Participation of the Tatar intelligentsia in scientific, cultural and educational work in Kazakhstan (19th – mid-20th centuries)*

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This article is devoted to the study of the results of participation of Tatar intellectuals in scientific, cultural and educational work in Kazakhstan. State officials, clerics, and jadidites has formed the basis of the Tatar intelligentsia in the steppe zone. Civil servants played an important role in the study of the history, language, family customs of the Kazakh people. Tatar mullahs practiced zoology, history, poetry and literature. Tatars in the steppe zone published newspapers, magazines, books not only in the national language, but also in Kazakh. The ideas of Jadidism and Pan-Islamism were actively disseminated in the region through printed media. The Jadits were ideological inspirers of the development in the steppe zone of theater arts, new-method schools and libraries. One of the most important results of the activity of the Tatar intelligentsia in pre-revolutionary time was the growth of political self-consciousness of Muslim peoples. During the revolution, Muslims attempted to form an autonomy based on religious, ethnic self-determination.

Keywords: Tatars, Kazakhstan, steppe zone, scientific and cultural-educational activities


In the constructivist paradigm, the intelligentsia is considered a class that plays a significant role in the formation of the nation and culture. The importance of this society stratum lies in its ability to generate national myths and ideology [8], to actualize interest in its history, language and traditions [23], to create a “high culture” [22].

The beginning of the Tatar intelligentsia stratum formation in the steppe zone was caused by the fact that the Tsarist administration needed information about the customs, habits and traditions of the nomadic population. The officials wanted to reveal the influence degree of the norms of customary law on the life of the Kazakh nomadic society, to find out how the adaptation process of new administrative re-

* The territory of modern Kazakhstan was part of the Russian Empire (often called the steppe zone) in the 19th century. After the Bolshevik seizure of power and a number of territorial and administrative perturbations, the steppe zone became the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic within the USSR.
forms and Russian judicial proceedings took place in the steppe in the 20–40s of the 19th century [6, p.361].

Including for this purpose, the Orenburg Border Commission at the end of the 18th century was created, where Tatars were actively invited. Their competitive advantage was the ability to integrate into Kazakh society and obtain the necessary information.

The notes of the junior translator of the Orenburg Border Commission I. Batyrshin about Ermuhammad (Ilikey) Kasymov, who was the khan of the Prisyrdarya Kazakhs are valuable on the history of the Kazakhs. In the state archive of the Orenburg region, there is a “Journal made with descriptions of the notes taken by the collegiate registrar and translator M. Bekchurin during his journey on the secret expedition entrusted to him to Bukharia upon his return to Orenburg”. In addition to official information, this document contains history and ethnography facts about Kazakh people. He also compiled a Russian-Kazakh-Persian-Bukharian-Tatar dictionary-phrasebook. Collegiate secretary of the Orenburg Border Commission S. Biglov, sent with a Cossack detachment to establish the Ural fortification (now Irgiz), kept daily records, which contain information and names of the local Kazakh biys most famous for their intelligence and experience, described the family rites of Kazakhs wandering in this area.

The interpreter of the Orenburg Border Commission, the bailiff under the sultan-ruler of the eastern part of the Junior Zhuzh, Colonel A. Dzhantyurin, captain of the cavalry M. Sh. Aitov studied the property, family and marriage relations of the Kazakhs, regulated by the norms of customary law, funeral rites [15, p.130]. The translator of the Orenburg Border Commission A. Subkhankulov investigated the peculiarities of taxation among Kazakhs wandering along the course of the Syrdarya River [6, p.361].

Summing up the activities of the first pleiad of the Tatar intelligentsia, Kazakh historian G.S. Sultangalieva emphasizes that “the significance of the materials presented by Tatar translators is also determined by the fact that they were compiled by eyewitnesses of events in the Kazakh steppe of the 17th–19th centuries. In addition, personal acquaintance with representatives of the Kazakh elite (khan, sultans, biys, elders), who explained certain phenomena in the life of the Kazakh people and their observations increase the content of their materials” [15, p.131].

