



Lutfullo ABDULKADIROV^a

*^aSenior Lecturer, “ICESCO” Chair of
Islamic Studies and the Study of Islamic Civilization,
International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

MUTUAL CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL AND EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN AND TURKESTAN JADIDS

Abstract. *This article examines the cultural, spiritual and educational cooperation between the Crimean Tatar (Russian) and Turkestan Jadids in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, centred on the figure of Ismail Gasprinski. It traces the penetration of his “usul-i sawtiyya” (phonetic method) and the influence of his newspaper Tarjimon into Turkestan, his visits of 1893 and 1908, and his contacts with local enlighteners such as Munavvar Qori Abdurashidxonov, Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy, Abduqodir Shakuriy and the poet Chulpon. Drawing on archival directives and correspondence, the article shows how the colonial administration and the missionary N. Ostroumov sought to obstruct the new-method schools, and how Gasprinski defended the Turkestan reformers in the press. It concludes that the Turkestan Jadid movement was, in many of its domains, a close collaborator of Gasprinski in the processes of renewal.*

Keywords: *Ismail Gasprinski, Jadidism, usul-i jadid, usul-i sawtiyya, Tarjimon, Turkestan, Munavvar Qori, Behbudiy, Chulpon, Ostroumov, enlightenment, new-method school.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the figures who made a great and invaluable contribution to the cultural development of the Turkic peoples was Ismail Gasprinski. In the period in which he lived – the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century – there was neither an air route nor even a railway directly linking Crimea with Turkestan. To travel from Crimea to Samarkand or Bukhara, for instance, one first had to reach Moscow by rail and only then continue to these ancient cities of Turkestan. Despite such difficulties,

the newspaper *Tarjimon* founded by Gasprinski and the idea of the “usul-i sawtiyya” (phonetic-method) school that he had devised travelled thousands of kilometres and reached Turkestan as well.

From that time on, the name of Ismail Gasprinski, the leader of the Crimean Tatar people, became dear and cherished among the peoples of Turkestan, and especially among their intellectuals such as Munavvar Qori Abdurashidxonov, Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy and Chulpon. The historical conditions for the beginning of a new progressive movement in Turkestan had already matured; yet had it not been for Gasprinski, this movement would arguably have begun somewhat later in Turkestan and would not have embraced the spheres of enlightenment, the press, literature and theatre with such consistency. For this reason the leading representatives of the Uzbek Jadid movement regarded Gasprinski as their teacher and held him in esteem. His death on 10 September 1914 was a great loss for them, and the newspapers published in Turkestan were filled with elegies and articles about their teacher.

Speaking of Gasprinski and Turkestan, one cannot pass over his invention – the “usul-i sawtiyya” method. The old approach of mechanically repeating the “abjad” formed from a few joined Arabic letters, then writing it on the board and forcing literacy through fear, had become outdated and no longer met the demands of the age. Gasprinski’s method was designed for pupils to acquire literacy quickly. Those who widely introduced this method – M. Abdurashidxonov, M. Behbudiy, A. Shakuriy, A. Avloniy, N. Husanov, Usmon domla Abduxoliquov, Eshonxo‘ja and Hasanxo‘ja Xoniy – were constantly compelled to stand face to face with the tsarist secret police and censorship.

Seriously occupied with perfecting the method he had devised, Gasprinski closely followed every scholarly-pedagogical and theoretical change taking place within the national school. His name was even mentioned in the article “A new-method school in Andijan” published in *Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi*. Having learned of this article, the great teacher sent the following letter to Ostroumov on 17 June 1900. (Ostroumov received this letter on 8 July 1900 and replied on 10 July; unfortunately, the reply has not been preserved.) In his letter, noting that the population was adopting the “usul-i sawtiyya” of its own free will, without pressure or rewards, he says that he is enclosing the book *Rahbar-i muallimin*, and stresses that “it contains only what is fit for our dull-witted pedagogues, and nothing that would ‘cut’ the timid ear of the unlettered

Muslim.” By this, the great teacher means that the “usul-i sawtiyya” frightens no one but Ostroumov himself (Tarjimon, 1893).

But could such an elegant jibe have any effect on a man who had made it his profession to keep a nation in spiritual and intellectual isolation?

