubaşev, Rızaeddin Fahreddin, and a number of other figures. By late 1906, however, Yusuf Akçura had become the most dominant figure in the party congresses. Even though Akçura did not run as a candidate for *İttifak* and did not sit in parliament, he was responsible for almost all of the major communications made in the party’s name. These duties included writing frequent newspaper articles to explain and defend *İttifak*’s policies and activities. Akçura was also the

issues. Over time, however, many Muslims came to oppose *İttifak* altogether, particularly in the wake of the party's third congress, held in Nizhnii Novgorod in August of 1906.

While the role of *İttifak* in the political lives of Muslims after 1905 is considerable, this movement did not represent the entirety of "Muslim politics." Towards the end of 1904 and in the first half of 1905, tsarist officials continued to view the Muslim spiritual assemblies as the primary locations for articulating the political demands of the empire's Muslim communities. This was a view that was shared by many Muslims as well, including many of the Muslims attending *İttifak* meetings and congresses. Indeed, spiritual assembly leaders such as Müfti Soltanov of the Orenburg Assembly and Müfti Adil Mirza Karashaiskii of the Crimean Assembly<sup>5</sup> also participated in the *İttifak* meetings and at times cooperated with the *İttifak* leadership in their negotiations with the Russian government and other matters.

Particularly after the Third All-Russian Muslim Congress<sup>6</sup> in August of 1906, *İttifak* became a much narrower organization. Not only did the party leadership become increasingly dominated by Muslims from Kazan and Ufa, but also began to endeavor increasingly to transform the party into a vehicle for the advancement of jadidist ("new method") cultural reforms more particularly. These developments contributed to the emergence of increased Muslim opposition to the party.

Many Muslims who had earlier attended *İttifak* meetings and who had supported the movement politically now looked elsewhere for political leadership or else became disillusioned with politics altogether, a trend that was further exacerbated by the shrinking political relevance

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party secretary, and chaired most of the sessions at the Muslim congresses. Other sessions were chaired by İsmail Gasprinskii and Ali Merdan Bey Topçubaşev.

<sup>5</sup> The official name of this assembly was actually the "Tavrida Muslim Spiritual Assembly," named after the province in which the Crimea was located. Among Muslims, however, the institution was generally referred to as the "Crimean Assembly," a convention that I follow in this paper.

of the Duma from 1907 onwards.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the formal establishment of *Ittifak* as a political party likewise alienated many Social Democrat and Social Revolutionary Muslims, who rejected the idea of Muslims forming a party defined by religious affiliation.

Having come of age in an era when Muslims in Russia were administered mainly according to confession, most politically aware Muslims in Russia continued even after 1905 to articulate their political interests in terms that were more confessional than ideological. This, indeed, was for many Muslims the initial attraction to *Ittifak*, whose very name underscored the movement's apparent commitment to attracting the support of a diverse community of Muslims from across the empire. However, while Muslims were generally supportive of a movement which strove to gain more freedoms for them, the emergence of mass politics<sup>8</sup> in Russia soon led to divisions among Muslims over a number of cultural, ideological, and political issues.

### **Community Leadership and the Muslim Spiritual Assemblies**

The years 1904-1906 mark a period of both coalition and division in the efforts of Muslims in Russia to organize politically. While there was often distrust and impatience among the various factions which emerged during this time, there was also a consistent desire among most of the participants in these meetings to work together in the interest of presenting a united

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<sup>6</sup> Held in Nizhnii Novgorod. This is not, however, to be confused with the First All-Russian Muslim Congress, also held in Nizhnii Novgorod, in August of 1905. The second congress was held in St. Petersburg in January of 1906.

<sup>7</sup> After the dissolution of the second Duma, Prime Minister Petr Stolypin unconstitutionally pushed through new election laws severely limiting the number of non-Muslims eligible to sit in the Duma. The representation of Central Asia was entirely eliminated, while Poland, the Caucasus, and other areas of the empire lost deputies. Moreover, in districts where non-Russians constituted more than half of the electorate, Russians were allowed to hold their own elections from a guaranteed number of seats available to them.

<sup>8</sup> On the emergence of mass politics in Ufa after the 1905 Revolution, see Charles Steinwedel, "The 1905 Revolution in Ufa: Mass Politics, Elections, and Nationality," *The Russian Review* 59 (October 2000): 555-576.

front vis-à-vis the Russian government.<sup>9</sup> In general, Muslims participating in the meetings taking place in late 1904 and 1905 supported the idea of “All-Russian” Muslim political action. However, there was also considerable division over the question of where the locus of this action should be.

Even at some of the earliest of these meetings, divisions regarding this issue were noticeable. At a meeting held in the Kazan merchant Ahmedcan Saidashev’s house, for instance, a number of members of the spiritual assembly attending the meeting objected when, in response to a call from a peasant<sup>10</sup> in the audience that Saidashev chair the meeting, Saidashev stepped to the podium. This, in turn, prompted “shouts and cries” from “all sides.” Sadık *efendi* Aligayef, a member of the Orenburg Assembly, then spoke up to challenge Saidashev’s right to chair the meeting.

A peasant calls out for you to be chairman and, shamelessly, and in front of the entire ulema, you step to the podium. What kind of chairman can you be? Step down from the podium! For shame!<sup>11</sup>

At this point cries came out from among those assembled to hold a vote in order to determine the chairman. Amid cries of “Vote! Vote! Vote!” Saidashev hastily surrendered the podium, and the noise died down.<sup>12</sup>

While the historiography of the region tends to describe “Muslim politics” almost exclusively<sup>13</sup> in terms of the activities of the *İttifak* party during this period, it is important to remember that the Muslim spiritual assemblies continued to play an important role in the events

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<sup>9</sup> Focusing especially upon the principle of Russian-Muslim equality, the lifting of restrictions on Muslims in the military and civil service, and the return of schools in the territories of the Orenburg Assembly to Assembly administration.

<sup>10</sup> Those in attendance thought that Saidashev had packed the meeting with supporters in the form of the peasants from his lands. Musa Bigi, *Islahat Esasları* (Petrograd: Tipografiia M.A. Maksutova, 1915), 5-6.

