

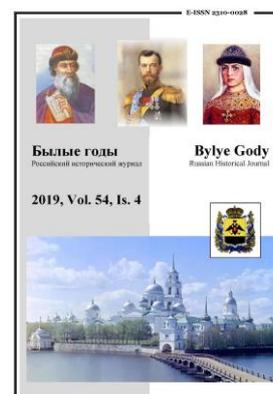
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## Gasprinskii's Nation-Building Project through its Reflection in "The Perevodchik-Terjiman" Newspaper

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### Abstract

This paper aims to identify the features of the nation-building project of the Crimean Tatar enlightener, educator, journalist, public and political figure Ismail Gasprinskii (1851–1914) based on the analysis of his newspaper "The Perevodchik-Terjiman" (1883–1918). This Bakhchysarai-based newspaper was published for 35 years, during which time it gave a voice to the forward-thinking Russian Muslims and provided an influential platform for public debates. The completion of a comprehensive discourse analysis on the newspaper's articles on a wide range of ethnocultural and sociopolitical issues allowed us not only to examine Gasprinskii's nation-building project from the perspective of his ideas concerning the creation of a common national language, modernization of the religious sphere and inclusion of women in the nation-building process; but also to fit it into the all-Russian sociopolitical context of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries by identifying and analyzing such topics as sociopolitical conditions of Muslim Turks in Russia and Muslim emigration from Russia to the Ottoman Empire (Muhajirism).

**Keywords:** Ismail Gasprinskii, Muslim press, Russian Muslims, Muslim Modernism, nation-building project.

### 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to examine the features of the nation-building project of Crimean Tatar enlightener, educator, publicist, public and political figure Ismail Gasprinskii based on the analysis of his newspaper, "The Perevodchik-Terjiman", [hereinafter referred to as The Terjiman]. The research is relevant not only because of its inclusion in the general sociopolitical context in Russia at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but also because Gasprinskii's ideas were popular in former USSR-states and in Turkey, where they are often cited in a selective and distorted manner.

The Terjiman newspaper was published in a dual-language format (Russian text with its translation into so-called common Turkic), and was one of the central journalistic platforms for deliberation on modernization issues among Russian Muslim Turks.

Through its public discussions and news reports, The Terjiman covered the questions of ethnocultural and sociopolitical changes among the various Turkic-Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire, as well as current events that took place at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Russia and around the world.

In the former USSR, among different Turkic peoples, one can note a rising tide of interest in modernization, educational projects and the nation-building processes of Muslims, and these were precisely the topics popularized by Gasprinskii in his newspaper. This is due to a consonance between issues raised at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the ensuing problems faced by the Turkic peoples after the collapse of the Soviet Union: preservation of their native languages; development of national educational systems including a determination of their own approach to national history; identification of their people as part of global history, and so on.

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At the same time, nowadays the slogan “Unity in language, thoughts, deeds”<sup>1</sup>, which was in use in The Terjiman from 1912 onwards, is mostly deemed in Turkey and in the West, (primarily, thanks to the Turkish-Muslim emigrants among Gasprinskii’s followers who left Russia after the revolution of 1917), as a symbol of world Turkic unity under the auspices of Turkey, just as Gasprinskii’s ideas were heard as a call for the political independence of Russian Muslim Turks and their struggle with the Russian authorities. However, this adoption of Gasprinskii’s ideas does not reflect his views on the prospects for further development of the Muslim Turk population of Russia.

It should also be noted the enormous influence The Terjiman newspaper still has on the modern Crimean Tatar press and Turkic-language periodicals in general, not only in Russia, but also abroad, primarily in Turkey. The continuity of Gasprinskii’s ideas is present in several modern Crimean Tatar, Turkish, Tatar newspapers and magazines. Thus, the day when the first issue of the The Terjiman was published on April 10<sup>2</sup> [1883] has been celebrated in Crimea and Ukraine as the Day of the Crimean Tatar Journalism, since 2011. Indeed, in 2015 a media center named after Gasprinskii was created on the peninsula, which publishes nine national newspapers, with three of them in the Crimean Tatar language. But if Crimean Tatar journalism is generally considered to be a follower of The Terjiman as a first national newspaper, then periodicals from outside of Crimea, presenting themselves as followers of Gasprinskii’s ideas<sup>3</sup>, promote projects of global Turkic unity under the cultural and political leadership of Turkey. In this manner, they reimagine Gasprinskii as a Pan-Turkism ideologist.