The authors of religious treatises, scientific and artistic works were also Tatar mullahs. The study of archaeological and architectural monuments on the territory of Central and Northern Kazakhstan, the activities of Genghis Khan and his descendants, the Kazakh khan Ablay and Abulfeiz, was carried out by a prominent imam, a native of Ayaguz K. Khalidi (1846–1913) [12], the history of Semipalatinsk – the imam of the seventh mosque of this city A. Munasypov [24]. The Kokchetav Tatar mullah F. Miftakhetdinov (1839–1913) was fascinated by history and zoology. However, his creative activity gained great popularity. Elan Patshasy Shahmaran (The King of Snakes – Shah-Maran) F. Miftakhetdinov’s novel was published in 1900 in Kazan and republished more than a hundred years later in 2011.

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For some time the Tatar poet and educator M. Kamaletdinov taught in the steppe zone and received the nickname Akmulla (“bright and fair mentor”) for his nobility and truthfulness. Akmulla wrote poetic works in a peculiar mixed style of the Tatar-Kazakh language with some colloquial elements of Bashkir speech. Some of his poems were created in the traditional Old Tatar literary language [17, p.20]. The poet’s works are considered the property of both Tatar, Bashkir and Kazakh literature [19, p.82]. The dastans of the Karkaralinsky mullah K. Minzalyavi, the poetic stories of A. Gabdessalyamov (pseudonym Kargaly), the poems of Yu. Tanchulakov and Ummati-Almatavi (known under the pseudonym Sabyr), the works of Sabirjan akin, M. Yumachikov and the Petropavllovsk mudaris in the madrasa of A. Urazayev-Kurmasi became widely known. The latter’s poem *Tahir and Zuhra* (1876) was written in rhythmic prose in Kazakh and Tatar languages and is dedicated to the theme of unrequited love and, according to G. Tukay, in his time, “it was difficult to meet men and women who would grow up without reading this poem with tears” [5, p.68].

G. Tukay was attracted by the ethnography and history of the Kazakh people. He, like Kh. Faizkhanov, Sh. Ibragimov, Sabirjan akin, M. Bekmetov, traveled to Kazakh villages, collected Kazakh songs, folk tales and legends [21, p.88]. Kh. Faizkhanov prepared a Kyrgyz-Russian dictionary for publication [16, p.116], M. Bekmetov published *Kazak Olenderi* – a collection of Kazakh songs [1], Sabirjan akin published in 1839 in the *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* newspaper *Barsa Kelmes* (*The place of no return*) Kazakh fairy tale. An interpreter, and later a high-ranking statesman, an actual state councilor Sh. Ibragimov (1841–1892) compiled an *Explanatory dictionary of colloquial and traditional words of the Kazakh language* [20, p.236], wrote a collection of memoirs about the outstanding Kazakh scientist and historian Ch. Valikhanov [19, p.516], an ethnography sketch about the Kazakhs, which describes the way of life, customs and traditions of the Kazakh people [9]. Thanks to him, in 1870, the first Turkic-language newspaper in Russia, *Turkestan Vilayate Gazeti* (*Newspaper of the Turkestan Territory*), which was published in the Kazakh and Uzbek languages came out. In the newspaper Sh. Ibragimov published ethnography and folklore articles about the peoples of Central Asia.