<sup>11</sup> Bigi, *Islahat Esasları*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

of the revolutionary period. Throughout 1904 and 1905, the leaders of the spiritual communities were frequently in contact with both tsarist officials and community reformers.

Far from disappearing after the emergence of the *İttifak* party, the spiritual assemblies and their respective leaderships continued to exert influence both in Muslim communities<sup>14</sup> and government circles. Indeed, for most tsarist officials, the Muslim spiritual assemblies represented the preferred option in their communications with Muslim populations. Unlike *İttifak* and its leadership,<sup>15</sup> the spiritual assemblies were to tsarist officials a relatively known quantity with whom they shared both a working relationship and an institutional history of over one hundred years.

Of the four Muslim spiritual assembly leaders, Müfti Soltanov of the Orenburg Assembly was perhaps the most actively involved in the new political era. On December 12, 1904, the müfti delivered a petition to the Council of Ministers in St. Petersburg in which he made several demands of the government on behalf of “the holders of the Muslim faith” of Russia. These included requests that Muslims be allowed to work as science teachers, that all barriers to Muslims receiving higher education (and educational stipends) be lifted, that the armed forces employ more spiritual personnel, and that the Orthodox Church no longer be given a say in determining whether or not permission be granted to construct a mosque.<sup>16</sup>

The müfti’s petition also included a passage written in response to an incident, occurring

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<sup>13</sup> Most discussions of this era, such as those by Rorlich, Kırmırlı, Noack, Swietochowski, and others, barely mention the continued activities of the leadership of the four Muslim assemblies.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the petition to the Müfti published in *Din ve Maişet*, “Kazan uleması ve ahali din tarafınan müfti hazretke garizhal,” *Din ve Maişet* 21, June 8, 1907, 335-337. Also see the letters sent to the Orenburg Assembly’s newspaper, *Mağlumat*, in Chapter 2 of James Meyer, “Turkic Worlds: Community Representation and Collective Identity in the Russian and Ottoman Empires,” (Dissertation, Brown University Department of History, 2007), 76-77.

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, two of the most important figures in *İttifak*, Yusuf Akçura and Abdürreşid İbrahimov, had both only recently returned to Russia after extended stays abroad, including several years in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul, a fact which could not have generated much trust from tsarist bureaucrats and policymakers.

<sup>16</sup> This portion of the petition was made on behalf of the Crimean Assembly in addition to the Orenburg Assembly.

on August 16, 1904, in which the provincial administration (*gubernskoe upravlenie*) of the petition of Ufa had dismissed from the Orenburg Assembly a number of spiritual personnel (mullahs), an event which had caused considerable outcry among their communities. “As Muslim mullahs are not appointed, but rather chosen by their communities,” wrote the müfti, “the arbitrary dismissal of mullahs from their positions is keenly felt by the populace.”

It would therefore be desired that the administration of Muslim spiritual personnel be undertaken in general in a manner which corresponds to the high status which is accorded spiritual personnel in the eyes of the Muslim population. With regard to the dismissal of Muslim spiritual personnel in particular, all exigencies of the law should be followed, as neither the governor nor the provincial administration possesses the right to arbitrarily dismiss spiritual personnel according to their own discretion.<sup>17</sup>

Having served as Orenburg Müfti for nearly two decades, Soltanov was well known in government circles. Since the late eighteenth century, the tsarist authorities had most frequently turned to the spiritual assemblies during periods of unrest among Muslim communities.<sup>18</sup> Thus, when Sergei Witte had called upon the müfti to assemble a collection of capable spiritual personnel in Ufa to discuss the question of reform, the Interior Minister was tapping into a well established means of communication between the state and the empire’s Muslim populations.

Nevertheless, Soltanov’s Ufa meeting immediately came under fire from Muslims for what was considered its secretive and exclusive nature. During the course of the meeting and in the months which followed, dozens of telegrams were sent to the Assembly and to *İttifak* figures, complaining about the small number of people involved in the discussions. In one telegram it was observed that:

Articulating the religious and social needs of all Russian Muslims is a very serious and important task. It was necessary to have

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<sup>17</sup> “Petitsiia Orenburgskago müftiia v komitet ministrov,” *Tervüman* 28, April 12, 1905.

<sup>18</sup> See chapters 1 and 2 of Meyer, “Turkic Worlds.”

people elect representatives to undertake it. Why were only thirty-six people invited?<sup>19</sup>

Writing in *Tercüman* two weeks after the conclusion of the meeting, meanwhile, İsmail Gasprinskii likewise drew attention to the lack of publicity surrounding what had transpired in Ufa. Publishing the names of those who had attended the meeting, Gasprinskii concluded by remarking, “It would be nice to know what they talked about and what decisions were made.”<sup>20</sup> Abdürreşid İbrahimov and others, moreover, not only criticized the müfti for having called this meeting under the seemingly innocuous (and, he argued, deceptive) pretext of “attending to official business” (*po delam sluzhby*), but also criticized fellow community reformers, like Rizaeddin Fahreddin, for having participated in the meeting at all.<sup>21</sup>

The Muslim spiritual assemblies, and the Orenburg Assembly in particular, also loomed large in the minds of not only tsarist officials, but also Muslim community reformers. Indeed, individuals most involved in the establishment of *İttifak*, particularly those from the Kazan-Ufa-Orenburg region, placed the spiritual assemblies at the very center of their reform proposals. While the individuals participating in the nascent *İttifak* leadership were often critical of the leadership of the four Muslim assemblies, almost all of *İttifak*'s leaders were strong supporters of maintaining the assemblies.

Indeed, among Volga Muslims, only a small number of social democrats favored abolishing the spiritual assemblies. For liberal Muslims such as İsmail Gasprinskii, Yusuf

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<sup>19</sup> Bigi, *Islabat Esasları*, 144-145. The “thirty-six” here is apparently a reference to the number of people who attended, rather than those who were actually invited.