## 2. Materials and methods

For this project, we focused on The Terjiman newspaper articles in Russian and so-called common Turkic (in Arabic script) from 1883 to 1914, i.e., the period during which the newspaper’s editor-in-chief was Ismail Gasprinskii.

Initially we searched, selected and thematically classified the relevant items of the The Terjiman newspaper, then also transliterated and translated Turkic articles into Russian.

At the second stage, we implemented a diachronic discourse analysis on selected materials, such as, but not limited to, a comparison of the Russian and Turkic sections of the newspaper.

For the purposes of our study, using comparative historical and constructivist approaches, we tried to identify the main features and evolution of Gasprinskii’s nation-building project in the all-Russian context.

## 3. Discussion

There are many studies examining the influence of The Terjiman newspaper on the development of the modernization process among Russian Muslim Turks at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Lizzerini, 1992; Khalid, 1998; Gankevich, Shendrikova, 2008). These pieces of research focus mostly on the key role and impact the newspaper exerted on the modernization process. At the same time, we are interested in the correlation between Gasprinskii’s nation-building project and modernization.

There are also studies on the nation issue in The Terjiman and on the ideological views of Gasprinskii himself. Most of them sought to portray him as an ideologist as well as placing The Terjiman as an advocate of Pan-Turkism ideas and the struggle of Muslim Turks with Tsarist Russia (Akchura, 2008; Kirimer, 1934). In this connection, the authors of these studies perceived Gasprinskii’s nation-building project in a more radical form. They admixed it with the Turkic unity project not taking into account that the idea of Turkic unity in The Terjiman was not of a political, but of a cultural nature, one which focused on common cultural and historical roots of Turkic peoples. We should keep in mind that Gasprinskii’s nation-building idea itself featured only Russian Muslim Turks. Meanwhile, there is also some research outlining The Terjiman as an advocate of the Russian statist position (Yilmaz, Bahrevskiy, 2017). However, our focus in this paper is on the constructivist aspect of Gasprinskii’s nation-building project.

Some researchers have also addressed the sociopolitical situation of Muslim Turks in Russia, which was one of the central topics of The Terjiman newspaper<sup>4</sup> (Ot redaktsii, 1883). Drawing on articles from the newspaper, researchers have focused on various aspects, such as the social and daily life of Muslims in different regions of the Russian Empire at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Abduramanova, 2015); issues of inter-ethnic relations and patriotism among the Muslim population of Russia (Shukurdzhieva, 2017); issues of emigration of Russian Muslims to the Ottoman Empire (Abibullaeva, 2010); and so on. In addition, the studies of D.S. Arapov (Arapov, 2004) and R.G. Landa (Landa, 2011) cover the history of the interaction

<sup>1</sup> Dilde, fikirde, işde birlik.

<sup>2</sup> Here and hereafter in the text all dates of newspaper publications are listed in Old style. It should be noted that the Day of Crimean Tatar journalism is celebrated on April, 10 in New style.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, the “Türk yurdu” and “Emel” magazines and “Qırım’ın sesi” newspaper in Turkey, the “Turkic view” newspaper in Tatarstan, etc.

<sup>4</sup> On April 10, 1883, Gasprinskii had already written in the first issue of his newspaper: “The Perevodchik” will serve for Muslims as much as a conductor of sober, useful information from cultural life, and at the same time it will familiarize Russians with the life, attitudes and needs of Muslims”.

between Russian Muslim Turks and the state power in the 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which describes the overall sociopolitical context, and are of great relevance to our study.

Despite the abundance of literature on the subject covered in this paper, such topics as the evolution of the editor's approach to the nation question or correlation between the newspaper's ethnocultural and political issues and the promotion of the nation-building project, have not been the subject of much research. Besides, there seems to be an absence of research directly devoted to a discourse analysis of *The Terjiman* newspaper. Indeed, in this paper we tried to employ a distinctive approach, focused on "in what way" and "for what purpose" something was said in a certain context rather than on "what" was said.

In addition, we used the academic research of B. Anderson ([Anderson, 2006](#)), G. Gellner ([Gellner, 2009](#)) and C. Hirschi ([Hirschi, 2012](#)) on the origin and development of nationalism concepts. For instance, Anderson labelling nations as "imagined communities" articulated the concept of a "print capitalism". According to this concept, the widespread evolution of the newspaper industry as well as the novel genre in literature, deeply affected the development of national identity. Gellner emphasized the unification and nationalization of the education system as a key factor in the formation of national ideas. Both Anderson's and Gellner's theories correlate with Gasprinskii's educational and publicist activities. Still, in their view, the only form of state power nationalism accepts is an independent nation state. At the same time, as Hirschi exemplified by the nationalism of Antiquity and Medieval era, there are other forms of nationalism without claims to an independent statehood.

