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Islamic Reformism on the Periphery of the Muslim World: Rezaeddin Fakhreddin (1895-1936)

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**Islamic Reformism on the Periphery of the Muslim World: Rezaeddin
Fakhreddin (1895-1936)**

By

Sofia Mazgarova

**Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Claremont
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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Religion**

**We certify that we have read this document and
approve it as adequate in scope and quality for
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. HISTORY OF MIDDLE VOLGA MUSLIMS AND THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAMIC REFORMISM IN THE REGION	5
B. THE LIFE OF REZAEDDIN FAKHREDDIN.....	21
C. A REVIEW OF EXTANT SCHOLARSHIP.....	32
CHAPTER 1.....	39
A. THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNITY.....	39
B. FAKHREDDIN’S INTERPRETATION OF VOLGA-URAL PEOPLES HISTORY -- <i>ALTIN ORDU VE HANLARI</i> AND THEME OF BULGHAR IDENTITY; <i>ASAR</i> – VOLGA MUSLIM’S LOCAL AND GLOBAL HISTORY.....	46
CHAPTER 2	67
A. EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE.....	67
B. FAKHREDDIN AND EARLY 20 TH CENTURY LITERATURE.....	77
C. REZAEDDIN FAKHREDDIN’S INFLUENCE ON RELIGIOUS REFORM.....	93
CONCLUSION.....	99

SOFIA MAZGAROVA*

ISLAMIC REFORMISM ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE MUSLIM WORLD: REZAEDDIN FAKHREDDIN (1859-1936)

INTRODUCTION

During the apex of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the geopolitical paradigm was gradually transitioning from imperialism toward the nation-state order. Where the former framework witnessed a handful of European empires vie for global hegemony and influence, the latter facilitated indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Religion, naturally, played a central role in opposition to colonialism and the galvanization of indigenous nationalism. Consequently, the shape of religion was also influenced, and ultimately redefined to fit the new world order.

John O.Voll (1983) distinguishes between *Tajdid* and *Islah*. *Tajdid*, he writes, “is usually translated as ‘renewal’ and *islah* as ‘reform’. Together they reflect a continuing tradition of revitalization of Islamic faith and practice within the historical communities of Muslims.”

Tajdid is a concept that is rooted deeply in Islamic tradition of *hadith*¹. Algar (2001, p.292) among other *ahadith* quotes the one included by Abu Da’ud in his *Sunan* on the strength of an *isnad*² that states “Certainly Allah will send to this community at the beginning [or end] of every hundred years one who will renew for it its religion.” The

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¹ A tradition based on reports of the sayings and activities of the prophet Muhammad and his companions.

² The chain of transmission of a hadith.

essence of *tajdid* in the traditional understanding lays in “the revival of *sunna*³ and the eradication of *bid'a*”.⁴ From this follows, that the shift in paradigm which *tajdid* brings does not have to be in the political realm, and expansion of traditional meaning of *tajdid* into politics is a modern phenomenon.⁵

Voll remarks that over the time the meanings of *tajdid* and *islah* have changed, depending on the evolution of Islamic thought and the changing circumstances of the Muslim community. Essentially this broad renewal-reform tradition represents the individual and communal effort to define Islam clearly and explicitly in terms of God’s revelation.⁶

The revivalist movement among Muslims of Russian Empire commonly known as *jadidism* was not aimed at the renewal of what had been perceived as an authentic, ideal earlier stage in history. Thus, *islah* would not be an applicable methodology to the movement such as *jadidism*, because it would aim to re-establish conditions prevalent during “Golden Age” of Islam. Jadid movement was rather progressive than regressive as Ingeborg Baldauf (2001) points out in his article. Jadid movement was looking towards the future of Muslim community and also looking to establish an organized Muslim presence in Central Asia and Volga-Urals rather than completely separate from Russia.⁷

I argue that the revivalist movement in Central Asia and Middle Volga region during the nineteenth century was not only means of “defining Islam”, but also an amalgamation of Islam into political consciousness and identity. The scholarly works of

³ Refers to the exemplary customs and conducts of the prophet Muhammad.

⁴ Algar 2001, p.295

⁵ Algar 2001, p. 296

⁶ Voll, 33

⁷ Baldauf, 74

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, a noted reformer, historian and intellectual, archetypically evidence the brand of Islamic politicization, if you will, that informed the nationalist mobilization of the region. Initially in Russia, Islamic reformism became popular in advocacy and educational circles in the end of the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century. The inquiries for change generally revolved around abandonment of obscurantism in traditional *kalam*⁸ theology widely taught in *madrastas*,⁹ as well as the inclusion of secular subjects in school curricula. Abdulnasir Qursavi (1776-1812)ⁱ and Shihabeddin Mardjani (1818-1889)ⁱⁱ are the most prominent scholars who laid the spiritual, theological and historical groundwork for the Islamic revivalist movement within the bounds of the Russian Empire.

With the beginning of nineteenth century, which witnessed Russia's integration into the global economy, the process of nation building became more prominent than ever. The modernist Muslim intelligentsia no longer limited their discourse solely to reform within educational institutions. Historians and scholars such as Musa Jayrullah Bigi (1875-1949), Kayuum Naseri (1825-1902) and contemporary of Shihabeddin Mardjani Huseyn Faizkhanov (1828-1866)ⁱⁱⁱ addressed a range of issues, including the re-interpretation of the *Qur'an*, industrialization and westernization, and the reconsideration of Muslim history in the region in relation to the rest of the Islamic world and the Russian Empire.

⁸ In Islam, speculative theology. The term is derived from the phrase *kalam Allah* (Arabic: "word of God"), which refers to the Qur'an. In early stages, *kalam* was merely a defense of Islam against Christians, Manichaens, and believers of other religions. As interest in philosophy grew among Muslim thinkers, *kalam* adopted the dialectic (methology) of the Greek skeptics and the stoics and directed these against the Islamic philosophers who attempted to fit Aristotle and Plato into a Muslim context ("kalam").

⁹ Schools that Muslim students in Volga-Ural region used to start after primary educational institutions *maktab*.

The study of Islamic reformism in the Volga-Ural region is of considerable intellectual importance because the degree of inquiry into it has been meager, at best.

First, examining Islamic reformism in the Volga-Ural region furnishes a unique prism into the salient sociopolitical developments of the time, which witnessed an emergence of modern Islamic movements as a platform for indigenous empowerment and nationalism. Second, the academic record on Islamic reformism is effectively monopolized by inquiries into movements in the Arabic and Persian speaking worlds, with little attention to peripheral regions of the Muslim world, including the context of this piece.

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin was one of the scholars of his time who was responsible in defining a connection between modernization, national identity and Islam. I will focus on the historical background of Volga-Ural Muslims in order to provide a context for the further analysis of Fakhreddin's works. I will then focus on Fakhreddin's seminal historical work titled *Asar* in order to demonstrate that *Asar*, despite being written in Arabic with the distinct traditional bibliographical style very common among Arabo-Persian speaking populations, was one of the determinant works in the formation of national identity among Muslims of Volga Ural. The construction of historical discourse of Muslim peoples in the region at the end of nineteenth century is no coincidence to the creation of this work. In combination with Fakhreddin's other historical works, such as *Altin Ordu ve Hanlari* and multiple journal publications, the favorable attitude of the author towards nationalistic discourse becomes increasingly evident.

In addition, I must mention that the translations of all the Russian, Tatar and Turkish sources with an exception of Kanlidere's work are mine. This includes all

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin's works as well as secondary sources such as historical background references and biographical data of the prominent Volga-Ural Muslim personalities unless specified otherwise.

A. HISTORY OF MIDDLE VOLGA MUSLIMS AND THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAMIC REFORMISM IN THE REGION

Fakhreddin, as a nineteenth century Tatar historian, played a special role in the historio-graphical discourse of the Volga-Ural Turks region. Herein, I provide a historical account of the region during the era of Islamic Reformism. In order to place the works of Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, as well as to highlight the contributions of Fakhreddin with regard to the development of Islamic reformist thought in the area, it is not only necessary to examine the political and intellectual conditions under which the author lived, but also, the seemingly irrelevant external theological and historical stimuli. A historical and cultural account of Fakhreddin's works will allow for the assessment of the originality of his thoughts within a particular historical context that spurred his ideas. Unlike his predecessors, such as Mardjani and Kursavi, Fakhreddin was a product of the Middle Volga region. The majority of his contemporaries came from Bukhara and Samarqand, where the vast majority of scholars from the colonized Muslim areas received their education. Although he was not trained in Bukhara's *madrasas*, his religious framework was not completely divorced from his Bukharan trained contemporaries.

After all, there was always a strong cultural connection between Muslims of the middle Volga, Central Asia and Middle East. These connections were fortified mainly

through close contacts with Islamic institutions throughout Central Asia, and on the periphery of the Middle East. Such a connection specifically with central Asian Islamic centers of learning was not coincidental; in fact there is an established symbiotic history between the Middle Volga's *'ulama* and Bukhara's schools. The entrenched hostility of Imperial Russia toward "magometan" religions, naturally, fueled this institutional symbiosis and galvanized Muslims of all stripes and geographic locations. Moreover, the historical narrative of the Volga Ural Turks started long before the region was acceded by the Russian empire. The Volga valley, or the Volga-Kama region, was historically considered to be the northern most boundary of the eastern Muslim lands. It is not precisely recorded, however, when Islam first swept through this region, which later became part of the Russian Empire. Islam became the officially recognized religion of the entire region in 922 CE, with Ibn Fadlan's formal journey into the "Land of the Bulgars." However, there is archeological evidence of the connection between the people of Bashkortostan and Muslims dating back to the eighth century.¹⁰ In the tenth century the Bulgar Kingdom, which was located on the Volga River, formally declared Islam as its official religion and later, in the tenth century, the Bashkirs joined the kingdom almost five hundred years before Ivan the Terrible (Ivan IV) conquered the region. Thus, the Bulgar Kingdom (Khanate) ultimately grew into one of the most important Muslim centers and also established a connection with other Muslim centers such as those at Buhara, Samarqand and even Baghdad. This nexus was tightest however, with Khorasan and Central Asia. By time the Great Prince Vladimir of Kiev baptized his subjects in the

¹⁰ The Bashkir people are Turkic people of Volga-Ural area. They appeared on the political arena as a distinct element at the time of the Russian Revolution. After the February Revolution, Bashkir nationalists, led by Zeki Velidi Togan, supported the idea of "territorial autonomy" (federalism) for the Muslim peoples of Russia and dismissed the Volga Tatars' strategy of "extra-territorial cultural autonomy" (unitarism).

Dnieper in 988 CE, Islam was already strongly established along the Volga River, which today is acknowledged as the ancestral home of the Tatars. Later in 1613 CE, when Russia's Nobles offered the throne to the first Romanov Czar, Mikhail, several Tatar princes served among the electors.¹¹ The involvement of Islam and Muslims in the vast regions on the periphery of Russian (Slavic) territories was recognized by nineteenth-century Russian philosopher and historian S.M. Soloviev, who stated, "[W]hen the Bulghar was already listening to the *Qur'an* on the shores of the Volga and the Kama, the Russian Slav had not yet started to build Christian churches on the Oka and had not yet conquered these places in the name of the European civilization."¹² Hence, Islamic institutions, as a pervasive religious network, may have predated the comprehensive establishment of Christianity in this region.

Ivan the Terrible's conquest of the Kazan Khanate (in 1552 A.D.) brought its Muslim citizenry under the rule of the Russian Empire. Moreover, the Russians imprisoned the Muslim residents of Kazan during their conquest. The imperialistic Russians subsequently erected St. Basil's Cathedral, which became the permanent embodiment of the tragic events of 1552 CE.¹³ Religious cleansing, if you will, was undeniably at the fore of the Russians' colonial calculus. Following that fateful year, the political and ideological climate drastically changed for the Middle Volga Muslim population. This reformation was permanent. With the loss of their independence, the Volga Turks were subsequently placed in a compromising condition: not only did they lose their sovereignty and become second class citizens as an ethnic minority under

¹¹ Aron, 42

¹² Hunter at 3.

¹³ Aron, 42

Christian rule, but their religious beliefs were also severed from their routine lives. The attending and building the mosques was damn illegal, as well as openly practice Islam. Furthermore, the Russian invasion led to the persecution of Islam under both the auspices of the Christian Orthodox Church and the secular segment of Russia that supported the Church's encroachment into the region.¹⁴

Following the Russian incursion, waves of compulsory baptisms of *inoveretsy*¹⁵ took place through the eighteenth century. The colonial policy applied to Muslims during the first part of this period focused specifically on three segments of society: nobility, religious leaders and the (lay) masses. First, the Muslim nobility were faced with cooptation—with or without immediate conversion to Christianity—and economic servitude. Those who resisted were summarily executed. Second, Muslim religious leaders were expelled from the cities and their mosques were destroyed. This strategy was nothing short of “religious cleansing,” if you will, aimed at eliminating the very institutions that mobilized, educated, and led the lay Muslim populace. Thirdly, a compulsive baptism policy was formally implemented in 1565 CE for a large part of the masses. New converts into Christianity became subjects of the Czar without being forcefully culturally assimilated, or “Russified.”¹⁶

In 1593 CE, Czar Feodor ordered his army to follow up with newly baptized Muslims. For those who were not willing to give up Islam, Feodor ordered to, “[B]eat [them] to death, throw them to jail, and destroy any known mosques or places of

¹⁴ Gilyazov, I. “Evolutsia sotsial’noy struktury tatarskogo obschestva i Islam (vtoraiia pol. XVI-XVII vv.)” in editor: Khakimov R., *Islam v Tatarskom Mire: Istorii i Sovremennost’* (Islam in Tatar World: History and Modernity), Institut AN Tatarstana, 1997: 13-22

¹⁵ Term that used to be applied by Russians to both Muslims and pagans of colonized areas, literally translated as adherents to the “other” faith, non-Christians.

¹⁶ Bennigsen at 8.

Magometan worship”. In 1683 CE, non-baptized Tatar landowners were to be stripped of their land, as mandated by reactionary Russian legislation, and all of the newly baptized Tatars were freed from *krepostnichestvo*.¹⁷ In addition, Tatars were banned from living in large cities such as Kazan and anywhere along the banks of large rivers (principally the Volga and Kama Rivers), which are the most fertile lands. These policies indicated the anti-Islamic, and “Islamophobic,” policies strategically interwoven into the Russian Imperial expansion into the East. The result of the forced assimilation programs, and purposeful destruction of Turkic nobilities, which through the 15th-18th centuries comprised the most educated sphere of people, yielded a lack of demand for cultural production. Also, without the established noble organizations and networks, effective resistance to Russian rule became impossible. In other words, the very elements that could pose any semblance of resistance were categorically extinguished. Therefore, many Tatars who refused to be baptized were forced to search for other paths to function in a new society, namely by taking up a new trade or joining the Muslim clergy.

By the eighteenth century, Muslim Turkic society was mostly agricultural. Peasants dominated the population, and the cultural fabric of a generally agrarian society was premised on Islam. In other words, in a largely peasant Muslim population without nobles, Islam ultimately grew into a cultural and spiritual expression of the middle Volga Turks, becoming virtually indistinguishable from their ethnic identity. According to Iskhakov D.M., the majority of middle-Volga and Ural Turks preferred to identify themselves as Muslim rather than Tatars during the 18th-19th century.¹⁸ Islamic identity, therefore, effectively trumped ethnic affiliation as the salient marker of identification.

¹⁷ A term that is translated as serfdom, but really this system of serfdom resembles slavery.

¹⁸ Gilyazov, 19

This existential reform of identity, if you will, was naturally a reaction to Russian political and spiritual encroachment. The role of Islam, and Islamic actors, was consequently heightened. The *'ulama* (the Islamic scholars) replaced the nobles in Turkic Middle Volga region and had immense influence in the Volga Urals Muslim communities. Activities of the *'ulama*, however, were not limited to strictly spiritual and educational domains, but extended to political platforms as well. Therefore, spiritual leaders also assumed political leadership during this historical moment, politicizing Islam as a sort of liberation theology.

However, very little was known about the *'ulama*¹⁹ after the Russian conquest of Kazan (1552 CE) up through the accession of Catherine II in 1762 CE. Much of this can be attributed to the role played by Russia, which removed *Shari'a* law and replaced it, for official purposes, with the civil codes of the Russian state. In addition to colonizing and “cleansing” Muslims on the ground, there was also a simultaneous intellectual battle to do away with Islamic normative systems. In turn, this Russian eradication of Islamic law deprived the *'ulama* of implementing their primary functions. In the other words, until the middle of the eighteenth century Russian authorities purposefully marginalized the *'ulama* and did not recognize them as a legitimate legal entity, or political institution. Hence, there are virtually no records of the *'ulama* in any Russian historical sources.²⁰

¹⁹ In Islamic societies the *'ulama*, above all else, is concerned with the administration and interpretation of Islamic Law. R. Stephen Humphreys has observed that defining the *'ulama* is not an easy matter. He writes “they are neither a socio-economic class, nor a clearly defined status group, nor a hereditary caste, nor a legal estate, nor a profession.” “Yet,” he continues, “they seem to cut across every possible classification of groups within Islamic society—the one group which in fact makes it ‘Islamic’ rather than something else...”. This definition of *'ulama* equally applies to Volga Ural population, even through the most prominent peculiarity of this group is that it survived and developed without the benefits of living in a Muslim state (Frank, 21).

²⁰ Frank, 22

Nevertheless, the role of the Volga-Ural *'ulama* was pronounced, especially in social resistance movements. Members of the *'ulama* took part in the two major Bashkir uprisings of the seventeenth century, and cemented themselves as instrumental components of political opposition movements. The first of these was the uprising of 1662-1664 CE, in which the Bashkir tribal “aristocracy” sought, among other things, to establish a Bashkir *Khanate*²¹ headed by Chingisind. According to Russian sources, the Bashkirs sent out a member of the *'ulama* named Kara-Duvani Bakaik Abyz to the Crimea to receive help from a Crimean Khan. Another *'ulama* named Aktai Dostmukhammedov served as a negotiator for the Bashkirs during the first rebellion, which was not successful.²²

During the second Muslim rebellion that took place in 1681-1683 CE, the *'ulama* gained even more influence. This revolt was launched in response to the imposition of a policy of forcible Christianization of local Muslims, and developed into a holy war (*ghazwa*) against the Russians. Not much is known about the leader of the revolt, but Islamic sources give his name as Seyyid Ja'far. In the *Daftar-i Chingiz Nama*, he is described as a Sufi, since he is referred to as *sahib-i karamat* and is given credit for converting Bashkirs to Islam.²³ In fact, the majority of *'ulama* who actually were active in the area belonged to one or another Sufi order (usually the Naqshibandiyyah).

Later in the century, personalities such as Batyrshah (known as Mulla Bathyrsha Aleev in Russian scholarly sources, and who carried a title of *akhund*) traveled through Urals, Kazan area, and the Kazakh steppes with a mission to unite Muslims in resistance

²¹ Kingdom (Tatar).

²² Ibid, 23

²³ Frank at 24.

to Russian rule. His “manifesto” not only included the rationale for the rebellion, but also a pragmatic plan to engage the Russians.²⁴ Furthermore, another member of the *ulama*, Mulla Murad, led a movement for the reestablishment of the Bulghar state, which was largely peaceful. In 1760 CE, he delivered a sermon in the old city section of Bulghar, calling for the establishment of a state based not only on Islamic law, but also the Christian tradition.²⁵ Very much a visionary, Batyrshah attempted to usher in the peaceful coexistence of Islam and Christianity, and establish a pluralistic community premised on the free exercise of faith, and tolerance.

By the eighteenth century, Islam prevailed in almost every salient dimension of society. Because of the near annihilation of noble class, the secular dimension was basically absent, leaving space only for the religious expression of culture. During this period, religious literature and history flourished widely. During this period Sufi spiritual movements became increasingly popular. Imprints of Sufism are especially apparent in the literature of that period. Some of the seminal pieces of Islamic poetry were composed by Sufis affiliated with Mawla Qoly, who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Moreover, ‘Abdi (1679-1710) and Utyzimeni Al-Bolghari (1754-1834) were produced during that period. The traditions of Sufism were instrumental in defusing religious tension, and bringing to the fore Islam’s capacity of engendering cultural and intellectual vibrancy.

Despite Russian Christian colonial rule, the Muslims of Middle Volga never lost their contact with Muslims beyond the Imperial Russia. A common religion, combined with the feeling of affiliation and affinity with the Prophets’s *umma*, or transnational and

²⁴ Ibid at 45.