<sup>20</sup> See “Ufa,” *Tercüman* 33, April 29, 1905. Musa Bigi later would charge that the meeting had been described in a deceptively innocuous manner, claiming that the invitation letters sent out to Orenburg spiritual personnel had said nothing about the congress other than that its purpose was the “explanation of some professional matters” (*ob’iasnenii po delam sluzhby*). See Bigi, *Islabat Esasları*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> See “Bize ait,” Abdürreşid İbrahimov, *Hayat* 74, September 29, 1905. Fahreddin had not been invited but, like Akçura and others, had submitted a petition to be read at the meeting. It is unclear whether he read this petition in person, or if it was read for him.

Akçura, Abdürreşid İbrahimov, Rizaeddin Fahreddin, and others, the spiritual assemblies remained an integral component of their vision of Muslim life in Russia. However, these individuals—who appeared convinced of the popularity of their positions among Muslims more generally—were insistent upon making the leadership of the assemblies accountable to the ballot box. This, they felt, would place the assemblies in the hands of their political allies, thus granting them the opportunity to undertake the cultural reforms they felt were required for Russian Muslims, particularly with regard to education.

While there were often tensions between the *İttifak* leadership and Müfti Soltanov, both sides recognized the importance of working together. This occurred not only in connection to the holding of public meetings, but also with regard to carrying on negotiations with the tsarist government. On March 31, 1906, for example, the Ministry of Education released a new set of regulations concerning Muslim education in Russia. Among these regulations was a ban on using books published outside of Russia in Muslim schools. The new regulations also foresaw instituting a Cyrillic-based transcription alphabet in Muslim schools.

In response to these proposals, *İttifak* wrote a petition arguing against the regulations, which it then passed on to Müfti Soltanov. Soltanov, along with *İttifak* figures such as Akçura and Topçubaşev, then held negotiations with the education ministry for much of the year.<sup>22</sup> These negotiations ultimately produced compromise, with most of the articles from the March regulations that Muslims had found the most objectionable—particularly the proposal to create a Cyrillic-based alphabet for Muslim languages—overturned.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bigi, *İslabat Esasları*, 242-251. 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. National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (henceforth, NART), f. 1370, op. 2, d. 23, l. 17.

<sup>23</sup> 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, 236-238.

## The Crimean and Caucasian Assemblies

In the Crimea, Müfti Adil Mirza Karashaiskii was also involved in early negotiations with the government. As was the case in Ufa, negotiations among Muslims regarding who would take part in the delegation that would be meeting with Witte generated controversy. In April of 1905—at the same time that Orenburg Müfti Soltanov was presiding over the meeting of invited spiritual personnel in Ufa—Müfti Karashaiskii held a meeting at his house in Simferopol regarding the issue of how to proceed with the question of reform.<sup>24</sup>

The purpose of this meeting was to coordinate a list of demands to be included in the petition they were planning on sending to Witte.<sup>25</sup> 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 to speak to Witte on behalf of Crimean Muslims, both spiritual personnel and non-spiritual personnel were chosen. Thus, alongside spiritual assembly figures like Müfti Karashaiskii, Simferopol Kadi Ömer Efendi from Simferopol, and Imam Hacı Amir Efendi from Bahçesaray, non-assembly figures would also take part, including Mustafa Mirza Kipchakskii (a member of the *zemstvo* of the *uezd* of Simferopol), Mustafa Mirza Davidovich (a member of the city Duma of Simferopol), İsmail Mirza Müftizade (an officer), İsmail Gasprinskii, and “three students.”<sup>26</sup>

By June, however, serious divisions had emerged between Müfti Karashaiskii and İsmail Gasprinskii. In an open letter to Karashaiskii published by Gasprinskii in *Tercüman*, Gasprinskii accused the müfti of failing to live up to their earlier agreement. The müfti, Gasprinskii charged,

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<sup>24</sup> This meeting had likely been arranged in response to a request from Witte, who is on record as having asked both Soltanov and Sheyh ul-Islam Akhundzade of the Caucasus to schedule such meetings with their assemblies.

<sup>25</sup> “Postanovlenie sobraniia musul'man krymskago poluostrova.” *Tercüman* 31, April 22, 1905.

had assembled a new delegation of representatives consisting entirely of members of the spiritual assembly, which then traveled to St. Petersburg without Gasprinskii or any of his supporters.

Gasprinskii wrote that he had only learned of the creation of the new Crimean delegation while he was traveling by train from Orenburg to Tashkent, where he had planned to meet with Muslim community representatives from Central Asia. In his letter to Karashaiskii, written from the train, Gasprinskii accused the müfti of ignoring the interests of the community (*millet*) and betraying his word to the representatives who had collected at the müfti's residence the previous April.<sup>27</sup>

In another article, Gasprinskii similarly 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<sup>28</sup> kadi 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*).<sup>29</sup>

While this incident caused a permanent rift between Gasprinskii and Karashaiskii, Karashaiskii continued to be involved in the activities of non-spiritual personnel in their efforts to organize politically. In January of 1906, Karashaiskii visited St. Petersburg just before the Second All-Russian Muslim Congress was due to begin. Indeed, *İttifak* leaders such as Yusuf Akçura and Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev understood the value of the müfti, and sought to employ him in discussions with the tsarist authorities. Just like the Muscovite Zahidullah Effendi Shefih

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Kırım Müftisine (açık mektup)," *Tercüman* 43, June 3, 1905.

<sup>28</sup> "Akmescit" is the Tatar name for "Simferopol."

<sup>29</sup> "Kırım Müftisi ve dukhovnileri," *Tercüman* 41, May 27, 1905.

had attempted to convince Müfti Soltanov to intervene on behalf of *İttifak* in order to arrange an audience with the Emperor, Müfti Karashaiskii was enlisted in January of 1906 to speak to Witte in an (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to get formal permission for the organization to hold a party congress in St. Petersburg.<sup>30</sup>

In the Caucasus, issues pertaining to Muslim political activity and representation were dominated by events related to the Muslim-Armenian fighting which broke out in 1905. While representatives from the Caucasus such as Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Hüseyinzade Ali, and Ali Merdan Bey Topçubaşev attended the first *İttifak* meeting in St. Petersburg in early 1905, they had returned early from the meeting in order to attend to events unfolding in Baku, which had been the site of particularly bloody skirmishes.