#### 4. Results

In furtherance of this study's goal we analyzed the key aspects of Ismail Gasprinskii's nation-building project regarding the creation of a common national language, the reformation of Islam and women's integration into the nation-building process. We also distinguished such important issues for the evolution of Gasprinskii's ideas, as the sociopolitical situation of the Muslim Turks in Russia and their emigration to the Ottoman Empire (Muhajirism); as well as applying a discourse analysis of the newspaper's terminology used in the nation context.

Firstly, it should be noted that there was an unsystematic use of ethnoreligious, linguistic and sociopolitical terminology, which formed the basis of the newspaper's nation discourse.

For example, during the life cycle of *The Terjiman*, a variety of terms were used for the general designation of Russian Muslim Turks: "Turks", "Turkic-Tatars", "Tatars", "Muslims". These different terms would be used simultaneously within the same article. The same goes for the common language titles: "Turkic", "Tatar", "Muslim", "Turkic-Tatar".

The term "nation" ("Millet") was also ambivalent, as far as it was used both for the Turkic people taken separately and Russian Muslim Turks taken as a whole. Moreover, it is noticeable from a diachronic perspective, that the term "Turkic tribe" ("Turk Kavmi") was gradually replaced by the term "Turkic nation" ("Turk millet"), which gained currency only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (from 1900). At the same time, semantically similar to the term "nation" was the term "people" ("halk"), initially used to designate the Turkic people taken separately and then all Russian Muslim Turks taken as a whole. In this respect, in the newspaper's Turkic version, the terms "milletdash" ("representative of the same nation") and "dindash" ("coreligionist") were also used, however in the Russian text there was only the term "coreligionist".

In addition, throughout the entire period of *The Terjiman*'s life cycle, one of the key concepts used in the newspaper's nation discourse was "Russian Muslims" or simply "Muslims", and if required, with regional referencing (Crimean Muslims, Kazan Muslims, Tiflis Muslims, etc.). Moreover, the term "Russian Muslims" mostly referred to "Russian Muslim Turks" and in this respect, it was used as a synonym for the term "people" ([Terjiman, 1894](#)). This is because the population census in the Russian Empire during that period was based on a self-definition of one's religious affiliation rather than on ethnicity. It should be noted, however, that ethnic self-definition and its opposition to "other" ethnic groups obviously existed, resulting in ethnonyms such as Tatar, Kirghiz, Nogai, Crimean Tatar, Bashkir and others, which we also found in *The Terjiman* newspaper articles. At the same time, the idea of a "common Turkic" national identity was absent, and its construction would require extensive work, primarily through the impact on public opinion of such media as *The Terjiman* newspaper.

Setting the sociopolitical aspect of Gasprinskii's nation-building project in the context of Russian realities of that era, one can note the regular use of the following terms: "loyal subject" ("sadatkatly tebaalar"), "patriotism" ("vatanperverlik"), "Motherland" ("Vatan"), "toleration" (in Turkic translation -"dine kemal-i hurmet", i.e. "full respect for the faith"), "equal/fair rights" ("bir derejede/adil haklar"), and so on. It denotes the positive image-building of Russia as a country of origin for Muslim Turks, as well as demonstrating of their loyalty to the authorities.

In this context, there were also terms that emphasized the newspaper's nation-oriented line: "Turkic (Muslim) people / tribe / nation" ("Turk (Muslim) halki/ ashireti/ milleti"), "nationalism" ("milletperverlik"), "subordinated / conquered peoples" ("zabt idilmish/ tabi idilmish halklar"), "Russification" ("Ruslashdyrma"), "person of foreign race" ("gayri Ruslar", i.e. "non-Russians", Russian "inorodets") and others.

Besides, the newspaper's Russian text regularly marked the indigenous origin of Muslim Turks in Russia by use the term "natives" (Russian "tuzemets"), whereas in Turkic versions the terms "islamlar" or "musulmanlar" ("Muslims") were mostly interchanged.

As may be observed from The Terjiman articles, Gasprinskii sought to construct the common national identity of Russian Muslim Turks by gradually promoting the idea of their cultural and historical kinship. In one of the very first issues of The Terjiman, Gasprinskii pointed to the "unity of the religious sect, language and tribe" of "Muslims from various Russian regions" ([Dva slova, 1883](#)).