Not without the help of the Tatars, the first Kazakh journal named *Aiqap* appeared. The main monetary contribution to its publication was made by the Tatar merchant Mullah-Akhmat Yaushev, the room for the editorial office was provided by the Ganiev brothers’. Tatar poet A.M. Galimov, a native of Kostanay, became the secretary of the journal. He did a lot to make Tatar and European classics famous among the Kazakh people. A. Galimov translated *Sotka toshkan tychkan* (*A mouse that fell into milk*) fable by G. Tukay, *The Prisoner of Chillon* poem by D. Byron into Kazakh. Like other representatives of the steppe Tatar intelligentsia, he wrote his works in Kazakh, for example, *Zhastyk zhemisteri* (*Fruits of Youth*, 1912) collection of poems. A. Galimov, as well as the head of the *Sayyar* first Tatar professional theater troupe G. Kariev, Kh. Ismailov, S. Sagdiev, Sh. Yalimov,
G. Abubakirov and others, stood at the origins of the theatrical movement in the region.

For emerging amateur theaters, A. Galimov wrote the *May mas’alase, yahud Angyra Mullah* (*The Question about Butter or the Stupid Mullah*) anticlerical Tatar comedy [19, p.94]. In his works, the playwright and poet popularized the ideas of Jadidism and Muslim modernism.

According to researcher L. V. Sagitova, “the purpose of the Jadidists’ activity was to build their national “high culture”, which was to act as a basis for the consolidation of Muslims into a single whole – a nation capable of more successfully resisting the assimilation policy of the Russian state. It was designed to ensure equality of all Muslims with Russians and to lay the potential for the future development of the nation in line with the beginning of industrialization” [14, p.48].

“In the future, Jadidism represented an attempt to Westernize the Turkic-Muslim society and create a Turkic nation, like modern European nations” [11, p.141], says Kazakh historian S. Sh. Kazaiev. Thanks to Jadidism, “Islam ceased to be an obstacle to progress and the path to reforms in other areas was cleared: language, education and political organization” [2, p.6], – emphasizes researcher A. Bennigsen.

In Uralsk, the journalist and singer K. Mutygi (Tukhvatullin) was a jadidid. In the city, he began publishing *Fiker (Thought)* (1905–1907) newspapers, *El-gasr-el-jadid (New Century)* (1905–1907), *Uklar (Arrows)* journals. *Fiker* has become a point of attraction for the progressive Tatar and Kazakh intelligentsia. In its first issues, the *Program of the Kazakh Constitutional Democratic Party* and *Letter of the Kazakh People to the Russian People* were brought to the general public [3, p.81]. The equality of men and women was advocated on the pages of the newspaper by Kazakh G. Sharipova and Tatar F. Alusheva. *Uklar* defended the idea of reforming the Muslim confessional system of education, introducing secular disciplines into it [17, p.387]. The *Yanga Tormysh* newspaper covered the development of Tatar national culture, published fiction books, traced calls for the spiritual unity of Muslims of the Russian Empire.

The founder of the new Tatar literature, G. Tukay, began his creative career in these publications. During the twelve years of his life in Uralsk, he wrote more than 50 poems that were included in the golden fund of Tatar classical literature. The creative heritage of G. Tukay had a significant impact not only on the Tatar but also on the entire Turkic culture. Classic of Kazakh literature S. Mukanov noted: “During the ten pre-October years, many writers and poets of the Turkic-speaking peoples passed the literary school of Tukay, studied his artistic skills and became his students in the literal sense of the word. Bashkir writer Sаifi Kudash, Kazakh writers Sultan-Mahmut Toraighyrov, Sabit Dunentaev and Beimbet Mailin, Kyrgyz writers Ishangali Arabaev and Kasym Tnistanov, Uzbek writers Fitrat, Shulpah and Abdullah Kadir, Tajik writers Sadriddin Aini and Rahim Zadeh, Turkmen writer Berdy Kerbabayev and many others made their first steps in the literary field under the beneficial influence of Gabdulla Tukay” [5, p.68]. G. Tukay clearly expressed his socio-political views in his works: he was an adherent of renewal, Europeanization of Tatar society, getting rid of religious fanaticism and a supporter of men and women equality. Undoubtedly, K. Mutygi had a great influence on the formation of
his worldview. Like-minded people of K.Mutyga and G.Tukay among the Kazakh intelligentsia were Zhansha and Khalel Dosmukhametovs, N.Ipmagambetov, B.Karataev, who would later become leaders of the Alashordin movement.