The response of the regional tsarist authorities in the Caucasus to this fighting was to rely heavily upon the spiritual assemblies to both end the fighting and bring relief to the communities affected by it. Indeed, both Sheyh ul-Islam Akhundzade and the Armenian Patriarch were charged by the vice-regency with the task of assembling delegations to take part in three-way talks arbitrated by the Russian authorities in Tbilisi.<sup>31</sup> After the fighting had subsided, moreover, the vice-regency established a system of indemnification through which material losses suffered by Muslims as a result of the fighting would be compensated by money obtained through *vakıf* revenues. Shiite spiritual authorities were made responsible for compiling and assessing the worthiness and accuracy of the claims of Muslims, while the Armenian Spiritual Assembly was

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<sup>30</sup> Yet he held the congress anyway. Bigi, *İslahat Esasları*, 208-210. 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.

<sup>31</sup> In a letter sent on March 29, 1905, the office of the governor of the province of Elizavetpol credits the Armenian and Muslim spiritual authorities in putting an end to the violence, writing "Thanks to the intervention of the Armenian and Tatar spiritual assemblies and gentry, Armenians and Tatars have made peace." Azerbaijan State Historical Archive (henceforth, ADTA), f. 290, op. 2, d. 2639, l. 3.

likewise responsible for undertaking these tasks in the Armenian community.<sup>32</sup>

Like müftis Soltanov and Karashaiskii, spiritual assembly figures in the Caucasus were also approached in early 1905 by tsarist officials seeking to enter into discussions with Muslim community leaders over the issue of reform. As was the case with Witte's request to Müfti Soltanov that he convene a meeting of the ulema in Ufa, tsarist authorities in the Caucasus also asked the Sunni and Shiite assemblies of the Caucasus to hold meetings of spiritual personnel in the interest of formulating a list of needs for the region's Muslims. These meetings were indeed convened but, as Ahmet Ağaoğlu and others would later charge, the meetings had ultimately broken up before any of the issues before it had been resolved and without sending a single petition to the government.<sup>33</sup>

While community reform figures from the Volga region active in *İttifak* tended to view the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly as an essential (if poorly led) component of Muslim administration, in the Caucasus there were far more direct attacks on the spiritual leadership and on the assemblies themselves as institutions. Ahmet Ağaoğlu in particular frequently offered scathing attacks on the leadership of Sheyh ul-Islam Akhundzade, and when the suggestion was made at the St. Petersburg meetings to unite the four Muslim spiritual assemblies, Ağaoğlu sharply criticized the idea.

There is no clergy<sup>34</sup> in Islam. Anyone who is respected enough to be granted the title can become an imam, even a kadi if necessary. It makes no sense to abandon this approach and instead adopt from

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<sup>32</sup> 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. One of these claims was written by Ali Hüseyinzade on behalf of an acquaintance of his. L. 8. Compensation paid to Armenian victims of the fighting was likewise paid out of the coffers of the Armenian Assembly.

<sup>33</sup> Ahmet Ağaoğlu, "İdare-i ruhaniyelerimizin işleri," *İrşad* 94, May 22, 1907.

<sup>34</sup> As was the case with many of the officials working in the tsarist state, some of the scholars studying Muslim institutions in Russia employ Christian concepts of "clergy" and "laity" in describing Muslim communities. While this was indeed one of the models employed by the tsarist government in creating the spiritual assemblies, the use of these terms in ways other than to specifically draw attention to tsarist categories for Muslims is rather misleading.

Christianity a system of spiritual administration.<sup>35</sup>

Although Ağaoğlu was in fact critical of the idea of having spiritual assemblies at all, in his writings appearing in *Hayat* and *İrşad*, Ağaoğlu instead called for the direct election of individuals to the positions of müfti and sheyh ul-Islam. While this suggestion was similar to those being made elsewhere in Russia at the time, Ağaoğlu's attacks on the spiritual assembly leadership were made in a far sharper tone than that being used by community reformers elsewhere in Russia.

Ağaoğlu characterized the spiritual leadership as primarily a group of “government civil servants (*nachalniklar*), totally ignorant of religious rules and customs,”<sup>36</sup> prompting both Sheyh ul-Islam Akhundzade and other spiritual personnel to write to *Taze Hayat* in order to complain about their treatment in Ağaoğlu's columns.<sup>37</sup> Ağaoğlu also 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.”<sup>38</sup> Ağaoğlu also complained that the spiritual personnel of Baku were discouraging Muslims from reading *Hayat*, supposedly telling their flocks that “it was practically a sin” to read the newspaper during the month of Ramadan.<sup>39</sup>

### **İttifak and the Duma**

Elections to the first Duma were held across Russia over the first four months of 1906.<sup>40</sup> In Kazan, Muslims lived in large numbers in two electoral districts (*uchasty*) of the city, the

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<sup>35</sup> Bigi, *Islahat Esasları*, 11.

<sup>36</sup> “Rusya'nın hal-i hazırı,” *Hayat*, June 12, 1905.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Sheyh ul-Islam Akhundzade's letter to *Taze Hayat*, “Sheyh ul-İslam'ın cevabı,” *Taze Hayat*, April 22, 1907. Also see *Hayat* 118, December 13, 1905; “Hurriyet-i diyanete” cevap,” *Hayat* 116, May 30, 1906.

<sup>38</sup> “Sebep gene özümüzün,” *İrşad* 76, May 25, 1907.

<sup>39</sup> “Baku ulemasının gazete barısında mevzeleri,” *İrşad* 255, November 1, 1906.