A special focus of the newspaper's discourse was on the percentage of Muslim Turk population in Russia, who in Gasprinskii's opinion quantitatively ranked first after the Russians ([Musul'manskoe naselenie Rossii, 1887](#)). It was repeatedly stressed in the newspaper that they accounted for nine tenths of the entire Muslim population in Russia and numbered between 10 to 14 million ([Vopros o yazyke, 1905](#)). Besides, Gasprinskii pointed out, that: "Apart from the Ottoman Empire and China (Kashgar), the entire Turkic-Tatar tribes became part of Russia. The previously formed Siberian, Kazan, Crimean, Astrakhan, Baku, Shemakhan and Kokand khanates consist of various peoples of the Turkic kind (plemya), such as the Tatars from Crimea, Transcaucasia, Astrakhan, Kazan, residents of Kokand, the steppe regions of Turkestan and other localities. <...> All these Muslims, except for the highland population of the Caucasus, speak similar dialects of the same language" ([Musul'manskoe naselenie Rossii, 1887](#)). Gradually, in allegorical form, Gasprinskii promulgated the idea of their future unification as a noticeable advantage relative to their then atomized existence.

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which marked the general liberalization of public life in Russia, The Terjiman's articles treated common Turkic nation idea apolitically. Primarily, because further dissemination and popularization of such an idea required the intended audience to be prepared for its perception. In this regard, concerning the creation of a semiformal political association of Russian Muslims, "Ittifaq ul-muslimin" ("Muslim Union", 1905–1907) Gasprinskii later noted: "In 1883 the common, unifying national idea wasn't even in the air, but now since 1905 it has reached different social groups and it's trying to crystallize as a cultural-political party" ([K chitatel'nyu, 1907](#)).

In addition to the above, from 1905 onwards, the idea of nation in The Terjiman's articles was discussed openly: "I will never sympathize with something that one way or another will erode the idea of nationalism. <...> I can think about nothing but it [our nation]" ([Gasprinskii, 1907](#)).

Moreover, the nation-building idea was covered in the newspaper both in special dedicated articles and intertwined with topics on common language, the reformation of Islam, the emancipation of Muslim women, the sociopolitical condition of Muslims in Russia, etc.

In the framework of Gasprinskii's nation-building project, the construction of linguistic unity among Muslim Turks seems to be the most important stage. In this respect, Gasprinskii was determined to resolve this issue: "Of course, the several million Turkic people can not be excepted from the rule and became a people without language. <...> We must not forget that the language of the people is a no less important element of its existence than is religion" ([Vopros o yazyke, 1905](#)).

Since its first edition, the newspaper regularly published notes about the linguistic affinity of different Turkic languages, usually calling them local dialects, parlances or subdialects: "Quite large Turkic-Tatar tribes inhabiting Central Asia and Eastern Europe speak many local dialects, which are so close to each other that for example a resident of Bakhchysarai can explain himself to a resident of Kashgar" ([Turetskie narechiya, 1888](#)).

Initially the newspaper set about gradually preparing its readers to perceive the idea of a linguistic unity of the Russian Muslim Turks, considering the common Turkic language as the language of literature, press and inter-ethnic communication. From 1905 however, the language issue in The Terjiman became increasingly more sensitive, explicitly voicing the nation idea and directly appealing for unity: "Vital, and the most complex tool, and basic for the progress of education and literature, religion and nation is a national language, a common literary language <...> Brothers, the time has come to work hard in order to bring about language unity; it's not the time to standstill or for apathy" ([Qarijin-i keraim khitap, 1906](#)). In addition, at the third All-Russian Muslim Congress in 1906, and despite the presence of opposing views, Gasprinskii succeeded in promoting the insertion of the common Turkic literary language into the program of "new method"<sup>1</sup> Muslim schools. It was also the time for The Terjiman to propagate a common Turkic literary language as a language for the new modernist (New Turkic) literature ([Vopros o yazyke, 1905](#)).

Another significant aspect of Gasprinskii's nation-building project was the reformation of Islam, since it seemed to be impossible to modernize Russian Muslim Turks and develop their national identity without religious renovation. As Russian Islam expert R.G. Landa puts it, Gasprinskii and other newspaper staff members reiterated the ideas of the coeval Muslim modernists (J. al-Afghani, M. Abdo, Sh. Marjani and others) about the unconditional suitability of the Quran and Sunnah for every epoch and all peoples ([Landa,](#)

<sup>1</sup> In 1884, Gasprinskii published a textbook, which provided a new phonetic method ("usul-i jedid") for reading and writing Arabic-script texts in Tatar. Then he started actively promoting this method for Muslim schools (mekteb) through The Terjiman. In this way, the "new method schools" were named after it. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries such schools were opened not only in Russia but also abroad (Iran, Bukhara emirate, China).