²⁵ Gilyazov, 20.

trans-ethnic community, prevailed over the ethnic differences or national borders. Therefore, transnational Islamic affinity was growing in the region. Earlier, part of the Muslim aristocratic class preferred trade in terms of material status to the status of *'ulama*, who were totally dependent on *awqaf*, or funds that were raised by donation. Trade as an occupation was also extremely favorable among Muslims due to the exemplary profession of the Prophet. Heavily influenced by Sufi tradition, Tatars considered the prophet as *pir*, or protector and a leader, of the merchant class. Thus, trade became the only acceptable occupation that was supported by Islam and allowed by Russian colonial rule.²⁶

Due to the loss of sovereignty and constant religious persecutions, Islamic education became practically unavailable to Muslims in their own lands. The only option remained to study abroad in other Islamic states, principally those Middle Eastern nations with established universities and learning centers. At first middle Volga Muslim students, more commonly called *shakirds*, traveled with merchants' caravans down the Volga River to Astrakhan, then to the Caucasus region, mainly to Daghestan, Iran and Central Asia. But starting from the seventeenth century, most of the *shakirds* started heading to Bukhara, and by the eighteenth century, the *mederese* of Bukhara are definitely preferred to the *madrassa* of Daghestan.²⁷

The strong preference for the Bukharan *madrassa* was not only because of the transportation conveniences but also due to the growing international prestige of these institutions. Bukhara attracted thousands of *shakirds* from the area known today as the

²⁶ Qursavi and Idiatullina, 17

²⁷ Ibid, 19

modern states of Afghanistan, Turkey, India and Saudi Arabia. From the very beginning of Islam's history, *talab al-'ilm*, or the pursuit of knowledge was considered to be a duty enjoined upon every believer. Hence, travel with that sacred goal in mind was especially encouraged. The efforts to get parental permission for travel and study (the required condition in order to acquire the divine blessings) also added to the zeal of Tatar shakirds.

The late eighteenth century became a turning point for the volatile Muslim-Russian dynamic. The Russian government became more lenient toward Kazan Muslims. Under the rule of Catherine II (1762-1796), reforms with regard to minorities, specifically the decree or *ukaz* calling for "the tolerance of all religions" in 1773 yielded religious freedom for all the Muslims of Russia, effectively put middle Volga Turks into a favorable position in terms of the growing trade between Russia and Central Asia. In addition, in 1788 the first *Dukhovnoie Sobranie* or Ecclesiastical (Muslim) Council was established in Orenburg. An Islamic religious Administration, composed of a *mufti* (a religious leader appointed by the Russian czar and seated in Orenburg) and three *qadis* (judges) was established. The duty of the administration encompassed matters including deciding over marriage, divorce, inheritance, administration of Muslim schools and appointment of Muslim clerics. This Religious Administration was later moved to Ufa. Among the rules introduced at the time of the first mufti, Muhammadjan, was that appointment by certificate to be an *imam-khatib*, or *mudarris* was through the *Sobranie*, which had not been the case previously.²⁸

Along with religious tolerance, in 1792 Russia granted Volga-Ural Muslims extensive trade privileges. Therefore, Muslims became intermediaries in Russian-Asian

²⁸ Kanlidere, 15

commerce. Due to the relatively favorable political and economic situation, the region's urban folk were able to achieve financial success. As the rules of the Empire became more flexible, the graduates from Bukharan *madradas* felt no obstacles in organizing their own learning centers. Among the oldest and most famous *madradas* in the area were Kyshkar, Tuntara and Kargaly, named after the villages in which they were located. From the eighteenth century on, the authority of Bukharan learning tradition has become consolidated among the locals in Russia. Thus Bukhara was viewed as an ideal and most pure symbol of Islam and the "fountain" of Islamic sciences (Idiatullina, 24). The halo of sanctity of individuals such as Bahauddin Nakhshband, imam al-Bukhari and others, contributed greatly to Bukhara's popularity among the Muslims of middle Volga and the establishment of local *madradas* did not decrease the numbers of *shakirds* seeking knowledge in Central Asia.

The Muslim educational system ordinarily started with the *maktab*, where children aged an average of five years old learned the Arabic alphabet, and mastered basic reading and writing skills as well as the basics of faith. For instance, some of the books that children had to memorize included *Shara'it al Iman* (The Conditions of Faith), and *Haftiyek* (1/7th part of the Qur'an). They then started *madrada* training where the curriculum was based on the Bukharan program, and the quality and contents of the curriculum completely depended on the *mudarris* (teacher). Many students after finishing their course in the *madrada* simply quit, but the most eager ones traveled to gained more knowledge in "blessed Bukhara".²⁹

²⁹ Qursavi and Idiatullina, 25

Russia's attempts to reconstruct its governing system in eighteenth century and expand its control over empire's colonial lands in terms of governing a population rather than a territory directly challenged native culture and life style.³⁰ The rise of Russian nationalism in the end of eighteenth century created a trend where the Russian Empire once again initiated attempts to assimilate its non-Christian population (Jews and Muslims) by imposing Russian language in schools as well as funding large Christian Orthodox missionary campaigns. Partially, these intense Christian missionary activities were initiated to prevent "Islamization" and "Tatarization" of smaller ethnic groups in areas such as Chuvash, Mordvas and Votyaks as well as among Baptized Tatars (most of whom returned to Islam during the nineteenth century). In addition, the expansion of the Russian Empire further to the east and south to Central Asia had a negative impact on Volga-Ural natives, who were intermediaries between Central Asian and Russian trade, causing Muslim merchants of middle Volga to explore their opportunities in Russian markets.³¹

³⁰ The idea that in eighteenth century government was reinvented was introduced by a French philosopher Michael Foucault (1926-1984). According to Foucault, the art of government shifted away from the model of the household in the 18th century. From this point, "government" refers to actions of the state rather than actions of individuals, the church, etc. With the break from the model of the family the word "economy" developed new meaning as well. In Foucault's words, the word 'economy,' which in the sixteenth signified a form of government, comes in the eighteenth century to designate a level of reality, a field of intervention, through a series of complex processes I regard as absolutely fundamental to our history (Foucault 1991:93). So, as government is coming to be understood as the state's management of people and things connected in certain kinds of relations, 'the economy' is coming into being as one field or set of such relations, one regularized way in which individuals relate to and interact with other individuals and the world around them, one "thing" of the kind with which the government is properly concerned. The population is another such thing, and perhaps the most important example. The object or target of government, Foucault argues, is population. The change to the logic of governmentality was in part a consequence of the dramatic increase in the size and penetrative capability of the state in the modern and later pre-modern eras (Foucault 1991:88; also Foucault 1977). The state became more and more capable of exercising increasing levels of control over the people it governed in more and more precise ways. What is key for the development of nationalism is that the change the change in the logic of rule prompted a change in its object, from territory to population (Foucault 1991:99) (French, pp. 12-13).

³¹ Kanlidere, 17

Due to the direct cultural challenge from Russian authorities and Christian missionaries that often attacked Islam with accusations for its “backwardness”, “disrespect” to women and “despotism”, Muslim intellectuals had to come up with a defensive discourse that obviously had never been addressed before in the traditional Muslim educational system.

Bukharan centers were no longer suitable for the newly emerged nationalistic bourgeoisie class of Volga Urals. Invasion of Central Asia by Russia eliminated Tatars as intermediaries in trade between two regions; from now on Russians operated freely in Central Asian markets. Such a geo-political shift caused Tatar merchants to direct themselves to Russian territories by using another outcome of Russian conquest the Trans-Caspian (1899) and Orenburg-Tashkent (1906) railroads. Those were Muslims who had to come face to face with Russian Christians more often than ever before in their historical co-existence. Naturally, Muslims of Volga-Urals started to distance themselves ideologically from Bukharan learning centers, which became apparent in the methodologies and curricula that were used in *madrasas*. Volga-Ural Muslim youth preferred institutions in Istanbul, Cairo and Russian cities to Central Asia in terms of educational opportunities.³²

The adherents of *jadid* movements understood the need for the new discourse that could address the challenges of changing society, such as those posed by nationalism, secularization, and the pressure of Christian Missionaries, who constantly challenged Muslims culturally and theologically. Specifically, the inability of traditional *ulama* to resist the missionary activities, according to Kanlidere (1997) encouraged this small

³² Ibid, 18

group of reformist Muslims to take matters into their own hands. Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, in fact, accused traditionalist *'ulama* of occupying themselves with trivial unrelated issues, and was inspired to write number of works concerning Islamic and Turkic history.

Indeed, the array of those challenges, as well as different perceptions of their nature and acuteness, promoted considerable disputes among attentive Muslims, making it extremely difficult to reach consensus. The unease about the situation was not just limited to traditional *ulama* unable to transmit the knowledge coherent with the present. The problem was that traditional centers of education were no longer capable of transmitting the values of the past in ways that related meaningfully to the present. A systematic reform was an immediate measure that needed to be undertaken for society if Volga-Ural Muslims were to survive the unprecedented challenges of the modern world.

Although Jadidists saw themselves as reformers of their society, their enthusiastic embrace of modernity³³ led them to embrace radically new conceptions of society. Their intention to rescue a tradition in reality redefined it; and their attempts to return to the “pure” Islam yielded a completely new understanding of Islam and Muslim identity.³⁴

Small group of Jadid followers were able to gain supporters for their projects, but their call for reform also invoked a large opposition that was led by established elites (*qadimchi*) and considerably polarized their society. As Adeeb Khalid (1998) approaches

³³ The term “modernity” has been in the social science vocabulary since the dawn of the social sciences. Beginning in the eighteenth century, European and North American scholars came to believe there were societies that were “civilized”—that is, had reached the stage of modernity—and others that had not yet advanced along the path to civilization. Modern societies they believed, were those that duplicated the European experience: Those societies trusted in science, not superstition; secularism, not religion; freedom, not despotism... European society was complex and dynamic, while “traditional” society was simple and stagnant (Gelvin, 69).

³⁴ Khalid, 2

this phenomenon, it was through the debate over the meaning of their culture that Central Asians came to imagine the modern world and their place in it.

Of course, the Jadidis were hardly unique in Muslim societies of that period in reevaluating their heritage in the context of modernity. Jadidism had many similarities with modernist movements so popular with intellectuals all over the world where Muslims resided. The goal of those movements was to reconcile Islam with modernity. The term ‘modernity’ is a complex term that according to Foucauldian philosophy describes an invention of ‘disciplined’ society. The nation state is one of the examples of disciplined society, in which there are multiple institutions responsible for disciplining each and every individual; those are the “houses of confinement” such as prisons, hospitals and schools. Naturally, because jadidism was a movement in favor of modernity, the first step the adherents of the “new style” took was an organization of schools. Indeed, *usul-i jadid* (the new method) schools gave the movement its name. In fact, Ismail Gasprinski (1851-1914) is considered a father of Jadidism, due to the fact that he was the first to inaugurate a new-style school at the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, assigning a specific date to the start of the movement or associating it with the activity of one person would yield an extremely simplistic picture of reformation process. The process of reformism emanated from variety of sources. It is easy to draw a distinction between the advocates of Islamic classicism and nineteenth century reformists who challenged them. The influence of Russian philosophy and politics as well as the Ottoman renewal of *tanzimat* period has a very definite place in Volga-Ural Jadidism. The distinctive character of this reformism however, as Ayse Rorlich (1986) ponders, “is a measure of the intensity and creativity with which the Tatars themselves approached

these sources.” Muslim reformism in Russian colonial territories can be traced to the eighteenth century with a reassessment of their religious thinking, which then turned toward cultural and educational reformism, and finally reached the realm of politics at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ayse-Azade Rorlich mentions several representatives of reformist movement of Volga-Urals, whose works developed a theological base for the reform movement. Utyz Imeni (1754-1815) and Abu-Nasir al-Kursavi (1776-1813) are perhaps the best known *‘ulama* representatives of Volga-Urals, and a figure who had a direct impact on Rezaeddin Fakhreddin was Shihabeddin Mardjani (1818-1889). Unlike his predecessors, Mardjani was interested not only in issues of theology and philosophy, but also in historical topics. He was the first one to compile the comprehensive history of Volga-Ural Turks. His first historical essay discussed the history of the Uyghurs, published in 1865, which attracted the attention of St. Petersburg Archeological Society, where he remained an active member throughout his life and presented many papers on the history of Volga-Ural region.³⁵ Mardjani’s bibliographical work titled *The Legacy of the Ancestors* was to become an inspiration for Rezaeddin Fakhreddin’s work, *Asar*.

Overall, interest in history among the reformers of Volga-Ural Muslims, especially the works that revolve around ethnic groups, is a very clear indication of the early process of the construction of nationalistic identity. Later historical works by Musa Bigiev and Kayyum Naseri echo *nahda* (awakening) sentiments of Middle East, which presents us with a unilinear nationalistic discourse of a nation’s prosperity, then downfall, followed by awakening and progress. The interesting part of the Jadidist view of nationalism is that they imagined it in unity with religion rather than views these as two

³⁵ Rorlich, 50

compartmentalized entities. There was literally not a single nationalistic discourse that was widely articulated among Volga-Ural Muslims in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that was entirely secular in nature.

B. THE LIFE OF REZAEDDIN FAKHREDDIN

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, son of a prominent *mullah*, was born January 16th, 1859 CE in the village of Kuchuchat (Yuldash) of Bugulma *uyezd* (province). This region today is known as Almet *rayion* (district) of Tatarstan. His mother, Maukhbuba Bint Rymqul al-Ishtiryaki, spent most of her time with her six children and used to teach young boys and girls of the village how to read and write. Thus, Fakhreddin was very much raised in a vibrant intellectual environment, where reading and writing was nurtured.

The ethnic identity of Fakhreddin is widely disputed, and the subject of sometimes heated debate. Both Tatars and Bashkirs claim Fakhreddin as one of their own, and include his works as a part of their national heritage. However, Fakhreddin himself neither regarded himself to be a part of particular nation or ethnic group, nor did he specifically address nationality or ethnicity in his work. In fact, his works carry a very general pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic tenor, and have a universal character that is not grounded in any particular nationalist thought (Tatar/Bashkir). His ideas of pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism are subtle in nature, and furthermore, are constructed in a non-polarizing fashion. Moreover, Fakhreddin's style of communicating is very straightforward yet not oppositional. He is more concerned with the inner spiritual

dimension of the individual, than with the divisive elements characteristic of political and some pan-Islamic scholarship.

According to Fakhreddin his first teacher was his own mother. This pedagogical relationship was most typical for most children of *mullahs*. As stated above, his mother was a capable and educated woman, who excelled as a teacher. In addition, she did not follow mainstream teaching practices. Unlike the usual practice at local *maktabs*, she did not use any sort of physical punishment towards her students. Thus, as documented later in his scholarly works, Fakhreddin was very much inspired by his mother's example as an educator.³⁶

After studying with his father for several years, his parents decided to send him to study at the *madrassa* in Chistopol under Akhund³⁷ Gilman Kerimi^{iv} in 1867 CE. Due to transportation difficulties, he only attended the Chistopol *madrassa* for a year. He later continued his education in a local Shilcheli *madrassa*. During those years, Fakhreddin put tremendous effort into learning Arabic and Persian, particularly the former because of its intimate relationship with Islam. The lack of comprehensive instruction and teaching materials at Shilcheli, however, did not stop Fakhreddin from learning both languages. He hand-copied the books he found in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman and forged ahead toward establishing his own library. The books he copied by hand include *Bidan*, *Sharkh-e 'Abdulla*, *Qawa'id wa 'Awamil*, *Mansoor Khashiyase*, *Kafiya*, *Moqaddima-i Jazariya*, *Sharkh-e Jami*, among other fundamental works. Oftentimes, because of the poor quality of the paper and storage conditions in the *madrassa*, his transcribed copies

³⁶ Turkoglu, Ismail, *Rusya Turkleri Arasyndaki Yenilesme Hareketinin Onculerinden*, Istanbul, 2000

³⁷ High ranking religious clerics who were responsible for the supervision of local district imams' affairs in Volga Ural region.

were damaged and unsalvageable. Thus, Fakhreddin copied many of the books two to three times throughout the years of his study. He also often regretted how little individual attention students received. “[N]ever did anyone fix my pen or look over my works to fix my grammar mistakes. While writing *Sharkh-e Jami* by ear instead of *mobtida* or *ibtida*³⁸ mistakenly I would write down *moptida* or *iptida*,” wrote Fakhreddin in his autobiographical work.

As it was mentioned before, unlike his predecessors such as Kursavi and Mardjani, or contemporaries of his such as Musa Bigiev (1875-1949),^v Fakhreddin had never been educated in Bukhara. His formal education was limited solely to village *madradas*, particularly in Shelchele Madrasese, which is located in today’s Leninogorsk district of Tatarstan. In 1885 CE he married Nurjamalbint, the daughter of Rizaeddin Tukhwatulla, the imam from a neighboring village. He ultimately finished his formal education at the age of thirty-one, and in 1889 CE relocated to Ilbek village (which is located in the modern Minzele district of Tatarstan) with his wife and two-year-old son, where he assumed the position of *imam-khatib*. Subsequently, Fakhreddin opened his own *madrasa*. In 1891 CE, after teaching in Ilbek for nearly two years, Fakhreddin was appointed *qadi* (judge) of the *Sobraniye* in Ufa.

In Ufa, he had the opportunity to engage the Tatar community’s problems at an intimate level. He addressed the region’s crises through religious leadership, a capacity that fell within the domain of his responsibilities. But it seemed like the main object of Fakhreddin’s interest was an archival examination of scholarship. During his years of service in *Sobranie*, he reorganized the archival system and performed his own historical

³⁸ Arabic meaning the beginning.

research based on the information he could readily access in *Sobranie's* archives. As a result, he built a foundation for his most prominent work, *Asar*, which was ultimately published in 1900 CE.³⁹

Despite being an extremely knowledgeable, introspective and accomplished intellectual, Fakhreddin often saw himself as an underprivileged scholar. He wrote, “[T]he situation of Kursavi, Mardjani, Barudi and others, who decided to become scholars... in comparison with my conditions had a lot better perspective [in terms of learning]. Because from the young age they studied in famous Bukharan madrasas, had well known teachers and access to the best libraries; while they were drinking knowledge from the sea of sciences I was merely trying to dig a water house with a needle” (Amirkhanov, 33). Therefore, the hardships Fakhreddin encountered during his studies combined with the scarcity and inadequacy of educational resources, made him even more zealous in his quest for knowledge and language acquisitions. Instead of merely victimizing himself and using his relatively inferior educational experience as a crutch, his concerns only increased his vigor toward maximizing his scholarly promise and output.

Fakhreddin was extremely interested in Chaghatay works, as well as modern and classical Ottoman literature. He grew fond of several Turkish thinkers, including Cevdet Pasa (1822-1895), Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844-1913), Ziya Pasa (1825-1880), and Namik Kemal (1840-1888). In addition, Fakhreddin counted among his most influential thinkers some Arab writers as well. He was particularly interested in reformist Arab works, such as those of Jemal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad ‘Abduh

³⁹ Rorlich, 54

(1849-1905), and Qasim Amin (1863-1908). He was also influenced by several Christian Arab writers as well, including Jurji Zaydan (1861-1914), Farah Antun (1871-1922), and Ya'qub Sarruf (1852-1927).⁴⁰

In 1906, Rezaeddin Fakhreddin resigned from his position as *qadi* and moved to Orenburg. At Orenburg, Fakhreddin began a new career as a journalist and wrote for the prominent Muslim newspaper *Vaqit* (Time), which was founded in the same year by Shakir and Zakir Ramigullari. While working as a journalist, he also assumed the position of lecturer in the prestigious *madrassa*, Hussainiya. During that time, according to Hamid Algar (1992), Fakhreddin established a very close connection with a famous Naqshibandi shaikh, Zayhullah Rasulev, of Volga-Urals, who was one of the most powerful religious figures in the area in terms of his following and missionary activities.