<sup>40</sup> In Kazan, votes were cast in early April, 1906.

second and fifth. In these two districts, there were numerous Muslim candidates to choose from, and even among candidates affiliated with *İttifak* there was competition for seats. Prior to the elections, newspapers such as *Vakit*, *Yoldiz*, *Kazan Mukhbiri*, and *Beyan ul-Hak* published the names of the electors for which they recommended Muslims vote.<sup>41</sup> While all of these newspapers recommended only Muslims running as Kadets, the specific individuals recommended by these papers often differed greatly.<sup>42</sup>

Of the twenty-five Muslims elected to the first Duma, twelve were from the Volga-Ural region. Three were from the province of Kazan, six from the province of Ufa, two from Orenburg and one from the province of Viatka. Of these, four had received university education and were employed as civil servants, publicists, or lawyers. Another four deputies were mullahs, and four were landowners or merchants. All twelve of the Muslim deputies from the Volga-Ural region were affiliated with *İttifak* and sat in the Duma as Muslim Fraction members within the Kadet party.

In the Caucasus, meanwhile, a total of seven Muslims were elected to the Duma. One was from Kars, two were from the province of Elizavetpol, three were from the province of Baku, and one was from Yerevan. All seven sat in parliament as part of the Muslim Fraction (*İttifak*), but only two as members of the Kadet party.<sup>43</sup>

In the historiography of this period, *İttifak* is remembered primarily as the party of Gasprinskii, Akçura, Rizaeddin Fahreddin, and other well known jadids. However, a large

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<sup>41</sup> In these and other Duma elections, voters would elect a number of electors (*vyborschchiki*) in each district. Based upon the total number of votes a party received in the province, each party would have the right to a proportional number of candidates to be placed in the Duma. The electors chosen from each party would then choose who would go to the Duma. Usually, but not always, those men selected to become Duma representatives were themselves electors.

<sup>42</sup> For a comparison of these electoral lists, see *Yoldiz* 25, March 25, 1906 and *Kazan Mukhbiri* 57, March 26, 1906.

<sup>43</sup> For information on the Muslim deputies of all four Dumas, see Diliara Usmanova, *Musul'manskaia fraktsiia i problemy "svobody sovesti" v Gosudarstvennoi Dume Rossii (1906-1917)* (Kazan: Master Lain, 1999), 128-146. Also see M.F. Usal, *Birinci, ikinci, ve üçüncü Dumada müslüman deputatlar [bäm alarnıng kalğan eshlere]* (Kazan: Tipografiia I. N. Kharitonova, 1909).

number of individuals who were active in *İttifak* in 1905 and 1906 did not easily fit into this template. Indeed, in late 1905 and early 1906, *İttifak* represented a coalition of Muslim interests, even while its leadership tended to be drawn from the ranks of jadids and their supporters. Among Muslims in the Volga region in particular, an effort was made to include among *İttifak*'s Duma representatives a number of individuals from outside the publicist-jadidist circle that dominated its leadership.

For example, Fazıl Minglibaev, who finished last out of sixteen electors chosen in Kazan's second district, was one of three Muslims from the province of Kazan to be chosen by *İttifak* to sit in parliament. Minglibaev was able to go to the Duma as the result of an informal agreement among *İttifak* leaders in Kazan (who did not expect to win more than three or four seats) to divide their electoral spoils equally by choosing "one intellectual, one merchant, and one mullah." Thus Minglibaev, who was a mullah, went to St. Petersburg alongside Said-Girey Alkın, a lawyer and editor of the newspaper *Kazan Mukhbiri*, and the merchant Gafir Bademshin.<sup>44</sup>

Another example of an *İttifak* representative who was not part of the reformist-jadidist leadership circle was Hayrullah Usmanov. Mullah Usmanov was a well known teacher from Orenburg who was close to Müfti Soltanov and active in the politics of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. An *akhund*, Usmanov was one of the few dozen spiritual personnel invited to Müfti Soltanov's meeting in Ufa in April of 1905.<sup>45</sup> In June of 1906, Usmanov was appointed to the open position of kadi, a move which angered a number of jadids writing in the periodical press,

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<sup>44</sup> Usal, *Müslüman deputatlar*, 94. Draft materials of *İttifak* fundraising letters from 1906 also reveal an intention to include a reference to such a coalition among the intelligentsia, spiritual personnel, and merchants. See Kazan State University Lobachevsky Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division (henceforth, KGU), document T-907.

<sup>45</sup> This list is provided in *Islahat Esasları*, 13-14.

as they had been lobbying for Rizaeddin Fahreddin's appointment to the position.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, however, Mullah Usmanov was also deeply involved in *İttifak*'s activities. In the elections to the second Duma held in December of 1906, Usmanov was first elected as a *vyborshchik* and then selected outright to be one of *İttifak*'s two representatives from Orenburg.<sup>47</sup> In parliament, he became the secretary of the *İttifak* party, and throughout 1907 worked closely with jadidist-*İttifak* figures like Rizaeddin Fahreddin, Abdürreşid İbrahimov and Fatih Kerimi in organizing party activities.<sup>48</sup> During this time, Usmanov also contributed articles to the jadidist press, including Kerimi's *Vakit*.<sup>49</sup>

Yet Usmanov was also an individual to whom Muslims, and especially minor spiritual personnel, would appeal with complaints regarding the *İttifak* party. Writing in the conservative (or "kadimist") journal *Din ve Maişet* in 1907, Usmanov reported that he had recently received two petitions complaining about "the educational program and policies concerning the Sharia court undertaken at the Muslim congresses." One of these petitions had been signed by eighteen imams in the *uezd* of Orsk, while the other had been sent to Usmanov by twenty-five "imams and other people" in the *uezd* of Chelabi. Usmanov's tone in the article was neither critical of the imams nor of the *İttifak* leadership, and he treated the disagreement largely as a misunderstanding which could be reconciled.<sup>50</sup>

The presence of individuals like Usmanov in *İttifak* during the years 1904-1906 was not an aberration. Indeed, in the early months of *İttifak*'s existence, the movement was successful

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<sup>46</sup> "Dukhovnoe Sobranie," *Kazan Mukhbiri* 105, June 23, 1906.

<sup>47</sup> Usal, 161-162.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, letter from Rizaeddin Fahreddin to Fatih Kerimi, September 1907, NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 30, l. 27 and letter from Rizaeddin Fahreddin to Fatih Kerimi, October 15, 1907, NART, f. 1370, op. 1, d. 30, ll. 37-40.