2011). In this regard, they called for a return to the original purity of Islam<sup>1</sup> through its reformation, renewal and adaptation to modern conditions.

We also accept Landa's position whereby one of the basic methods for the renovation of Islam was the implementation of *ijtihād*. According to classic Sunni theory, the term "*ijtihād*" refers to the independent reasoning of the *mujtahid*<sup>2</sup> relating to unaddressed in Quran and Sunnah theological and legal questions or questions without scholarly consensus (*ijma*). On the other hand, Muslim reformers argued that every Muslim, highly proficient in Arabic language and theology, can perform *ijtihād*. So, The Terjiman regularly published articles by ordinary Muslim theologians and teachers, interpreting certain aspects of Islam, such as *zakat* (almsgiving) (Saafes, 1904), divorce (O razvode, 1904), etc., that directly confirm its modernist perception of *ijtihād*. Moreover, in 1899 The Terjiman announced a book contest (Terjiman, 1899) for the best religious interpretation of the questions relating to free will and obligation of labor in Islam (Premirovannaya knizhka, 1900). Thus, Gasprinskii did not only adhere to a modernist understanding of *ijtihād* but sought to disseminate it widely.

Gasprinskii's nation idea, among other things aimed at advancing the Turkic national identity, was supported by publications about the role of different ethnic groups including the contribution of Turks to the evolution of Islam: "<...> some of the greatest scholars and philosophers of the Muslim world were not Arabs, for instance, Ibn Sina was a Turk (according to other sources he was Iranian); Farabi was also a Turk; Salaheddin-Eyyubi was Kurd, etc." (Gasprinskii, 1884).

The newspaper's religious discourse also included articles about activities of Muftis (Gasprinskii, 1883) and the Spiritual administration of Muslims (Terjiman, 1885), mostly criticized for their inefficiency. In this regard, Gasprinskii tried to sell the line that it is necessary to employ forward-thinking Muslims as Muftis: "<...> the mufti should hold expertise both in religious and civic spheres... without damage to religious life, the senior member of the Mufti could be elected from among the civic people who had an understanding of the needs of the time as well as the orders and situation in Russia... The Mufti's proficiency in religion may be enough in Persia or Bukhara, where he is both a clergyman and religious judge. But in Russia, the Mufti is a civil dignitary and Muslim's representative in government and courts" (Otvēt gazete Ziya, 1883).

Like other coeval Muslim reformists, Gasprinskii did not advocate for complete secularization of society, but still he sought to renovate Islam to adapt it to present-day developments (Musul'manskaya tsivilizatsiya, 1884). More significantly however, is that Gasprinskii considered Islam a core element of national identity, able to resist assimilation and other negative external influences. A case in point was the Polish and Lithuanian Tatars, who completely lost their national language, but survived as a "nation" thanks to their religious identity (Pol'sha musul'manlary, 1913).

Also of particular importance in Gasprinskii's nation-building project was the issue of female education, since he saw girls as the future "mothers of the nation": "Let us add, that one educated, literate girl is ten times more useful than that of a boy; she will become a mother and her children's first teacher. Women must read, they must learn" (Koe o chem, 1884).

In our opinion, the "women's question" in The Terjiman should be considered in the context of the feminist movements which originated in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the West and subsequently spread far beyond. An economic accelerator of this process appears to be the heightened need of fast-growing industry for female labor. At the same time, it is of significance that the increased socio-economic importance of women in the 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had a great impact on the construction process of the national identity (Anderson, 2006: 62). Therefore, if previously non-taxpaying women were ignored by the authorities responsible for counting the population, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women were included in the census (Predstoyashhaya pervaya vseobshhaya perepis', 1895).

Alongside this, the newspaper's discourse on women's issues fed into the narrative of coeval Muslim reformists. Accordingly, Gasprinskii attached great importance to the equal status of men and women justified by Sharia as well as the needs of women's social engagement and female education. The newspaper also covered topics on female status in different countries, including Muslim ones, to identify existing problems in the field and show positive results of women's liberation (Zhizn' i pechat' v Turtsii, 1895).

To contextualize Gasprinskii's nation-building project we will also address the position of The Terjiman to the issues relating to the sociopolitical status of Muslims in Russia.