Fakhreddin's connection with mysticism was the issue of much debate. Some Turkish authors such as Ismail Turkoglu (2000) or Ahmet Kanlidere (1997) either chose to ignore Fakhreddin's connection with mysticism or to make hasty statements denying the connection of Rizaeddin Fakhreddin with the local Naqshibandi order,⁴¹ except for the mere purpose of intellectual discourse. These thinkers supported their views with superficial arguments that Fakhreddin was an advocate of Ibn Taymiyya's ideas, and even dedicated an article about this *salafi* author. Hamid Algar, on the other hand, points out that Rezaeddin Fakhreddin had a prominent connection with the influential Naqshibandi *Shaykh*, Zaynullah Rasulev. According to Algar, (1992) Fakhreddin was not only an acquaintance of the *Shaykh* but also a follower of his teachings. In fact, he left his post in *Sobranie* as a *qadi* in 1906 so he could devote himself to scholarship and

⁴⁰ Kanlidere, 49

⁴¹ Kanlidere, 51

mysticism.⁴² Khusainov (1999), in the Near Eastern Studies conference materials on Fakhreddin's biographical overview, indicates that "the life span friendship" of Rezaeddin Fakhreddinov and another one of the "prominent sons of Bashkir people", Zaynulla Ishan, starts as early as 1894-1895. As a result of that friendship, in 1917 Rezaeddin Fakhreddin dedicated a biographical work to Shaykh Zaynulla, fittingly titling it *Shayekh Zaynulla Khezretten Terjemei Khale* (Biography of Sheikh Zaynulla).⁴³

Another important historical development that has influenced many intellectuals in colonial Russia was the Russian constitutional revolution, or the "October Manifesto of 1905."^{vi} This event triggered the beginning of a new stage in nation formation among Russia's colonial people, including the Volga-Ural Muslims. The government granted to Muslims the right to establish their own periodicals, which was extremely limited and constrained before. A number of religious scholars, including Fakhreddin, switched from being primarily religious scholars toward becoming full-fledged political participants in the nation-building process.

Fakhreddin's interest in temporal affairs increased, and he dedicated himself to journalism. Journalism furnished him with the forum to address a wide range of topics, encompassing the religious, political and cultural. In this capacity, he evolved into an able public intellectual versed in the various dimensions of life in the region. In 1908, he started publishing his own journal, *Shura* (Council), becoming its editor-in-chief and

⁴² Algar, 127

⁴³ Khusainov, G.B. "R. Fakhretdin Tormysh hem Ijad Youly Datalary" (The Dates of R. Fakhreddin's personal and scholarly life), in *Nauchnoe nasledie Rizy Fakhreddinova i aktual'nyie voprosy vostokovedeniya* (Academic heritage of Riza Fakhreddinov and Contemporary Issues in Near Eastern Studies: materials of the conference of December 28, 1999), Goscomnauka Respubliki Bashkortostan, Ufa, 1999 (In Bashkir)

main contributor. Fakhreddin took *Shura* to a completely different level in terms of its coverage, developing it into one of the most serious, elaborate and long-lasting Muslim Turkic periodicals prior to the revolution of 1917. *Shura* addressed a wide range of topics and was broad in its scope. It featured biographies of prominent Muslims, a history of the Turks, reviews of language and linguistics, and presentations on geography and ethics.⁴⁴ While living in Orenburg, Fakhreddin was able to publish about 180 biographical essays under the series of *Famous Men*, and published biographies of Ibn Rushd (1905), the Prophet Muhammad (1908), Abu al-‘Ala Ahmad bin al-Magharri (1908), Imam Ghazali (1910), Ahmad Bai (1910), Ibn al-‘Arabi (1911), Ibn Taymiyya (1911), among other notables. However, freedom of speech still remained limited even after 1905 A.D., which curbed *Shura*’s capacity to touch upon the most provocative political questions of the day.

Fakhreddin’s book, *On the Measures of Government Regarding Islam*, was sent to print in 1908. However, it was immediately censored and banned for its acutely political commentary (Khusainov 1999). During the winter of 1911, the police broke into Fakhreddin’s house and thoroughly inspected his belongings in response to his recent book. Many valuable manuscripts, periodicals and archival materials were confiscated and never returned. However, the oppressive Russian police did not effectively stunt Fakhreddin from engaging in his dynamic political and journalistic activities. In 1914, Fakhreddin traveled to St. Petersburg for the All-Russia Muslim Congress where he delivered a speech, which was critical of the Russian government and its rigid opposition

⁴⁴ Kanlidere 51

to civil liberties and dissent. In 1915, the police confiscated his book titled *Religion and Social Issues* in response to his defiant stance against the status quo.

After the revolution of 1917, Orenburg was consistently attacked by Red Communist military forces. Finally, in January of 1918, Orenburg officially fell to the communists. This, consequently, brought an end to the only two sources of Fakhreddin family's income. The commissars terminated the operation of the publications *Shura* and *Vaqit*, and confiscated the properties of both magazines as well as their assets, leaving Fakhreddin and his family of six with nothing. In February of the same year, Fakhreddin accepted the post of *qadi* again, and set out for travel to Ufa. Heartbroken by the separation from his family, he was also torn apart by feelings of duty to support his wife, children, and sixty-year old mother. Fakhreddin's grueling trip to Ufa took him an entire month. The situation in Ufa, however, was no better than that in Orenburg. Control over the city frequently changed between the Reds and the Whites, leaving uncertainty over the Ecclesiastical Council's fate. At one point, the White Army had a short-lived directive to terminate *Sobranie*. However, Fakhreddin convinced the Whites to keep at least five *qadis*, and was able to continue his archival work at the Council.⁴⁵

The combat in Ufa continued for about a year. Yet, Fakhreddin never ceased to continue his scholarly endeavors. According to Fakhreddin's memoirs, "[P]eople would wear every piece of clothing they owned and run down to their basements for safety. I was perhaps the only one to do the opposite; I used to take off my coat, sit down and write." Under these dangerous and volatile conditions, Fakhreddin impressively was able

⁴⁵ Ozalp, 72

to complete his work on *hadith*, titled, *Al-Balagh al-Mubeen wa Sherhi* (Clear Manifestations and their Explanations).⁴⁶

Another unfortunate event shaking up Fakhreddin's family would take place in 1920. His beloved wife Nurjamal caught typhoid, which took thousands of people's lives in the area. Sleepless and desperate, Fakhreddin spent day and night at her bedside. The typhoid epidemic left the hospitals grossly overcrowded, and doctors rarely had time for private visits. Fortunately, Nurjamal was able to make a substantial recovery, yet was left extremely weak. Just when the Fakhreddins had managed to endure the difficult winter of 1920, the dry summer of the following year brought a torrid drought, followed by a harsh famine. According to the Turkic (Siberian Tatar) traveler Abdulresit Ibrahim, about forty to fifty Muslims would die each day in Orenburg from starvation. Because Muslims were impoverished by war and disease, nobody had the resources to bury their dead. Thus, the bodies were stored in mosques' ablution areas. Every Friday before the congregational prayer the healthiest men would dig a communal grave and bury the dead, and finally conduct the *janaza* prayer. People grew so desperate during this time that bodies of the newly dead would often be stolen, and consumed.⁴⁷

In 1922, distressed by these terrifyingly hopeless conditions, Fakhreddin and Keshafeddin Terjumani sent a letter to the Istanbul-based Turkish Red Crescent asking for help. They also requested that word of the famine be spread to every Muslim nation in the world. However, before donations from Crimea and Turkey could even reach the shores of the Volga, the new Soviet government confiscated and distributed the donations to the rest of the poor in the area. During those years, Fakhreddin had to sell many of his

⁴⁶ Ozalp, 73

⁴⁷ Ibid, 75

valuable manuscripts and books in exchange for food. His family was forced to live off the modest foods from their small garden, comprised of vegetables, mostly potatoes.

The famine in the Volga left behind crowds of orphans. Some were left to dwell in the streets of the big cities begging for money and food, while others were taken into orphanages organized by the Soviet government. Fakhreddin, who throughout his life had stressed the importance of Islamic morals and ethics as the basis of his own children's upbringing, found it heartbreaking to see similar Muslim children grow up without such an ethical framework. He petitioned and finally managed to open an orphanage for Muslim children in Moscow, where he implemented his own curriculum.

During the famine, the grand *mufti*⁴⁸ of the Ecclesiastical Council, Galimjan Barudi, also passed away from starvation. As a result, Fakhreddin was elected to be his successor and assume this prominent position, which he occupied until his death. During the final stage of his illustrious life, Fakhreddin continuously struggled against the Soviet government's offensive aimed at the eradication of Islam in the region. Mosques were destroyed, religious schools were summarily closed, and Muslim clerics were arrested on the charge of being "spies," "anti-Soviet elements" and subversives, or the "people's enemy." Thousands more were exiled, while many died in "work camps," more commonly known as *gulags*.

Fakhreddin, unlike some members of the Muslim intelligentsia, never gave up on his views and convictions. In 1926, he continued his activities as a *mufti* and headed a delegation of Soviet Muslims to the International Islamic Conference in Mecca. In 1931, the Soviet authorities invited Fakhreddin to testify publicly about the freedom of religion

⁴⁸ Generally mufti is a title given for the member of clergy who is qualified to interpret and Islamic law. In the context of Volga-Ural Muslims Mufti is a head of Dukhovnoie Sobranie (Ecclesiastical Council)

in the Soviet Union. However, Fakhreddin firmly refused to collaborate, which led to his being harassed by the *organy*⁴⁹ until his death. The only thing that protected Fakhreddin from the common fate of other religious and political activists was his incredible moral prestige, and authority as one of the leading Islamic scholars in Russia of his time.⁵⁰

Fakhreddin finally passed away in Ufa, on April 12, 1936, at the age of seventy eight. Until the very day of his death, he maintained his scholarly activities and wrote theological treatises. Like many Muslim scholars of his day, he felt disenchanted with regard to his work's capacity to resonate broadly. During this era, religious scholars would customarily bury their books and manuscripts, partially because they did not wish for their knowledge to be tainted by "godless" Soviets. In one of his letters, Fakhreddin wrote to a friend:

[M]y life is spent in writing and in correcting what I have already written. I have no hope that anybody will read my writings. There is no place left for any hope. But research, learning and writing help me to forget the unhappiness and life passes by in peace. It is most definitely the greatest blessing.⁵¹

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin left numerous volumes of unpublished manuscripts on subjects including history, education, theology and spirituality. We can only hope that today, with improved access and research dedicated to his works, those manuscripts will not only be made available to Turkic-speaking peoples, but also to scholars and others in other parts of the globe that would be enriched by his intellectual contribution.

⁴⁹ Organy—is usually referred to the Committee of Government Security in Soviet Union, commonly known as KGB/nKVD.

⁵⁰ Tahir, 113

⁵¹ Quoted in Tahir, Mahmud, "Rizaeddin Fahreddin", *Central Asian Survey*, 8-1 (1989): pp. 111-115

C. A REVIEW OF EXTANT SCHOLARSHIP

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, whose interest and focus during his life was pedagogy, was a strong supporter of the *jadid* movement in the Volga-Ural region and also a strong proponent of educational reform. His status as arguably the region's most celebrated public intellectual of his era, in addition to his prolific writing, furnishes a rich record for inquiry into the prevailing political movements of his time.

The works of Rezaeddin Fakhreddin are multifaceted with regard to the disciplines and matters he explored in his writing. He is popularly known as a historian, journalist, educator, and writer as well as an influential cleric and theologian. Fakhreddin's contributions in each of these fields deserve separate research and inquiry, yet exhausting these respective fields would be far too ambitious for any single intellectual enterprise. In this piece, I address the historiographical aspect of Fakhreddin's works. I concentrate squarely on his historical and literary writings, by examining the methods he utilized in gathering information and research, his primary sources and intellectual influences. I also demonstrate that the variety of subjects and work Rezaeddin Fakhreddin chose to engage was anything but random. Rather, his work was directed towards the development of distinct nationalistic discourses and dialectics, many of which centered on establishing Islam as a political and nationalistic identity.

Throughout his life Fakhreddin produced a great number of works, most of which today are not accessible to the general public. The majorities of Fakhreddin's works are either in their original manuscript form, or published in Arabic or in Turkic,⁵² and thus

⁵² For the purposes of this work, I will use Turkic to refer to the native language of Volga Ural Muslims, rather than specify it as Tatar or Bashkir. On one hand in Bashkir sources Fakhreddin is viewed as distinctly Bashkir scholar and it is argued that he was writing in Bashkir. In Tatar sources, it's argued his

only written in Arabic script. Hence, these works are accessible only to individuals versed in these languages. Unfortunately, very few of Fakhreddin's works were translated into English or any other Western European language. This is partially because general academic interest in the regions of the former USSR have been mainly skewed towards the modern, post-Communist developments in the area. In addition, as mentioned above, Turkic Islamic reformist/intellectual thought in the former USSR has been neglected in Western scholarship, while Arabic and Persian sources from the Islamic heartlands have been prioritized, and thus, have received much more intellectual and academic attention. Thus, due to the partial picture of Islamic reformist thought in the West, Fakhreddin's works have been significantly neglected. Fakhreddin's works have only recently caught the attention of prominent academic scholars. Until the late 1980's and 1990's, the only authors that cited Rezaeddin's works were Ayse Azade Rorlich, in her work, *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience*.⁵³ In biographical papers such as Shaikh Zaynullah Rasulev⁵⁴ by Hamid Algar, *Asar* the most famous work of Fakhreddin, is perhaps Algar's key source. Moreover, Algar essentially bases his work on Fakhreddin's bibliography of the region's most acclaimed individuals, including religious scholars and *Sufi shuyukh*.⁵⁵ However, recent academic production in the area of Islamic Studies has witnessed an increase in interest in the studies of the region. Most notably, the works of scholars such as German Michael Kemper⁵⁶, Frank

work has distinctively Tatar style. Both of those claims are correct since those two languages are extremely close to each other, and scholarly/ formal versions of those languages distinctly grew apart only after communist revolution of 1917.

⁵³ (1986).

⁵⁴ (1992).

⁵⁵ Religious leaders (Arabic).

⁵⁶ Kemper, M., *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789-1889: der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, Bd. 218. Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1998)

Allen⁵⁷, Jo-Ann Gross, Edward J. Lazzerini, and Charles Kurzman⁵⁸ collectively reference Fakhreddin's works. Charles Kurzman, for example, presents a short biography of the author along with a selection from one of Fakhreddin's biographical works on Ibn Taymiyya. In addition, Alan W. Fisher recently translated a seminal article on a well-known Turkic reformist, Gasprinski. This piece is included in the book titled *The Tatars of Crimea*, which was published in 1998, and is concerned mainly with the personalities and historical background of Crimean Tatars.

Since few of Fakhreddin's works have been translated into western European languages, they have only drawn the interest of Turkish scholars. Thus, an impressive portion of his work has been translated into Turkish. However, this has not been the case west of Anatolia. European and North American scholarship, has largely neglected the intellectual contributions made by Fakhreddin specifically, and the intellectual Islamic reformist movements arising out of his region at large.

Fakhreddin's original works, including *Altın Ordu ve Kazan Hanları* (The Golden Horde and Kazan Khans), and his work on Ibn Rushd were both translated into modern Turkish and published within the last two years. But perhaps one of the most interesting works is a book by Ismail Turkoglu (2002),⁵⁹ who presents Fakhreddin's work within the context of Islamic reformism among "Russian Turks." Turkoglu mainly focuses on Fakhreddin's journalistic works, drawing upon the late nineteenth century periodical

⁵⁷ Frank, A.J., *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District & the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910*, Brill, Boston, 2001.

⁵⁸ Kurzman, C. "Rizaeddin Bin Fakhreddin: Ibn Taymiyya" in *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, Oxford University Press US, 2002: 238

⁵⁹ Türkoglu, I., *Rusya Türkleri Arasındaki Yenilesme Hareketinin örcülerinden RizaeddinFahredden, Ötüken Nesriyatı, Istanbul, 2000.*

Shura (Consensus), which was prepared and edited by Fakhreddin. Furthermore, Turkoglu bases his research on both post- and pre-revolutionary period publications of Fakhreddin. Turkoglu also draws his resources from Ufa, Kazan and Istanbul-based institutions and funds, which enable him to investigate the journalistic aspect of Fakhreddin's scholarship from a regionally and ethnically comparative perspective.

Another Turkish writer, Hakan Özalp, focuses mainly on Fakhreddin's biography and presents a useful, detailed bibliography of Fakhreddin's works. Özalp's contribution also includes periodicals. Moreover, Özalp highlights articles by Fakhreddin published in *Shura*, which Fakhreddin edited. Those articles are especially interesting because many of them articulate Fakhreddin's attitudes towards reformist Muslim movement among Tatars, and his relationship with the most influential reformist thinkers, which included Musa Jayrullah Bigi and Ismail Gasprinski.

In Russia Rezaeddin Fakhreddin's works have been revived after seven decades of Soviet rule. Bolshevik rule has proclaimed Rezaeddin Fakhreddin as a nemesis of "vanguard communism" because of its acutely religious tenor and focus. Thus, nobody dared to touch his publications, except for Jamaledin Validov who in 1936 called Fakhreddin one of the brightest, modern thinkers of the East (Baybulatova, 6). Today, especially in the Tatar and Bashkir press we see a wider variety of publications concerning Fakhreddin's works. For instance, the first two volumes of *Asar* were published both in Russian and Tatar, as well as his work on ethics, titled *Nasihah*; fiction works *Selime*, *Asma*, and *Akhmat Bai* translated by Rakhmankulova is currently in circulation.

Rakhmankulova made a considerable effort to bring Fakhreddin's works to the general public by translating them from old Tatar into modern Tatar. She also published a biographical work on Fakhreddin in 1991,⁶⁰ which included a biographical consolidation of many of his personal family pictures, private letters, and notable excerpts from key works.

Although Fakhreddinov's works were addressed in Russian scholarship before the nineties as well, such works were more philological in their analysis, and dealt only with his works of fiction. For example, Gaynullin⁶¹ in his survey of Tatar literature and press of the early twentieth century addresses Fakhreddin's short novels titled *Asma* and *Salima*. In these works, according to Gaynullin, the author attempted to project his own understanding of an "ideal individual" and that "ideal individual" was a woman, among whose virtues were education and established career. He affirmed that women are equal to men in their intellectual abilities, and that it takes an appropriate education for women to be fully integrated into modern society. Gaynullin also notes some shortcomings in Fakhreddin's literary style, such as "unfinished" characters, and "far-fetched" plots.⁶²

Baishev continues the analytical studies of Fakhreddin's works, and investigates the socio-political and ethical views of the author. He describes in depth the environment in which Fakhreddin shaped his positions as "period of formation of Marxist ideas", however his views remained "non-marxist, and non-socialist". Baishev claims that

⁶⁰ Rizaetdin bin Fakhretdinge 140 yash' Tulu Monasebete belen (1859-1936), a biographical work on Fakhreddin dedicated to his 140th anniversary of birth.

⁶¹ M.Kh.Gaynullin, *Tatarskaya literatura i publitsistika nachala XX veka*. (Tatar Literature and Periodicals of the early twentieth century), (Kazan: Tatar 1983)

⁶² Gaynullin, 164

although Fakhreddin did not support Marxist ideas, he nevertheless had strong democratic convictions in terms of his social and political views.

Scholars such as M.A. Usmanov, R.A. Utiabaeva, B.Kh. Yuldashbaeva address his historical works along with his religious views and stance on a variety of social issues.

In addition to these publications, there are several conferences that were held during nineties. The materials from those conferences sometimes seem very general and somewhat simplistic. Nevertheless some of the participants contributed greatly to the research on Fakhreddin's life and scholarship. For instance, the papers presented at the *Conference On the Academic Legacy and Contemporary Issues in Middle Eastern studies* dated 1999 include papers by scholars such as Salikhov on *Little Known Facts from Fakhretdinov's Life*, Baishev on the *Contidion of Muslim Institutions*, and Yanbaev on *The Tradition of Composition of Bibliographies and Works of Reza Fakhretdinov (on Bashkir)*. The latter author Yanbaev, published his Ph.D dissertation on *Eastern Epic Tradition and Asar of R. Fakhretdinov, Ufa* in 2001, which is a profound work on the literary style and its strong connection to the historical and Arabo-Persian literary tradition. Yanbaev's work is comparative in its nature. He compares the style and genre of *Asar* with Arabic and Persian literary works such as Al-Maqrizi (d. 1364), Muhammad al-'Alam al-'Alawi, Ali-Sher Nava'i also known as Nizam al-Din Ali Shir Herawi (1441-1501), Muhammad Samarqandi (b. 1641) and many others. By analyzing Fakhreddin's works in this manner, he places the intellectual tradition of Volga Ural Muslims into the wider picture of Islamic studies.

Fakhreddin's methods of acquisition of historical knowledge and biographical facts comprised Liliya Baybulatova's area of interest. She believes that the uniqueness of *Asar* lies first of all within its accuracy and reliance on competent sources. Second, she points out that *Asar* is divorced from the ordinary dry encyclopedic style, and infused with the author's subjective presentation and remarks of an educational character. She concludes that "by picking accurate, reliable sources for the description of facts, R. Fakhreddin ... was able to demonstrate the transmission of tradition, periods of development and decline in the spiritual history of Turkic peoples in Volga-Ural region."

⁶³ As a primary reference for the interpretation of events and important personalities in the reformist movement in the area by Fakhreddin I will draw upon the first two volumes of *Asar* in modern Tatar language. In order to demonstrate the nationalistic discourse in Fakhreddin's historical writings I will refer to the historical work of Fakhreddin on the Golden Horde, *Altin Orda ve Kazan Hanlari*, written in Turkish.

