Between Cairo and the Volga-Urals

Al-Manar and Islamic Modernism, 1905–17

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In 1905, a student protest erupted in the Islamic seminary (*madrasa*) of the Muhammediye (est. 1881), one of the most important institutions of Islamic learning in the Volga-Urals city of Kazan. The protest was led by the Reform Society (Islâh Cem'iyeti; est. 1904), which advocated reform of the madrasa's curriculum and further instruction in modern subjects. The demonstrations ended in the resignation of 82 students following the expulsion of 4 of their schoolmates.[1] Observing these events from Cairo, the Syrian-born Islamic scholar (*'alim*) Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935) published several letters by and articles in support of the protesters in *al-Manar* (The Lighthouse; 1898–1935), a renowned Arabic journal circulated throughout Muslim communities worldwide.

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[1] Nadir Devlet, "Alimjan Barudi (1857–1921)," *Central Asian Survey* 9, 2 (1990): 147. For a recent in-depth study of this and other student protests in the early 20th-century Russian Empire, see Danielle M. Ross, "Caught in the Middle: Reform and Youth Rebellion in Russia's Madrasas, 1900–10," *Kritika* 16, 1 (2015): 57–89.

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Al-Manar's articles on the Muhammediye events signaled more than passing interest in a piece of news; they marked increasing interactions between Islamic scholars in Cairo and the Volga-Urals during the revolutionary turmoil of 1905–17 in Russia. In particular, *al-Manar*'s publications on the Volga-Urals demonstrate not only how proponents of "jadidism," the multifaceted modernist movement of Islamic reform across the Russian Empire, became a subject of significance for enterprises of Islamic reform in Cairo, but also how jadids utilized Arabic journals to display and project their views and experiences to readership beyond the Russian Empire.[2]

Al-Manar was established in Cairo in 1898 by Rida, who had immigrated to Egypt from Ottoman Syria following the press censorship ordered by Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909).[3] Supported by his Egyptian

[2] The term "jadidism" remains to this day a contested subject among historians of Islam in late imperial Russia. For a recent critique that has questioned the usefulness of "jadidism" as an analytical historical category solely identified with *modernism,* see Jeff Eden, Paolo Sartori, and Devin DeWeese, "Moving beyond Modernism: Rethinking Cultural Change in Muslim Eurasia (19th–20th Centuries)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (*JESHO*) 59, 1–2 (2016): 1–39. This piece was part of a *JESHO* special issue, which also included Devin DeWeese, "It Was a Dark and Stagnant Night ('til the Jadids Brought the Light): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of 'Central Asia,' " 37–92. Though Adeeb Khalid was criticized by the authors of this special issue, current historiographical debates over jadidism are still shaped by his work. See Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Mustafa Tuna has recently offered a response of his own to Eden, Sartori, and DeWeese (through the example of the Volga-Urals), showing the importance of modernity for jadids (" 'Pillars of the Nation': The Making of a Russian Muslim Intelligentsia and the Origins of Jadidism," *Kritika* 18, 2 (2017): 257–81.

[3] For further information on Rida and *al-Manar*, see Shakib Arslan, *al-Sayyid Rashid Rida: aw, akha' arba'in sanah* (Damascus: Matba'at Ibn Zaydun, 1937); Ahmad al-Sharbasi, *Rashid Rida, sahib al-Manar: 'Asruhu wa-hayatuhu wa-masadir thaqafatihi* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-a'ala' lil-shu'un al-Islamiyya, 1970); Amira Bennison, "Muslim Internationalism: Between Empire and Nation-State," in *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750*, ed. Vincent Viaene and Abigail Green (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 163–85; Juan Cole, "Rashid Rida and the Baha'i Faith: A Utilitarian Theory on the Spread of Religions," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5, 3 (1983): 276–91; Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 222–44; Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 153–208; Umar Ryad, *Islamic Reformism and Christianity: A Critical Reading of the Works of Muhammad Rashid Rida and His Associates, 1898–1935* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); and Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi, *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2006). For a recent study on Rida's correspondence with his readership worldwide via *fatawa* (legal opinions) concerning new technological and commercial objects and theories, see Leor Halevi, *Modern Things on Trial: Islam's Global and Material Reformation in the Age of Rida, 1865–1935* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019). I am thankful to Leor Halevi for sharing his work with me during the last phases of writing this article.

mentor, Shaykh Muhammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905), Rida initially established *al-Manar* as a bimonthly journal, later switching to monthly publication. The journal covered various themes such as politics, theology, education, sciences, economics, poetry, and history. The journal's main message was a call for Islamic unity alongside educational and socio-political reforms based on the mastery of Arabic. Advocating the use of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) alongside an emphasis on the compatibility between Islam and reason, Rida rejected what he viewed as "blind following" (*taqlid*) of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*madhahib*), considering them a major obstacle to progress.[4] He sought to promote this message of Islamic reform through the *fatawa* (legal opinions) he published in *al-Manar* in response to inquiries from Muslims living across Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[5]

Comprising nearly 14 million subjects (according to the 1897 Russian imperial census), Muslims living under Russian imperial rule were one of the most important target audiences for *al-Manar*.[6] Although the journal touched on and corresponded with Muslims living under tsarist-governed regions such as Crimea, Dagestan, and Turkestan, its articles and interactions with Muslim subjects of the Russian Empire centered on the Volga-Urals, especially during the period between the 1905 and October 1917 revolutions.

As Stéphane A. Dudoignon has shown in his pathbreaking study on the utilization and circulation of *al-Manar*'s ideas in the Russian Empire through the Orenburg-based Turkic biweekly *Shura* (Council, 1908–18), the popularity of Rida's journal among Islamic reform enterprises in the Volga-Urals was tremendous. Islamic scholars in the Volga-Urals adopted *al-Manar*'s message or used the journal's publications to reinforce and affirm their ideas, while modeling their journals' organization on that of *al-Manar*. However, as Dudoignon has himself noted, even after the short-lived liberalization of the Russian press in the aftermath of the 1905 revolution, Muslim journals in the Russian Empire remained under the tight control of the tsarist state, whose officials feared the appearance of any so-called "Pan-Islamic" or "Pan-Turkic" ideas among the empire's Muslim subjects. Thus Dudoignon suggests

[4] Allegedly characteristic of the four Sunni schools of Islamic jurisprudence (the Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, and Shafiʿi schools; *madhahib*).

[5] The journal issued 2,592 fatwas in total. See Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David Powers, "Muftis, Fatwas, and Islamic Legal Interpretation," in *Islamic Legal Interpretation*, ed. Masud, Messick, and Powers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 31.

[6] Although the exact number was 13,889,421 Muslims, Robert Crews notes that "census-takers concluded that they had undercounted Muslims and estimated their true number at closer to twenty million" (*For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006], 13).

that the "intellectual borrowings made by the new Muslim press of Russia from *al-Manar*, and from other periodicals of the external Islamic world, took place during a relatively short period, and were restricted to questions which would not arouse the concern of censors."[7]

Dudoignon's assumption concerning the restriction of *al-Manar* and other non-Russia-based journals in the Volga-Urals highlights the difficulties Muslims in imperial Russia faced when seeking to establish transregional bonds with their co-religionists abroad. Nevertheless, Dudoignon explored such contacts solely from within the space of the Volga-Urals itself, and thus his study was restricted to how *al-Manar* was read in translations into Turkic. Indeed, notwithstanding the recent proliferation of studies about the intellectual and sociopolitical histories of Muslim communities in the Volga-Urals during the post-1905 period,[8] which have meticulously surveyed and analyzed Turkic and Russian sources, the story of how Islamic scholars in imperial Russia interacted in Arabic with their co-religionists in Egypt and the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire has remained beyond the scope of the current historiography.[9] Moreover, while a few studies on the Volga-Urals and other regions of imperial Russia (such as Dagestan, where Arabic was a *lingua franca*) have used Arabic sources to historicize legal and theological debates, they have largely remained focused on the local usage of Arabic rather than its utilization for transregional communication beyond the tsarist territories.[10]

[7] See Stéphane A. Dudoignon, "Echoes to *al-Manar* among the Muslims in the Russian Empire," in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication,* ed. Dudoignon et al. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 86.

[8] See Alan J. Frank, *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia: Sufism, Education, and the Paradox of Islamic Prestige* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Agnès Nilüfer Kefeli, *Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia: Conversion, Apostacy, and Literacy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014); James H. Meyer, *Turks across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims: Islam, Empire, and European Modernity, 1788–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Tuna, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process: A View from the Late Russian Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, 3 (2011): 540–70. Eileen Kane's in-depth study on Imperial Russia's Muslim communities and the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*) also correlates with themes appearing in such studies (*Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015]). See also Danielle Ross, *Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

[9] See Dudoignon, "Echoes to *al-Manar*," 85–116. In addition, Mustafa Tuna noted that intellectual circles in the Volga-Urals espoused educational models from Egypt but did not explore this use further ("Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process").