Thus, despite the considerable criticism of Russia's national policy for "persons of foreign race (inorodets)", the newspaper cultivated the loyalty of the Muslim-Turk population towards the state authorities and supported a rapprochement with Russians. This trend held both in the newspaper's early-

<sup>1</sup> For example: "The essence and spirit of Islam and its lofty principles remain the same as they were under the first Muslims, but perception of religion has changed and false attitudes to it have been established" (Lemanov, 1905).

<sup>2</sup> A *Mujtahid* is a high-ranking *faqih* (theologian), who has the ability and the right to decide on important issues of religion and sharia (Islamic law). The *Mujtahid* is required to know perfectly Arabic language and literature, to know by heart the Quran and Hadiths of a legal nature, and to rely solely on them in his judgments, to be able to apply the method of judgment by analogy (*qiyas*), to be aware of matters relating to *ijma* (consensus of *ulamas*), etc. In Sunni Islam, after the establishment of the four main *madhhabs* (law schools) in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it became almost impossible to attain the level of *Mujtahid*.

period publications<sup>1</sup> and during the period of the 1905–1907 Russian Revolution<sup>2</sup>, as well as in the subsequent period<sup>3</sup>.

In several articles on the social status of Muslims in Russia, one can note differences between the Russian and Turkic texts. For instance, the article “A few days in the Caucasus” covered the land problem in Batumi after its territories were captured by Russia in 1878. Its Russian version stated: “However, many natives lost their lands without knowledge of how and where to file a motion” (*Neskol'ko dnei*, 1886). At the same time, the Turkic version attributed the situation to a lack of knowledge of Russian language and laws: “The fact that there were no Muslims who speak Russian or who know Russian regulations, as well as the exact time of their appointment, predetermined a large number of those who lost their rights”. It means that for its Muslim Turkic readers, the newspaper promoted Russian language proficiency and knowledge of state laws as a necessity for their further integration into Russian society, as well as implicitly criticized the Russian authorities for the lack of conditions needed for the adaptation of the new subjects in the captured territories.

The newspaper’s narrative on public life in Russia during the 1905–1907 Russian Revolution is also of particular interest for our study. First, it should be noted that the term “revolution” was not in use in the newspaper, nevertheless events were presented negatively as a series of decentralized acts of protest throughout the country, threatening stability and inter-ethnic relations. In particular, the editorial staff of *The Terjiman* condemned the anti-Armenian massacres in Transcaucasia (*Armyano-tatarskaya reznya*, 1905), anti-Semitic outrages in different regions (*Terjiman*, 1905b), mass robberies (*Terjiman*, 1905a), etc. Moreover, to confirm its loyalty to the state authorities during this period, the editorial staff published the following statements: “<...> our periodical focuses on the promotion of Russian freedom and Russian unity due to the evolution of the rights and way of life of the Muslim Turk population in Russia” (*Terjiman*, 1905c).

In addition, the sociopolitical demands of the “progressist” part of Russian Muslims were covered in the newspaper both within the framework of the activities of the Muslim union “*Ittifak ul-Muslimin*” (1905–1907) and its regional offices, one of which, operating in Crimea, was headed by Gasprinskii himself, and the Muslim faction of the State Duma (from 1906). Their demands included such issues as the national cultural autonomy of Muslim Turks within Russia; preservation of Islam in its renewed form as a core element for the future unified Turkic nation; reform within the religious administration, educational institutions, military service for Russian Muslims; solidarization in public affairs with progressists from among representatives of other nationalities, and so on.

For instance, we can cite from the newspaper a transcript of the State Duma-speech of a Muslim parliamentarian and Gasprinskii’s comrade Sadri Maksudi: “I declare, g. [gentlemen], we will live as a particular nationality and will live freely in a free Russia” (*Rech' Maksudova*, 1910).

Another significant aspect of Gasprinskii’s nation-building project was the issue of Muslim emigration (primarily from Crimea) to the Ottoman Empire. Previously, other researchers have remarked on Gasprinskii’s negative attitude to this issue (*Abibullaeva*, 2010). In addition, we should specify that this attitude was based on its negative impact on Gasprinskii’s national program, because emigration could demonstrate its non-viability.

Primarily we should point out the differences between the Russian and Turkic texts, including the articles’ titles. Such differences can be noted from the very first articles about the mass emigration of the Crimean Tatars. For example, the Russian text stated: “25 years ago many Crimean Tatars emigrated to Turkey. Thousands of them died abroad; all of them turned bankrupt, and some of them came back” (*Gasprinskii*, 1886). At the same time the Turkic one was written with an overtly emotional tone: “In addition the Crimean population emigrated 25 years ago. Many of them died along the road. Some of emigrants returned to Crimea. Even one man of a thousand did not rest at ease through this emigration”.