<sup>49</sup> "Duma azalarından mektup," *Vakit* 156, May 7, 1907.

largely because of its ability to attract to the party people like Usmanov, Minglibaev, and others who supported the principle of improving conditions for Muslims in the empire without embracing the educational reforms advocated by much of the *İttifak* leadership.

By working with the leaders of the spiritual assemblies and opening the doors of the party to individuals both on the left and right who did not always agree with their positions, the leaders of *İttifak* created a movement that held substantial appeal for Muslims of a variety of ideological, professional, class, and regional backgrounds. This spirit of coalition and consensus, however, would not last beyond the Third Muslim Congress, which would be held (like the First Congress) in Nizhnii Novgorod in August of 1906.

### **Muslim Opposition to İttifak**

Even in 1905 and early 1906, when enthusiasm for the Duma and for *İttifak* was at its height, it was widely believed that large numbers of Muslims had chosen to not vote for the Muslim Fraction. After the elections to the first Duma in 1906, for example, a number of articles appeared in the jadidist press criticizing supposed “evil” (or “false”) “friends” (*nadan duslar*), Muslims who had allegedly not turned out to vote for *İttifak*. Abdürreşid İbrahimov, for example, wrote in his newspaper *Ülfet* that Muslims did not try hard enough to get Muslim representatives elected.

A lot of words have been said about the elections of representatives to the Duma. In very many provinces, no Muslim representatives were elected. Certainly, this is the reason: among Muslims there was no striving (*ictihad*), no solidarity (*ittifak*). And when there isn't enough striving, then mischief can take place. A place like the Crimea, a true land of Islam, has two hundred thousand *ağas* but couldn't get one *Mirza* through the gates.

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<sup>50</sup> See “Musulman fraksiyası,” *Din ve Maişet* 15, pp. 257-258, 1907. Usmanov also published “question and answer” articles in *Din ve Maişet* in which he would occasionally answer questions from spiritual personnel regarding the activities of the Muslim Fraction in parliament. See, for example, “Orenburg Haberleri,” *Din ve Maişet* 12, 195-197.

Nobody made it from a pure Nogay city like Hacı Terhan.<sup>51</sup> From the illustrious Muslim provinces of Samara and Simbirsk, from the *uezd* of Bugulma, not one person chosen. Even though the province of Perm is filled with Muslims, just two men were chosen.<sup>52</sup>

*Yoldız*, meanwhile, carried a story in which the author blamed imams in the district of Bishbalta for *İttifak*'s failure to win any seats there.<sup>53</sup> In another article appearing in *Din ve Maişet* prior to the elections to the third Duma, meanwhile, the writer likewise observed that more *İttifak* deputies could have been elected to the first Duma if Muslims had participated in greater numbers.<sup>54</sup>

Genuine resistance to the *İttifak* movement among Muslims only began in significant numbers after the conclusion of the Third All-Russian Muslim Congress, which was held in Nizhnii Novgorod during the period August 16-21, 1906. This was, in fact, the congress at which *İttifak* formally became a political party, a move which was strongly opposed by many socialist and left-wing Muslims like Hadi Atlasi<sup>55</sup> and Fuad Tuktarov.<sup>56</sup> Rather than create a political party, Atlasi, Tuktarov, and others argued that *İttifak* should focus on improving the cultural and educational conditions of Muslims. "Let's educate our children in a more contemporary way," argued Atlasi. "After that we can begin talking about political issues. I'll repeat myself: let this

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<sup>51</sup> Astrahan.

<sup>52</sup> "Duma saylauı," *Üljet* 24, May 18, 1906.

<sup>53</sup> "Nadan Duslar," *Yoldız*. 13, April 1, 1906.

<sup>54</sup> *Dünya ve Maişet* 1 "Dumaga vekil sailau hakkında," pp. 17-18, 1906. Also see "Sailaular hakkında," *Din ve Maişet* 1907, 366-367. *Din ve Maişet* was called *Dünya ve Maişet* until 1907.

<sup>55</sup> Hadi Atlasi ("Atlasov," 1876-1938) was an imam-hatip in the village of Elmet, near Bögelmä, in the province of Samara. He was also, during the years 1903-1909, a teacher in the *medrese* of this village. He was elected to the second Duma, where he sat in the *Trudovaia grupp*a bloc. After the October Revolution, Atlasi taught in both Bögelmä and Kazan. He was executed in 1938. "Hadi Atlasov," *Tatarstan Entsiklopediia Süzleşe*, 50.

<sup>56</sup> Fuad Tuktarov (1880-1938) was a well known publicist who published a number of articles in *Tang Yoldızı*, *Kazan Mukhbiri*, *Mektep*, and other newspapers and journals. After the October Revolution, Tuktarov briefly worked Kazan city administration before emigrating in 1919, living in Turkey from the mid-1920s onward. "Fuad Tuktarov," *Tatarstan Entsiklopediia Süzleşe*, 670.

congress be about facilitating the expansion of education!”<sup>57</sup>

In fact, Muslim socialists were often opposed to the creation of a Muslim political party on ideological grounds. Believing that *İttifak* was dominated by wealthy Muslims like the Hüseyinovs, Akçurins, Aitovs, and others, Russian Muslim socialists were reluctant to support a “bourgeois” political party, even if it was one that nominally supported the interests of “All-Russian Muslims.” Arguing that class, rather than religion, was the most pertinent category of social organization for Muslim peasants and laborers, Muslim socialists publishing in organs such as *Ural*, *Duma*, and *Tang Yoldizi* accused *İttifak* of being an instrument for rich Muslims to continue to exercise their economic monopoly over the poor. *İttifak*’s use of religion as a category for political organization, they argued, was simply a means of exploiting religion for the sake of politics.