[10] On the Volga-Urals, see Michael Kemper, "Imperial Russia as Dar al-Islam? Nineteenth-Century Debates on Ijtihad and Taqlid among the Volga Tatars," *Encounters* 6 (2015): 95–124. For other regions, see Shamil Shikhaliev, "Muslim Reformism in Daghestan (1900–1930)," *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov´ v Rossii i za rubezhom* 35, 3 (2017): 134–69; Michael Kemper

A rare exception was Thomas Kuttner's study on the visit of the Crimean jadid Ismail Gasprinski's (Ismail Gaspirali in Tatar; 1851–1914) to Cairo in 1908. However, Kuttner, whose work was published in the mid-1970s, did not explore engagements between Islamic scholars of both regions beyond the short episode of the Cairean visit of Gasprinski.[11] We still know little about the interactions of Muslims in imperial Russia with their co-religionists in the Arab world and their participation in the booming public sphere of major Arab urban centers, such as Cairo.[12]

This article addresses this historiographical lacuna and suggests that the sociopolitical and intellectual history of Muslims in late imperial Russia also involved Arabic literati beyond the tsarist state and were performed in part in Arabic, via Arabic-language journals. Addressing such a lacuna not only sheds light on often-overlooked engagement between Russian Muslims and their co-religionists abroad; in exploring such contacts, we can see how Islamic thinkers in tsarist Russia reformulated platforms of Islamic thought and practice beyond their imperial and even transnational—that is, their relations with Ottoman Muslim subjects—boundaries to advance their own message of Islamic reform.

As a case study, this article focuses on the publications of *al-Manar* in the Volga-Urals during the period bookended by the 1905 and October 1917 revolutions. It focuses on the Arabic intellectual arena of Cairo, a center of transregional Islamic journalism during the period in question, where jadid activists and their Cairo-based counterparts both posed and debated questions of Islamic reform in the Volga-Urals, in particular, and the Russian Empire

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and Shikhaliev, "Qadimism and Jadidism in Twentieth-Century Daghestan," *Asiatische Studien/Études asiatiques* 69, 3 (2015): 593–624; Amir R. Navruzov, *"Dzharidat Dagistan"—araboiazychnaia gazeta kavkazskikh dzhadidov* (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2012); and Navruzov, "Ziiaiushchie vysoty: Problemy islamskoi vysshei shkoly," in *Dagestan i Musul´manskii vostok: Sbornik statei*, ed. A. K. Alikberov and V. O. Bobrovnikov (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2010), 150–64.

[11] See Thomas Kuttner, "Russian Jadîdism and the Islamic World: Ismail Gasprinskii in Cairo, 1908," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 16, 3 (1975): 383–424. In *Modern Things on Trial*, Leor Halevi devoted a section to Gasprinski's visit to Cairo, focusing on the debates his visit invoked in *al-Manar* about capitalist endeavors, such as banks and industries, and how they would advance and support various Islamic causes (115–19).

[12] It is important to note, however, that a few studies in Middle East history have explored some aspects of these connections by analyzing *fatawa* inquiries from readers in the Russian Empire to *al-Manar*. Yet these studies' sections on or references to the Russian Empire were only part of larger works on *al-Manar* in the context of the *fatawa* enquiries Rida received and answered. See, e.g., Umar Ryad, "A Prelude to Fiqh al-Aqalliyyât: Rashîd Ridâ's Fatwâs to Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule," in *In-Between Spaces: Christian and Muslim Minorities in Transition in Europe and the Middle East*, ed. Christiane Timmerman et al. (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009), 238–69; and Halevi, *Modern Things on Trial*.

in general. The article examines two interconnected questions. First, how did Rida construct his religious authority over Muslims in the Volga-Urals in the pages of *al-Manar*? Second, what was the role of *al-Manar*'s Volga-Urals readership in shaping the journal's coverage of the region's sociopolitical and religious landscape?

This study reveals the active role of jadid thinkers from the Volga-Urals in shaping *al-Manar*'s publications on the Russian Empire. Since its establishment in 1898, *al-Manar* had been a source of inspiration for jadids in the Volga-Urals, who supported the journal's calls for Islamic unity and educational reform, which emphasized the compatibility between Islamic sciences and reason. However, as this article contends, while Volga-Urals jadids did correspond with *al-Manar* before the 1905 revolution, tight tsarist censorship hindered contact, which was mostly limited to *fatawa* requests sent to Rida about issues concerning ritual practice as well as occasional, idealized depictions of Muslims in the Volga-Urals. It was only after the liberalization of the Russian press following the 1905 revolution that engagement between jadids in the Volga-Urals and Rida became more frequent and politicized, as information could now flow much more smoothly in both directions. This logistical transformation enabled Rida to circulate his journal in Russia more widely—despite tsarist fears of "Pan-Islamism"—and broaden its coverage of Russian Muslim affairs, including educational, legal, and language reform, as well as the relationship between the tsarist state and its Muslim subjects. In fitting his journal to the new sociopolitical conditions following the aftermath of the 1905 revolution, Rida positioned himself as a source of religious authority for his counterparts in the Volga-Urals.

But *al-Manar*'s publications on the Volga-Urals were not only related to Rida's prolific skills as a journalist. In fact, as this article contends, Rida's post-1905 writings on Muslims in the Russian Empire were informed by and depended on the opinions of a Volga-Urals-based group of jadids that used *al-Manar* to advance their own local agendas at a time when publishing articles on sociopolitical themes in the Russian Muslim press was a sensitive issue in light of "Pan-Islamic" conspiracy theories. This group of jadids was distinguished by, on the one hand, sympathy with the emerging Russian Muslim intelligentsia and, on the other hand, a common religious educational background and affiliation with state-sponsored Islamic institutions that sought to integrate Muslims into the modernizing Russian Empire.[13] Such jadids called for worldly advancement (*taraqqi*) without

[13] On the emergence of the category of "Muslim intelligentsia" in imperial Russia, see Tuna, "'Pillars of the Nation,'" 257–81.

abandoning their commitment to Islamic theology and jurisprudence. They not only solicited the journal's advice on rituals but also were given a space by Rida to communicate their experiences and debates from their own region to the Arabic readership of *al-Manar*. In short, this group of Volga-Ural jadids shaped *al-Manar*'s writings on the Russian Empire, adjusting the journal's view on Islamic reform in the Russian Empire through the lenses of their own enterprise.

This article begins with a discussion of *al-Manar* and its imperial Russia-based readership and circulation, focusing on the differences between the periods before and after the 1905 revolution. It then examines three major themes in the communications between Islamic scholars in the Volga-Urals and Egypt: reform of Islamic education and the study of Arabic, reform of legal institutions, and Muslims' cooperation with the tsarist government. In the epilogue I briefly explore the period following the October 1917 revolution to show how the Volga-Urals/Egypt connections were largely severed under new geopolitical circumstances.

Al-Manar and Imperial Russia: Circulation and Readers

Al-Manar's subscriber lists and articles from its first years of activity reveal the journal's connections to multiple regions and cities under Russian imperial rule. The front page listed the Russian Empire as one of five major circulation destinations alongside the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Sudan, and India.[14] While *al-Manar*'s subscribers included residents of the Caucasus, Crimea, Russian Turkestan, and Volga-Urals cities such as Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg, their numbers from the journal's first eight years of activity (the only extant lists) mention 24 subscribers in the Russian Empire, out of approximately 3,000 around the globe.[15] This small number of subscribers did not diminish the importance of Russia to Rida. One reason was the financial responsibility of his Russian readers, whom Rida judged to be "the most honest in paying their subscription [fees] on time."[16] More important for Rida, however, were the particular historical conditions of Muslim communities in imperial Russia. Living under non-Muslim rule for centuries, imperial Russia's Muslims succeeded in establishing various new Islamic movements starting in the late 19th century.

[14] The price of the journal's first edition (1898) in the Russian Empire was seven rubles.

[15] At least ten of these readers can be identified as based in the Volga-Urals. I am grateful to Umar (Amr) Ryad for sharing with me the subscribers' lists of *al-Manar* from his private archive at the Catholic University of Leuven.

[16] Ryad, "A Printed Muslim 'Lighthouse' in Cairo: al-Manar's Early Years, Religious Aspiration and Reception (1898–1903)," *Arabica* 56, 1 (2009): 47.