⁶³ Baybulatova, L., *Asar Rizy Fakhreddina (Asar of Reza Fakhreddin: fundamentals and meaning of the bibliographical work)*. (Kazan: 2006)

CHAPTER 1

A. THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNITY

The contributions of historians are the products of their contexts. Moreover, their works reflect the political, economic and social atmosphere of the period in which they were written. Muslim historians of the nineteenth century, such as Fakhreddin, observed the geopolitical paradigm shift toward the nation state, and the spreading influence of European colonialism and modernity. During Fakhreddin's lifetime, the global economic system was truly commencing, which fortified the organization of the world along the lines of the nation state, two developments that ushered in what is referred today as the "modern" world. In the other words, the evolution of this "twinned system," a label coined by Gelvin (2005), was a precondition for the flourishing of modernity. Hence, what is widely regarded as the "challenge of modernity" among the Muslim intellectuals, who attempted to reconcile Islamic theology, law and ethics with this new world order, was spawned by the novel challenges presented by the hegemony of the global economic system and the establishment of the nation state.

The prominent French philosopher, Michel Foucault, offered another definition of modernity, based on structural underpinnings. Foucault defined modernity as a global condition, which redefined the notion of self and society. Furthermore, this new definition brought a different type of intellectual production and most importantly a new ways of "imagining the world." In his book *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, Adeb Khaled argues that modernity is not equivalent to economic development or the establishment of specific cultural norms or systems. Rather, he concurs with Eric Hobsbawm and other scholars who have argued that modernity is a process that

transforms tradition, where the tradition starts being perceived as a tradition, which ultimately produces a variety of cultural forms, and thus develops into an integral part of economic development. This particular definition, championed by Khalid, is more descriptive of modernization and counters the convergence theory (Eisenstadt, 1973; Inkels 1975; Levy, 1966), which viewed modernization as a unilinear process that invaded the traditional forms and suspended its oppositions.⁶⁴

Furthermore, Khalid argues that the *jadid*⁶⁵ movement in Central Asia, which attracted many Muslim scholars during the nineteenth century, was an extension of the trend prevailing throughout the Muslim world whereby scholars were reevaluating their cultural heritage under the pressures of modernization. *Jadidism* can be interpreted not only as one of the expressions of modernity, but more truly as embodying an intellectual aspect of transmission from a social system that was not conducive to new political or sociopolitical movements such as nationalism, to a social system that was appropriate to nation states.

Most of the herein mentioned scholars agreed that nationalism relates to a specific framework for the organization of social relations and social reproduction (Anderson, 1983). The emergence of nationalism in the Volga Urals can be traced to the same existing conditions in other areas in the globe. Just like the remainder of the globe, the spread of the Russian Empire into the periphery of the world capitalist system during the mid to late nineteenth century, along with attempts at administrative revitalization, had a transformative effect on the empire, and in turn, its population.

⁶⁴ Khalid, 2

⁶⁵ New method style education method movement initially started by Islamil Gasprinsky, which later grew into larger movement covering other aspects of the social change in Muslim community of Volga-Urals

There were a number of ways in which the Volga-Ural area came to be part of the modern economic and geopolitical order. The first was through integration and “peripherization,” speaking in Gelvin’s terms, which took place in the region by the pull of the international market. Without question, Russia found itself in a very favorable position politically and economically after Napoleon’s 1812 campaign. Alexander, the Czar of Russia, became known as the “liberator of Europe” for his defeat of Napoleon, and was chosen to preside over the redrawing of the map of Europe at the Congress of Vienna (1815). Subsequently, Alexander was made the monarch of Congress Poland.⁶⁶ Therefore, Russia’s convincing defeat of the imperialistic French provided the ideal platform for Russia to intervene into the European economic and political markets. Furthermore, landlords and merchants during the post-Napoleonic Russia started directing production and trade toward the international market, which yielded high profits. This type of economic integration into the world market would not have been possible without the political prominence afforded by the defeat of Napoleon.⁶⁷

After the Russian army defeated Napoleon, many Russian-educated military elites returned with new ideologies, such as liberalism and democracy. These elements attempted to curtail the Czar's powers during the abortive Decembrist Revolt of 1825, which was followed by several decades of political repression. Russia’s leaders sought to participate in the world economy, and thus attempted to restructure their economies as well in line with the political underpinnings of their Western European neighbors. In order to facilitate economic cooperation with the remainder of Europe, Alexander III

⁶⁶ See Henry Troyat, *Alexander of Russia: Napoleon's Conqueror*, translation by Joan Pinkham (Grove Press, 2002).

⁶⁷ See William.L Blackwell, *The Beginnings of Russian Industrialization*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

established a railway system and abandoned the serfdom in 1861. These developments spurred the industrialization of Russia.⁶⁸

Such economic developments were accompanied by political restructuring. Thus, the rulers of Russia copied European methods of governance and imposed them on their domains. The reason for such measures was based on the assumption that this type of governance had proved itself effective in Europe. Therefore, it would provide protection, mobilization and a controlling impact on the Russian population as well.

The second way in which the Volga-Ural area came to be part of the modern economic and geopolitical order was through colonization, which Russia applied extensively to its subjects in Central Asia, Volga-Urals and Transcaucasia.

Edward W. Said, author of *Orientalism*, effectively illustrates how colonial misconstructions of indigenous culture, knowledge, and institutions furnished, and justified, the dehumanization of colonized peoples. Said's account, however, notes Robert Geraci in his work *Window on the East*, does not exactly apply to the history of Russian colonization and the treatment of Russia's Asian neighbors. In comparison with Britain, France, and the United States, whose ideological alienation of the "Orient" was a sophisticated justification for dominating an enemy of medieval and religious origin, Russia's relationship with "the East" (the geographical vicinity as well as common history such as Kievan Rus' losing their political independence to Mongols and becoming part of the Golden Horde) could be characterized as a very pronounced exasperation. Russia was often labeled as an Eastern "barbarian" by Europe, and thus had more urgency in defending its own status by categorizing anything "Eastern" as inferior (Geraci, 2001).

⁶⁸ Haas, 1997

The Turkic identity of Volga-Ural peoples during the nineteenth century, which evolved into contemporary Tatar and Bashkir nationalisms, originated as much from chiefly local conditions as being a response to emerging Russian nationalism. Russia's governmental policies, spearheaded by Christianization, coupled with the growing economic pressure on peasants in the form of exemptions (from property taxes and military service) were the most common methods applied to achieve full assimilation of the colonized population. These policies, regardless of how extensive and harsh they were, never really proved effective. As Geraci states, Russian attempts to Christianize the Muslims were largely a failure. Though hundreds of thousands of Tatars were converted following the conquest of Kazan in the sixteenth century, and again during the first half of the eighteenth century, these gains later evaporated. In the nineteenth century, the church ceased attempting to Christianize the Muslims of the Volga-Urals, for fear that the dissent would provoke the "fanatical" Tatar population into resistance, and hence challenge the state order.⁶⁹

In the mid-nineteenth century, however, Russian methods of assimilation started changing. The Russian government shifted its focus from religious domination to establishing physical and ideological (?) control over the population. Thus, Russian rule primarily concentrated its attention on the Muslim educational institutions, the language of its Muslim citizens, and the Muslim press. A prominent example of such attempts to control the Muslim population was headed by Ilminskiy (1822-1891). Ilminskiy, who was a Christianized Turk of Volga-Urals himself, a professor of Turkic languages at the Kazan Theological Academy and Kazan University, emerged as the promoter of a new approach

⁶⁹ Geraci, 139

toward the *inorodtsy*⁷⁰. In a project he presented to the academy in 1850, he argued that the main missionary weapons should be schools, the teacher, and local language. Ilminskiy opened a number of Russo-Tatar schools in the area, and pressured traditional Muslim madrasas⁷¹ to include Russian as a part of their curriculum. These types of policies were not new in principle. However, the novel aspect was the degree to which these policies were supposed to affect the populace as well as the emphasis on language, which was no longer simply one of the methods of assimilation but rather the most important method of assimilation (Rorlich, 1986). These attempts to control the population of non-Russian parts of the empire by imposing the language on the natives were met with opposition from the lay masses. Yet they “did a great service to Tatars” according to Ayse Azade Rorlich (1986) by sparking an “intellectual restlessness” among Turkic speaking intellectuals, which propelled the construction of an intellectual framework for Tatar nationalism.

On the intellectual sphere, perhaps the first most articulated attempt to construct nationalistic identity was represented in the works of Shihabeddin Mardjani. Mardjani, who was appointed as a teacher at a Russo-Tatar Teacher’s school in Kazan, published his significant work on the history of the Volga Tatars in 1887. Mardjani’s compilation was written in the Volga Turkic dialect, and was titled the *Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwal-i Qazan wa Bulghar* (Select information on the situation of Kazan and Bulgar). This book was the first attempt to construct the historical connection between the Kingdom of Bulghar and modern Muslim population of middle Volga region. It is also considered a foundational work of Tatar national thought.

⁷⁰ Term applied for all non-Russian people of colonial Russia.

⁷¹ Secondary schools (Tatar).

In the nineteenth century, Russia's Muslim scholars took on the task of creating a rhetoric that was eloquent enough to counter Russian nationalistic expression. Russian nationalism emphasized its superiority to the "others", which referred to the Muslim populations encompassed by the Russian Empire. Naturally, Muslim scholars were the ones who had to preserve the integrity of their *umma* by adopting a nationalistic format of dissidence that countered Russian arrogance.

The nationalistic format of argumentation largely means adopting certain assumptions about the order of human society. Every nationalist banner, or ideology, is premised on the belief that humanity is naturally divided into smaller units, or nations. Therefore, all nationalists believe that nations can be identified by certain characteristics that all its citizens hold in common. These characteristics include the linguistic, ethnic, religious, or historical traditions that make a nation distinctive, or exceptional. Nationalists believe that times may change, but nations maintain their core characteristics. Moreover, successive generations are linked by language, literary tradition, and history. Thus all nationalists believe that peoples have a connection to some particular "historical" land where their ancestors first emerged as a distinct group, and flourished. A coherent historical narrative, without question, provides a memorialized source of inspiration that continually keeps a nation united. Moreover, nations possess a "common interest," and the state ought to promote it. Therefore, the only form of government that can guarantee the pursuit of a nation's "common interest" is self-government (Gelvin, 2005).

In this context, history as a discipline gained a central focus with regard to nationalist ideologies. In order to validate one, or another brand of nationalism, the intellectuals had to link one generation of people to another (who preferably shared the

same territory while also portraying them in a favorable light). This historical link between the ancient people and the modern population of particular states serves a purpose of validating a particular nationalism. Hence, with the rise of nationalism, national histories and historical analysis has gained tremendous importance.

B. FAKHREDDIN'S INTERPRETATION OF VOLGA-URAL PEOPLES HISTORY -- *ALTIN ORDU VE HANLARI* AND THEME OF BULGHAR IDENTITY; *ASAR* – VOLGA MUSLIM'S LOCAL AND GLOBAL HISTORY

The nationalistic discourse of modern Tatars and Bashkirs, who comprise the two largest ethnic groups residing in Russian territory today, can be traced to the end of the eighteenth century. Since the Turkic peoples of the Volga-Ural region historically were not able to form the wealthy noble class as discussed in the first chapter, it was up to Muslim clergy to entertain the emerging nationalist ideology. Naturally, as an educated member of the local clergy, Rezaeddin Fakhreddin had to have his own perspective on the national history of the Turkic peoples in the region. Influenced by individuals such as Shihabeddin Mardjani, Galimjan Barudi (1857-1921) and Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, who visited St. Petersburg University, Fakhreddin created his own version of the historical narrative. His version did not specifically catered to Tatar or Bashkir nationalism, but rather attempted to explain the existence of ethnically Turkic people in the area. Fakhreddin frequently visited museums and historical places in St. Petersburg, Kronshat, Peterhof, and Oranienbaum in the late 1880's. He paid close attention to mosques and Muslim cemeteries, where he used to study old gravestones, which contained poetic epithets, or narratives inscribed in Arabic or classical Turkic languages. In the other words, Fakhreddin not only reiterated the ideas of his contemporary thinkers

but also conducted extensive field research to provide evidence and support for his historical claims.

As a scholar and an editor of a popular magazine named *Shura*, Fakhreddin was in continuous contact with many of his contemporaries, both abroad and in Russia, which exposed him to dynamic intellectual movements such as Islamic reformism. For example, since a young age, Fakhreddin subscribed to the newspaper *Terjuman*, published by the pan-Turkist Crimean intellectual Ismail Bey Gasprinski. As a result, he became one of the enthusiastic supporters of Gasprinski's new style schools of learning or *madrastas*.

Fakhreddin's historical account of Turkic peoples in the region falls into the same category as that of Shihabeddin Mardjani, at the heart of which lies the legend that the city of Bulghar on the Volga had already been converted to Islam in the year nine of the Hijra as the result of a miracle performed by three companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and under his explicit orders. According to the legend, the successors of these three *ashab*⁷² converted the surrounding tribes and the areas of the Volga-Ural region later on.⁷³ Thus, the city of Bulghar and the ethnic population of the Bulghar kingdom were viewed as being direct ancestors of the modern Turkic population in Russia. The appealing part about this narrative was the archeological evidence that was found--the remains of the old city section of Bulghar, including numerous gravestones with inscriptions mainly in Arabic. This archeological evidence buttressed the account of newly emerging Western style nationalist historians, without contradicting lay historical accounts, in which Islam was a determining factor in the formation of identity. The ethnic Turkic population in

⁷² Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (Arabic)

⁷³ For more information on Bulghar identity among Volga-Ural Muslim population see Allen Frank, J, *Islamic Historiography and 'Bulghar' Identity Among The Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Boston: Brill, 1998).

Russia previously relied on myths, songs, tales (written and oral) as the principal methods for transmitting historical knowledge, passing it on to successive generations. Until today, people's historical memory determines how people perceive their collective identity.

Fakhreddin, who shared that vast oral culture retained in peoples' memories, based his historiography on the "purity" of the Bulghar Muslim lineage among Turks of Middle Volga. This contention of longstanding Muslim purity is precisely why Fakhreddin identified with Mardjani's historical teachings, according to which the roots of modern Volga Tatars lay in Bulghar. Mardjani concluded that Turkic people of Volga Urals identified themselves as Bulghars, and never assimilated with the conquerors throughout the period of Mongol rule (Golden Horde). According to Fakhreddin, the Russian Orthodox missionaries were responsible for associating the Middle Volga Muslim population with the shamanistic Mongols in order to dehumanize Muslims and alienate them from their history, which would foster an effective Christianization and assimilation of the populace. Thus, from Fakhreddin's historical perspective, Bulghars never mixed with Mongols and were able to preserve and continue their culture.

Fakhreddin's historical perspective of the Kazan Khanate as a cultural and historical descendent of Bulghar was most evident in a series of articles he penned about the Khans of the Golden Horde. Fakhreddin published a series of articles in *Shura* magazine, titled "Famous Personalities and Great Events." One of the articles featured Khan Ulug-Muhammad, and his manuscript on Bulghars and Kazan Turks, parts of which were recently reprinted again in 1993. Those works mainly concentrate on the political history of the Bulghar kingdom, which along with Mardjani's works laid a historical base for the modern Tatar nationalism.

Fakhreddin approached his task as objectively as he could, drawing upon a variety of sources including the works of Russian historians such as Rychkov, Karamzin, Solovyev and Fuks. Despite their established authority in Russia's academia, Fakhreddin examined and critiqued these popular historians' accounts. In fact, he argued that many of the Russian historical accounts addressing the political history between Moscow and Kazan, and the Golden Horde, were far from objective. For instance, Fakhreddin passionately critiqued Russian historian Karamzin who "completely neglects the Tatar sources" in his accounts. Furthermore, Fakhreddin castigates distorted interpretations of the Belevski battle led by Vasilii II and Ulugh-Muhammad⁷⁴ in the works of P.I. Rychkov and S.M. Soloviev.⁷⁵ He charged these Russian historians with offering an extremely skewed and simplified portrayal of Kazan's ruling administrations, especially in the case of Safa-Girey.⁷⁶ However, Fakhreddin's general approach to the works of Russian historians remained respectful in nature, as evidenced by his dependence on Russian sources. According to some of Fakhreddin's contemporaries, "one of the main characteristics" that drove his research was his "tolerance of other faiths and ideas".⁷⁷ Despite the fact that Fakhreddin's works are greatly influenced by nationalistic sentiments, Fakhreddin never played on, or exploited, nationalistic emotions of one or another ethnic group in the area. In addition, he never sought fame or recognition among Russian academia or the nationalistic Pan-Turkists and Pan-Islamists of his time. His

⁷⁴ Ulugh Muhammed, (d. 1445) was khan of the Golden Horde (1419–1422/23 and 1428–1433), the founder and the first khan of Kazan Khanate (1437–1445).

⁷⁵ Quoted in B.Khamidullin, *The History of Kazan Khanate in works of Tatar Historians of XIX–XX centuries*.

⁷⁶ Safa Girey ruler of Kazan Khanate between the years 1524-1531, 1535-1546 and 1546-1549, a member of Crimean dynasty of khans. For more on Safa Girey and his famous wife and the legend of Suyunbike, see Janet Martin's *Medieval Russia* (1995), 351-352.

⁷⁷Khamidullin, 8

works never called for any political or separatist action against Russia. There is no doubt that Fakhreddin not only subscribed to a particular brand of nationalism, but also prioritized a Muslim identity. In his works, Fakhreddin attempted to preserve the history of Muslim peoples in Volga-Urals and place it properly in the historical context of Islamic societies. The importance of Islamic history and Islamic historians is evident in Fakhreddin's work due to his approach to the question of the ethnogenesis of Tatars, as well as the word *tatar* itself.

Unlike Mardjani, Fakhreddin considered the word *tatar* an unacceptable title for the people of the Volga-Urals. "Our national name," wrote Fakhreddin, is "*shimal torkilere*" (Northern Turks). He uses the word "tatar" only as an ethnonym of "mongol". According to Fakhreddin "tatar" originally meant a horseman, and used to be a division name in Chingiz Khan's army. Later, this term spread to refer to all of the Turkic and Mongol-speaking Eurasian ethnic groups. The rulers of the Golden Horde accepted the title "tatar", which indicated the representatives of higher ruling classes in that context, and later "tatar" extended to identify all the Turkic-speaking peoples of Golden Horde including Bulgars.⁷⁸ Thus, while addressing the modern ethnic population of Volga Urals, Fakhreddin uses terms such as "Bulghar Turks," "northern Turks", "Kazan Turks", "Muslim Turks", or "Muslims of the North" in order to draw a separation between the Turks of Volga-Urals and Chingisids as well as the Turks of Central Asia (modern Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz). Bulghar Khanate officially accepted Islam in the tenth century and became the most northern extent of Islamic domain. Thus, Fakhreddin centers his narrative around Bulghar and the acquisition of Islamic identity, which later

⁷⁸ Zakiev, 59

according to him, was carried on by the Turkic population of Middle Volga.

In his book titled *Bolghar hem Kazan Toreklere* (Bulghar and Kazan Turks) he distinguishes five periods in the history of the Volga-Ural ethnic people. The first is “Sovereignty,” which is self-explanatory and deals with the cultural, religious, and political aspects of the Bulghar Khanate. The second and third periods, titled “Bulghar Turks under the rule of Tatars” and “Bulghar Turks under Russian oppression”, respectively, unequivocally set Muslim “Bulghar Turks” apart from pagan Tatar conquerors. This work was very similar to other Muslim historical accounts that depict Mongols as pure evil and sometimes associate the Mongol army with the biblical Gog-Magog.⁷⁹ Fakhreddin presents the Mongols as cruel, pagan invaders; however, he doesn’t seem to despise the establishment of the Mongol Golden Horde that was ruled by Batu Khan, grandson of Chingiz. In fact, the author refers to the Golden Horde as a “great Turkic state,” which was mainly comprised of the Turkic-speaking populace within the Mongol-Tatar ruling dynasty.

The periods titled “Life under missionary rules and forced Christianizations” and “Perishing under the rule of Communists” are perhaps the most emotional parts of his writing and a subject of the author’s major concerns.⁸⁰ The declaration of “the end” of Volga Turks as peoples under Communist rule is an indication by itself of how much Fakhreddin was devoted to the Islamic identity of his people. It is not coincidental that according to Fakhreddin, the history of “northern Turks” reached its apex during the Bulghar period when the kingdom officially accepted Islam. In addition, he clearly tries

⁷⁹ For example Maulana Abu’l Kalam Azad (1888-1958), Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979), Said Nursi (1873-1960).