The centers of the spread of the Jadidism ideas in the steppe zone were the new method schools. One of the first and most authoritative among them was the Khusainiya madrasah, which opened at the expense of the Khusainov brothers. The students of the madrasah founded the Kazakh Language Study Society, the purpose of which was to study the monuments of Kazakh folk literature, compile textbooks for mektebas and madrasahs in the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) language, and assist publishers of future newspapers [10]. Tatar intellectuals such as educator and poet Kh.Yu. Abushaev (pseudonym Abushaev Atlashi), writer, translator and journalist Z.Sh. Bashiri, journalist and publisher K.Mutygi, archaeographers Z.A. Maksudova, G.Sagdiev, G.M. Ishmukhametov, writer F.Suleymanova, linguist V.N. Khangildin, etc. worked as teachers in the new method schools of the steppe zone. Future representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia received education in Tatar Jadidist schools: poets S. Toraigyrov and B.Suleev, writers Zh. Aimaatov, S.Donentaev, M. Zhumabaev, Zh. Tlepbergenov, M.Serlin, playwrights B.Mailin and B.Serkebaev, linguist K.Zhubanov and others.

Thanks to the Tatar intellectual elite, in addition to Jadidism, the ideas of pan-Islamism are also widely spread in the steppe zone. A.Ibragimov did a lot for this. As a result of his efforts, the Serke (Leader) newspaper began to be published in Kazakh language in Saint Petersburg. In its first issue, a poem by one of the future leaders of the Alash-Orda government and To the Youth national liberation movement of Kazakhstan M.Dulatov and its particular provisions from the Wake up, Kazakh! book were published. In the second issue of this newspaper, an Our Tasks article by M.Dulatov was published, which was consonant with the Karakalin petition on the land issue and education problems [7, p.288].

Questions about the creation of a national Muslim autonomy and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly were raised in the Halyk suze (Word of the People) newspaper, which was published by F. Aitikin in Semipalatinsk. The Literature section published works by local authors: stories and feuilletons by A.Najip, Sh. Sharaf, K.Muhammad, M.Charkand, Zh. Yumashev, poems by G.Ilimitov, D.Gabelmanov, G.Almet, S.Kudash [17, p.425].

Many representatives of the Tatar and Kazakh intelligentsia took part in Muslim congresses and in the established political structures of Muslim governance: Vakytly milli idare (Provisional National Government) and Milli shuro (National Councils) of provinces. Among them were G. Akchurin (Petropavlovsk), A.Mukhamadiev (Yarkent), F.Sadykov (Kapal), Mustafa and Ramazan Tyrmenov (Petropavlovsk), V.Khalilov (Kustanai), A.Bukeikhanov, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, Sh. Koshegulov and others.

After the Bolsheviks occupied the Volga region and the Urals, the activities of the National Administration under the leadership of G. Ishkahi were transferred to Petropavlovsk. In this city, G.Iskhahi together with Sh. Alkin, G.Teregulov, F.Tuktarov, G.Gabdulbari published 30 issues of Mayak – the political, literary and national Turkic-Tatar newspaper, the first issue of which was published on December 7, 1918 [4, p.144]. The Yul (Path) Tatar weekly newspaper was also published.
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в Петропавловске (отредактировал S. Sagdaldin и Kh. Munasyrov), в Семипалатинске — 
Halyk suze (The Word of the people), Khorriyat dulkynlary (Waves of respect), в 
Урале — Khabarlар (News), Mokhbir (Correspondent) (отредактировал A. Ishmus-
kamedov), в Гурьеве — Yashlar (Youth) (отредактировал Y. Marudi), в селе 
Новая Казанка — Yaktylyk (Light) [18, стр.94], и т. д.