A case in point was the Muhammadiye madrasa. Founded in 1881 by Alimjan Barudi (1857–1921), a reader of *al-Manar* himself and the son of a wealthy Kazan merchant, the Muhammediye drew students from across the empire.[17] In 1886, Barudi made the Hajj, stopping on the way in Cairo and Istanbul, where he was impressed by new professional schools based on European models.[18] Inspired by what he saw on his travels and by the writings of the Crimean-born intellectual Ismail Gasprinski (1851–1914), Barudi reorganized his madrasa during the 1890s and reopened it in 1891 with a new reformed educational program.[19] He shifted the curriculum's focus from Hanafi jurisprudence (the main school of jurisprudence among Russian Muslims) and Sufi literature to Qur'anic exegesis and hadith sciences alongside Islamic history, Arabic language and literature, and Turkic and Russian and secular subjects, such as geography, biology, and mathematics.[20]

Fascinated by the Muhammediye, Rida republished in *al-Manar*'s 1899 edition an article by the Beirut-based Islamic newspaper *Thamarat al-Funun* (The Fruits of Knowledge; 1875–1908), about a visit to Beirut by one of the seminary's teachers, the Penza-born Ahmadjan Muhammad Rahim Mustafin (1860–1938).[21] In the article, titled "The Muslims in Russia," Mustafin described the Muhammadiye as a superior Islamic seminary that accommodated both the material and the religious needs of various social classes among Russian Muslims.[22] Learning from Mustafin that the state of Russian Muslims was "better than that of the Muslims in other lands," Rida expressed his astonishment at the quality of intellectual and public welfare projects Mustafin depicted, characterizing them as a "revival of knowledge" (*nahdah ʿilmiyya*).[23] In the wider transregional project of Islamic modernism imagined by Rida, even Kazan's Madrasa Muhamadiyye could serve as a model. While the relationship between Rida and the Muhammediye's staff would experience ups and downs during the post-1905 period—as we will

[17] Zhamaluddin Validi, *Ocherk istorii obrazovannosti i literatury volzhskikh tatar* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel´stvo "Volga," 1923), 81.
[18] Tuna, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process," 545.
[19] Ibid., 547.
[20] Barudi's departure from his Bukharan teachings did not mean a complete rejection of Sufism (Frank, *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia*, 160–63). On the reforms, see Tuna, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process," 552; and Devlet, "Alimjan Barudi," 147.
[21] Donald J. Cioeta, "Thamarat al-Funun: Syria's First Islamic Newspaper, 1875–1908" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1979); "Ahmadjan Muhammad Rahimovitch Mustafin," *Tatarskaia entsiklopediia*, 2008, 4:292. I would like to thank Mustafa Tuna for providing me with the latter reference.
[22] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Muslimun fi Rusiya," *al-Manar*, no. 2 (1899): 442.
[23] Ibid.

see in the next section—such articles demonstrate the respect Rida held for Islamic educational endeavors in the Russian Empire.

Yet such articles were rare. In fact, before the 1905 revolution, *al-Manar*'s publications on the Volga-Urals in particular, and the Russian Empire in general, mostly came from non-Islamic sources such as international news agencies.[24] The few direct contacts between *al-Manar* and its Russian Muslim readership that did exist were restricted, for the most part, to reports about Islamic enterprises in the Russian Empire, exceptional visits to Cairo by scholars from imperial Russia (Mustafin is the only documented example), and questions about ritual practice in the Volga-Urals, avoiding descriptions about the political relationship between the tsarist state and its Muslim subjects, apart from few instances.

Tsarist censorship was the main obstacle to such communications, as Rida himself understood.[25] In a short piece in *al-Manar* in November 1903 on the establishment of an Islamic library in Khar´kov (today's northeastern Ukraine), Rida expressed frustration over Russian censors' excising of some of *al-Manar*'s pages. He claimed that *al-Manar* was not an anti-tsarist journal and wondered why some of its contents were censored by the Russian imperial authorities. As he protested: "we seek to know about the [degree] of good treatment toward Muslims by the [Russian] emperor's government, and the freedom of knowledge among them, without the hindrance of the censors in Moscow and other cities who deny Russian Muslims some of *al-Manar*'s sections due to their misunderstanding of its translation [from Arabic to Russian]. There is nothing [in *al-Manar*] that requires such conduct."[26]

Rida's critique not only hinted at the tsarist censors' suspicion of so-called "Pan-Islamic" texts and the lack of qualified Arabic translators among the tsarist censors but also revealed that he did not seek to promote *al-Manar* as a dissident voice among Russia's Muslims.[27] Indeed, the little evidence we have on Rida's contact with his readership in the Volga-Urals before the 1905 revolution proves that he supported the involvement of Muslims within Russian imperial-controlled institutions.[28]

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[24] See, e.g., the reports on the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) (Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Khulasat ta'rikh harb al-Yaban wa Rusiya," *al-Manar* [1904]: 629).

[25] On how Muslims made use of such technologies, see James L. Gelvin and Nile Green, eds., *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

[26] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Akhbar wa al-araa'," *al-Manar*, no. 6 (1903): 838.

[27] Paul W. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Tolerance and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 216.

[28] Leor Halevi has examined a fatwa Rida issued to one of his readers in the Volga-Urals on the permissibility of photographic identification. The reader in the Volga-Urals, 'Abdul Kabir al-Mustafawi, wrote to Rida that the tsarist government initiated a mandatory requirement of

The 1905 revolution enabled greater contact between Rida and the Muslim subjects of the Russian Empire. After the revolution, Muslims were granted the "freedom of objection" (*svoboda vozrazheniia*), meaning they were permitted to publish responses to polemics against Islam by the Orthodox Church.[29] Islamic activists established various organizations such as the Union of Muslims in Russia (Itifaq), which was affiliated with both liberal and socialist parties and founded more than 50 new Muslim newspapers and magazines in languages such as Tatar, Azeri, and Persian.[30]

Rida himself reacted positively to the revolution. In a short piece he published in *al-Manar* during October 1905, he reported on the Russian revolutionaries' success in forcing the tsar to concede to their demands. Rida saw the 1905 revolution as part of an ongoing battle between knowledge and ignorance, which, as he claimed, could not exist side by side. He therefore considered the events of the 1905 revolution as the triumph of justice over oppression, crediting the success of the revolution to the activism instigated by seekers of knowledge across Russia.[31] Rida's support for the circulation of knowledge across Russia is key here. One can assume that, for Rida, the triumph of knowledge over ignorance meant an increase of his connections with his readers in the Volga-Urals and other parts of the Russian Empire.

It is important to note, however, that Rida did not address in his short piece the impact of the revolution on his Muslim readership in Russia. To publish such information, Rida needed direct contacts with his readership in the Russian Empire. The liberalization of Russian censorship after the 1905 revolution provided Rida with such new opportunities. A case in point is an article published in April 1906 by one of *al-Manar*'s Russian readers in

photo identification for Russian Muslim clerics.The latter had to be photographed and send their photos to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in Ufa to confirm their identity. Though some Islamic scholars considered photography to be forbidden according to Islamic law, Rida thought differently about this matter. As Halevi argues, Rida took a historical approach. On the one hand, he claimed that images of animals and humans were forbidden during the early Islamic period, when polytheism was prevalent and had to be eradicated by Muslims; on the other hand, however, Rida argued that photography was permissible as a tool of modern governance. As one can see, Rida did not object to the tsarist government's utilization of such governmental practices of control, nor did he object to Muslims obeying local law, demonstrating again that he did not strive to make *al-Manar* into a dissident voice in the Russian imperial context. See Halevi, *Modern Things on Trial*, 178–80.

29 Werth, *Tsar's Foreign Faiths*, 216.

30 Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History* (New York: Longman, 2001), 338.

31 Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Akhbar wa al-ara'," *al-Manar*, no. 8 (1905): 677–78.

the Volga-Urals, Muhammed Necîb Tünterî (1863–1930), a madrasa teacher and imam in the town of Tünter.[32]

The article, "The Revival of the Muslims of Russia and Their Newspapers," described current political conditions in Russia and lauded Tsar Nicholas II for his "granting of religious, conscientious, personal, verbal, and social rights [to Russian Muslims]," which allowed the "return to Islam" of forced converts to Christianity and the organization of political gatherings by Muslims.[33] Of greatest importance for Tünterî was the flourishing of the Muslim press, and he listed 17 new Muslim newspapers and journals across the empire.[34]

The burgeoning press following the 1905 revolution reflected the diverse views of Muslims in the Volga-Urals. Two important publications became the main source of information for *al-Manar* on the Muslim communities of the Volga-Urals and other parts of the Russian Empire: the newspaper *Waqt* (Time, 1906–18) and its biweekly supplement, *Shura*, both published in Orenburg.[35] As Dudoignon has shown, these journals translated *al-Manar*'s articles from Arabic to Turkic and popularized the thought of Rida and his mentor, Muhammad 'Abduh, among Muslims in the Volga-Urals. *Shura* itself was modeled on *al-Manar*'s themes and design, also producing, though on a smaller scale, an imagined community of readers across Eurasia. As Dudoignon contends, it was thanks to such media that *al-Manar* became during the years 1905–17 the journal "most often quoted, translated, and commented in the press of the Sunni Muslim communities of the Russian Empire."[36]

The relationship between *al-Manar* and the *Waqt-Shura* joint venture was facilitated by Volga-Urals-born graduates and students of al-Azhar University in Cairo (est. 972). The "Tatar Azharites" began going to Cairo in increasing numbers during the 1890s as a result of an improved Russian imperial infrastructure for traveling to the Hajj in Mecca. These newcomers established their own bookshop in Cairo as well as their own student union (est. 1906).[37] Though the names of these Volga-Urals al-Azharites did not appear in most of

[32] Adler Timergalin, *Milliyat süzlege* (Kazan: Tatarstan kitap nashriyati, 2006), 2:494–95. I would like to thank Fatima Minvaleevna Ruslanova for translating this piece from Tatar to Russian for me.