They don’t want to just call themselves the Kadet party, but instead decide “Let’s call ourselves the Muslim *İttifak*.” Because if they call themselves Muslim, then Muslims will think that *İttifak* is looking out for their interests. But this party calling itself the Muslim *İttifak* is instead harmful to the interests of workers and villagers.<sup>58</sup>

The creation of *İttifak*, argued Muslims on the left, was undertaken in order to “prevent Muslim peasants and workers from understanding which class they belong to and therefore not struggling against” the wealthy interests controlling *İttifak*.<sup>59</sup> Arguing that religious or national metaphors of collective identity treated Russian Muslims “as if they were a single person,”<sup>60</sup> Muslim socialists advocated prior to the elections to the third Duma against voting for *İttifak*. Instead, they called upon Muslims to support Russian parties which would defend the class

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<sup>57</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 Ağust’ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi (Kazan: Brat’ia Karimovy, 1906), 32.

<sup>58</sup> “Müsülman İttifağı,” *Ural* 1, January 12, 1907.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> *Ural* 21, March 18, 1907.

interests of all workers and peasants.<sup>61</sup>

The tension between creating a political party and simultaneously speaking in the name of “All-Russian” Muslims was not lost on Yusuf Akçura. In an article published in *Kazan Mukhbiri* the day before the Third Congress was due to start, Akçura defended *İttifak*’s decision to adopt a political platform, even one which might not be supported by many Muslims.

Even if the “union” (*ittifak*) that Muslims are attempting to create is called the “Union of Russian Muslims,” it is impossible to bring together all Russian Muslims at the same time. Therefore, the first article in the party’s platform reads that its goal is to “unite (*birleştirmek*) all Russian Muslims of the same ideas politically.” After it was decided to accept the platform in its entirety, it is natural that this would become the party’s aim. Thus, “*İttifak*” is the party only of those Russian Muslims who are working towards a specifically defined goal.<sup>62</sup>

The Third Muslim Congress represented a narrowing of *İttifak* from an initially broad movement into one of relatively narrow interests “working towards a specifically defined goal.” Indeed, criticism of the meeting and of the *İttifak* leadership’s<sup>63</sup> party program came from all sides during and after the congress. Both delegates to the congress and individuals who had not gone to Nizhnii criticized what they described as the lack of publicity surrounding the meeting and the party program that would be discussed there.<sup>64</sup> Hadi Atlasi and Fuad Tuktarov complained that such a small sample of Russian Muslims could not possibly accept the responsibility of debating measures in the name of “all Russian Muslims,”<sup>65</sup> while Muslims in the Caucasus complained that they had not been informed that a Muslim Congress was going to

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<sup>61</sup> “*Müslümanlara başka dindeki kişileri Dumaga sailarga yarimi?*” *Ural* 5, January 21, 1907. Also see “*Kadetler*,” *Ural* 3, January 12, 1907.

<sup>62</sup> Yusuf Akçura, “Rusya musulmanları ittifağı, programma laihasının tedkiki IV.” *Kazan Mukhbiri* 131, August 9, 1906.

<sup>63</sup> *İttifak* was now primarily in the hands of Yusuf Akçura and Ali Merdan Bey Topçubaşev. İsmail Gasprinskii still loomed as the powerful, though ailing, doyenne of the movement.

<sup>64</sup> And, in this respect, this episode resembles Müfti Soltanov’s 1905 Ufa meeting.

<sup>65</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust’ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 144.

be taking place at all.<sup>66</sup>

Troubling to many others, meanwhile, and compounding anger over the lack of prior publicity regarding the congress program, were signs that the Third Muslim Congress was being used as an opportunity to transform *İttifak* into a vehicle for advancing jadidism within Muslim communities across the empire. The party program endorsed at the Third Congress included, for example, an ambitious project regarding the establishment of a standardized (*umumi*) program of education for Muslim schools in every region of Russia.<sup>67</sup> This program envisioned the creation of a standardized curriculum for Muslim *medreses*, something which had been long a feature of the idealized versions of jadidist education described in the writings of Gasprinskii and others. The establishment of teacher training schools was also planned, and teachers would have to take examinations in order to become licensed. Licensing would be the responsibility of the Orenburg Assembly, which would become a unified body consolidating all of Russian Muslims into a single institution.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to creating teacher training schools and establishing examinations, the standardized educational program that was accepted at the Third Muslim Congress also called for Muslim schools to teach, “to the extent possible,” in the “common language” (*umumi lisan*), or “Türki,”<sup>69</sup> a proposal that was clearly influenced by İsmail Gasprinskii, who had been campaigning for the adoption of a “common literary language” on the pages of *Tercüman* for

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<sup>66</sup> “Uçüncü umum Rusya müsülman içtimaina dair,” *İrşad* 197, August 21, 1906. Ali Merdan Bey Topçibaşev was one of the chairmen with this congress, but Topçibaşev has spent most of his time since 1905 in St. Petersburg. Muslims who had stayed in Baku throughout the Armenian-Muslim fighting and its aftermath included Ahmet Bey Ağaoğlu and Ali Bey Hüseyinzade. Ağaoğlu, in particular, was involved in a number of activities devoted to community welfare, and was appointed to the Muslim side of the peace talks sponsored by the regional vice-regency.

<sup>67</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 60-61.

<sup>68</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 60-61.

<sup>69</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 76-77.

most of 1906.<sup>70</sup>

The 1906 meeting also called for increasing Russian language courses in Muslim schools,<sup>71</sup> a position that had long been supported by jadids as well even as thousands of Muslims in the Volga region had been protesting against mandatory Russian-language education for much of the previous twenty-five years.<sup>72</sup> Even more galling to non-jadid followers of *İttifak*, however, was the proposal, also accepted at this congress, that “all Russian Muslims will be educated according to the new method.”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, for many people in attendance, the Third Muslim Congress represented the final victory of jadidism. Very few people spoke up in defense of the existing system of education. “We’re all fed up with our schools,” declared İsmail Gasprinskii during the course of the discussions. Nobody contradicted him.<sup>74</sup>

In the words of one delegate to the congress, the new method teacher Ahmedcan Mustafa, “the battle over *usul-i cedid* is over.”