⁸⁰ Zakiev, 63

disassociating Muslim Bulgars from Chingisid Tatars (who were pagans) by implying that those were not only people of different religions but also of completely separate ethnicities. Finally, the sovereignty of the *Muslim* khanate succumbed to *pagan* Mongol invasions, and later to Russian *Christian* domination that depicts a history of Volga Turks essentially as a struggle between Muslims and the enemies of Islam.

Although the author by all means possible tried to deny any type of ethnic or cultural imprints left by the Mongols on modern Turkic population of the region, he nevertheless stressed the connection between the Kazan Khanate (which was a formerly under Mongol rule for about two centuries) and the Bulghar Khanate, especially in their sharing and commingling of their spiritual and ethnic culture. It is difficult not to notice a discrepancy in Fakhreddin's account, especially when he categorically denies possible connections between the Mongols and the Bulgars while readily embracing the connection between the populace of the Kazan Khanate and the ancient Bulgars, as if Mongols throughout their continuous two-century rule had no influence whatsoever on the khanate population's genetic pool or culture.

Fakhreddin, perhaps following a trend in many Muslim historical accounts, did not speak very highly of "tatars" (Mongols). According to him, they destroyed the Bulghar kingdom, and did not commit a single good deed. In reverse, in terms of language, religion, and custom, Mongols were inferior to Bulghar Turks and became their followers. In any case, because of a loss of their sovereignty and the destruction of their social structure by Tatar Mongol invasions, the Bulgars' fate ended tragically and put them under Russian rule, concluded Fakhreddin.⁸¹ "Although the Bulghar kingdom is in the

⁸¹ Amirkhanov, 47

past now,” narrates Fakhreddin, “the peoples that compose it haven’t disappeared and are well and around today.” ‘Bulghar Turks’ now live in Kazan, Samara, Ufa, Orenburgh, Saratov, Viatka, and Astrakhan *gubernias* (provinces of imperial Russia).”⁸²

Despite some discrepancies, Fakhreddin’s narrative for the most part is supported by cultural, linguistic, and religious evidence, which makes it a compelling account of Volga-Ural’s native Turkic population. He managed to maintain the connection between the generations of people who lived in the area and their historical heritage, and also established a continuous historical connection between the people and the land. For instance, he identifies three “capital” cities of the Bulghar Turks--first, the ancient remains of the city of Bulghar, second, Old Kazan (the city used to be located on the banks of the Kazan river but was destroyed by the Russians), and finally, the modern city of Kazan.⁸³

The nationalistic notion in Fakhreddin’s historical narrative becomes especially apparent in his work *Bulghar hem Kazan Torkilere* (Bulghar and Kazan Turks). In this work, Fakhreddin identifies and characterizes all known rulers of the Bulghar kingdom and notes the seizure of the Bulghar throne by Ulugh Muhammed of the Golden Horde (ethnically Mongol). Ulugh Muhammad (d. 1445) seized the throne from Bulghar Alimbeck in (the year) and founded his own dynasty (1419-1445). However, despite this fact, Fakhreddin strongly rejected the idea of the Bulghar population mixing with “merely three thousand ‘tatar’ soldiers” of Ulugh Muhammed. Although, he argues, the population received the name of “tatar” after Ulugh Muhammed’s rule, “in actuality, Tatars here are like a drop in the sea” (Amirkhanov, 47). Sometimes, Fakhreddin comes

⁸² Quoted in Amirkhanov “Rizaeddin Fakhreddin kak istorik” (Rizaeddin Fakhreddin as a Historian), *Rizaeddin Fakhreddin: Mirasy ham Khazerge Zaman (Rizaeddin Fakhreddin: Heritage and Modernity)*, 46.

⁸³ Amirkhanov, 46

out to hold rather naïve views about the extent of the population's interactions. Realistically, the extent of assimilation of local populations into natives of the Golden Horde (whether they were Tatars or Mongols) is impossible to trace. No matter how many arguments nationalistic historians may bring contending the purity of race, there is never going to be that factual certainty to confirm either side of the debate.

Fakhreddin's analysis of the "renaissance of Kazan Khanate on Bulghar bases" is constructed in terms of military encounters with Moscovites. Fakhreddin presents a very detailed account of battles between the Kazan Khanate and Moscow, and accounts for the losses and the amounts of booty captured from both sides. In this case, Fakhreddin's narrative is a traditionally accepted description of the political dynamic between the two states. Traditionally, priority in this type of historical narrative was given to external political interactions between the states, which were dominated by military actions. Fakhreddin's narration does not include the social and cultural developments during the time of the Kazan Khanate, since medieval historians did not bother to account for the general conditions of the population but rather focused on the ruling elites and territorial expansions. And even if there were any sources relevant to cultural and social aspects of the Kazan Khanate, they were perhaps destroyed during the capture of Kazan by the Russians (Khamidullin, 2003).

Although Fakhreddin's general attitude toward the Mongol invasions carries a negative valence (similar to that of many other Muslim historians of Middle East and Central Asia), he nevertheless pays great attention in his works to the history of the Golden Horde. In the magazine *Shura*, Fakhreddin commences his historical examination of the Golden Horde from the period of Berke Khan, the brother of Batu Khan (1258).

The character at the beginning of the narration is not arbitrary, because Berke Khan was the first one from the Chingisid dynasty in the area to accept Islam. Thus, from the beginning Fakhreddin sets a positive tone to his historical account of Golden Horde. Moreover, Fakhreddin talks about the predecessors of Berke, namely, Djuchi, Batu and Chingiz Khan later in his works, categorizing them as “shamanists”.⁸⁴ It seems like the author almost attributes the terror and suffering they brought to the “rest of the civilized people” to their ignorance and lack of guidance in the Islamic perspective. Despite all of this disapproval, he nevertheless refers to Chingiz Khan as one of the “greatest commanders and characters of genius the world has ever seen.”⁸⁵

In general, Fakhreddin portrays the Golden Horde and Mongol rule more favorably than the Russian side while describing interactions between the two states. Fakhreddin partially believed that the Golden Horde was not only part of the Mongol Empire, but rather a great Turkic entity, in which Turkic people comprised a considerable part of a military. He called the Golden Horde “a great Turkic state” and argued that a large part of the Golden Horde’s population was Muslim. This type of historical presentation of Golden Horde is no accident for a Turkic-speaking Muslim scholar of the nineteenth century. Fakhreddin’s main objective is to create a coherent nationalistic historical narrative that supports the continuity of the modern population of the region. Thus, he succeeds in establishing connections between the Muslim Bulghar kingdom with its culture, the Muslim Turks of the Kazan Khanate under the rule of “great Turkic Empire” and finally, the modern Muslim population of Volga-Urals.

⁸⁴ Amir Khanov, 48

⁸⁵ Shura, N. 4, p. 97. Quoted in Amir Khanov, “Rezaeddin Fakhreddin as a Historian”.

Unlike ordinary nationalistic narratives, Fakhreddin's offering ends with the "termination" of people as a nation under atheistic Communist rule. As mentioned earlier, Fakhreddin divided the history of the Bulghar and Kazan Turks into five periods, with the fifth period titled, 'termination under communist rule.' Fakhreddin wrote, "Let alone writing about it, I can't even start imagining about this period. God willing, we can write about it in heaven, where we can have as much paper as needed and good ink. We wouldn't have to stay after dark with little light and sell necessary things for the payment of taxes. God willing there is going to be no rule of Ch.K and GPU^{86,87}

Fakhreddin was greatly affected by the switch of Arabic script into Latin, which according to him led to the separation of the new generation from the cultural and scholarly heritage established over centuries. This switch in script led the interruption of cultural inheritance, and provided one more sign for Fakhreddin that "our Turkic language is on the edge of disappearance"⁸⁸

But most importantly, by 1930 the propaganda and post-revolutionary governmental pressure for "the atheistic disciplining of the masses" became a fundamental policy of the Communist Party. The religious rights of Communist Russia's citizens were completely revoked. Moreover, the followers of any religion were persecuted, prosecuted and accused of participating in counterrevolutionary actions.⁸⁹

It was not difficult to see that the language of the Volga-Ural Tatars would not be easily extinguished. Fakhreddin lived through the declaration of autonomy by Tatarstan

⁸⁶ Cherezvychainy Komitet (Ch.K) and Gosudarstvennoie Pravovoie Upravlenie (GPU), early predecessors of communist Committee of State Security (KGB).

⁸⁷ Baishev, 73

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid, 75

and Bashkortistan in the 1920's, which meant that the native populace was recognized politically and was assigned a specific territory. Such ethnic recognition was unprecedented in Russian history. For Fakhreddin, however, who built his own and his people's identity around Islamic values and the history of Islam in the region, this Russian brand of "militant atheism" exported in the 1930's effectively meant the end of Muslim history in the region.

Generally speaking, Fakhreddin, like Mardjani, supported the idea of the historical continuities between the Volga Bulghar Kingdom, the Golden Horde, the Kazan Khanate and contemporary "Muslim Turks" of Middle Volga residing in the areas of Kazan, Samara, Ufa, Orenburg, Viyatka, Saratov and Astrakhan. The narrative of the Tatar Bulghar lineage once again gained popularity in the Volga-Ural region after the republic of Tatarstan gained its sovereignty in 1990. That is why Fakhreddin's historical works remain relevant among natives of the Volga-Ural Turkic population until today.

ASAR – VOLGA'S MUSLIM HISTORY

As a student of Shihabeddin Mardjani, Fakhreddin continued and developed many of the projects begun by his teacher. This included seminal biographical works, which were mainly concerned with influential Muslims in the Volga-Ural region. These biographical works became very popular in Muslim region of Russia during the nineteenth century. The influences and inspirations to Fakhreddin's *Asar* (which can be translated as Marks or Traces, Monuments, as well as Works) were *Nojumet-Tawarikh* (Stars of History) by Husayin Amirkhan (1815–1893) and the impressive *Wafayat al-Aslaf wa Takhiyat al-Akhlaf* (The legacy of the Ancestors and the Response of Their Descendants) penned by Shihabuddin Mardjani, comprising the biographies of over 6057

famous Muslim personalities, especially of the Kazan Khanate. However, he wished for *Asar* not to be simply an imitation, but to make an original contribution in its own right. *Asar* was written with the intention of attracting larger numbers of Turkic Volga-Ural readers, and resurrecting the original history of Volga Ural Turks without concealing any types of mistakes or shortcomings. Therefore, the prominence of the bibliographical encyclopedia was not coincidental, but intentionally chosen by Fakhreddin. Again, the bibliographical description was extremely popular among people who valued the oral tradition, and the stories of saints and heroes were deep-seated in the collective memories and imaginations of the people. *Kisekbash Kitaby* (The Book of Kisekbash) was a classic example, which is a *dastan* (epic) narrating the heroic actions of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law, cousin, and companion of the Prophet Mohammed. In addition, *Alty Barmaq* (Six Fingers) by Muhammad bin Muhammad Chokryzade and *Qyssa-i Rabguzi* (The Stories of the Prophets by Rabguzi) by Nasreddin bin Burganeddin Rabguzi, which are totally dedicated to the stories of the prophets,⁹⁰ also rank as archetypal biographical historical accounts.

Asar was heavily influenced by Arabo-Persian Muslim medieval literature,⁹¹ which was spread among the educated Turkic populations of Russia, in addition to similar works on Turkic languages. The objective of such works, however, was not the precision of historical facts, but rather the relation of spiritual or moral lessons to the reader. With *Asar*, Fakhreddin attempts to not only achieve the factual accuracy of the subject’s biographical data, but also aims to set moral standards for the reader.

⁹⁰ Baybulatova, 41

⁹¹ The placement and the significance of *Asar* as a literary work in Muslim literature is most eloquently described in I.K. Yanbaev’s doctor’s thesis *Vostochnyie epicheskiye traditsii i kinga “Asar” R. Fakhretdinova* (Oriental epical traditions and book of R. Fakhreddin Asar), Ufa, 2001.

Asar was first published between the years of 1900–1908, compiled in two volumes in Kazan and Orenburg. *Asar's* remaining volumes (volume 3 and 4) remain unpublished in hand-written format at the library in Ufa. The bibliography contains 1009 aggregate entries dedicated to famous Muslim scholars, spiritual leaders and political leaders from the tenth to the early twentieth centuries. Although the first volume of *Asar* was published and hence made accessible to the public, the original manuscript of the work is significantly different from the official version of the work. The copy of the original, which can be found in the Lobachevski library, contains “corrections” of the Russian censor V.D. Smirnov. Smirnov seemed to find it necessary to remove parts of the original introduction, which according to him did not comply with Russification policies of Imperial Russia. Therefore, the official version of *Asar* lacks the author’s analysis of the historical events and spiritual culture of the Middle Volga and Ural Muslims. *Asar's* missing components were brought back by Liliya Baybulatova in her work *Asar of Reza Fakhreddin* (2006), in which Fakhreddin holds up the development of Russian and Ottoman literary and biographical traditions, and declares these two elements as the foundation for a nationalistic establishment,

Every pupil,--he says after listing most permanent Russian and Ottoman authors,--knows their names, loves and respects them. Children learn about those individuals’ lives and achievements, memorize their poetry. Due to them children become dedicated to their nation, and from then on they are united by the idea of integrity and closeness (Baybulatova, 39).

Therefore, in the beginning segments of *Asar*, Fakhreddin emphasizes the importance of historical knowledge, specifically the bibliographical genre in the establishment of national identity. In the words of Fakhreddin himself, *Asar* is a historical work that attempts to replicate the inspirational impact Pushkin, Gogol, and Tolstoy left indelibly

on Russian readers. In *Asar*, Fakhreddin's words manifest a sense of awe to those intellectuals' "beautiful works," and a stylistic adherence to those great thinkers' "eminent ideas." Fakhreddin's *Asar* presents figures that would inspire similar sentiments among his people. Liliya Baybulatova quotes Amirov R.K. in her work,

For Fakhreddin history is a discrete inconsistent process, which is characterized primarily by the activities of the great individuals. That is primarily why this [genre of bibliographical dictionaries]⁹² was most attractive to him.⁹³

The total study of *Asar*, in terms of categorization and classification, is yet to be completed because of the unavailability of the four volumes of the work. Hence, for purposes of this paper, I rely heavily on secondary sources such as Yanbaev's dissertation, as well as my own copy of *Asar*, which is limited to the first two volumes of the entire work.

Again, following the traditions of West Asian Muslim scholars, Fakhreddin chose to compose a bibliographical compilation that resembled a prosopography.⁹⁴ Prosopographies, according to Robinson (2003), can be categorized into bibliographical dictionaries and *tabaqat* works. *Asar* is a distinctively bibliographical dictionary, which means it is not dedicated to a specific *tabaqah* (level), but rather organized in chronological manner (by the dates of death).

The building block of bibliographical dictionaries is the capsule biography written in the third person, whose coverage and size depends on the purpose and scope of the

⁹² My sentence in brackets

⁹³ Baybulatova, 27

⁹⁴ The term prosopography is a better description for Fakhreddin's work according to Chase Robinson's work titled? *Islamic Historiography* (2003). He draws the difference between biography and prosopography in that biographies accentuate the individual whereas prosopographies make individuals members of groups. These groups are usually the groups of elite individuals, such as those who possessed religious merit (Companions of the Prophet), a particular type of knowledge (philosophers, traditionists) or skill (Qur'an reciters).

host prosopography (dictionary or *tabaqat*). The entries of bibliographical dictionaries are usually very selective and what is selected from the available biographical data conforms to the designs of the compiler.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the works that analyze *Asar*, spearheaded by Yanbaev's Ph.D. dissertation, does not concentrate on the nature of entries but rather focuses on the style of *Asar*. In fact, he attempts to examine *Asar* in terms of *tabaqat*. According to Yanbaev (2001), *Asar* can be broken down into several *tabaqat*.⁹⁶ For example, the biographies of influential poets including Miftahuddin Aqmullah (1831–1895), Shamseddin Zaki (1825–1865), Abdelmanih Qargalyi (1784–1833), Gibadullah Salikhov (1794–1867), Tajeddin Ialchygul (?), Utyz–Imeni (1754–1834) and Gali Chokoroy (1826–1889) are presented as traditional *tabaqat ash-shu'ara* (the poets) or *tazkirat ash-shu'ara*. This collective also includes the lesser known Turkic poets, who wrote mainly *qasa'id* (couplets), including Walit bin Muhammad al-Amin (#81); literati and poet Gabelkhair ibn Suleyman bin Mustafa (#95); Akhtam bin Akhmar (#108); “natural poet” Gayaseddin bin Habibullah bin Rakhmankuli (#430), who wrote his poetry in Turkic and Persian, Tajeddin bin Gismatullah (#454); Muhammad ibn Gabelraqib bin Gadelmu'min (#459) and many others.

Similar categorization, according to Yanbaev, is evident in Fakhreddin's other works including *Mashhur Hatynnar* (Famous Women) and *Yuanych* (Consolation).

Yanbaev draws his attention to another level of classification in Fakhreddin's *Asar*, namely *tabaqat as-suffiyya* (Sufis). Fakhreddin, who himself was active in *tasawwuf* describes ordinary mystics with perceptible favor as a community, “who were true servants of their people.” Personalities such as Muratbakiy bin Ishali (#104),

⁹⁵ Robinson, 68

⁹⁶ Levels (Arabic).

Gabdelkhakim bin Islamkul (#277), Gabdelyappar bin Yagafar bin Gadelgafur al-Parawi (#384), Muhammad-Murad bin Gabdelkayuum al-Badahshi (#423), Shaikh Shamil (#435), Hasan bin Hamid (#444), Tajeddin bin Akhmar (#448), Nurmuhhammad bin Gomar al-Toboli (#451), Hibadullah bin Iskhaq (#462), and many others who spread *tasawwuf* can be included in this category.

However, this type of analysis is potentially problematic if *Asar* is classified as a bibliographical dictionary. Because, by definition, dictionaries are not structured as *tabaqat* works, and thus do not serve the same purpose. Thus, many individuals who can be classified under Sufis (*tabaqat as-sufiyyah*) according to Yanbaev's method, can also be categorized as poets, travelers, scholars and the authors of commentaries to different works. For example, above-mentioned poets such as Qargaliy and Utyz-Imeni wrote poetry that definitely places them into *tabaqat as-sufiyyah*. In fact, in many bibliographical works compiled years later, Qargaliy is commonly referred to as a Sufi poet.⁹⁷

In other instances, Fakhreddin does not explicitly identify the individuals as followers of any particular Sufi order. For instance, Ishniiyaz bine Shirniiyaz bine Iarmuhammad (?–1791), who according to Marsel Akhmedziyanov held a permanent status in the Naqshibandiyyah order is not identified by Fakhreddin explicitly as a holder of *ijaza* to teach *tasawwuf*. Fakhreddin mentions his *shakirds* (students), which can be an indication of Ishniiyaz's association with Sufism, but never specifies exactly which order and under which sheikh Ishniiyaz studied. In the other words, *Asar* should be approached as a comprehensive and vast source for historical research, and can be used to extract the

⁹⁷ Kharisov, E.I., *Bashkort khalkynyn ezebi mirasy (Literary heritage of Bashkir people)*, Ufa, 1973

answers about issues that interest historians. It all depends on the nature of the question for which the historian is trying to provide an answer. There may be many issues historians are trying to address concerning demographics, linguistics, social structure of the particular area, etc. But primarily one has to ask what was the issue the author himself was trying to resolve by creating his work. According to Fakhreddin, the most important question was where the limits lie with regard to the identity of the Volga-Ural Turks. Interestingly, Fakhreddin's *Asar* demonstrates that this identity is extremely flexible and multilateral. It encompasses individuals from different geographical locations and of diverse ethnicities. However, what truly connects these individuals is Islam, and their affinity with the history of the region. Moreover, going through the entries of *Asar*, it becomes apparent that the "geographical region" that we talk about today within the context of modern Tatar and Bashkir identity, is different from the "region" comprising Fakhreddin's "Muslim Turkic" identity. For example, entry number sixteen in *Asar* is dedicated to Muhammad bin Ibrahim at-Tanji, more popularly known as Ibn Battuta (1304-1378). While there are many factors leading to Ibn Battuta's inclusion in *Asar*, the primary reason is arguably his relationship with Khan Uzbek, and his reception at Khan Uzbek's palace where he was received with highest of the honors—including meeting with the Khan's wives and daughters. This demonstrates that identity was not solely limited to the region of Volga-Ural per se, but rather encompassed a broader area stretching through Central Asia. The only other justification for why Uzbek Khan's and Ibn Battuta's encounter could have interested Fakhreddin is that both regions—the Volga Urals and Kharezm⁹⁸ were once parts of a larger entity—the territory controlled by the Golden

⁹⁸ The territory roughly located in the basins of former Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers (Oxus and Jaxtres)

Horde. Thus, for Fakhreddin there is a logical historical connection that makes Uzbek Khan's connection to Ibn Battuta a critical theme worthy of inclusion in *Asar*.