MAIN PART

Inspired by the favourable reception of his ideas and method in Turkestan, Gasprinski visited the region again in 1908. He witnessed the children of the local people acquiring literacy quickly with the aid of the “usul-i sawtiyya.”

Regarding the Jadids’ relations with Gasprinski, the theme of Gasprinski, Chulpon and the newspaper *Tarjimon* seemed to us of particular interest. *Tarjimon* and its owner Gasprinski were extremely famous in their time, and this standing has been preserved for many years, even to the present day. Anyone who leafs through *Tarjimon* will easily sense its worthy foundation, its ardent national spirit, its Jadid temper, and the vigour and courage characteristic of Gasprinski. The newspaper’s level was high: it covered a great many socio-political, cultural-educational and literary questions, and its circle of authors was exceedingly wide. The Turks, in particular, were very active; the paper even ran a permanent “Istanbul Post” column. Although in its early years there were very few – almost no – contributors from Turkestan, from around 1910 signatures such as Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy (Samarkand), Oxund Mulla Mavdud Ohimuf (Tashkent), Mirhusayn Mirrahimuf (Kokand), Abduqodir Shakuriy (Samarkand), Hoji Muin (Samarkand), and Qazi Ziyovuddin Mahmud ibn Domla and the mudarris Fayzrahmat (Bukhara) begin to appear. Sometimes the authors wrote special articles, and sometimes they merely reported on their own circumstances. In issue No. 75 of 2 April 1913, under the heading “A letter from Samarkand,” the well-known teacher A. Shakuriy wrote in the Crimean Tatar language of the steady progress of his school, which by then was managed with four classes and two preparatory classes, four teachers and three assistants – one teaching Arabic and another Russian – expressing his hope that the local Muslims were increasingly turning toward learning.

For Chulpon it was, of course, a kind of “reward.” We read the letter: “Our esteemed teacher, honoured Ismail-bek! Certain notables of Andijan say to me: ‘You read *Shalola*, *Turk Yurdu*, *Shahbal*, *Tarjimon* and *Iqbal*; why do you not read ‘Mirza Bedil’ and ‘Xo‘ja Hafiz’?’ I could not find a word to say in answer to this question. If there is an answer,

I earnestly beg that it be published in *Tarjimon*. If there is no answer, then – casting this ‘new literature’ into water and fire – as long as I live I shall not part from the study of ‘Mirza Bedil’ and ‘Xo‘ja Hafiz.’ Sulaymonzoda Abdulhamid Yunusov” (*Turkiston viloyatining gazeti*, 1908).

Scholars note that Gasprinski visited the land of the Uzbeks twice, in 1893 and 1908, and the materials in the pages of *Tarjimon*, which the great enlightener edited for more than a quarter of a century, confirm this. During these visits Gasprinski hoped that the great enlightenment ideas he had launched would also flourish in other lands, and dreamed that, through the opening of new-method schools not only in Crimea but in other Muslim countries as well, the local population would swiftly master modern science and rise to lofty heights. Toward this aim, wherever he travelled, he would meet with the leading enlightened intellectuals there, exchanging ideas, learning some things from them and teaching them much more. He first sought to convince both the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs and the Governor-General of Turkestan of the great benefit his new ideas would bring to the whole people and country, fully informing them of his plans; but all his efforts came to naught and he received a sharp refusal. His several meetings with the Bukharan Emir Abdulahadxon likewise yielded no expected result, since the emir was in practice subordinate to the imperial government.

Bringing other possibilities into play, Gasprinski paid particular attention to meeting local enlighteners, sympathetic merchants and others, and there were instances in which he achieved his aim to some degree. For example, during his 1893 visit, with the help of the Samarkand Tatar millionaire Abdulg‘ani Husainov and his brothers Ahmad and Mahmud, and under the direction of his friend Sultan Majid G‘anizoda whom he had brought from Bahchisaray, the administrators of a new-method school succeeded in opening and putting it into operation – though the colonial administration soon had it closed. On that same visit, in Tashkent, Gasprinski met N. Ostroumov, the chief ideologue of the tsarist administration and editor of *Turkiston viloyatining gazeti*, hoping to win his sympathy for his enlightenment views as well. But Ostroumov, who had received malicious training in the anti-Muslim missionary department of the Kazan Christian Theological Academy in the manner of Ilminsky and had thoroughly studied the means of depriving Muslims of learning, had opposed Gasprinski tooth and nail from his very first steps; Gasprinski left disappointed, without grasping Ostroumov’s true aim.

