

## National Periodicals as a Way of Forming Public Opinion in the Russian Province at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

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**Abstract:** The article shows the influence of Muslim democratic periodicals on the formation of the ideological background for the Turkic youth political activity within the Russian provincial territories during the political crisis of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. The information contained in periodicals is of exceptional value as a historical source for studying the formation of public opinion in the Russian province at the beginning of the twentieth century. The article is based on a historiographic review of materials on local history. The particular value to the work is given by the authors' reference to factual material from the provincial Muslim press which testifies for the interaction of the Tatar and Azerbaijani democratic movements in the issues of equal rights of nations within a single state with wide autonomy, in the context of understanding the concepts of "nation" and "national self-determination". The national periodical press of that period, covering acute and topical issues of all aspects of the socio-political and socio-economic life of the society, was certain to influence the formation of public opinion in the Russian provincial territories.

**Keywords:** the Russian province; Turkic youth; muslims; tatars; the national seal; public opinion.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of the formation of the national periodical press of Muslim peoples at the regional level allows us to show the political palette of the multinational Russian empire of the twentieth century. Provincial newspapers, as a powerful means of ideological influence on society, contributed to the process of formation of ideas of national self-determination. The reaction to this process becomes a litmus test for determining the degree of radicalism of the political views of representatives of various parties and public organizations of a democratic and liberal direction. An important component of the development of the Turkic-Muslim diaspora of the empire is the activity of Muslim enlightenment, representatives of Jadidism. The activities of Tatar religious reformers, enlighteners, representatives of Jadidism and the young Shakird movement cannot be considered outside of the relationship with the development of the Turkic-Muslim influence of the peoples of the Caucasus region, Crimea, and Central Asia. Along with objective reasons of an economic nature, the revolutionary situation in Russia in the early twentieth century, together with the policy of tsarism towards national minorities, led to the formation of such a historical phenomenon as the level of preparedness of the Muslim society of the empire for abrupt changes. During the joint struggle of the Turkic-Muslim peoples, the potential for a future anti-colonial revolution in Russia was created. Stubborn joint struggle of Muslim peoples against colonial oppression, formed certain premises for the formation of national ideology, the crystallization of ideas about their future in a rapidly changing world.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The most important source for writing this article is the materials of the periodical press of the Turkic peoples, reflecting the social processes of the Russian province at the beginning of the twentieth century, giving ideas about changing the ideological foundations of the modernization of non-Russian peoples of the Russian Empire. The information contained in periodicals is of exceptional value as a historical source for studying the formation of public opinion in the Russian province at the beginning of the twentieth century. The article is based on a historiographic review of materials on local history published on the pages of the provincial periodicals "Al-Islach", "Kamsko-Volzhskaya Speech", and "Molla Nasretdin". The works are analyzed on the basis of a multifactorial explanation of the local manifestations of the Arab-Muslim civilization within the Volga-Ural region and determining the logic of perception of events by the population of the Caucasus region, understood in a regional perspective, using general historical research methods and methods used to study local history.

## DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM

Traditionally, representatives of Soviet historiography from an ideological point of view investigated the national periodical press as a means of forming the Tatar democratic movement. The focus of modern researchers (Amirkhanova, 2005), Nafigova, 1964, Tagirova, 1999; Farkhutdinov, 1998; A.Yu. Khabutdinov, 2001) the seemingly forgotten topic of the political activity of Muslim society in the years of the political crisis of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century again appeared. Today, the emphasis has shifted to the problems of studying the periodical

press of the Turkic peoples as a way of forming public opinion. Moreover, in recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the regional aspects of the problem.

## RESULTS

Political development in the early twentieth century led to a rapid growth of progressive principles among the Turkic peoples of the Russian Empire in all spheres of social development. The basis of this situation among the Tatars was represented by the movement of the Jadidists, who laid the foundation for the political and cultural upsurge of the emerging nation. Under the influence of the activities of the representatives of Jadidism and their ideological predecessors, the shakird movement and teachers are particularly broad-minded for the reform of the national education system. His active representatives gradually shifted to political activity, forming a cadre base for the most diverse areas of the national movement. These forces formed the left opposition to the liberal movement within the Tatar society. "Revolutionary-democratic youth first, in the framework of the Shakird movement, created such organizations as: Brek, which arose in the autumn of 1905 and was headed by G. Iskhaki; "El Islah", which arose at the end of 1904, headed by F. Amirkhan; "Ittihad," which arose a year later and started work in the village of Izh-Bubi (Fakhrutdinov, 1998).