[33] Tünterî was referring to the mass conversions of "Kräshens" (Muslim and animist Tatars who were converted to Orthodox Christianity between the 16th and 18th centuries) to Islam.

[34] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Akhbar wa al-ara'," *al-Manar*, no. 9 (1906): 234–35.

[35] At its peak, this newspaper circulated to 5,000 readers. See Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims*, 117.

[36] Dudoignon, "Echoes to *al-Manar*," 96–97.

[37] On the bookshop, see ibid., 115 n. 80. The student union was the Association of Tatar Students in Cairo. See Zavdat S. Minnullin, "Fraternal and Benevolent Associations of Tatar Students in Muslim Countries at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," in *Muslim*

al-Manar's articles on this region and require further research, it is clear that these students played a major role not only in popularizing *al-Manar* among Russia's Turkic Muslim communities but also in circulating jadid thought—as published in *Waqt* and *Shura*—from the Volga-Urals to *al-Manar*.

A major example of such jadidist materials are the post-1905 publications by Rızâeddin bin Fahreddin (1858–1936), the editor of *Shura* and the assistant editor of *Waqt*.[38] Born in the village of Kuchuchat in the Middle Volga region in 1859, Fahreddin was educated at his father's Hanafi *mekteb* (primary school). In his last year of study in the countryside, he began to read works by various well-known Islamic scholars, such as the Tatar Shihabetdin Marjani (d. 1889) and the Iranian-born Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (Fahreddin met the latter during his 1888 stay in St. Petersburg). Apart from publishing notable works on Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic language, and ethics, Fahreddin also served as a *qadi* (judge) in the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly of Islamic law in Ufa (1901–6) and later moved to Orenburg for his editorial work for both *Waqt* and *Shura*.[39]

Fahreddin himself had corresponded directly with Rida over ritual and theological issues already in 1902.[40] Yet though he continued to ask Rida for *fatawa*, his main engagement with *al-Manar* began in the aftermath of the 1905 revolution, when his articles from the Volga-Urals press began appearing—via translations by Tatar Azharites to Arabic—in the Cairo-based journal. Though few in number, jadid thinkers such as Fahreddin played a crucial role in the Volga-Urals booming post-1905 public sphere, which enabled their contacts with *al-Manar*. As we shall we see, this group of jadids in the Volga-Urals directly (by requesting *fatawa*) and indirectly (by reading translated articles by Tatar Azharites) used *al-Manar*'s Arabic platform to communicate debates in their own locale to readers of Arabic and to seek the advice of Rida on not only theological and ritual issues but also on the socio-political dilemmas they faced.

Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries, ed. Anke von Kügelgen (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1998), 279.

38 Fatih Karimi (1870–1937) was the editor of *Waqt*, but so far as I know he did not publish in *al-Manar*.

39 Dudoignon, "Echoes to *al-Manar*," 99–100; Azade-Ayse Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 53–58.

40 These themes included *fatawa* inquiries on the starting dates of Islamic months, the temporality of the cosmos (*huduth al-'alam*), and a *qadi*'s right to judge in family matters (e.g., marriage and divorce) See Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Bab al-as'ila wa al-ajwiba," *al-Manar*, no. 5 (1902): 581–82; Rida, "Bab al-as'ila wa al-ajwiba," *al-Manar*, no. 6 (1902): 544–45; and Rida, "I'tibar ru'ya al-hilal fi al-shuhr al-'Arabiyya," *al-Manar*, no. 6 (December 1903): 705–7.

Debating Educational Reforms in the Volga-Urals via Cairo

One of *al-Manar*'s first major reports on the Volga-Urals dealt with a student protest that took place in Kazan's Muhammediye madrasa in 1905–6. The causes of this protest, which was part of several student protests throughout the Volga-Urals, were diverse. One may have been the Muhammadiye's inability to fund students.[41] Another explanation relates to debates over the madrasa's curriculum. Although the older generation of Muslim scholars sought to introduce secular subjects only gradually, the younger generation had different ideas in mind. Inspired by national as well as various Russian socialist and liberal currents, younger students found the madrasa's emphasis on medieval Hanafi legal texts and Islamic etiquette (*adab*) rigid and impractical.[42] Other reasons, as Danielle Ross has argued, included the "changing demographics of the student population [in the Volga-Urals], the urban environment in which many reformed schools were located, and disagreements over the purpose of the madrasa as an institution."[43]

The outbreak of the student protest in the Muhammadiye earned more than a headline in *al-Manar.* The news coming from the Muhammadiye touched a nerve for Rida, who had just experienced a crisis with al-Azhar University. Rida, like his mentor, Grand Mufti of Egypt Muhammad ʿAbduh, invested much of his time in developing a curriculum to train Muslims in both shari'a (Islamic law) and natural sciences. These efforts were hindered in March 1905 when ʿAbduh, two months before his death, resigned from a committee responsible for reforming the al-Azhar curriculum. His resignation was provoked by verbal attacks by the Egyptian khedive ʿAbbas Hilmi II (ruled during 1892–1914), who accused ʿAbduh of "undermining the religious mandate of this venerable seat of Islamic learning."[44] As the Azhar crisis was unfolding, *al-Manar* published a letter sent to Rida by an anonymous student in one of Kazan's Islamic seminaries. The letter described the circumstances leading to the expulsion of the 82 Muhammadiye students. Demonstrating its transregional readership's broad interest in these events, Rida mentioned that he had "already seen that all of the Russian Islamic newspapers circulated to Egypt had devoted themselves to this issue."[45] Depicting the student revolt

[41] Devlet, "Alimjan Barudi," 147.

[42] Tuna, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process," 560–61; Norihiro Naganawa, "Maktab or School? Introduction of Universal Primary Education among the Volga–Ural Muslims," in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007), 65–97.

[43] Ross, "Caught in the Middle," 59.

[44] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 144–45.

[45] Rida, "al-Akhbar wa al-ara'," *al-Manar*, no. 9 (1906): 235.

as an example of the "poor situation" of the religious seminaries of the city, the student from Kazan wrote:

> The education method in Kazan's religious seminaries is very pernicious! Nothing is taught in them, apart from what has been left from the thought of [ancient] Greece, al-Nasafi [a Persian Muslim scholar known for his work on the Sunni creed, *al-'Aqa'id al-Nasafiyya*; d. 1142] alongside the commentary of his work by al-Taftazani [a Persian Muslim polymath known for his commentary on al-Nasafi's work; d. 1390] and the grammatical order of words and morphology by [al-Nasafi's] well-known books. These [studies] require [one's willingness] to lose five years of life without understanding a thing. He will not study a thing from what has been mentioned and neither Qur'anic exegesis nor hadith, etc.[46]

Wondering about *al-Manar*'s view on the issue, the student from Kazan asked Rida: "What is this barbarism in the age of civilization? How long will we be a laughingstock for foreigners? And how long will we collectively wander about in our ignorance?" The student praised *al-Manar*'s role in "igniting a new spirit" of reform among Kazan's seminary students, saying they had "entered a new life." This expression of gratitude for Rida's journal hinted at the wide circulation in the Volga-Urals of *al-Manar*'s call to shift from Hanafi legal pedagogy to a focus on the *Qur'an* and hadith—a shift identified with so-called Salafi strands of Islamic modernism.

In the same May 1906 issue, *al-Manar* also published an article translated from Turkic, originally published in the Bakhchisarai-based *Tercüman* (The Interpreter; 1883–1914), a newspaper edited by Ismail Gasprinski. The article contained a copy of the letter sent by the expelled students to their fathers. Criticizing their own insufficient training in the madrasa, the expelled students wrote:

> Our teachers fill our minds with superstitions and *israiliyyat* [stories from the Jewish and Christian traditions which are not taken from a well-accepted source about the prophet Muhammad]. They put our beliefs into disorder by [the teachings of] the ancient Greek traditions [*yonaniyyat*] and the works of Taftazani [1322–90]. They impose on us to conform to footnotes and annotations, making us drink from these bitter glasses that have no connection to religion whatsoever. They make us drink from [these] bitter glasses in the name of religious sciences, and we graduate from these religious seminaries without religion to strengthen us or modern sciences to arm us, like slaves of false illusions,

[46] Ibid., 235–36.