Asar is not dedicated solely to ethnically Turkic individuals. The first entry of *Asar* is in fact Ahmad bin Fadlan bin al-Abbas bin Rasheed bin Hammad al-Baghdadi, who is described as an *'alim*, and *katib* of the representatives from the 'Abbasid Caliphate to the city of Bulghar. Ibn Fadlan was known for his work *Risalah*, which describes the lives and customs of peoples he encountered during his travels. According to Fakhreddin, Ibn Fadlan was the one to give the Bashkirs their modern name and to *distinguish* them as a separate and distinct people. After the visit of Ibn Fadlan to the city of Bulgar, it officially was declared Muslim. In the other words, it seems as though Fakhreddin dedicated his bibliographical dictionary to making a space for Muslims of the Volga Urals within the history of the global Muslim community.

Fakhreddin gave great importance to Muslim women in his practical life, but he did not dedicate a particular section of *Asar* to women. Many entries mention women's names, but simply as a formality of keeping track of marriages and offspring. It is highly improbable that Fakhreddin himself was invested in the patriarchal structure of his society. In fact, he published multiple series titled *Famous Women*, which was a series of bibliographical essays comprised of about over seven hundred personalities, including a range of women starting from the wives of the prophet to the prominent women of Volga-Ural area. Basically, *Famous Women (Meshhur Khatynlar)* was a type of bibliographical dictionary that included only women. He also advocated equal access to education for both males and females. At one point, Fakhreddin's short story titled, *Asma*

caused a controversy due to its unorthodox view (by that society's standards) about the "ideal person" who happened to be a woman.

One possible explanation of why women were not included in *Asar* is the number of literate women and men could not compare to each other. One of Fakhreddin's main goals in writing *Asar* was to reach as many people with his work as he could. Due to this "troubling state of women" in Fakhreddin's own words about the level of female education, *Asar* was directed primarily to a male audience. Fakhreddin was simply observing the world around him and was trying to make his work most useful and effective for the *literate* population of Muslims in the region. Indeed, this issue should be studied in the future, especially after all four volumes of *Asar* become readily available, so that the salient question of women's place in the region can be further clarified and explored.

The general purpose of *Asar* is to establish and preserve the connection between Muslims of the Volga-Urals and the rest of the Muslim world. *Asar* sought to educate the general population about the outstanding individuals who served and improved their *millet* (nation). The spread and accessibility of information fostered by print proliferated such biographical dictionaries and prosopographies, and made such accounts universally acceptable. It was during that age when the questions of religion and nationalistic identity among Muslims were being highly debated, because the idea of nationalism originated in the Western societies where religion and the state were highly segregated. Rezaeddin Fakhreddin incorporated both of these conceptions into his idea of Muslim identity. He constructed a comprehensive identity where nation and religion are inseparable parts of a harmonized whole. Furthermore, Fakhreddin constructs this

identity, firstly, by connecting the present population of Volga-Urals to the ancient Bulghar Kingdom, which reinforces the historical, cultural and linguistic continuity among the generations and their claim to the particular territory. Secondly, by means of his bibliographical dictionary and multiple publications in *Shura*, Fakhreddin created a space for Volga-Ural Muslims within the historical context of the global Muslim community. He considered this connection to be the singlemost necessary component of the identity of his people.

However, his historical narrative is not the most optimistic one since it is perhaps the only nationalistic narrative of a kind that has an end. Rezaeddin Fakhreddin declares his people to have “perished” under the despotic atheist regime of the new Soviet government. This particular sentence from his work on Bulghar and Kazan Turks basically proved that Fakhreddin, along with many who were active in *jadid* movements, did not sever nation from Islam. Today, with the recent reconnection of modern Tatars with Islam as one of the most primary components of their identity, the works of Fakhreddin have been revived after over seven decades of bans and marginalization.

CHAPTER 3

A. EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

Jadidism is rightfully rarely considered a mass movement. More accurately it can be characterized as an ideological manifestation of modernization and should be understood within the context of development of nation-states and the rise of various nationalisms. The objective of this final chapter is to demonstrate how Fakhreddin's focus on literacy, as well as the forms and themes of his own literary output all function as an aid to "imagine", invoking Anderson's usage of the term, modern Tatar and Bashkir identities and to supply this new social imaginary with an ideological foundation that is firmly grounded in Islam.

The manner in which societies were organized before the nineteenth century shifted during the twentieth century. Societies before the nineteenth century largely organized themselves according to family or tribes, whereas, societal organization within the nation-state order was premised on the stratification of groups based on power (the power they held, or harnessed). Furthermore, such societal reorganization required the solidification of an ideology as a precursor, in order for groups to galvanize along lines of political, economic or cultural affinities. While the reorganization of societies based on specific-interest groups, or power shifting from family or tribes was a novel development in character, it was not novel in process.

Nationalisms function similarly to money, which means that they can only maintain their values if a large number of individuals "*buy into it*", if you will, and give it broader *currency*. In other words, the impact of nationalism was strengthened with the

maximization of subscribers, who aligned with groups and gave such entities a following. Furthermore, money would have no value if citizens did not buy its underlying system of exchange, and the basic idea of the nation-state, with its definitive geographical boundaries, citizenship rights and benefits, and markers could not be sustained without popular following and support.⁹⁹ Therefore, the nation-state order could not be solidified overnight, but required a concerted popular campaign aimed at mobilizing, and galvanizing, an observant population.

A nation-state was far more than an “imagined community,” extending into a network of people connected by tangible affinities and interests. Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community” promoted the modern methods of communication that became readily available in the 1800’s; mechanisms that facilitated the rapid expansion and fortification of a nation-state. The modern means of communication were not merely channels for the communication of ideas, and the exchange of information, but also portals that helped to shape new ways of imagining the world. Moreover, these portals transformed the parameters of debate in Russia, and consequently, in the Muslim areas of Volga-Urals. As Adeeb Khalid argues, “[N]ewspapers, magazines, books, and theater created a public sphere that became the central venue for discussing culture and society. Unlike the decades’ worth of learning in the *madrasa* that granted reception to the cultural elite, access to the new public space required only basic literacy.”¹⁰⁰ Khalid’s observation is telling, namely because the introduction of books, newspapers, and

⁹⁹ Josh Lauer, “Money as Mass Communication: U.S. Paper Currency and the Iconography of Nationalism”. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Sheraton New York, New York City, NY, <Not Available>. Feb.5, 2005.
http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p13502_index.html

¹⁰⁰ Khalid, 10.

magazines made the production and dissemination of information more pluralistic and democratic. Instead of knowledge originating from one source, a range of new outlets manufactured differing perspectives and opinions to the masses. In addition, these new institutions had a productive impact on literacy in the region. The establishment of new institutions provided the most effective and accessible methods for mass acquisition of literacy, which emerged into an essential issue in the end of nineteenth century.

Muslims of Russia were limited in terms of their freedom to fully express and form nationalistic ideas, and thus their efforts were focused on issues minimally related to politics. Therefore, Fakhreddin's attention centered on these foundational elements of society, and education, language, and literacy, were salient themes of his work. In addition, education, language, and literacy comprised common points of intellectual discourse in newly emerging nation-states toward the end of the nineteenth century. Fakhreddin was very much the voice of his region with regard to these institutions, but also part of a universal intellectual movement taking place in emerging, nascent nation-states.

Increasing literacy levels became a principal objective in the Ural-Volga regions. In the Muslim-populated areas of Russia, the emergence of *usul-i jadid*, a new method of education proposed by Ismail Bey Gasprinskii, aimed to make pupils of *maktab* functionally literate. This stood in marked contrast to the old style of education, where Arabic served as a mnemonic aid for students who simply memorized passages, instead of reading them; a deceiving practice that skewed educational levels. Although children were taught the alphabet, the acquirement of functional literacy was not the objective of

the *maktab* educational experience¹⁰¹. In a society organized around direct, in person relations, writing was of limited use and was likely to become a specialized skill. The ability to read and write was necessary for only few areas of endeavor, whereas immense areas of life remained untouched by writing. Even in trade, major dealings were carried out purely through oral communication, with the personal assurance of special intermediaries (*qasids*) taking the place of written documents as late as the 1870s¹⁰². By the close of the nineteenth century, new-method schools proved to be very effective in Russia and its colonized Muslim territories, so much so that literacy among Muslim populations hit a higher mark than within the Christian Russian population.¹⁰³ Thus, the ushering of the nation-state order birthed a range of new sources of information and data, which created a productive impact on literacy, and the attainment of literacy on the ground.

Fakhreddin himself evolved into a champion of literacy in the region. Fakhreddin is considered to be one of the most dedicated proponents of the *jadid* movement and supporters of Gasprinski's program of education, and as a *mudarris* (teacher) by education he was drawn to reform the Muslim school. Fakhreddin strongly advocated for the revitalized method of Arabic teaching and learning, focusing more on organic understanding versus rote memorization, along with the inclusion of other disciplines including geometry, mathematics, astronomy and finally native Turkic language grammar in the curriculum. Moreover, Fakhreddin published several articles in *Shura* magazine,

¹⁰¹ Khalid, 23

¹⁰² Ibid 24

¹⁰³ qtd. in Shorish 163-164

titled *Din we Milli Mekteplerebez Hakkında* (On Religion and our National Schools),¹⁰⁴ *Islam we Ana Tele* (Islam and Mother Tongue),¹⁰⁵ and *Torki Lughatemeznen Edebiyatı belen Shoghellenechulerge* (To Those Who Study Our Turkic Language).¹⁰⁶ In these articles, Fakhreddin emphasized the importance of native language instruction in the Muslim schools of the region, and urged them to revive the works of native poets of earlier periods, including those of Gabdelrakhim Utyzimeni, Aqmulla, Shemseddin Zeki, Abdelmenih Qarghalyi and many others whose biographies were later included in his larger historical work titled *Asar*.

Fakhreddin understood that the progression of literacy, and the advancement of his works, would have to be coupled with the reintroduction of the works of his predecessors. Overall, Fakhreddin echoed Gasprinskii's basic teaching that the efficacy of education must be premised on the native language of students. In addition to advancing literacy-directed activities, Fakhreddin made works of the eighteenth century Turkic poets and writers available to the broader public through his publication *Shura*, and through numerous methodological works for teaching Turkic literature in new-method Muslim schools. In the other words, Fakhreddin promoted literacy while simultaneously promoting the seminal works of his Volga Bulgar predecessors, which enforced and promoted the idea of cultural and historical congruence between Fakhreddin's generation and inhabitants of old Bulghar kingdom. Thus literacy in the context of the nineteenth century was one of the most essential elements in spread of nationalisms.

¹⁰⁴ *Shura* v.24, 1913; v.2, 1914.

¹⁰⁵ *Shura* v.3, 1917.

¹⁰⁶ *Shura* v.12, 1911.

As discussed above, Fakhreddin's understanding of education was not solely limited to literacy. Rather, Fakhreddin believed that education is not merely a goal in and of itself but rather a means for individual empowerment, and namely, an avenue through which to become a more spiritual and ethical individual. This was very much the hallmark of Fakhreddin's promotion of literacy—its nexus with spirituality. Fakhreddin's understanding of Muslim ethics and character was of central importance to him with regard to his new-method educational program. He published a number of works dedicated to the question of ethics. For instance, *Gaile* (The Family), *Ghilm-e Ahlaq* (The Ethics) combined of three volumes titled *Nasihah* (Advice), and a series of shorter articles published between the years 1902 and 1909. *Nasihah* contain several volumes geared towards young men, young girls, and adults tackling the question of ethics. For Fakhreddin ethics were directly dependent on religious domain. He believed that morality is the most valued virtue in this world and in afterlife. He also affirmed that *akhlaq* (Ar. character) is socially beneficial concept. "*Milletler* [the nations] progress because of good ethics and come to an end due to the decline because of lack of it. The nations that value ethics will be most respected and elevated above all..."¹⁰⁷ Among many virtues Fakhreddin emphasized characteristics such as religiosity, consistency in words as well as deeds, patience, persistence, piety, and modesty.

Moreover, appropriate behavioral conduct was not only reflective of religious identity of the individual but also began to contribute to a newly forming nationalistic identity of Muslims in the region. *Nasihah* presented detailed directions for how Muslim men and women's should dress, act within the boundaries of family as well as with other

¹⁰⁷ Fa'khreddinev and Kha'iri 142

members of society. For instance, in his Advice for young men he stresses that “one should never be in public with uncovered head. And if someone to walk in while one’s head was uncovered young man ought to put *kelepush*¹⁰⁸ on and greet the person accordingly...”¹⁰⁹ In his Advice for young girls, Fakhreddin almost begs young women to avoid wearing corsets: “...Do not wear clothes that are too loose... but avoid tying your clothes too tight on your waist, and, please do not wear a corset!”¹¹⁰

Naturally, Fakhreddin mentions “our religion does not permit for women to show their hair and naked legs”.¹¹¹ The wearing of *hijab* (veil), although worn differently by women in Russia than for example in Ottoman Empire or Central Asia, was practiced widely in the region. Traditionally, Muslim women in urban middle Volga covered their hair with a shawl and the national headpiece called *qalfaq*, which often left the front part of the head exposed. In rural areas Turkic women practiced head covering but ordinarily the head scarf would be tied back sometimes exposing braids. Very few women actually practiced full body and face veiling, and by the end of nineteenth century in cities such as Kazan, Astrakhan and others, often head covering was limited to *qalfaq*. Fakhreddin’s own daughters did not cover their hair, due to later prohibitions imposed by Soviet Regime. Regardless, covering and *hijab* was never a significant issue among jadidists. In the other words, Fakhreddin does not seem to pay too much attention to women’s attire, but rather emphasizes neatness and cleanliness of clothes rather than specifics of fashion.

Fakhreddin’s point-by-point rules on behavior and etiquette may seem unnecessarily detailed and descriptive at times. However, taking into account that

¹⁰⁸ *Kelepush* is a head dress for men often worn by Muslims in Central Asia and Russia.

¹⁰⁹ Fa`khreddinev and Kha`i`ri 142

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 79

¹¹¹ Ibid.

“discipline of the population” in Foucauldian terms is one of the initial steps towards the creation of a powerful governing mechanism, the works of Fakhreddin certainly do not seem unnecessary re-assertions of behavioral norms but rather can be characterized as manifestations of new modes of governance or “governmentality”.¹¹²

Subsequently, Fakhreddin published *Tarbiyele Khatyn* (The Well-Mannered Wife; 1899-1910), *Tarbiyele Ata* (The Proper Father; 1898) and *Tarbiyele Bala* (The Well-Mannered Child; 1898-1914). Before the Revolution of 1917, the curricula in Muslim schools generally included ethics, and Fakhreddin’s works were used as textbooks in a majority of Muslim institutions in the area.¹¹³

In his work *Edeb-e Taghlim* (the ethics of teaching), published in Kazan in 1908, Fakhreddin raises the problem of upbringing the individual in a society. In a very eloquent manner and through poetic metaphor, both of which are most appropriate for his largely rural Muslim audience, Fakhreddin compares the formation of an individual to the harvesting of crops. Always the apt writer, Fakhreddin wrote in a fashion that resonated with his specific audience.

[B]efore planting the grain,” Fakhreddin wrote, “[t]he farmer must prepare the soil in a manner that it is clean of weeds and harmful roots, well moistened and softened. This [process] is called the soil preparation, which is the single necessary step to the success of the harvest. [Similarly,] to nurturing a respectable individual must start early in the childhood. Just like no quality wheat can grow on uncultured soil, no individual can be brought up without the proper discipline and upbringing (*tarbiya*).¹¹⁴

Accordingly, Fakhreddin breaks down the process of education into three primary sources. The first source, *tarbiya*, is the primary care of a child by the mother and father;

¹¹² A concept instigated by M. Foucault to encompass the mentalities, rationalities, and techniques used by governments, within a defined territory, actively to create the subjects (the governed), and the social, economic, and political structures, in and through which their policy can best be implemented (Mayhew 233).

¹¹³ Khairi, 2003

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 173

second is the child's teachers and mode of education, and the third source is the socialization of the individual with their peers, teachers, readings, and other social stimuli.

“Correct upbringing” or “proper upbringing” for Fakhreddin means primarily an upbringing within the religious traditions. The importance of child upbringing is central for Fakhreddin; hence he emphasizes the role of the mothers and importance of women's education. More in-depth discussion of women's character and the “perfect individual” can be found in Fakhreddin's literary pieces, which will be discussed later in the course of the chapter.

Generally, Fakhreddin assumes men to be the traditional head of the house. Hence, more responsibilities are assigned to a man. His chapter on *Ata Edeplere* (Father's etiquette) lists fourteen points, while his chapter on mother's etiquette is comprised of nine points. The mother's duties are centered around the manual and physical aspects of childcare, like feeding, cleaning and ensuring the child's safety, while the father's duties include more abstract duties such as making sure religious rules are followed, educating the wife and children about matters that are allowed and prohibited in Islamic law, or making sure all children are treated equally. For instance, the mother is urged to be patient if she has many children, and advised to “never forget that they [children] are God's servants as well ... because there is a chance that the rewards, which one usually gains through pilgrimages and fasting will be derived from the childcare”.¹¹⁵

Furthermore, Fakhreddin emphasizes the role of educational institutions as the place where children learn various academic disciplines, and also the place that

¹¹⁵ Fākhreddinev and Khāiri 89

determines the future of each child, and the context that shapes the child's morals. In sum, the educational setting has a potential for disciplining the population in order to comprise a uniform organized society bound not only by religion but also common language, behavioral conduct and even appearance.

In his work, Fakhreddin emphasizes the importance of teachers' morals, and their competence and integrity as individuals. In this regard, the teacher not only dispenses information and educates, but must also embody the very ethical model that their students strive to emulate:

[T]he most precious of virtue is honesty. Being honest in affairs of this life and after-life is necessary for everybody. [But] for the *mo'alim* (teacher) because of his involvement in education and shaping the minds and souls [of youth] it should be more than mere necessity! The honest [ones] will have every opportunity to accomplish their goals... and their every wish will come true without blocking anybody's way.¹¹⁶

Aside from the teachers and parents Fakhreddin sees literature as one of the greatest ways to cultivate "*insane-e kamil*" (a perfect individual). "In order to become a 'person' – Fakhreddin says – "one needs *ghyilem* (knowledge) and righteous character. Those two entities are inseparable [in a perfect individual]"¹¹⁷ Fakhreddin sees literature as one of the fundamentals for cultivating a character. "Literature and industriousness are two remedies on the path of purifying the soul and disciplining the *nafs* (ego)" – writes Fakhreddin in his work *Asmaa*.¹¹⁸ Hence it is important to examine what type of literary expressions Fakhreddin admired and used the most, and of course place Fakhreddin's

¹¹⁶ Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, *Edeb-e Taghlim (The Ethics of Teaching)*, (Qazan, 1908), 91 qtd. in Khairi 172

¹¹⁷ qtd. in Minnegulov, 158

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 159

works within the broader context of the literature in the end of nineteenth beginning of the twentieth century.