No fear remains. The fantasy that *usul-i cedid* would harm religion did frighten people, but now they understand that it is harmless. So, we must now try as hard as possible to reform our schools, and if we so endeavor we will accomplish these reforms.<sup>75</sup>

According to the program of the Third Congress, the Muslim spiritual assemblies were also slated to undergo major changes. The four assemblies would continue to exist, but would be

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, “Can yani dil meselesi,” *Tercüman* 6, January 25, 1908. Also see Lazzerini, “İsmail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism in Russia, 1878-1914,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington Department of History, 1973), 211-213. Gasprinskii had been the most prominent Muslim reformer calling for the establishment of a “common literary language” (known as *Türki*) since early 1906. For more on the so-called “language issue,” see Chapter 5 of Meyer, “Turkic Worlds,” 203-206.

<sup>71</sup> Indeed, İsmail Gasprinskii and Abdürreşid İbrahimov had advocated the study of Russian among Muslims for decades.

<sup>72</sup> See Meyer, “Turkic Worlds,” chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>73</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 84-85.

<sup>74</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 76-77. While some, such as Carullah Akçurin, spoke out against this, the most influential members of the *İttifak* leadership—Abdullah Apanaev in particular—harshly criticized Akçurin, and the resolution was easily passed.

<sup>75</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 70.

subsumed within a single body, which would be concerned with the affairs of both Shiite and Sunni Muslims across the empire. The head of this body would be called the sheyh ul-Islam, who would be elected to a five year term.<sup>76</sup> Muslim judges, or kadis, would also be elected to five year terms. Moreover, both the sheyh ul-Islam and the kadis would be assisted in their duties by a lawyer trained in Russian civil law.<sup>77</sup>

According to a proposal made by İsmail Gasprinskii, affairs concerning Muslims would be divided into separate “political” and “religious” realms. The newly consolidated spiritual assembly would be responsible for “religious” matters, while *İttifak* would be responsible for “political” matters facing the Muslim community. The only people to speak out at length against this resolution at the congress were the leftists in attendance, headed by Fuad Tuktaroff and Hadi Atlasi, who both favored abolishing the spiritual institutions altogether.<sup>78</sup> As was the case with the debates at the Third Congress over the question of school reform, no one spoke out in favor of maintaining the existing structure of the assemblies.

## **Conclusions**

While the Muslims of the Russian Empire—both elites and non-elites—did not protest in large numbers against the tsar during the revolution of 1905, they nevertheless did participate fully in the 1905 Revolution. They were, in fact, particularly active in the writing of petitions and the organization of professional and political groupings. Yet their concerns focused less upon the administration of the empire as a whole than the administration of Muslim communities in particular. For most Muslims of the empire, the 1905 Revolution did not constitute simply the

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<sup>76</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 108-109.

<sup>77</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 124-125.

<sup>78</sup> 1906 sene 16-21 *Avğust'ta ictima etmiş Rusya Müslümanlarının nedvesi*, 104-108.

“Russian” revolution taking place throughout the empire more generally and in St. Petersburg in particular, but was rather concerned with the transformative events taking place within their own communities.

While most historiography of the *Ittifak* movement has taken at face value the claims of its leadership to represent “All-Russian Muslims,” there was in fact considerable factionalism within *Ittifak*, and opposition to the movement’s leadership increased considerably among Muslims after the Third Muslim Congress in Nizhnii Novgorod. In 1905 and 1906, *Ittifak* represented a coalition of interests which, while frequently at odds with one another over various cultural issues and the location of Muslim political representation, managed to work together and find success in parliamentary elections.

From late 1906 onwards, however, *Ittifak*’s leadership alienated a number of Muslim partners with whom it had largely cooperated over the previous two years. Many Muslims from the Crimea and the Caucasus were upset that they had not been invited to the 1906 meeting in Nizhnii Novgorod, and as a result ceased participating in *Ittifak* activities altogether. Left-wing Muslims from the Volga-Ural region, who had attended the 1906 meeting, left Nizhnii Novgorod feeling ignored and embittered, and from that point forward began focusing upon their own political organizations outside of *Ittifak*.

Meanwhile, the Orenburg Müfti, who had had a contentious yet frequently cooperative relationship with the *Ittifak* leadership for much of the previous two years, became a target of *Ittifak* reforms aimed at curbing his authority and tenure and ceased working activity with the *Ittifak* leadership.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps most importantly, *Ittifak*’s proposals to make itself (rather than the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly) responsible for Muslim education in Russia and its proposals to

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<sup>79</sup> Adeeb Khalid writes of a similar competition over political authority among Muslims in Turkestan in 1917. See “Tashkent: 1917.”

make *usul-i cedit* the curriculum for all Muslim schools aroused the intense indignation of a number of the movement's erstwhile supporters and partners.

In the years after 1906 the Muslim political movement, already severely weakened by an election law designed to restrict the participation of non-Russian populations of the empire, became increasingly divided, and was marked by indifference and malaise. All of the major factions of politically active Muslims—the spiritual leadership, *İttifak*, the right, and the left—maintained alliances with non-Muslim political parties and institutions that at times put them in direct competition with one another. Indeed, Muslim political figures from across the political spectrum were at times closely allied with non-Muslim organizations.

*İttifak*, for example, partnered with the Kadets, the party of which they were officially a part in the first Duma and with which they cooperated in later Dumas as well. While *İttifak* worked with the Kadets, left-wing and socialist Muslims joined the Labor Bloc and advocated voting for Russian left-wing parties instead of *İttifak*. Meanwhile, right-wing Muslims often voted for the conservative Octobrists and were affiliated with other right-wing organizations that maintained close ties to Russian parties.

Indeed, the leadership of the various spiritual assemblies also maintained their contacts within the Russian government and bureaucracy, where they were generally held in higher esteem and were trusted more than representatives of *İttifak*. Far from representing a clear-cut case of “Muslim” agitation against “Russian” rule, the *İttifak* movement and other expressions of Muslim political activity in the months and years after 1905 more often than not featured coalitions of Muslims and non-Muslim communities working in opposition against other Muslim/non-Muslim alliances.