> cowards, empty-headed people, and fools who severely tremble before every educated Russian, Pole, or Jew.[47]

In response to these accusations, one of the madrasa's teachers, the above-mentioned Mustafin, wrote to *al-Manar*. In his letter, published in the June 1906 issue, Mustafin defended the Muhammediye's curriculum and pedagogy and accused the protesting students of spreading lies about the madrasa. He dismissed their claims, arguing that these were first-year students in the madrasa's primary level (the lowest of its three levels) who did not represent the majority of the madrasa's hundreds of students. Mustafin explained that while this group of students sought to eliminate Islamic topics from the madrasa's curriculum, the madrasa remained committed to its program of gradual reform and combination of religious and natural sciences. Mustafin described the curricula of each of the school's programs, emphasizing the madrasa's teaching of various languages—including Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Tatar; Islamic sciences, such as the *Qur'an*, hadith, Hanafi jurisprudence, logic, and philosophy; and mathematics, geography, biology, and other natural sciences. As for the study of Russian, Mustafin agreed that Islamic schools needed to teach the language but also added that its study did not entail eliminating religious instruction.[48]

Rida was skeptical of Mustafin's claims. He criticized the madrasa's teaching of Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Tatar (the students' native language that was close to Ottoman Turkish) as mandatory classes, considering them to be a "heavy burden" on students, who instead ought to study European languages such as English and French or improve their Arabic or Russian. Rida's views on the importance of Arabic and Russian were similar to those expressed by Islâh Cem'iyeti, which led the protests. Its proponents called for the mandatory study of Arabic and Russian in all educational programs.[49] Rida was also critical of the religious training of the madrasa's students:

> We discovered that the students read the *muʿamalat* [commercial and civil acts or dealings under Islamic law] of *fiqh* [legal doctrine or jurisprudence] in each part from the primary to the most advanced [educational levels]. He did not mention the classification of the hadith. He only mentioned [the study of] the treatise on logic, *al-Shamsiyya* [written by the 13th-century Persian philosopher Najm al-Din al-

[47] Ibid., 237.

[48] Ahmad Jan bin Muhammad Rahim al-Mustafawi (Mustafin), "al-Madrasa al-Muhammadiyya fi Kazan (Rusiya)," *al-Manar*, no. 9 (1906): 385–88.

[49] Rorlich, *Volga Tatars*, 94.

> Qazwini al-Katibi]. All of this is deserving of criticism, as we shall clarify later.[50]

Supporting the students, Rida thus called for the Muhammadiye to re-evaluate its methodologies and curriculum. Most important, he criticized the madrasa's overemphasis on Hanafi jurisprudence, as well as its neglect of the study of hadith—which for Rida was key to understanding the teachings of Islam.

Al-Manar's publication of the letters by Mustafin and the Muhammadiye students shows that the debates surrounding the madrasa protest transcended their Russian context. The fact that the Muhammadiye students and Mustafin used *al-Manar*'s pages as a platform to express their respective positions, even in a period of growing secularization of Islamic schools, speaks to the journal's importance in legitimizing specific projects of Islamic reform in the Russian Empire as advocated by its Volga-Urals-based readership.[51]

Rida's support for the 1905 revolution is also crucial here. *Al-Manar* indeed had Volga-Urals contacts that preceded the revolution, but it was the revolution that gave such links new sociopolitical significance. As the example of the madrasa demonstrates, Rida considered the students to be representative of the revolution and thus supported them in their protest. The publication of Mustafin's response demonstrated Rida's dissatisfaction with the slow rate of reform in Islamic institutions relative to the achievements of the revolution. The events at the Muhammadiye prompted Rida and his counterparts in the Volga-Urals to use *al-Manar* to communicate ideas about improving Islamic education and institutions in tsarist Russia, as well as the general state of Muslims under Russian imperial rule. We now focus on three major themes that appeared in *al-Manar*'s publications on the Volga-Urals: the study of Arabic, Islamic legal and institutional reforms, and cooperation between the tsarist government and its Muslim subjects.

Al-Manar and Arabic and Islamic Modernism in the Volga-Urals

The call for Islamic unity at the center of *al-Manar*'s project appears at first glance to be an Arab-centric one, conditioning Islamic unity on the utilization of the Arabic language alongside a thematic focus on the role of Arabs in the history of Islam. Rida himself wrote in 1917, "My Islam is connected by history to my Arabness [*'arabiyyati*]."[52] But Rida's imagined community was by no means restricted to the Arabic-speaking world; rather, he continuously

50 al-Mustafawi (Mustafin), "al-Madrasa al-Muhammadiyya," 388.

51 On secularization, see Tuna, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process."

52 Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Masala al-'Arabiyya," *al-Manar*, no. 20 (1917): 34.

argued that Arabic was the finest tool for achieving Islamic unity, because it was based not on ethnicity but on acquirable skills.[53] Arab-Muslim identity was for Rida language based rather than ethnically bounded and thus was accessible, through study, to Muslims worldwide.

It is therefore not surprising that Rida emphasized the study of Arabic beyond Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, in regions such as British India, the Dutch East Indies, and the Russian Empire. Rida's Arabic-centric message was shared by a wide range of intellectuals in Egypt and Ottoman Syria from the last quarter of the 19th century on. These writers, like Rida, were connected to the Arab *Nahda* (Awakening), a term referring to projects of Arab political and cultural modernity between the early 19th and 20th centuries that placed Arabic and its reform at the heart of their activism. However, *al-Manar* stood out among such Arabic enterprises, particularly for its long-standing connectivity with various Muslim audiences beyond Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.

Promoting the study of Arabic in the Russian Empire was of interest to Rida even before the 1905 revolution, when he followed related developments through sporadic correspondence with his Volga-Urals readers.[54] Yet it was only after 1905 that Rida, through his promotion of Arabic, became involved in debates on educational reform and national identity among his jadid interlocutors.

Volga-Urals Muslims began reading *al-Manar* when *madaris* (Islamic seminaries) affiliated with the jadid curriculum of *usul-i jadid* (the new method), which stressed the study of modern sciences and linguistic reform, prioritized the study of Russian and nonreligious sciences over the study of Arabic.[55] Still, Rida's post-1905 correspondence with readers from this region shows that there were jadids who saw Arabic as central to not only ritual but

[53] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Khutba al–ra'isiyya fi Nadwat al-'Ulama li-sahib al-Manar," *al-Manar*, no. 15 (1912): 331–41.

[54] This correspondence included translations of the *Qur'an* from Arabic to Turkic and the reading of the Friday sermon in mosques in one's native language, and scarce information available from Arabic newspapers and journals in Beirut and Cairo, such as the above-mentioned Ottoman-Syrian journal *Thamarat al-Funun*. In 1899, the latter journal published a short piece by an anonymous Russian Muslim reader (translated from Turkic to Arabic by the journal) about the study of Arabic throughout the tsarist lands. The author lauded the high level of Arabic in the Russian Empire in both Islamic seminaries and the Faculty of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg but also criticized tsarist Russification policies, which hindered contacts between Muslim subjects and their co-religionists abroad. See "al-Lugha Arabiyya fi al-bilad al-Rusiyya," *Thamarat al-Funun* 1292, 15 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1316 H [27 March 1899], 3-4. I thank my colleague Omri Eilat for referring me to the original publication of *Thamarat al-Funun*.

[55] Tuna, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularizing Process," 549, 554–55. See also Ross, "Caught in the Middle," 70.

also educational and sociopolitical reforms. Likewise, Arabic was important to Rida and his counterparts not only for reasons of piety but also as a signifier of one's level of education and sociopolitical awareness.

Rida sought to offer practical solutions for those interested in the study of Arabic and supported its teaching in the Volga-Urals. In January 1911, for example, *al-Manar* published a question from one of his readers in the Volga-Urals, Abu-Adib Hafiz Hilmi, who recounted a debate in Kazan over the use of the phonograph—a popular technological object in the Russian Empire which was debated among Islamic scholars worldwide—to listen to recitations of the *Qur'an*.[56] As the questioner told Rida, one group approved of the phonograph, arguing that the level of Arabic among Kazan's Muslims was poor and that such technology could compensate for the fact that most Muslims were unable to travel to Egypt and the Hejaz for religious training. The other group argued against the phonograph because its general use in improper places of entertainment rendered it an illegitimate tool for religious training. Attuned to the need to improve knowledge of Arabic among Russian Muslims, Rida agreed with the first group, issuing a fatwa approving the use of the phonograph but stressing that its use was permissible only in religious contexts, such as the recitation of the *Qur'an*.[57] In his approval of this new technology, Rida promoted the idea of Arabic as a universal language that connected the Volga-Urals to the spaces of Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, while also bypassing the madrasa as the sole space for the study of classical Arabic and recitation of the *Qur'an*.[58]

Rida also used the example of Arabic as a means of promoting national unity among Volga-Urals Muslims. In the March 1908 issue of *al-Manar*, Rida published a fatwa replying to an inquiry made by the aforementioned Tünterî about the lawfulness of the first Tatar theater in Kazan (est. 1906). He was concerned because one group of *'ulama'* (Islamic scholars) considered the theater to be a forbidden (*haram*) space on the grounds that women

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[56] See, e.g., the article of the Dutch orientalist Snouck Hurgronje, "Islam and the Phonograph," *The Muslim World* 5, 2 (1915): 159–65. On *al-Manar*'s transregional engagement with the question of the phonograph, including a discussion of the above-mentioned fatwa, see Halevi, *Modern Things on Trial*, 131–58. There Halevi emphasizes the political economy and material concerns that instigated transregional debates on the permissibility of photography for Muslims in different regions of the globe.