B. FAKHREDDIN AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY LITERATURE.

Fakhreddin's literary works are the expressions of his commitment to literacy and modernization of education system. *Asmaa* and *Salima*, are short names for Fakhreddin's most commonly known fictional works, whose full titles are: *Asmaa yaki Gamel wa Jaza'* (Asmaa or Fault and Punishment; 1903) and *Selime yaki Gyiffet* (Selime or Innocence; 1899) Fakhreddin's literary endeavors are not comparable with the works of Turkic literati of latter generation, such as those of Gayaz Iskhafiy (1874–1954) or Fatykh Amirkhan (1886–1926) in terms of their literary style or complexity of composition. Turkic authors of Russia and the Ottoman Empire were not unique among activist intellectuals who picked literary venues for their ideas on modernization and nationalism. There are very similar works at the onset of twentieth century written in the same genera by Egyptian authors at such as Qasim Amin (1865—1907), Hafiz Ibrahim (1872—1932), Mustafa Kamil (1874—1908) and Muhammad al-Muwaylihi (1858—1930). The spark of such a drastic emergence of writers and their adherence to a traditionally western form of written language such as the novel can be explained by the development of print-capitalism.¹¹⁹

The development of the printing industry was gradual, but its intersection with the growth of the nation-state order, and nation-state specific nationalism, enhanced the

¹¹⁹ Print capitalism is a term introduced by Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities*, published in 1983. Anderson considers the emergence of print-capitalism in the late eighteenth century as pivotal in the development of nationalism because it led to various types of literature (books, newspapers, etc.) being disseminated throughout the territorial boundaries, enabling people to “imagine” themselves as connected to each other in the experience of living a life and contributing to a nation.

success of the new paradigm. Printing was introduced to Europe during the fifteenth century, which with the development of new technologies by 1850 evolved into industrial scale production, marking the beginning of “print capitalism.” Print was introduced in Ottoman Empire in 1729¹²⁰ and Egypt had its first Arabic print house established after the French invasion in 1798.¹²¹ In Russia, the establishment of Islamic typographies was banned until the beginning of the twentieth century.¹²²

The development of the print industry in Western Europe, according to Anderson, promoted the ideology of nationalism and facilitated the imagining of the nation-state. The expansion of the book market added to the “vernacularization” of languages, and hence enabled each person in society to become aware of the existence of many others who share their national affiliation, culture, religion, and language. Examples of such books are the works composed by the German authors Joseph Freiherr Von Eichendorff and Theodor Storm,¹²³ as well as the British writers Edmund Burke and William Wordsworth,¹²⁴ the Russian authors Alexander Radischev, Leo Tolstoy,¹²⁵ and later, the

¹²⁰ Cosgel Metin M., T.J. Miceli, and J.Rubin, "Guns and Books: Legitimacy, Revolt and Technological Change in the Ottoman Empire." *University of Connecticut Department of Economics Working Paper Series* (2009): 1-34. [Http://repec.org/](http://repec.org/). University of Connecticut, Mar. 2009. Web. 17 Mar. 2010. <http://www.econ.uconn.edu/>

¹²¹ Roger William, *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004), 5

¹²² The majority of large printing companies (such as Karimov, Khusainov and Co. (est. 1905), the print house of *Din wa Maghishat* magazine established in 1909, and finally brother Rameyev's *Vakit* print established in 1909) were the product of the twentieth century. Before then, the entire Muslim press of Russia was dependent mostly on print house in Kazan, which was originally established by the order of Catherine the Great in 1800, and later became part of Kazan University Press.

¹²³ Michael Perraudin, *Literature, the Volk and Revolution in Mid-Nineteenth Century Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 65-100.

¹²⁴ Marlon B. Ross, "Romancing the Nation-State: The Poetics of Romantic Nationalism," *Macropolitics of Nineteenth-Century Literature: Nationalism, Exoticism, Imperialism*, ed. Jonathan Arac and Harriet Ritvo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995) 57. [Questia](http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=14451576) <<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=14451576>>. Accessed 20 May 2009.

¹²⁵ Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000) 88-91

emergence of the *Slaviyanophil* movement pioneered by authors such as Mikhail Pogodin and Konstantin Aksakov. In large part, the themes of these authors' work revolve around the lives of common folk, and their affection to the land that was incorporated into the mythical conception of the *rodina* (motherland) by Tolstoy, for instance, which needs to be defended by any means.¹²⁶ Indeed, the defense of one's indigenous land evokes the very spirit of "us versus them," the touchstone quality of nationalism. Furthermore, the works also addressed the majesty of simple peasant labor, and the romanticizing of historical heritage that justified, or jostled with, colonial expansion. The colonial wars were justified by bringing civilization to the uncivilized, and progress to the colonized "other," which is often depicted as a sub-human mass that is void of a defined nationalism, trapped in their own history with no development until the arrival of Western modernity.¹²⁷ In other words, literature was one of the methods to combine synchronicity of history and diachronic ideals in order to create the representation of a particular political entity, which laid grounds for the nation state. Therefore, literature disseminated what it comprehensively meant to be part of a broader nation, or nation-state, and also, the collective interests that drove the domestic and foreign policy of the nation-state. During this dynamic era, literature was not isolated in fiction, but intimately intertwined with the pressing (and still unfolding) political and social developments of the time.

In line with this, the Turkic literature of the Russian Empire began to experience a noticeable shift in terms of its content and expressive styles toward the close of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the mediums of literary expression, such as short stories,

¹²⁶ Ibid. 88.

¹²⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 2004), 227-231.

novels, and even modern poetry were widely borrowed from Russian and European literary traditions, which was a natural consequence of the colonial dynamic of the time. Therefore, the shift toward the nation-state order brought about a noticeable reform in the work of the Turkic writers. Before the nineteenth century, the content of literary works had a slanted religious and spiritual orientation, varying from traditional Islamic formats such as *gazels*, *qasoids*, and *mathnavi* used for praising actions of heroes (imaginary or real), miracles of Sufi mystics to stories of love and romantic longing, which were borrowed from Persian literature¹²⁸. In the nineteenth century, the objective of literary works shifted to addressing prevailing sociopolitical issues, which included the lives of ordinary people, peasants, social injustice and equality, and women's rights. As a result, Fakhreddin was part of the broader politicization of literature movement that characterized his era. . Despite the fact that Islamic press was officially banned until the beginning of twentieth century, Fakhreddin was still able to publish some of his most prominent works, including the pamphlet *Selime*, in Orenburg.

Overall, with press readily available to the wider masses, and journalism integrating society closer than ever before, the stage was set for the development of nationalism. National problems, experiences, a common historical and religious background, and a unifying narrative, which collectively give society a sense of unity and structure, or “imaginary” link, made the nationalist experiment a firm possibility. In other words, literary expression became one of the central ways through which to create the

¹²⁸ The examples of such literature would be works by Kul Ghali (1183—1236?) *Qyisse-i Yusuf* (The story of Yusuf), Kul Sharif (?) namely *Qyisse-i Khubbi Khodja* (Story of Khubbi Khodja), *Zafername-i Vilayet-I Qazan* (Conquest of city of Kazan) and of course famous Some most famous Sufi influenced works can be traced to authors such as Utyzimeni (1730—1815), Ibatulla Ishan (1794—1867) and Shamseddin Sufi (1825—1865).

“imaginary community” that Anderson invokes. Furthermore, the expansion of nationalism also enhanced the significance of Fakhreddin’s work, and he came to assume a social stature that transcended his role as an author and intellectual.

Fakhreddin was not the only intellectual in the region at the forefront of the reforms in journalism, history and literature. Hadi Atlasi (1876--1938), for example, wrote the historical fiction essay *Suyunbike* in 1913; Gayaz Iskhaqyi (1878-1954) was known for short stories with cogent and strong nationalistic and modernist messages, such as *Zoleykha*, and the novel *Ike Yoz Yildan son Inqiraz* (The Extinction after Two Hundred Years; 1905); and acclaimed poet Derdemand (1859-1921) was a journalist and a founder of the Turkic periodicals *Vaqit* and *Shura*. In the other words, the prominent intellectuals of the Turkic-speaking Muslim population widely embraced western European literary styles, especially the Russian literary tradition. Furthermore, these intellectuals employed western literary traditions to create their own interpretation and narration of Turkic nationalism, and to also meet the intellectual demands of the newly forming social order.

Fakhreddin’s interpretation of Islam was inextricably linked to developing nationalistic ideology in the region. The majority of Fakhreddin’s works are religious in nature, and concerned with ethics and the interpretation of Islamic scripture. It is evident from Fakhreddin’s work that he not only views Islam as a foundation for political identity for Muslims in Russia, but also strives to preserve traditional Muslim ethics and morals to be passed to future generations, and in turn, integrate them into the portrait of his conception of the perfect individual, which is reflected in character of Salima. Those familiar with Russian literature would immediately recall Dostoyevskiy’s and Tolstoy’s

search for the mysterious “Russian soul”. Their conception of Russian spirituality parallels the works of many Muslim authors of Volga-Ural in terms of their portrayal of *jadid* style Muslims.

The most prominent themes in Fakhreddin’s most notable works include: gender relationships in Islam, the notion of an “ideal individual,” the history of the Turkic peoples of the Russian Empire, and finally, how to improve the economic situation in Kazan markets. *Asmaa* and *Salima* are the principal works in which Fakhreddin brings up the themes of spirituality and morality. As indicated in the titles of *Asmaa* and *Salima*, the primary protagonists of the novels are women. However, the pressing “women’s question” of the nineteenth century is not necessarily the main topic of these novels. Rather, Fakhreddin generally addresses the women’s question, but focuses mainly on the reform of the educational system in his region.

The role of women in literature also assumed a changed role. In general, most of the existing scholarship developed by the non-Russian peoples of the region offered only scattered references to real women, as opposed to women who were conveyed as objects of imperial policy or as models of an emerging nation state (Engel, 2003). On the one hand, the historiography of Muslim women of Volga-Urals is heavily based on nineteenth century *jadid* writings; and on the other hand, it also draws upon Russian missionary accounts and narratives. Earlier ethnographic works also predominantly interested in the struggle of prerevolutionary Muslim women for equality and freedom. Especially Soviet works have significantly neglected the devotion of women to Islam and their role as Muslim missionaries. Jadidisits as part of modernization movement in the regions argued that women in traditional Islamic societies lived under the yoke of their fathers and

husbands, who kept them in total ignorance, which is not necessarily completely incorrect per se. Many Muslim reformers attacked Muslim patriarchy¹²⁹, the secluded lives of women, and lack of their formal education. Those sources, argues Agnes Kefeli (2001), overwhelmingly assumed that women had no power or say in the world outside the home, a perception that she proves to be inaccurate. In addition to Russian and *jadidist* sources, Kefeli evaluates accounts of Russian Orthodox Christianizations, which noted that Muslim women offered greater resistance than men did to the spread of Russian Orthodox church among the peoples of Volga region. Kefeli's work is telling because it indicates that conventional analytical prisms cannot be engaged to assess the role of women of Fakhreddin's Volga-Ural region, but rather, a more cultural-sensitive observation must be had to understand, and appreciate, women's unique and significant role. Moreover, Kefeli comes to the conclusion that Muslim women of the middle Volga region played an integral role in the struggle against religious assimilation and, in some instances, actively proselytized for their Muslim faith. In the Volga-Ural region, almost as many girls attended religious schools as boys, in preparation for passing on the faith to their offspring, and encouraging non-Muslims to convert. Muslim women in the Volga-Ural region were at the fore of Islamic education and missionary work. Kefeli's work does not necessarily contradict the *jadidist* accounts that assess Muslim women's literacy as low and education opportunities as extremely limited. After all, in mainly peasant Muslim region, the literacy levels were low both men and women. Women might have had been much more active than they were depicted in pre-revolutionary reformist literature, nevertheless, the status of women in the region was not as substantial as men's.

¹²⁹ M.Kh. Gainullin, *Tatarskaia literature XIX veka (Tatar literature of XIX century)* (Kazan, 1975), Z. V. Togan, *Vospominaniya (Memoirs)* (Kitap, Ufa, 1994)

Jadidist views were generally representative of the nationalistic uptake on women's status. They argued that in the traditional Islamic society of the Volga-Ural region, women were helpless, oppressed, and powerless in context. *Jadidist* views regarding the "women's question" are clearly expressed by the founder of the movement, Ismail Gasprinskii, who in 1913 wrote:

Whoever loves his own people and wishes it a [bright] future must concern himself with the enlightenment and education of women, restore to them their freedom and independence and give wide scope to the development of their minds and capabilities.¹³⁰

The proponents of the new method including Fakhreddin contended that women were initially granted their rights by the Holy *Qur'an*, a message that was distorted over the years by "narrow minded *fuqaha*", who enslaved them by isolation, and placing them [women] behind closed doors [of houses as well as figuratively speaking the society]," according to Musa Bigiyev.¹³¹ The advocates of women's rights among the *jadidists*, ironically, were mostly male. However, the most famous *jadidist* (of the Volga-Ural region) who championed the cause of women is perhaps Muhlisa Bubi (1869-1937), who was the first Muslim woman elected to the position of *qadi* (judge) during the 1917 First All Russia Muslim Assembly in Moscow.¹³² The younger generation of feminists, led by Giffet Tutash (real name Zahida Burnasheva; 1895-1977), a poet and social activist who published a number of works, including a history of Tatar women's movement in 1911, were also quite active. However, the literature on the women's movement in the Volga-Urals region, and women's contributions to Islamic jurisprudence, are not readily available. Therefore, the vast majority of the ideas about the Muslim women liberation

¹³⁰ Engel, 2003

¹³¹ Kanlidere, 1997

¹³² Muhlisa Bubi was working closely with the muftis Barudi and Rezaeddin Fakhreddin at the Ecclesiastical Council starting in 1918 to the tragic end of the religious establishments of Communist Russia.

movement is derived mainly from the works of male *jadidists*, including Hadi Atlasi, Musa Bigi, and the two brothers of Muhlisa, Gubaydullah Bubi (1866-1936) and Gabdulla Bubi (Nigmatullin) (1871-1922).^{vii}

Fakhreddin generally accepted jadidist position of women's status in the society, however, he never thought of the reason to actually revise the existing religious laws addressing women. Overall, he relies heavily on existing medieval interpretations and *hadith*. Fakhreddin affirms that the idea of equal rights between men and women is naturally confirmed by the Qur'an's essential message. While addressing this topic, Fakhreddin almost sounds irritated, writing, "[A]ll of the natural, granted by Qur'an itself, rights of all humans regardless of their sex."¹³³ Fakhreddin bases his central thesis of the equal opportunity for education for both sexes on the baseline that the foundation of Islam is knowledge, and it is every Muslim's duty to obtain that knowledge, beyond gender, national, or ethnic bounds. Therefore, those who do not support the equal opportunity of education along gender lines are questioning Islam's hallmark quality, and thus, transgressing upon one of the faith's scriptural pillars.

Fakhreddin appealed to the view that Islamic teaching was progressive in terms of changing negative customs in respect to women. In order to illustrate this, Fakhreddin presented several examples of pre-Islamic Arabs who were able to wed an unlimited number of women, as well as some practices in the sub-continent, according to which a wife had to discontinue her own life if her husband passed away. Fakhreddin reasoned that the Islamic limitation to four spouses was, relative to the time and region, more progressive. In the other words, he concludes that the *sharia* established the ideal grounds

¹³³ Qtd. in Tukhvatullina, 317

for the family structure because of the greater protection given to women. Furthermore, he reasoned that the family is the pillar of every functional society, and the harmonious functioning of the family facilitated the progress of society. It is only due to “*ghafalah*”¹³⁴ in some instances, and mostly due to the avaricious nature of human beings, who look to seize opportunities to satisfy their lust, which compromises the family unit. Fakhreddin argues that the meaningful message of the scriptures was lost over the years¹³⁵.

While these arguments are still made today, and may seem to be simplistic and somewhat apologetic, one salient consideration stands out. Fakhreddin believes that the Qur’an addressed societies in the past, and therefore, some messages would not apply to contemporary contexts. Although Fakhreddin comes across as quite conservative in some instance, he largely believes in the ability (and the right) to reinterpret (and adapt) the scripture according to the specific needs of the day and the context. This religious fluidity also applies to women and comprises an important hermeneutical opening, in line with Muhammad Abduh in Egypt and later, Amina Wadud in the US.

In his most celebrated novels, Fakhreddin vividly conveys the shift in ideas and social changes that were taking place in Russia, and specifically within the Muslim communities. The language Fakhreddin presents us with is not the most elaborate in its literary style, and neither are the plots of his stories. In short, his works represent a condensation of *jadidist* ideas and themes, which are aimed to be an easy read for every literate person of Turkic origin. Clearly, his aim was disseminating literature that was accessible to every social class. Furthermore, Fakhreddin’s short novels are reminiscent

¹³⁴ A term used in Islam to describe negligence or forgetfulness of God that is either the root of sin or at least an impediment to spiritual realization in Sufism.

¹³⁵ Tukhvatullina, 320

of Arab writers' works of *nahda* (awakening) period, which also carry traces of nation building elements. Unlike outspoken nationalistic authors of Middle East however, Fakhreddin concentrates on the internal issues faced by his society, such as the treatment of women, the role of education, the debate and difference of opinions among Muslims (Shi'a and Sunni belief systems), and the philosophical question of what constitutes an "ideal person." Fakhreddin, alongside many other Muslim historians influenced by Ibn Khaldun assumed that successful societies are built around a family/clan loyalty rather than around governments. Thus, the stability of the family would bring about the stability of a society. His views partially reflect his own life experience. Fakhreddin raised a tightly knit family despite surviving some of the most turbulent times in Russian, and the region's history. He maintained a very close relationship with his wife, who was his friend and his partner.¹³⁶ Thus, when he wrote about women he illustrated relationships based on mutual support and partnership, rather than on subordination and dominance.

In his novel *Selime*, Fakhreddin idealizes the woman who is well spoken, clever, and proficient in the following:

[R]eading and writing, Turkic language grammar rules, Persian, Arabic and French languages. From sciences--logic, geometry, arithmetic, *aqeeda* (Islamic belief system), *qalam* (dialectic), *esma' al-husnaa* (knowledge of names of Allah)".¹³⁷

Selime, a modern woman, is the main female character of the novel. Dressed in European attire, which presumably indicates her non-Turkic heritage and modernity, Fakhreddin intentionally assigns Iranian heritage to Selime because it enables him to

¹³⁶ See R. Märdanov, R.Mingnullin, and S. Răkhimov, *Rizaëtdin Făkhretdin: Fănni-biografik Jyentyk: Rizaëtdin Făkhretdinov : Nauchno-biograficheskiĭ Sbornik*. (Rizaetdin Fakhretdin: biographic-academic collection) (Kazan: "Rukhiat" Năshriiaty, 1999)

¹³⁷ Tukhvatullina, 2003

address the Shi'a and Sunni tensions emerging later in his story, where he goes on to discuss in very general manner the similarities between Shi'a and Sunni branches of religion and urges Muslims to reject all the negative polemics directed to agitate sectarian differences. Selime who is the daughter of a wealthy Iranian merchant and Shi'i Muslim by birth addresses the issue of historical intolerance that exists between those groups and concludes that the prejudice and bigotry is a political issue that can be clearly resolved by proper education and dialogue between two communities. Selime inherited her father's business and made a decision to run it on her own. Fakhreddin praises Selime's ability to maintain her inheritance, and also to multiply her father's wealth by following the example of Khadija, the wife of the Prophet Mohammed. Fakhreddin takes his time to condemn the behavior of rich Kazan widows, "[W]ho cry and scream the first day [after the husband's death] and the next day you see them laughing in delight by the side of a young bridegroom."

Fakhreddin always promoted sincerity and unions based on partnership, rather than relationships that were aimed at meeting each party's individual interests. In his works on ethics he proclaims that marriage of a girl to a man she does not want might as well be considered girl's death. He states that in marriage spouses should be equal. "Do not give away [for marriage] your cleaver and well raised daughters to the brothel frequenting and drinking boys just because their families are rich... True happiness in this world is not obtained through wealth, but soul tranquility"¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Fakhreddinev and Khāiri, 163

He truly believed in the companionship and mutual support that he himself was able to enjoy with his wife and family. He urges men to not fall for superficial beauty, but rather to admire other qualities such as good manners, modesty, and grace. That is why Selime, a strong modern woman, supersedes Fakhreddin's male hero in almost every aspect (education, social status, financial competency), but is not the stereotypical beauty. Nevertheless, Selime conquers the hearts of young men by her gentle manners, "amicability" and most importantly by her vibrant intellect.

Fakhreddin answers the ever-present "women's question" by squarely addressing the issues of education and morals. Fakhreddin considers education the ideal way to become a moral and "ideal" person. In his opinion, the materialism of wealthy merchants' wives is a product of ignorance and mistreatment of women by male relatives. He compares them with mannequins at clothing stores, and expresses deep discontent at the thought that those women are going to raise the next generation of Muslims. In other words, Fakhreddin praised a woman who exceeded her promise as a potential wife, but more critically, who was a prospective mother who could rear good Muslim children. Here it's hard to ignore the question if Fakhreddin is facing a tension in articulating an "ideal" Muslim woman conception. As a scholar, he must have been aware of all the hadiths that are employed to denigrate women. For instance Tukhvatullina accounts for the hadith which Fakhreddin might have come across in popular at that time work by Jamaledin Biktashi *Fadail ash-Shuhur* (Righteous Deeds) that states that if anyone was ordered to prostrate before a person it would be a wife prostrating before her husband.¹³⁹ In his *Terbiyele Khatyn* (Well Mannered Wife) Fakhreddin did not explicitly disagree

¹³⁹ Al-Tirmidhi qtd. in Abou El Fadl, 211

with narrations of such nature, instead he articulated popular argument that men are *qawwamun*, or “protectors” and “guardians” of women. Generally, Fakhreddin avoided the polemics of “women’s question” however his views of marriage as a partnership is very close to Abou El Fadl’s, who eloquently proves that “...[M]arriage is characterized as a relationship of companionship and compassion”¹⁴⁰ in Islam. Abou El Fadl argues that Qur’anic term often used to justify such narrations, is a vague and may have a wide spectrum of meanings, like for instance Muslims are referred as *qawwamun* of justice in Qur’an.¹⁴¹ Although Fakhreddin does not analyze any particular part of the scriptures or questions authenticity of *isnad* (the chain of transmission) he nevertheless stresses that “...[W]ife is not a toy – she is not there to amuse you at all times...Wife is not a servant, she cannot be merely appreciated for good service she provides or be disposed in case she fails to do so. Wife is a companion for life.”¹⁴² In the other words, although Fakhreddin did not produce alternative sophisticated discourse to address each of those hadith, he nevertheless never failed to articulate progressive values that potentially elevated women’s status in the society.