We can also cite an article, which reported on a petition to Russian authorities by several Caucasian Tatars, who had recently emigrated to Turkey, and were struggling to return home because of the collapse of the Ottoman empire. This article, entitled in Russian “Return from Turkey”, began with the words: “It’s obvious that the Tatars, who emigrated from the Caucasus to Turkey, get on badly”. Its Turkic version, entitled “Return of the emigrants” (“*Kidenlerin Qayatushi*”), at the same time stated: “It’s wrong to say “return of Muhajirs”, because when there is no reason for Muhajirism, there are no “Muhajirs”, there are “emigrants” (*Vozvrashhenie iz Turtsii*, 1903).

<sup>1</sup> “As for the traits of Muslims as subjects of Russia, and loyal servants of the Tsar, we mentioned earlier that animus and detachment cannot be applied to them, because our religion dictates that we should love the motherland that feeds us and be loyal to the ruler who protects us” (*Gasprinskii*, 1885).

<sup>2</sup> “Manifest about a freedom was greeted by Muslims <...> with a great pleasure. In Crimea, in Caucasus, and in Kazan, Muslims stood under the state flag, avoiding both the red flag and the disruptions, provided by blackhundredtists. Thank God, in the atmosphere of joy and freedom, Turks neither stain their hands with blood nor soil their hands with other people’s property” (*Znamenatel'no*, 1905).

<sup>3</sup> In the sphere of domestic policy, we have advocated and will continue to advocate the idea of friendly cooperation with the Russian people, considering our several-million-strong people to be Russians almost as much as Russians themselves, both in terms of our duties and rights” (*Dlya novykh podpischikov*, 1910).

Such differences reveal the newspaper's negative image-building towards emigration. First, for their Russian-speaking readers, it was enough to mention the harsh living conditions of emigrants in Turkey to explain the reasons for their return home. At the same time the Turkic text, appealing to the potential emigrants from among the Russian Muslims, should be well argued. As we can see in the above-mentioned passage the Russian Muslims perceived emigration from Russia to the Ottoman Empire as "Muhajirism", i.e., as emigration from a non-Muslim country to a Muslim one to "save the faith". In this regard the newspaper argued against those perceptions.

To foster negative public opinion regarding the emigration of Russian Muslims to Turkey, the newspaper's editorial staff published, for instance, a series of emigrant letters warning against emigration ([Pis'mo ehmigranta, 1903](#)). In this connection, we would also point to the article entitled "Victim of emigration" ([Zhertva emigratsii, 1903](#)), which reported on the suicide of a Crimean Tatar man, who returned to Crimea after his collapse in Turkey, but did not receive permission to remain. The regular publication of official decrees prohibiting the return to Russia of Muslim emigrants is also of significance. In addition, a negative image around emigration was built in newspaper by usage of such descriptive words as "unreasonable" ("sebeb olmayan") (*Neobosnovannoe ehmigratsionnoe dvizhenie*, 1902), "disaster" ("bela") ([Toprak, toprak, toprak, 1913](#)) or "illness" ("hastalyk") ([Gasprinskii, 1903](#)).

To ward readers away from emigration, the editorial staff traditionally used Islamic religious doctrine in their arguments: "Friends, our faith teaches us to love our Motherland selflessly, it says that foul and fair as well as daily bread are god sent. If so, then where and from whom should we go?" (*Neobosnovannoe ehmigratsionnoe dvizhenie, 1902*).

Despite the fact that The Terjiman focused first and foremost on Crimean Tatar emigration, it also negatively depicted the cases of Muslim emigration from the Caucasus ([Ehmigratsiya, 1889](#)) or Volga-Ural region ([Gazeta "Svet" govorit, 1894](#)). Consequently, because of the general Muslim-Turkic orientation of the newspaper and its focus on the implementation of Gasprinskii's nation-building project, the emigration issue could never be portrayed in a positive way.

In addition to abovementioned we should also specify that the newspaper's discourse on Russian-Turkish relations supports our hypothesis that Gasprinskii's nation-building project was limited to the territories of the Russian Empire.

For instance, The Terjiman's editorial staff criticized both Russian self-perception as an "acting guardian" of Ottoman Christians and that of the Ottoman Empire towards Russian Muslims ([Dlya novykh podpischikov, 1910](#)). Regarding the Ottoman Empire it stated: "Turkish and all other journalists should notice first that these matters concern us [Russian Muslims], the Russian government and Russian people, but no one else" ([Po povodu odnoj telegrammy, 1911](#)).