[57] See Muhammad Rashid Rida, "As'ila min Rusiya," *al-Manar*, no. 13 (1911): 906–8.

[58] This claim is strengthened by Halevi's findings and argument. As he contended, "*Qadimi* [referring to Hanafi scholars who objected to the jadidist enterprise] reciters had a professional reason, therefore, to resent the instrument that *jadidis* touted as wondrously modern while criticizing their traditional services as lackluster, parochial, and obsolete" (*Modern Things on Trial*, 144).

participated in and watched plays alongside men there.[59] While Rida maintained that certain forms of heterosocial activity in the theater violated Islamic law, he deemed the theater permissible on the condition that Muslim women in attendance dressed modestly and did not dance with men who were not their fathers or husbands. Sharing his own experience, he claimed that the theater could promote an elevated form of Arabic that connected classical and colloquial (*ʿammiyya*) forms and could serve as the basis for a national language.[60]

Rida's engagement with his Volga-Urals readership over the question of Arabic, however, should be seen, first and foremost, as concerned with the question of reforming Islamic institutions in the Russian Empire. A case in point is Fahreddin's correspondence with *al-Manar*. Fahreddin, who looked to Rida for clarification on Arabic-related questions, was critical of the state of Arabic among Russian Muslims, particularly since he saw it as a sign of backwardness in comparison to the Russian populations of the empire.[61] According to his view, most Muslims in the Russian Empire did not master classical Arabic, despite spending most of their youth studying the language. While Fahreddin was a great advocate of the study of Russian among tsarist Muslims, he believed that Arabic abilities needed to be improved through the reorganization of Islamic schools in the Volga-Urals region.[62] Such views resembled those of Rida, who saw the resuscitation of Arabic as a precondition for any enterprise of Islamic reform.

Rızâeddin bin Fahreddin and *al-Manar*'s Vision of Islamic Reform

In May 1906, and with the help of an anonymous Tatar student at al-Azhar University, Rida published an Arabic translation of one of Fahreddin's articles that first appeared in *Waqt*. Like Rida, Fahreddin promoted a system of Islamic schools founded on teaching Islamic texts relevant to the world beyond the madrasa, preparing the future political and religious leaders of Muslim communities by teaching social, educational, natural, and political sciences. For Fahreddin, the main issue was not literacy but the content of the

[59] Helen M. Faller, *Nation, Language, Islam: Tatarstan's Sovereignty Movement* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 38.

[60] I thank Adam Mestyan for referring me to this fatwa (*Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017], 238–67). Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Tamthil al-qisas au al-tiyatru," *al-Manar*, no. 10 (1907): 38–42.

[61] Rida al-Din bin Fakhr al-Din, "Tashbih kitab al-Ihya' bi al-Qur'an," *al-Manar*, no. 9 (1906): 235–36.

[62] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Islah al-ta'lim wa al-madaris al-Islamiyya fir Rusiya," *al-Manar*, no. 9 (1906): 305–9.

curriculum, which in his view did nothing to spur progress among Russian Muslims.[63]

Fahreddin's opinions on the state of Muslims in Russia went beyond the question of education. In July 1907, for example, Musa ʿAbdullah al-Kazani, a Tatar student at al-Azhar, published in *al-Manar* a two-part translation of Fahreddin's letter concerning the demands of Russian Muslims from the tsarist government after the 1905 revolution. These demands included complete equality between Russian Orthodox and Muslim subjects and clergy, the cancellation of the requirement to master Russian for holding religious positions, and freedom of religion and the press.[64] Fahreddin did not agree with these demands, however, considering them hindrances to Muslim advancement. Instead, he argued that Muslims living in Russia should study Russian to improve their material needs and secure their private and national rights, adding that imams and members of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly in Ufa should also be obliged to study Russian and imperial laws to make them more effective leaders.[65]

Such effectiveness was tied to Islamic education, as Fahreddin connected the poor state of *madaris* in the Russian Empire to the dearth of independent reasoning among religious scholars.[66] Calling on Muslim jurists to adapt to changing times, Fahreddin enjoined Muslims to learn from Rida's mentor ʿAbduh and master foreign languages to defeat Islam's adversaries.[67] Learning Russian would enable the Volga-Urals Muslims to understand Russian thought and law and thus more effectively counter anti-Islamic polemics and unfavorable statutes.

Fahreddin also criticized Muslim institutions in the Russian Empire, contending that Muslim jurists were not really concerned with the state of family law—in particular, what he saw as the discrimination against women who pleaded for divorce. Rather, as Fahreddin wrote, jurists were interested only in keeping their government jobs and thus refused to give up their authority over this issue.[68] Opposing what he understood as the strict "blind following" of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, Fahreddin argued that

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63 Ibid.

64 Musa ʿAbdullah al-Kazani [trans.], "Matalib Muslimi al-Rusiya min dawlatihim," *al-Manar*, no. 10 (1907): 367.

65 Ibid., 368–69.

66 Such claims have been questioned by Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 16, 1 (1984): 3–41.

67 ʿAbduh studied French in both Cairo and Paris. See Mark Sedgwick, *Muhammad Abduh* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2010), 73; "Matalib Muslimi al-Rusiya," *al-Manar*, no. 10 (1907), 367.

68 "Matalib Muslimi al-Rusiya," 445.

just as European legal systems changed every quarter-century in accordance with changing times, Islamic jurists should seek to do the same, since laws only reflect the opinions of jurists in particular historical periods.[69] He thus proposed removing unneeded sections from manuals of Islamic jurisprudence while leaving intact those of continued relevance. He contended that such legal eclecticism would produce a new Islamic legal archive for the *'ulama'* to draw on to reach verdicts suitable to the community's current situation.[70] Accordingly, Fahreddin proposed practicing *talfiq* (piecing together). This legal manipulation emerged in the 11th/12th centuries and entailed a fusion of several legal elements from the rulings of the four Sunni *madhahib* in a single ruling. Rida's mentor, 'Abduh, had himself practiced *talfiq* during his tenure as the grand mufti of Egypt, further indicating the influence of Cairene Islamic thought on Fahreddin.[71]

Rida supported Fahreddin's call for an all-encompassing reform of Islamic law. Such support was not only granted to Fahreddin, but was a main aspect of Rida's engagement with Islamic scholarly circles in the Volga-Urals region.[72] Ultimately, Rida's publication of Fahreddin, as well as the latter's correspondence with *al-Manar*, demonstrated these scholars' shared commitment to a reform that sought to adjust Islamic law to the contemporary needs of Muslims. For Rida, the reception of Fahreddin's writings did not simply "prove" that jadids in the Volga-Urals were emulating his journal's thought; rather, Fahreddin's translated publications in *al-Manar* became for Rida a dominant framework of Islamic educational and legal reforms in the Russian imperial context.

Integrating Volga-Urals Muslims into the Tsarist State via *al-Manar*

Speaking in 1912 in front of the participants of the annual meeting of Lucknow's Nadwat al-'Ulama (est. 1894)—an Indian Islamic educational organization—Rida painted a gloomy picture of the state of Muslims in the Volga-Urals and their relationship with the tsarist government. Writing after 1907—a period of political reaction—Rida described how Muslims were subjected to new forms of accusations, including "nationalism,"

[69] Ibid., 448–49.

[70] Ibid., 449–50.

[71] 'Abduh practiced *talfiq* in his *fatawa*. See Muhammad Rashid Rida, *Taarikh al-ustad al-imam* (Cairo: Dar al-Fadila, 2003), 647–66.

[72] For example, the Novocherkassk-born Musa Jarullah Bigiev (1873–1949), whose historical work on the *Qur'an* was published serially in *al-Manar*. See Musa Effendi Jarullah, "Taarikh al-masahif," *al-Manar*, no. 10 (1907): 187–92, 260–65. This work was initially published in St. Petersburg and approved by the tsarist censors (Musa Jarullah Rostovdoni, *Taarikh al-Qur'an wa al-masaahif* [St. Petersburg: I. Burganskii, 1905]).