После окончательной победы Болшевиков, почти все татарские периодические 
средства в степной зоне были закрыты, и представители интеллектуальной мысли 
были вынуждены покинуть новую власть. Писатель, журналист, издатель и 
политик G. Iskhamidi, историк и журналист B. Gabbulbar, журналист F. Tuktarov, 
писатель и журналист Kh.R. Gadbush эмигрировали.

В советское время, интеллектуалы, которые поддерживали идеи Болшевиков, 
поступили на первый план. В Казахстане одним из самых ярких борцов за 
осуществление Советской власти в Казахстане был татарский писатель S. Sharipov. 
Он является автором романов Altybasar (1918), Lawlessness, Ruzi Iran (1935), Layla (1937), Bekbolat (1937), Leech, Exit to the City и других. Он писал свои 
работы на русском, татарском и казахском языках. Фамозный казахский 
литературный критик T. Kakishev заметил в предисловии к сборнику его 
работ: “Sabyr Sharipov became one of the most desirable writers. In his works there is a 
passionate desire to know and understand something special in the life of the people 
with whom he met and got used to, he knew the Kazakh language as well as his native one. The 
fact that Saken Seifullin collected Sharipov’s stories published in various journals, 
edited them, and says how positively Kazakh literature met him...” [13].

S. Sharipov, like many other representatives of the Kazakh Tatar intelligentsia 
of the 1930s, was repressed. The victims of repression were also: the poet and 
director of the Tatar Pavlodar school Ya. Aimanov; director of the Kazakh commune 
school Karim Akchurin and his brother, a former member of the National Assembly 
of Turkic-Tatars of Inner Russia and Siberia (Milli Majlis) Galim; head of the 
Ayaguz Muslim and Sarkand Tatar school S.M. Biktashev; teacher, publicist and 
translator F.Z. Gabitova; Ural historian and archaeographer V.A. Zabirov; head of 
Akmola school No. 6 G.A. Izmailov; Kokchetav writer I.N. Salakhov; teachers of 
the Almaty school S.A. Begbayev, M.A. Bekbulatov (director), G.M. Muginov, 
I.M. Murtazin, A.B. Khakimov, B.Sh. Hisametdinov. The outstanding Tatar painter 
B.I. Urmanche also served a prison sentence. In the 1940s – 1950s, he became 
inolved in active work in the Kazakh SSR. During this time, B.I. Urmanche created 
a gallery of picturesque and sculptural portraits of outstanding representatives of 
the Kazakh Republic, landscapes, folk sketches, illustrations of Kazakh authors’ works, 
folk tales, and poems of G. Tukay translated into Kazakh language [17, стр.402].

In addition to B. Urmanche, in Soviet Times among the Tatar creative intellec-
tuals in the Republic were notable Honored Artists of the Kazakh SSR conductor 
F. Sh. Mansurov, singers Muslim and Rishat Abdullins brothers, composer 
L.A. Hamidi, Honored Artists of the Kazakh SSR B.H. Tabiyev, K.M. Sha-
yakhmetov artists, Chairman of the Artist Association of the Kazakh SSR 
K.T. Telzhanov, Honored Artist of Kazakhstan M.G. Baraisov, winner of the State 
Prize of the Kazakh SSR film director A.T. Ashrapov, Honored Worker of Educa-
tion musician G.G. Tamendarov, writers, laureates of the State Prize named after 
G. Tukay I.N. Salakhov and N.S. Fattah, poet N.G. Arslanov.

Scientific activity of V.A. Abdullin (works devoted to the industrialization of sheep breeding), N.B. Akhmatullina (founder of the virus genetics study in the Republic), Z.A. Akhmetov (studied Russian-Kazakh literary ties, the works of A.Kunanbayev), N.Z. Galikaberov (brought out the Kazakh white-headed breed of cattle), Sh.Sh. Ibragimov (developed several practical recommendations and proposals to improve the radiation resistance of materials used in nuclear power, efficiency and safety of nuclear power plants), R.S. Islamova (developed new resource-saving technologies for the titanium and magnesium production), M.R. Kurmangaliev (introduced into production a methodology for studying the process of burning low-quality coal in high-power boiler plants) was awarded State Prizes of the Kazakh SSR, and the USSR State Prize became an award for achievements in the field of science by B.G. Akhmetova (participated in the Discovery and the study of the shadows effect in nuclear reactions on single crystals work) and D.Kh. Fatkhutdinov (for his great contribution to the geology of the discovery of minerals).