The next step was the inclusion of democratic youth in the process of forming the national press. Creating dozens of new newspapers and magazines in the Tatar language, periodicals that originated in 1905 after repeated unsuccessful attempts turned into one of the leading forms of manifestation of the activity of the nation. This social phenomenon became a connecting link uniting the opposite in the political plan of the Türkic society. The study of newspapers and magazines makes it possible to give comparative characteristics of various ideological directions of socio-political thought, analyze the order of organizational design of political structures, liberal, and democratic movements. It was in this sphere of public life that the ideologists of the national movement fiercely clashed with their opponents. The materials of the periodical touched upon all spheres of life, which made it possible to conclude that periodicals prevailed in everyday life over other forms of political activity, such as the activities of political parties, social movements, elections to the State Duma and the activities of elected deputies. The press, unlike them, had a mass and permanent character, covering all categories of the Muslim population. However, it is necessary to note the existence of such deterrent factors within the work process as censorship and limited publications within the ideological orientation of editors of newspapers and magazines, which did not allow reflecting the vicissitudes of social development multifaceted.

The active part of the democratic Tatar youth in 1906 was grouped around periodicals: "Ural", "Tang Yoldyzy", "Tavysh", "Duma", "Azat", "AzatHalyk", "Karchyga", "Yaz" (Amirkhanov, 2005). The leaders of this direction were the newspapers "Tang Yoldyzy" and "AzatHalyk". Employees of one of the most famous editions of this group "Tang Yoldyzy" gained fame in the public circles, like the Tanchists. The leaders of this group consisted of most of the pupils of the Tatar teachers' school: Gayaz Iskhaki, Fuad Tuktarov, Khusain Yamashev, Shakir Mukhamediyarov. Being an irreconcilable opponent of the prevailing liberalism, "Tang Yoldyzy" conducted an acute polemic with less radical publications of the national press (Validi, 1923).

The second group of young people united around the publications "Fiker",

“Yana Tormush”, “Tup”, “Uklar”, “El-Gasr El Jadid”, leader among which was the newspaper “Al-Islah” at the turn of 1907. Unlike the previous group of publications, most of these newspapers and magazines were based far from Kazan. The proponents of the ideas put forward by the leaders of this political group were called Islachists in the Tatar society. At the head of the left wing of this trend for a long time was the actual editor-in-chief of the newspaper “Al-Islah” Fatih Amirkhan. Among the prominent figures of radical groups of youth in the early twentieth century can be noted Khusain Yamashev, Galimzhan Ibragimov and Gabdullu Tukaya. The latter paid attention to the negative aspects of national life, to which he reacted with a slight sense of humor, then an attempt at profound serious research (Validi, 1923). The events of 1907, connected with the suppression of the last activity of the revolution and the carrying out of reactionary policies in the country, adversely affected the political life of the Tatar society. Most of the Tancians followed these events, except for H. Yamashev, have departed from the socialist ideas to the narrowly national ones. This allowed the researchers of the national Tatar movement to conclude that the main feature of Tanchism was not so much commitment to the ideas of socialism as a radical and eternally protesting thought, and its carriers, having passed through a socialist school, became the head of the national movement (Validi, 1923).

At that time, one of the key figures in the left opposition, around which the radical-minded youth was formed, was the figure of Khusain Yamashev. In the environment of Kh. Yamashev, the circle “Shimbé” (“Saturday”) played an important role, which together with M. Tarikhin, F. Amirkhin, Kuliev, S-I. Tagirov, Tatar associates, representatives of students of Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Bashkirs, Chuvash and Mari. The role of Khusain Yamashev, as one of the leading leaders of the Tatar youth, vividly emerges in the Kazan period of his life. Yamashev's apartment in Kazan became, as it were, a home university for many progressive youth. In fact, many students of Turkish origin have been in his house and communicated with each other. Frequent guests here were the poet G. Tukay, the writer and public figure F. Amirkhan, the head of the Tatar theatrical group Sayyar G. Kariiev, the future prominent figures of the national movement A. Mustafin and M. Vahitov, the Azerbaijani student of Kazan University, the publicist R. Melikov and many others. At the same time, at Kazan University, whose student was H. Yamashev, there was a people's university, which was visited by Tatars. The Caucasian and Kazakh choirs worked in Kazan. Even earlier loyalty to the interests of Muslim peoples was manifested in the Urals period of life of G. Tukay and the Orenburg period of life of H. Yamashev when they organized through the newspapers where they worked, raising money for the benefit of the starving peasants, in the fund for helping the Bashkirs and Kazakhs (Nafigov, 1986).