"Pan-Turkism," and "Pan-Islamism."[73] After glorifying the Tatar promotion of Islamic educational reform, he shared with his audience how the Russian authorities attempted to prevent such activities. He told his audience about Alimjan Barudi (whom Rida mistakenly called Alijan), the founder of Kazan's Muhammediye Islamic seminary, who was forced by the tsarist government to go into exile in Egypt alongside his brother and assistant only because he "taught Muslims and was informed about their thoughts in the renowned madrasa in Kazan."[74]

Rida also lamented the closing of a madrasa in the town of Bubi (Viatka Province) in 1911 and the imprisonment of its two founders. This incident, in which ten of the madrasa's teachers were arrested under accusations of conducting "Pan-Islamic" and "Pan-Turkic" propaganda, was part of a larger campaign in the Volga-Urals that year, including more than 150 raids and police searches of various Russian Muslim institutions, such as schools (more than 70 were closed) and printing presses.[75] Even Rida's contacts became targets of tsarist persecution, among them Muhammed Necîb Tünterî. The tsarist authorities deprived Tünterî of any opportunity to work as a state-recognized Islamic cleric (he regained his position after the collapse of the tsarist empire in 1917).[76] *Al-Manar* did not escape such tsarist "Pan-Islamic" conspiracy theories, becoming a subject of interest to Russian orientalists and state officials who examined the journal to trace foreign "Pan-Islamic" trends.[77]

In his Lucknow speech, Rida also referred to tsarist fears of Muslim unity in the Russian territories, mentioning the Russian authorities' attempts to prevent Tatar pedagogues from spreading education in the territories of Russian Turkestan. Rida informed his audience about the pro-government newspaper *Novoe vremia* (1868–1914) that "urged the [Russian] government to prevent the Tatars from pursuing the education of the Muslims of Turkestan and stirred [the Russian government] to ban the Tatars from traveling in the territories [of Turkestan] in order that they would not agitate the neglected Turks [Muslims of Turkestan]."[78]

[73] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Khutba al–ra'isiyya fi nadwat al-'ulama li-sahib al-Manar," *al-Manar*, no. 15 (1912): 333–35.

[74] Ibid., 334.

[75] Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 291.

[76] Timergalin, *Milliyat süzlege*, 2:494–95.

[77] See the report written by the Russian orientalist Ignatii Krachkovskii (1883–1951) for the Russian journal *Mir Islama* (1912–13) ("Iz Arabskoi pechati Egipeta," *Mir Islama* 1, 1 [1912]: 495–96).

[78] Rida, "al-Khutba," *al-Manar*, no. 15 (1912): 334. Rida was familiar with *Novoe vremia* thanks to *Waqt*, which provided *al-Manar* with Arabic translations of two of its articles (Rida, "Akhbar al-'alam al-Islami," *al-Manar*, no. 15 [1912]: 210–12).

Commenting on *Novoe vremia*'s articles, Rida explained that the tsarist government accused the Ottoman Empire of discriminating against Ottoman Christians and pressured it to grant them complete educational equality and jobs but forbade its own Muslim subjects in Turkestan from acquiring knowledge and hindered other Muslims' travel to those regions. Rida also rejected supposed Pan-Islamic conspiracies, blaming the Young Turks' government in Istanbul for destabilizing the region and for leading Russian authorities to view their Central Asian subjects as potential supporters of Pan-Islamism.[79] By attacking the Young Turks, Rida sought to continue working within the tsarist state, and not against it, but without ignoring the realities of the tsarist post-1905 backlash.

Similarly, in June 1913, *al-Manar* published a selection of abridged news from *Waqt*. On the one hand, it depicted the persecution of Muslims by Russian missionaries in Tashkent, the prohibition of the Muslim press in Samara, the settlement of Orthodox immigrants in Muslim areas in Central Asia, the denial of permission for Muslims in Orenburg to donate money to the Red Crescent in Istanbul, and police raids on homes of Muslims suspected of donating money to the Red Crescent in Kazan.[80] On the other hand, this series of abridged news also showed instances of cooperation, as indicated by one article, "The Holiness of the Month of Ramadan." The article recounts that a group of imams in the city of Orenburg met to discuss measures against Muslims who breached the fasting of Ramadan. Due to the heat during the holy month, Muslims occasionally broke the fast early. Thus the imams agreed to inspect the city's public spaces to make sure that Muslims were fasting appropriately. After receiving permission to implement their plan from Orenburg's governor, they agreed on the following procedure:

> If one is found intoxicated, eating or drinking, he will immediately be handed over to the imam through the assistance of the police. He [the imam] will preach to him and afterward will hand him over to the police, who will put him behind bars for a while at the police headquarters. [The imams] also secured an order to shut down the [city's] alcohol bars during the three days of the ʿid [the holiday marking the end of Ramadan].[81]

As we can see, by using information from *Waqt*, a journal affiliated with the Islamic modernist strand of Fahreddin, *al-Manar* reported the complex realities faced by Muslims in the Russian Empire, showing the possibilities for cooperation with the authorities. This approach jibed

79 Ibid.

80 Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Akhbar wa al-ara'," *al-Manar*, no. 16 (1913): 478–80.

81 Ibid., 480.

with the view of Fahreddin and the jadid circles of *Waqt* and *Shura*, who advocated cooperation between the tsarist state and its Muslim subjects. The similar stance of *al-Manar* and these Volga-Urals journals points to a reality somewhat different from that described by Dudoignon. Although Dudoignon claims that *Shura*'s strategy of "accommodating with the Russian authorities" was distinctive and stood in opposition to the views expressed in *al-Manar*, we can clearly see that Rida supported similar cooperation with the tsarist state.[82]

Al-Manar supplied its readers not only with diverse information about events affecting Muslims within the Russian Empire but also legal arguments for Muslim cooperation with the tsarist state. In the period following the 1905 revolution, Rida sought creative solutions to support cooperation between the tsarist state and its Muslim subjects. These solutions constantly changed in accordance with the particular needs of his readership in the Russian Empire.

Demonstrative of such an approach is a fatwa Rida issued in June 1905 to an unidentified reader in Kazan. The reader asked whether Russia was *dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam)—that is, a Muslim-governed territory—or *dar al-harb* (Abode of War)—a territory in which Muslims were not permitted to dwell—and if Russian Christians were pagans or People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*, a term that usually refers to Christians and Jews). While Rida's answer to the second part of the question was clear, concluding that Russian Christians were still People of the Book even if their belief was damaged by paganism, his answer to the first part of the question demands more attention. There, Rida did not explicitly declare that the Russian Empire was *dar al-Islam* or *dar al-harb*; rather, he gave a general response, arguing:

> If the rulings [of a state] concerning Muslims are not opposed to the fulfillment of their Islamic law and public expression of their religion, and those who do not belong [to the religion of the state] live in peace and security, free in their religion under its authority and safeguarding, then such a land, with these conditions, is *dar al-Islam,* and if it does not, then it is a land of unbelief and war [*dar kufr wa harb*].[83]

For Rida, defining a place as *dar al-Islam* or *dar al-harb* did not depend on the ruler's religion but on how the state treated its Muslim subjects, thus hinting

[82] Dudoignon, "Echoes to *al-Manar*," 103.

[83] See Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Bilad Rusiya dar al-harb au dar al-Islam wa al-Rusiyyun kitabiyyun am wathaniyyun," *al-Manar*, no. 8 (1905): 291.

at the possibility of Russia being *dar al-Islam* even if its legal system was not based on the shari'a.[84]

In another fatwa, however, Rida utilized a different reasoning for supporting cooperation between the tsarist government and its Muslim subjects. In April 1906, Rida was asked by the aforementioned Tünterî about the utilization of funds from the provincial zemstvos for establishing Islamic primary schools. Muslims had refrained for years from using such funds, since their source was a yearly poll tax paid by Muslim and non-Muslim peasants. This abstention, Tünterî claimed, had led to a state of "ignorance" among Muslims. Thus a group of Muslims had decided to use the funds to build primary schools and even received approval from the zemstvo's executive board.[85] Yet a "bigoted group" of Muslims, he wrote, had rejected the funds, regarding them as forbidden since they included money from non-Muslims, as well as funds from poor Muslims and orphans.[86] Responding that such opponents of the initiative saddened all Muslims, Rida argued that the issue was not a religious question. The Russian Empire was beyond *dar al-Islam*, and its government was not obliged to impose sharia. Therefore, as he concluded, it was the Muslims' right to use their money for such projects of public interest. Rida also argued that the use of non-Muslim funds was lawful, since it served Muslims' public interest.[87] Based on sociopolitical information provided by his readers in the Russian Empire, Rida promoted cooperation with the tsarist state to better the economic welfare of the Muslim community and its fiscal organization.

Rida also saw the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 as an opportunity to promote positive contacts between the tsarist government and its Muslim subjects. One of *al-Manar*'s readers, Yusuf Effendi Hindi (his place of origin was not mentioned), asked if Russian Muslims who fought against Japan had

[84] This understanding is similar to Umar Ryad's analysis of the fatwa but differs from that of Leor Halevi, who has argued that Rida considered Russia as *dar al-harb.* Although Halevi states that for Rida, "a country should count as 'an abode of Islam' when the laws pertaining to Muslims belonged to them and when believers had the right to express their religion publicly and the means to execute the sacred law effectively," he also claimed that in declaring Russia as *dar al-harb*, Rida sought to "liberate Russia's Muslims from the impossible expectation that the government follow Islam's sacred law in its approach to taxation and education" (*Modern Things on Trial*, 227–29). See also Ryad, "Prelude to Fiqh al-Aqalliyyât," 243. For the 19th-century history of such questions in the Volga-Urals, see Kemper, "Imperial Russia as Dar al-Islam?," 95–124.

[85] On the cooperation of Muslim intellectuals and peasants with the zemstvos after the 1905 revolution, see Naganawa, "Maktab or School?," 70–75.