In those days Gasprinski also held lively conversations in Tashkent with the major enlightener of his time, Muhiddinxo‘ja Qazi, son of Hakimxo‘ja Eshon. At that time Muhiddinxo‘ja Qazi was the honorary inspector of the 3rd Russian-native school in the Sebzor quarter, the kind of school that helped produce leading intellectuals of the age such as Toshmuhammad Qori-Niyoziy, Abdulla Qodiriy, G‘afur G‘ulom, Chulpon, Komil Yormatov, Ubaydulla Asadullakhujaev (Khujaev), Ashurali Zohiriy and Yahyo G‘ulomov. A few months before Gasprinski’s arrival, in June 1892, a protest uprising against the colonial administration had taken place there, and Muhiddinxo‘ja Qazi, accused of sympathy with that “cholera uprising,” had been dismissed from his post as qazi of the Sebzor quarter the very next day and subjected to countless persecutions. Without the slightest hesitation, Gasprinski became a guest in the home of the qazi, who was regarded by the colonial administration as an “unreliable person.” Muhiddinxo‘ja Qazi also invited another “unreliable person” – Jo‘rabek and his son Ollaqulibek – to his home, introduced them to Gasprinski, and witnessed their many conversations. The next day Gasprinski and his hosts were guests at Jo‘rabek’s famous garden in Qorasuv.

Even before Gasprinski, major scholars and travellers who came to Turan from other lands often did not leave without meeting Jo‘rabek. For instance, the famous English traveller Schuyler, who came to our land in the 1860s when Jo‘rabek was still governor of the Kitab province, admired him in his book *Turkistan*, published in London, as “one of the best and purest of the Central Asian nobility.” In the early 1890s the famous Swedish scholar Sven Hedin, who first met Jo‘rabek at a reception in the home of Governor-General A. Vrevsky, was captivated by him and, having stayed several days in Jo‘rabek’s garden in Qorasuv, gave him the very high assessment of “a person who played a great role in the new history of Central Asia.” Gasprinski too, during his 1893 visit, described Muhiddinxo‘ja Qazi and Jo‘rabek as highly enlightened and intelligent men, and was especially pleased when the qazi, in accordance with Uzbek custom, presented him with a costly robe (Hedin, 1895, 1:57).

As noted above, both Muhiddinkhuja and Jurabek, the former governor of Kitab province, were on the colonial administration’s list of “unreliable persons.” For this reason every step these two men took after meeting Gasprinski remained under the watch of informers. Moreover, as the movement to open new-method schools that had begun to emerge in Turan grew livelier, the police department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs laid great tasks in precisely this matter upon its permanent agent,

the missionary N. Ostroumov, the fierce enemy of all Gasprinski's activity. In this, the influence of Gasprinski's activity – especially the newspaper *Tarjimon*, which he had begun to publish from 1883, and the new-method school whose vigorous activity began a year later in Bahchisaray – had been great.

We wish to draw attention to a directive letter sent from St Petersburg under No. 13444 on 31 December 1900, preserved in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Here is the text of that letter: “The police department has the honour of requesting the following of Your Excellency:

to identify the persons participating in the district entrusted to you as authors of works of the new kind;

to gather detailed information about their persons, their social and property status, and also their connections within the Muslim milieu, and where they were educated;

to establish what connection exists between the supporters of the new movement and the ‘Young Turks,’ and whether they are inspired by some other Muslim centre in Turkey or abroad;

to ascertain where and by whom the new-method Muslim schools in the district entrusted to you have been established, who teaches in them, and under whose institution and supervision these schools fall. About these matters, esteemed sir, kindly inform us as urgently as possible, in order to report to His Excellency the Minister of Internal Affairs” (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, F. 1009).

There are many such documents in the archive; we have confined ourselves to citing only one of them. What an ominous role these directive documents played in the fate of the progressive, self-sacrificing intellectuals of our land may be surmised from the many distressing events that occurred in those times.