About the role and significance of H. Yamashev as a bright leader of the new democratic generation of youth, one can be convinced by viewing the materials of the press of Kazan responding to his untimely death. The newspaper “Kamsko-Volzhsckaya speech” responded to this event with the publication of the obituary “In Memory of Comrade” Khusain Yamashev (The Kamsk-Volzhsckaya speech, 1912). The publication stated that Muslim students in Kazan are deeply moved by the death of university student Khusain Yamashev. Among the students and the Muslim intelligentsia, the deceased occupied a prominent place. The author of the note presented a lot of biographical material: “... He truly was the focus of our nascent youth. The Yamashev family, for everyone who knew it, was the place where everyone could rest their souls, we deeply believed that Yamashev would have a glorious activity among his fellow tribesmen” (The Kamsk-Volzhsckaya speech, 1912).



The obituary was signed by Rakhim Melikov, whose name was noticeable in the literary and democratic circles of Kazan. A student at the Kazan University of the Mathematical Department of the Physics and Mathematics Faculty, the son of a rural resident of the Mohammedan Confession, was born on April 20, 1886 in Baku, graduated from the Baku Real School. He appeared on the lists of students, as Melikov Ragim-bek Ogly, a scholarship named after Buldakov. In September 1906 he was listed among the "strangers" students at the university, in December passed additional examinations and was enrolled as a student of the law faculty, from September 1907 transferred to the physical and mathematical department.

This man became the link through which the Tatar democratic movement carried out a permanent connection with the Azerbaijani magazine "Molla Nasredin", published in the period from 1906 to 1914 in Tiflis, through this publication was associated with the democratic movement in the Caucasus. This relationship allowed for mutual, bilateral contacts. The Azerbaijani magazine "Molla Nasredin" constantly monitored the vicissitudes of the development of the democratic life of the Tatar people, influenced this process with their analytical articles that were followed throughout the Muslim world of the Russian Empire. A striking example of this connection was the sharp position taken by the editorial offices of "Molla Nasredin" in February 1908 in support of the Kazan democratic edition of "Al-Islah" in his ideological clashes with the newspaper "Bayanulhak". There were many other examples. "Molla Nasredin," analyzing the work of the Tatar periodicals, criticized the ideological foundations put forward by representatives of the liberal and conservative trend of the Tatar society. Having entered into a dialogue with the Tatar magazine "Din vamagashat", the editorial staff exposed the owners of the publication as zealous servants of the tsarist government, urging him to "catch" revolutionaries, including Muslims, because, according to them, an every Muslim is a revolutionary (Molla Nasretidin, 1909). The charity of the representatives of the national big bourgeoisie, which was one of the foundations of Tatar liberalism, was compared to a beating of poor people by the journal (Molla Nasretidin, 1909).

Tatar periodicals repeatedly referred to the information of "Molla Nasretidin". It is known that G. Tukay read this newspaper in Uralsk. From the item to the item, the democratic body of Al-Islah studied events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey and Iran, referring to "Molla Nasretidi", or retelling the briefings in his pages (Al-Islah, 1908). In 41 numbers of "Al-Islah" for 1909, the author of the publication, under the pseudonym "Mahalla karty", greeted the Azerbaijani magazine for the fact that he began to pay more attention to the life of the Tatars. Thus, it can be noted, undoubtedly, the enormous role that "Molla Nasretidin" had in the development of both the Tatar and Turkic peoples (Al-Islah, 1909). Characterizing the impact on the journal by the Tatar democratic movement, one can note the constant attention to the development of Tatar-Azerbaijani literary connections. The difficulty in developing this issue is that the question of the authors of correspondence from Kazan has not been solved so far, since most of the materials printed in the journal were sent without a signature or under pseudonyms. But here an important role in acquainting the inhabitants of Kazan with the vicissitudes of the literary life of the Azerbaijani people was played by articles in the Russian newspaper "Kamsko-Volzhskaia speech", written by Rakhim-bek Malikov (Sabirov et al., 2018).

## CONCLUSIONS

Within territories with a pronounced national specificity, the provincial

Muslim press was an effective “working” tool. The development of the national press of the Turkic population of the Russian province of the early twentieth century was a direct result of the growth of opposition sentiments of the Tatar democratic youth. For democratic periodicals, the issue of gaining independence within the framework of national-cultural autonomy was one of the most important in their political ideology. A distinctive feature of the new wave of political activity was the mutual relations of representatives of the Tatar democratic movement with the Azerbaijani democratic movement, established through the editorial office of the magazine Molla Nasruddin. The theoretical issues of the equal rights of nations within a single state with wide autonomy were common to them, and they also turned to the concepts of “nation,” “national self-determination.” Undoubtedly, the national periodical press of the early twentieth century, covering acute and topical issues of all aspects of the socio-political and socio-economic life of society, influenced the formation of public opinion in the Russian province of the early twentieth century and contributed to the preservation of cultural traditions, spiritual values, native language.

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