[86] Muhammad Radhid Rida, "fatawa al-Manar," *al-Manar*, no. 9 (1906): 205–6.

[87] Ibid., 207–8. This fatwa was also examined in Ryad, "Prelude to Fiqh al-Aqalliyyât," 253–54; and Halevi, *Modern Things on Trial*, 228–29.

obeyed or rebelled against God. Though in his earlier writings Rida had been enchanted by Japan and glorified its victory in the war, in this April 1907 fatwa he answered that he "believe[d] that the Russian Muslims' battle against Japan did not constitute disobeying God the Sublime nor was it legally forbidden under Islamic law."[88] In fact, Rida adopted a contemporary approach: modern citizenship. He argued that participating in battles remained one of the most important components of social life, and that Muslims should choose bravery over humiliation. More important, Rida explained that fighting alongside Russians would assist Muslims in gaining equality within the Russian state and protect their co-religionists from oppression. Thus, to Rida, fighting for the tsar's armies would strengthen Islam, not weaken it. To further illustrate his point, Rida made an analogy between Russian Muslims' participation in the tsarist army and the attempts of Christians in the Ottoman Empire to be drafted to the Ottoman army.[89]

Rida's engagement with his Volga-Urals readership and his responses to the tsarist state's paranoia showed that he supported Muslims' integration into the tsarist state, advocating the cooperative approach of his jadidist counterparts. Indeed, Rida reported on cases of persecution and rejected the tsarist government's accusations against Muslims. Yet in a period when jadids became identified with "Pan-Islamism" and "Pan-Turkism," Rida offered his readership an opportunity not to burn all bridges with the tsarist authorities, on which their sociopolitical conditions, as well as the circulation of his journal, depended. In so doing, he adopted the views of Islamic modernist scholarly circles in the Volga-Urals and provided them with legitimacy to further integrate Muslims into the Russian multiconfessional state.

Epilogue: *al-Manar* and the Volga-Urals after the October 1917 Revolution

The connections between Rida and his Volga-Urals counterparts diminished after the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Reflecting the weakening of this engagement was the closure of the *Waqt-Shura* joint venture in early 1918, probably as part of the Bolshevik government's decision to ban liberal and socialist newspapers that were not completely under party control.[90] But despite diminishing contacts with his Volga-Urals readership as a result of the growing Soviet censorship of the press, Rida did not initiate a polemical attack on Soviet policies until the early 1930s. Two reasons explain his stance. The

88 Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Fatawa al-Manar," *al-Manar*, no. 10 (1907): 117.
89 Ibid., 117–18.
90 Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilizations, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35–44.

first was Rida's interest in Soviet Russia's role in international politics. Rida considered Soviet Russia as a potential ally against Anglo-French imperialism in the former Arab-Ottoman provinces.[91]

The second reason concerned Rida's relations with his Volga-Urals readership. It seems that Rida was influenced by his jadid readership who, until the late 1920s, took part in the administration of various Soviet republics. Jadids participated in the Soviet administration not only of the Soviet Central Asian republics but also of the Volga-Urals.[92] Fahreddin, for example, headed the Russian Mufti Office from 1922 to 1936, continuing, despite ongoing Soviet restrictions, to lead the region's Muslim community. In short, then, as long as the Soviet state did not initiate official anti-Muslim policies and its politics benefited the anticolonial struggle against Anglo-French imperialism, Rida did not take an anti-Soviet approach.

However, Rida's positive attitude toward the Bolshevik government ended in the early 1930s, when reports from the Volga-Urals on the Soviet war against Islam reached Cairo. In 1930, *al-Manar* published a letter sent from the Association for the Independence of the Idel-Ural [Volga-Urals]. The letter described religious persecution and prohibitions against Muslims since the Bolshevik government seized power, mentioning local authorities' prohibition of Muslim religious obligations, such as praying and performing the Hajj. In addition, the letter described the dismissal of Muslim clerics, the building of Bolshevik institutions in Russian Muslim centers, including Kazan, Orenburg, and Astrakhan; the destruction of local mosques; the imprisonment of Muslims in Gulags; and the forcing of Muslims to consume pork. The letter stated that the printing of Islamic books had been banned in the once-flourishing Muslim printing hub of Kazan.[93]

Rida thus condemned what he perceived as international indifference toward the Soviet war against Islam, arguing that Russian Muslims "have moved from the tyranny of the [Russian] emperors to the tyranny of Bolshevism which outmatches the former in its cruelty and enslavement."[94] But Rida's response also reflected a change in his vocabulary. While the authors of the letter called on the world's Muslims to aid them against the Soviets, Rida now saw it as the responsibility of the international community, not the Muslim *umma*, to protect Russian Muslims. In utilizing such language, Rida now

[91] For example, although he denounced socialism as a "non-Muslim" strand, in 1919 Rida lauded the Bolsheviks' anticolonial views. See Muhammad Rashid Rida, "al-Ishtirakiyya wa al-Bolshifiyya wa al-din," *al-Manar*, no. 21 (1919): 253.

[92] On the Central Asian republics, see Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 246–81.

[93] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Ahwal muslimi al-Rusiya," *al-Manar*, no. 31 (1930): 70–75.

[94] Ibid., 75.

worked "internationally" for the sake of Russian Muslims, pleading to the international community in the spirit of the League of Nations' Minorities Protection Regime to defend their religious freedoms.[95] But this international plea was Rida's final publication on the Volga-Urals. Disconnected again from his Volga-Urals readership, Rida was reluctant to offer anything more than a condemnation of Soviet policies or a plea to the international community to protect Soviet Muslims.[96]

Al-Manar's publications on the Volga-Urals during the revolutionary turmoil of 1905–17 addressed a range of contemporary issues such as Islamic law, educational reform, language learning, and cooperation with the Russian state. Reduced censorship and greater connectivity after the 1905 revolution allowed information between Cairo and the Volga-Urals to circulate more smoothly than ever before. Understanding the new opportunities provided by the revolution, Rida tied himself to a group of jadids in the Volga-Urals via two mechanisms. The first was the publication of articles from *Waqt* and *Shura* to transmit reliable information on the condition of Muslims in the Volga-Urals and the Russian Empire as a whole. The second was his direct correspondence with this group of Islamic scholars through the medium of the fatwa. In this way, Rida enhanced his relationship with and relied on the information given by jadids who sought a Islamic reform alongside cooperation with the tsarist state. Whereas this group of jadids, most notably Fahreddin, did correspond with Rida before the 1905 revolution about theological and ritual questions, it was only after the revolution that they began using *al-Manar* as both a medium for communicating their message, experiences, and debates in the Volga-Urals and a transregional vehicle through which they staged and legitimized their modernist schemes. Seeing eye to eye with these jadids' enterprise of reform, as well as dependent on the information they provided to him, Rida accommodated their needs, allowing them to take part in shaping his journal's content through the lenses of their own enterprise.

As this article shows, such exchanges reveal how, through their direct contacts with *al-Manar*, Islamic modernist scholars from the Volga-Urals

[95] Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 80–83, 277–78.

[96] Other journals did continue to write about the Soviet Union's anti-Muslim policies. In 1931, e.g., the Cairo-based journal *al-Fath* (1926–48) interviewed Musa Jarullah Bigiev in Lucknow, British India, after he fled the Soviet Union. See "Hadith muhim maʿ al-ustad al-shaykh Musa Jarullah al-ʿalim al-Turki al-Rusi al-shahir," *al-Fath*, no. 267 (1931): 10–12.

debated in Arabic matters of politics and Islamic thought and practice with thinkers beyond their imperial or Turkic-lingual borders, even in a period of growing utilization of Turkic in both education and national politics. Moreover, they show the importance of ideas about reform among jadids and their search for transregional media for both attaining legitimization and conveying their views to broader audiences beyond Russia's imperial territories.

These exchanges also reveal the sophistication and transregional enterprise of *al-Manar*. *Al-Manar*'s call for Islamic unity worldwide was part of a historical moment dominated by essentialized and racialized views of Islam and Muslims, most prominently the idea of "the Muslim World."[97] Such perceptions were prevalent among non-Muslims and Muslims alike, but *al-Manar*'s contextual interactions with its diverse readership challenged such notions of a homogeneous Muslim World. By transmitting the journal's message from one locale to another, *al-Manar* created a reciprocity in which Rida's initial message was modified by its audiences, thereby causing it to be continuously reshaped by its own readership rather than by a single individual.[98] Indeed, by recovering interactions between intellectual enterprises such as *al-Manar* and jadidism, we can avoid reductionist abstractions, exploring textures and concrete conversations that connected Islamic scholars in distant regions together in particular historical moments.

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[97] Such discourses are illustrated in Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of The Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[98] These interactions bring to mind the term "agents of change" as coined by Terje Østebø, who describes such activists as transmitters of ideas from one locality to another. Such activists are involved in the transference of religious change through interactions with their audience. As Østebø argues, "the actual process of religious change is constituted through the dynamic interactions between agents and audience" (*Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale* [Leiden: Brill, 2012], 30–33).

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