Moreover, the term "Turks" as a generic term for Russian Muslim Turks and Ottoman Turks (in other contexts referred to as "Osmanli" or "Ottoman Turks") was employed only in articles about Russian-Turkish relations – primarily, to state their cultural and historical kinship, but also to support the idea of Russian-Turkish or generally Slavic-Turkic union. For instance, the article "In regard to one Telegram" reported with reference to the "Russkoye Slovo" newspaper: "<... > if only the Turkish press is going to start such an agitation [anti-Russian], we cannot congratulate it as a clever decision. <...> We have repeatedly written and will repeat again and again that the epoch of the Russian-Turkic struggle is over" ([Po povodu odnoj telegrammy, 1911](#)). In this respect Gasprinskii's nation-building project seems to include no claims to an independent Turkic state and a separation from Russia.

At the same time, Russians appeared in the newspaper as the people culturally the most close to Muslim Turks, that also justified the idea about Slavic-Turkic rapprochement: "Muslims, who are conversant with the European societies, become intimate primarily with Russians. The fact that Persian and Ottoman enlighteners come to the same point evidently shows that this our opinion wasn't a mere rhetoric but argued to the facts" ([Gasprinskii, 1885](#)).

## 5. Conclusion

In terms of his publishing activities, Gasprinskii aimed his particular nation-building program at Russian Muslim Turks. In his very first program work "Russian Islam. Thoughts, notes, observations of a Muslim" published in 1881, he stated clearly: "<...> there are already up to ten million people of Turkic-Tatar descent in Russia, practicing the same religion, speaking subdialects of the same language, living the same social lifestyle, having the same traditions <...> So, if it's obvious that Russification of Turkic-Tatars in Russia is impossible <...> what is therefore left to us? There is also the possibility of unification and mental rapprochement, based on equality, freedom, science and education!" ([Gasprinskii, 1993: 18](#)).

Subsequently the narrative of The Terjiman<sup>1</sup> supported this approach to the nation issue, as stated in his abovementioned work. The key aspects of it were a clarion call for Muslim-Turk national consolidation based on the unity of language and religion and on the European values and progressive ideas; as well as a promotion of their rapprochement with the Russians by further integration into the Russian society and loyalty to the tsarist authorities.

<sup>1</sup> This brochure is often cited in The Terjiman newspaper.

Based on our discourse-analysis of *The Terjiman*, we could argue that the newspaper's narrative depended on particular tasks and was instrumental in conveying Gasprinskii's general idea of nation-building. Although Gasprinskii repeatedly stated the cultural and historical kinship of Muslim Turks all over the world, he did not call for their political union. Thus, the newspaper covered the "worldwide Turkic kinship (Turkism) issue" in terms of culture, while the "nation-building issue" focused on Russian Muslim Turks, excluding both outlander Turks and non-Muslim Turks, such as Uighurs, Yakuts, Chuvash, etc. Moreover, the sociopolitical conditions in Russia at the time meant that Gasprinskii's nation idea could address only Russian Muslim Turks. But still it failed at least due to lack of consolidation among them.

Accordingly, the common Turkic national identity due to Gasprinskii's view should be based on the common literary language (common Turkic), religion (renewed Islam) and territory (Russian Empire), which correlates to the classic European concept of nation-building. At the same time, although Gasprinskii's program did not make a claim for an independent state for Russian Muslim Turks, this does not deny its nation-oriented nature.

In addition, Gasprinskii's nation-building project was considerably supported by the promotion of the "new method" schools, aimed at preparing and educating a "new Muslim citizen"; the emancipation of women – considered as "mothers of the nation"; "new Turkic literature", primarily national novels with Muslim Turks as the main characters<sup>1</sup> and civic poetry<sup>2</sup>; as well as like-minded national periodicals<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the Gasprinskii's novels "Molla Abbas" or "Arslan Kyz".

<sup>2</sup> The newspaper regularly published poems by Turkic-Tatar authors, addressed to the "nation" on certain issues.

<sup>3</sup> Until 1905, Gasprinskii actively advocated outreach to the national Muslim press. However, with the advent of competing Muslim periodicals such as the Tatar newspaper "Nur", whose program did not correspond to his nation program, he began to use "The Terjiman" as a platform to counter them. At the same time, such likeminded periodicals as, for example, "Shura" magazine, "Vaqit" and "Millet" newspapers were actively cited and popularized in "The Terjiman".

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