Thus, although Muhiddinxo‘ja Qazi was elected qazi of the Sebzor quarter in the summer of 1899 with great success, receiving 62 votes against 12, the provincial governor shamelessly annulled the election results and heaped slander upon slander on him. Jo‘rabek and his son Ollaqulibek could not free themselves from the consequences of their meeting and conversations with Gasprinski even ten or fifteen years later. Eight years afterwards, *Turkiston viloyatining gazeti* of 12 May 1901 carried a report that the War Minister, General Kuropatkin, had graciously conferred on Colonel Jo‘rabek the rank of major “for good service to the Russian state and for living quietly and

peacefully.” Yet only a few months later, in the autumn of that year, the governor of the Syr Darya province, Lieutenant-General N. I. Korol’kov, sent the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs a secret denunciation against Jo‘rabek, accusing him of several dangerous activities, some of them connected with his friendly relations with Gasprinski. Among other things, Korol’kov charged: “The zealous propagandist of the newspaper *Tarjimon* is Major-General Jo‘rabek. He takes an interest in the new-method [schools]. He met Gasprinski when the latter came to Tashkent.” This denunciation may safely be called an echo of the directive letter sent a little earlier from the Police Department of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs to Ostroumov, for Korol’kov and Ostroumov worked in Tashkent at the same time and jointly served the aim of the tsarist colonial policy of keeping the local people in ignorance.

As for the other enlightener of that period, Munavvar Qori Abdurashidxon o‘g‘li, one may suppose that Gasprinski met him not in 1893 but at some other time and on some other occasion, since in 1893 Munavvar Qori was a youth of fifteen and had not yet taken his place among the enlighteners of his day. The view therefore prevails that Gasprinski became acquainted with this great figure – who later became the father of the Tashkent enlighteners and gained wide renown even in foreign countries – somewhat later, but before his 1908 journey to Turan. Indeed, the materials Gasprinski published in selfless defence of Munavvar Qori against the furious attacks of the missionary Ostroumov date to 1906, when Munavvar Qori’s newspaper *Xurshid*, which he had begun to publish that year, became an important event in the cultural life of Turkestan and ardently propagated ideas of national awakening wholly opposed to Ostroumov’s views. Enraged by this, Ostroumov did not shrink from the basest means in his struggle against the ideas advanced by *Xurshid*. Gasprinski, who regularly followed both *Turkiston viloyatining gazeti* and *Xurshid*, acted as a fair arbiter as soon as Ostroumov’s paper began its attacks on Munavvar Qori, declared that these attacks in no way conformed to journalistic ethics, and branded them with the sharp seal of “bazaar gossip.”

Gasprinski then moved to open struggle, writing that he did not blame the Tashkent author who had signed the slanderous article but found the editor (Ostroumov) guilty, and gave Ostroumov excellent lessons in how an enlightened editor who observes journalistic ethics ought in fact to behave. Bringing Ostroumov to a state of “knockout,” he closed the article with one more elegant jibe, noting that the Russian surname “Ostroumov” means “sharp-witted” in Turkic, and wishing that God might make him

so, since “it is not fitting for old and aged editors to disparage the young and the new” (Tarjimon, 1906).

CONCLUSION

There are many examples demonstrating that the Jadids of Central Asia were close collaborators of Gasprinski in almost all spheres of the processes of renewal – in enlightenment, the press, literature and theatre alike. For this reason we have confined ourselves in this article to only a small number of examples. Taken together, however, they show that the relationship between Gasprinski and the Turkestan reformers was not one of distant admiration but of active, mutual cooperation, and that this cooperation unfolded under the constant pressure of a colonial administration and its missionary agents who sought to obstruct it at every turn.

REFERENCES

1. Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan (TsGA RUz). F. 1009, op. 1, d. 175; F. 11; F. 1. [Archival materials].
2. Hedin, S. (1895). *Serdtsse Azii* [The heart of Asia] (Vol. 1, p. 57). St. Petersburg.
3. Tarjimon [Newspaper]. (1893). No. 41, p. 4.
4. Tarjimon [Newspaper]. (1906). No. 117.
5. *Turkiston viloyatining gazeti* [Newspaper]. (1908, June 29).