Many representatives of the Tatar scientific intelligentsia headed research institutes and design bureaus at industrial enterprises. The post of Director of the Nuclear Physics Institute of the Kazakh SSR Academy of Sciences was held by Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic Sh.Sh. Ibragimov, Director of the Mining Institute of the Kazakh SSR Academy of Sciences – A.M. Sirazetdinov, Director of the Microbiology and Virology Institute of the Kazakh SSR Academy of Sciences – A.N. Ilyaletdinov, Director of the Kazakhstan Research Institute of Clinical and Experimental Surgery – M.A. Aliev, Director of the Goskomselkhoztekhnika Center for Scientific Organization of Labor and Production Management of the Kazakh SSR – A.G. Akchurin, Director of the Hydrome-
teorology and Environmental Protection Research Institute – I.Z. Lutfullin, Director of the Alma-Ata branch of the Institute for Advanced Training of Workers and Specialists of the USSR Ministry of Geology – Kh.I. Muraslimov, Director of the Kazakh Ophthalmology Research Institute – G.A. Uldanov, head of the design bureau at the machine-tool plant evacuated from Melitopol – N.G. Abdullin.

The technical innovators were M.G. Dautov (improvement of the caterpillar tractor’s work), G.Kh. Khairullin (introduction of a multiple-heading sinking method), A.U. Yunusov (creation of the first road train), all three were awarded the title of Heroes of Socialist Labor.

The names of many representatives of the Tatar intelligentsia of Kazakhstan, who contributed to the formation of Soviet Kazakh culture, are immortalized in the names of streets, schools, and monuments.

So, in pre-revolutionary times, the Tatar intelligentsia was closely related to the Kazakh. It contributed to the introduction of the nomadic population to the “high culture”, the politicization of ethnicity and religion among the Muslim peoples of the region.

Even though the revolution and repression disrupted the continuity of the intellectual elite, in the Soviet era, the secular Tatar intelligentsia had already made a significant contribution to the creative and scientific spheres of Kazakh society life, to the formation of the Kazakh Soviet elite culture.

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Участие татарской интеллигенции в научной и культурно-просветительской работе в Казахстане (XIX – середина XX вв.)*

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Данная статья посвящена изучению результатов участия татарской интеллигенции в научной, культурно-просветительской работе в Казахстане. Основу татарской интеллигенции в степной зоне составляли государственные служащие, духовные лица, а поздже джадиды. Государственные служащие сыграли важную роль в исследовании истории, языка, семейных обычаях казахского народа. Татарские муллы, помимо истории, занимались зоологией, поэзией и литературой. Благодаря татарам в степной зоне издавались газеты, журналы книги не только на национальном, но и на казахском языке. Через печатные издания в регионе активно распространялись идеи джадидизма и панисламизма. Джадиды были идейными вдохновителями развития в степной зоне театрального искусства, новометодных школ и библиотек. Одним из важнейших результатов деятельности татарской интеллигенции в дореволюционное время стал рост политического самосознания мусульманских народов. В период революции они пытались образовать автономию, основанную на религиозном, этническом самоопределении.

Ключевые слова: татары, Казахстан, степная зона, научная и культурно-просветительская деятельность


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* В XIX веке территория современного Казахстана была частью Российской империи (часто именуемой степной зоной), с приходом к власти большевиков и ряда территориально-административных пертурбаций стала Казахской Советской Социалистической Республики в составе СССР.
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