Ultimately, Fakhreddin asserts that motherhood is the principal responsibility of women. Therefore, the education of women is crucial because women are the individuals that raise children, and help form their first impressions. If the woman is uneducated, Fakhreddin contends, she is most likely to inflict the illusory, highly inaccurate view of the world on her child. Fakhreddin finds the fairytales and legends of the oral tradition about mythical spirits and *jinns*, quite overbearing and potentially harmful to a child’s

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 211

¹⁴¹ Abou El Fadl, 210

¹⁴² Fakhreddinev and Khäiri, 160

impressionable psyche. The author seems to be extremely opposed to the fear-inducing childrearing techniques that were very popular in rural societies. He encourages mothers to learn more about Islamic practices, teach their children ritual prayer, and ensure that it evolves into good habits.¹⁴³

Fakhreddin's education plans for women are comprehensive and extensive. In addition to acquiring fluency in Arabic, Persian and Chaghatay grammar, he suggests that women should have knowledge of arithmetic and various crafts, such as knitting, sewing, and other domestic abilities. Of course, Fakhreddin did not expect women to attain these skills overnight, but he sincerely believed that it was feasible with the new reform in education to gradually cultivate them. Nevertheless, Fakhreddin held a high standard of excellence for women in society, which in his view was the honor of raising a new generation of Muslims who would be educated, progressive and free of superstitions. Fakhreddin's approach to the 'women's question' is not necessarily paradigm shifting. He generally holds on to traditional conceptions of gender roles, and articulates his thoughts within the medieval Islamic framework. Tukhvatullina, for instance, criticizes his approach to the question of women's rights on the basis that Fakhreddin does not even attempt to change how women are viewed traditionally and merely works around the conception of medieval texts that objectify a woman rather than treating her as an equal part of the society. While this criticism is accurate for the most part, it is too narrow and based only on a single example where Fakhreddin metaphorically compares a woman to a jewel that needs to be preserved and taken care of. Certainly, linguistics and methods of expressions are often indicative of cultural attitude and underlying tendencies of

¹⁴³ Fakhreddin, R., *Terbiyele Ana* (Well-mannered Mother) (Kazan, 1998), 14.

gender stereotyping, which often translate into oppression. Fakhreddin, in Hadi Atlasi's words "a man of old times"; nevertheless, he was never opposed to the idea that women can play a significant role in the public sphere. In reality, as it was mentioned earlier, it was under Fakhreddin's leadership that the first Muslim woman judge Muhlisa Bubi was elected and functioned as a fully empowered authority who was entitled to make some of the most important decisions in Ecclesiastical Council. According to some sources she became the "right hand" of the mufti (Rezeddin Fakhreddin) in the struggle for gender-inclusive education among Muslims in Russia.¹⁴⁴ In the other words, Fakhreddin by no means can be called a vanguard of feminism in the region, neither did he work to shift gender roles, but he definitely never was an impediment to the development of Muslim women's rights. Fakhreddin is merely guilty of using archetypical medieval vocabulary and conceptions to describe the position of women in his society yet in reality he was perhaps one of the first Muslim clerics to work side by side with a female colleague.

In conclusion, Fakhreddin's literary contributions should be viewed from the perspective of building a distinct Muslim Turkic identity in the Volga Ural region. He participated in the process of "imagining" the community, and defining the role of religion in the newly emerging national identity by promoting *jadidist* ideals. Those ideals developed from the reform of education to the construction of nationalistic identity in the end of the nineteenth century. This fact is evident from Fakhreddin's novels, where he addressed topics concerning the religion, education, the woman question, and the linear progression of history that linked the modern Turkic population of Russia with

¹⁴⁴ Minnulina, 102

the ancient Bulghar kingdom, all of which were later integrated into modern Tatar and Bashkir identities.

C. REZAEDDIN FAKHREDDIN'S INFLUENCE ON RELIGIOUS REFORM.

Fakhreddin's contribution to the Islamic reform, in terms of theology, is difficult to pinpoint since his ideas were in line with prominent scholars of the time. Scholars such as Muhammad Abduh, Jamaladdin Al-Afghani (1838—1897), Rashid Rida (1865—1935) and local jadidist movement activists like Ismail Gasprinski (1851—1914) had a prominent influence on Fakhreddin. Fakhreddin's works have drawn the interest of Tatar academics due to their historical narrative, which today serves as a foundation for national Tatar identity. The religious dimension of Fakhreddin's heritage, on the other hand, has been marginalized since Islamic studies (as a discipline) is largely absent from Russian higher education, colleges and universities. Also, Fakhreddin's views of religious reform can be characterized as very moderate in nature, and the theological base for those reforms seems to rely on the earlier works of Qursavi, Mardjani and Muhammad Abduh of Egypt. In other words, Fakhreddin's primary goal was implementing this new modernist theology into the social framework of his community. This is why most of his works are concerned with social or educational reform, rather than the reform of the religious law, although it would be inaccurate to state he completely neglected the reform of Islamic law.

In order to understand Fakhreddin's outlook on religion, one must also assess the work of his influences. Fakhreddin mirrored views of many Middle Eastern Muslim scholars, particularly Jamaladdin Al-Afghani and Egyptian Muhammad Abduh, and the Syrian student of Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Rida. Stephane A. Dudoignon claims that

Shura, the magazine, which Rezaeddin Fakhreddin produced, was modeled after Muhammad Rashid's Rida's (1865—1935) *Manar* magazine. *Shura*, as mentioned earlier, took a role of a mouthpiece for the spread of reformist ideals, but at the same time conveyed progressive but still orthodox views based on detailed arguments and formulated with moderation.¹⁴⁵ Consequently, Fakhreddin's role was more of an educator and an activist, whose impact on the religious sphere of Volga-Ural Muslims was largely practical rather than theoretical.

Jamaladdin Al-Afghani's influence on Fakhreddin's activism manifests itself in sensitizing Fakhreddin to politics. Al-Afghani's is known for his political preaching's. The objective of his political and religious philosophy was the urgency to construct and ideological and political unity in the Islamic world as a defence against the "encroachments of the West" as Azade-Ayse Rorlich (1986) states it in her work. By restating the basis of the *umma* in terms of nationalism, Al-Afghani made an important contribution to the formulation of the pan-Islamic program.¹⁴⁶

Aside from the fact that Fakhreddin's journalistic activism was greatly inspired by *Al-Manar* journal¹⁴⁷ Muhammad Abduh's teachings of Islam's synchronization with modernity, Fakhreddin strongly disagreed with nationalistic Young Turks and socialist movements' views that Islam is an impediment to a nation's progress. He maintained that Islam is a universal religion and suitable for all times, all places and governments, and all people and nationalities.

¹⁴⁵ Dudoignon, 103

¹⁴⁶ Rorlich, 56

¹⁴⁷ See more in S. Dudoignon

By the end of the 1920's, partially due to his disappointment by the outcomes of 1917's Revolution, Fakhreddin realized that in order to reconcile Islam and modernity one must develop an active and political form of Islam as opposed to the traditionally passive pietistic, sanctuaries- and brotherhoods-oriented form prevalent in the region before the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Fakhreddin called for abandoning the superstitions of "folk" Islam and returning to the values of "pure" (*saf*) Islam. Fakhreddin's call for revitalizing the previous glory of Islam, during the era of the time of the Prophet and his companions, has noticeable *Salafi* coloring. However, in his understanding of this "return to the glory," Fakhreddin's believed that this would be achieved through the institutionalizing Islam and creating one mainstream consistent interpretation of the religion with the authority of jurists and '*ulama* in place, rather than reading the values of modernism into the original sources of Islam as the *Salafi* movement did. Thus, in Fakhreddin's mind, the return to "pure" Islam is really a creation of strong institutionalized form of Islam as opposed to an uncompromising, puritan interpretation of Islam, which was already present in some regions of the Muslim world such as Saudi Arabia, which is guided by the *Wahhabi* tradition.

Fakhreddin was distinctively aware of contemporaneous trends in religion. For example, in one of his essays he accurately assessed *Wahhabism* to be a political movement that was adopted by Ottoman Arabs to enhance their separate identity.¹⁴⁸ In his essay dedicated to the history and ideas of Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1787), where he refers to *Wahhabis* as "vahabiler mezhebe," or the Wahhabi sect within Islam and

¹⁴⁸ F.Z. Yakhin, "Riza Fakhreddinov Wahhabiler Khaqqinda." *Rizaëddin Fährredin: Mirasy Häm Häzerge Zaman ; Fänni Konferenciya Materiallary, Kazan, 16 Nojabr' 1999 El.* (Kazan: Inst. Istorii AN RT, 2003. 264-69)

qualifies their doctrine as “not that great of a work.” Overall Fakhreddin found Wahhabi methods of “revival” to be limited only to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and unacceptable outside that nation’s bounds.

He mainly found Wahabi conception of *bid’a* (innovation) too far-fetched, hence problematic. Particularly, he thought it absurd to declare traditional Islamic architecture such as minarets, women visiting burial sites and most importantly, the sacred relationship between pupil and teacher to be an innovation and objected to the complete abandonment of these forms and practices. Although, like many reformist thinkers Fakhreddin opposed the practices of Sufi brotherhoods, he remained close to modernized forms of Sufism, as can be seen in the biography of Rasulev of Troitsk, which Fakhreddin published during the revolutionary years.¹⁴⁹

Along with many Russian philosophers and writers of the nineteenth century, Fakhreddin firmly upheld the idea that morality’s only foundation is religion. Therefore, he saw the future of his nation and its religion (Islam) as inseparable. As a *qadi* (judge) and Islamic jurist he envisioned Islamic law to be the basis for the new Muslim society in Russia. Therefore, he saw the future of his nation and its religion (Islam) as inseparable. Fakhreddin became interested in the codification of Muslim legal practices in Russia and presented some of his ideas on Sharia’, *fiqh*, and a number of other issues concerned with religious reform in a statement submitted to the *ulama* congress that met in Ufa between April 10 and 15, 1905¹⁵⁰. Some of those issues can be traced in his work titled *Dini ve Ijtimaghi Meseleler* (Religious and Social Issues).¹⁵¹ In this work, Fakhreddin addresses

¹⁴⁹ Dudoignon, 99.

¹⁵⁰ Rorlich, 57

¹⁵¹ This work was published in 1914 in Orenburg by the *Waqit Publishing House*.

that in Islamic Law, *ijra* (executive) and *teshri'* (legislative) powers are already firmly established and articulated in the scripture. Fakhreddin's writes that, "[The Qur'an] is a foundation for essential decrees and regulations that have to be the same everywhere."¹⁵² On the other hand, the executive power is a domain of the *qadi*¹⁵³, the *emir*,¹⁵⁴ *mujtahids*¹⁵⁵ and *muhtesib*.¹⁵⁶ He also proposes for the mufti to be elected rather than appointed by the government, and he should have equal competence in religious and secular sciences (Rorlich, 58).

Furthermore, Fakhreddin pays a great deal of attention to the power of *mujtahids* and the practice of Ijtihad in general. Influenced by his processor, the prominent theologian of the nineteenth century Gabdennasyr Qursavi. A firm believer in *ijtihad*, Qursavi attributes the decline of Muslim societies to the spiral in independent reasoning, and the failure to produce *mujtahids*. Qursavi believes that *ijtihad* is a necessity of modernity and essential element for Muslim unity.¹⁵⁷ Fakhreddin, following Qursavi's teachings, affirmed the need for *ijtihad* during the period of such transformation.

“Our time is far from the time of our beloved Prophet and his companions... There is an immense difference between his time and our time... and great distance lays between his land and our land. That is why the words spoken by early *mujtahids* are impossible to connect with our times and our countries...”¹⁵⁸

Fakhreddin here brings up important issue of not being able to apply early interpretations and laws to the modern context. He views *ijtihad* as the only way to keep

¹⁵² Qursavi and Idiatullina, 168

¹⁵³ *Qadi* – judge (Arabic)

¹⁵⁴ *Emir* – leader (Arabic)

¹⁵⁵ *Mujtahid* -- [Islamic scholar](#), competent to interpret divine law ([sharia](#)) in practical situations using ijtihad (independent thought).

¹⁵⁶ *Muhtesib* – an accountant, historically a supervisor of bazaars, 136-164.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 194.

¹⁵⁸ Fakhreddin, 194

religion relevant to modernity. Ideally, Fakhreddin sees a *mujtahid* acting as a mufti “...[Faqikh], *mujtahid* and mufti come to mean the same thing...”¹⁵⁹ With those ideas in mind Fakhreddin prepared a religious reform statement, which he intended, not for presentation at the congress but merely as a guide for the mufti. As a need for more organized and constructive discussions became evident, the mufti Muhammediar Sultanov urged Fakhreddin to present his project to the assembled *ulama*. With the modifications and improvements included during the discussions, the project was adopted as a resolution for the congress.¹⁶⁰

In 1917, all of the Muslim parties and committees were comprised according to the methods Fakhreddin described in his work.¹⁶¹ As his final goal, Fakhreddin worked on organizing a functioning parliament (*Shura*) that produces legislation in accordance to Islamic law and the Qur’an. Consecutively, the *Shura*’s main objective was to draft a constitution, which “[W]ould be an extremely beneficial document to have for the Islamic world.”¹⁶² Unfortunately, Fakhreddin’s aspirations to create a united, functioning legal apparatus was not realized due to the growing control of the Communist party. Soon enough, any brand of religious institution was declared illegal under Soviet rule, and activists associated with any Pan-Turk, or Pan-Islamist, organization were charged with espionage, imprisoned, and oftentimes, executed. Nevertheless, scholars such as Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, Musa Jayrullah Bigiev, Qayyum Nasyri and Ismail Gasprinskii along with many others were able to produce vigorous intellectual discourse, which to a

¹⁵⁹ Fakhreddin, 187

¹⁶⁰ Rorlich, 57

¹⁶¹ Khabutdinov, 276.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

certain degree, reconciled modernity and religious traditions in the area and succeeded in creating the foundation for political Muslim identity in Volga-Ural region.

CONCLUSION

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin produced some of the most valuable and influential bibliographical and encyclopedic works of the region, which remain among the very few references of the region's history. Fakhreddin was a native of the Volga-Ural region of Russia educated in the region, unlike many intellectuals of his time, who predominantly received their training in Central Asia, Anatolia, Egypt or the Arabian Peninsula. This fact demonstrates that *jadidism*, which is generally not considered to be a mass movement, was nevertheless an ideological manifestation of modernization in the region following the political shift in the Russian empire's structure, and namely the emergence and spread of nationalisms. As an educated member of a mainly peasant Turkic population of Russia, Fakhreddin fully participated in the "imagining" of his community by developing a significant perspective on history, religion, and most critically, the place of the Muslim population of Russia within the global Muslim community.

Rezaeddin Fakhreddin, along with other historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth century in the Volga Ural region, incorporated local history into Islamic historiography. This is evident from several points in Fakhreddin's narrative, which is clearly defined by a keen Islamic historical perspective. First, as mentioned above, Fakhreddin commences the history of Volga-Ural Muslims from the starting point when the Abbasid Khalifate officially recognized the Bulghar areas as Muslim land in 922 C.E., and chooses to declare its end when he sees the atheistic regime of the Soviet

government gaining an undisputable influence in the region. Second, in his historical narrative he tries to distinguish the modern population from the preceding “Tatars,” who conquered the region during the Mongol Chingizid invasions. Furthermore, Fakhreddin explains that “Tatar” was initially the name of a rank in the Mongol army, and the Mongols who ruled over the major Turkic population. However, Fakhreddin explains that the barbarian destruction caused by the Mongol army took place because they were not Muslim, and were thus in a state of *jahiliyyah* (ignorance). Fakhreddin does not gear himself towards either Bulgharist or Mongolist historical narratives like some modern Tatar historians, but in fact, publishes a number of articles dedicated to Mongol leaders of the Golden Horde, where again, the importance of Islam and Muslim cultural ideals comprise the center of his narrative.

Third, looking at the variety of articles published in *Shura*, and the personalities Fakhreddin covered in his major bibliographical work, *Asar*, it is safe to state that the author views the Volga-Ural Turkic community as a part of greater Muslim culture. His articles cover biographies of medieval Muslim scholars, including Ibn Rushd, Imam al-Ghazali, and seminal personalities such as Ibn Fadlan and Ibn Khaldun, and suggest that Fakhreddin considered those travelers, scholars, and historians as having made an essential contribution to the Muslim culture of Volga-Urals. Fakhreddin claimed that the works these scholars left behind were very much a part of his people’s heritage. Aside from holding a post at *Dukhovnoye Sobraniie* (Ecclesiastical Council) as a *qadi* (judge) at first, and then as a *mufti* (the head of the Council), Fakhreddin engaged in vigorous scholarly and journalistic activities.

As a part of the modernist movement in Volga-Ural commonly known as the Jadid movement, Fakhreddin promoted the new-method education by publishing more than 50 books, approximately 410 articles in the magazines *Shura* and *Vaqit*, and left behind about 40 volumes of unpublished manuscripts. The contents of those works vary from textbooks for new-style education *madrasas* to works on the history of the region and the Turkic ethnic population to short novels. The rocketing numbers of newspapers and other publications at the end of the nineteenth century or in Benedict Anderson's words, "print capitalism", facilitated new social organization. The ideological shift in the society manifested itself through the changes in literary styles and contents of the literary works. While before the nineteenth century Muslim literature is mostly comprised of epic poetry, *qasaid*, *mathnavi* and *ruba'i*, at the end of the nineteenth century more authors chose to employ traditionally western European literary styles such as novels, drama and short stories. Fakhreddin published two of his short novels commonly known as *Asmaa* and *Selime*. In these works he was able to integrate his views on what makes an individual a worthy citizen of the community, the relationship between men and women, family, education and his hopes for the future. Although, idealistic, those thoughts are reflective of major ideological movements presented in the writings of the end of the nineteenth century Muslim intellectuals.

Volga-Ural region's scholars were able to achieve a success in institutionalizing Islam into the modern system of education and consequently introducing a system that includes religion into the everyday life of the private and public, rather than compartmentalizing it and creating unnecessary tensions in society. This is why through the new method, *madrasas* became virtually predominant in the Muslim educational

system of Volga-Ural and later spread to Central Asia as well. This progress and development of a successful educational system that incorporates the religion had not passed unnoticed by Russian and even Soviet officials. The election of Fakhreddin for the post of *mufti* is by itself compelling supporting evidence for the strong position of the reformist Islamic movement held at least in terms of education in the Russian Empire.

Unfortunately, the new communist rule was fast to denounce Fakhreddin's scholarship as anti-Soviet for over seven decades, along with that of many other scholars from the Volga-Ural region of current Russia. The works of Muslim scholars of Russia like Rezaeddin Fakhreddin were virtually ignored in the Islamic studies field, which is skewed towards Arabic and Persian sources. In order to understand the complexity of the development of Islamic thought as well as the interaction and multifaceted interpretations of the religion through the lenses of different cultures, different times and social construction, it is crucial to include the accounts of Turkic and Central Asian perspectives in Islamic Studies. In addition, the thoughts of modernist thinkers, namely the *jadidists* in Volga-Ural region contributed significantly to the construction of the current Tatar and Bashkir identities. Rezaeddin Fakhreddin's works on the history of the region, demographics, ethnogenesis and religion remain one of the most fundamental in the national identity of Tatars and Bashkirs today.

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ⁱ Abdunasir Kurasavi (1776-1812) according to Mardjani's research was born in the village of Masra in today's Archa district of Tatarstan. Kursavi is mostly known by his opposition to the "stagnant" spirit of Central Asian Islamic theological thought and by promotion of critical thinking when it came to the religion. His most important work is called *al-Irshad li l'Ibad* in which he advocated a return to scriptures and the use of a rational mode of *ijtihad*.

ⁱⁱ Mardjani was a noted theologian and historian from the Kazan region. Until the age of twenty he studied in his own father's madrase, but then continued his education in two major Central Asian religious centers, Bukhara and Samarkand. During this period in Central Asia Mardjani became involved in the theological controversies, which would profoundly influence the course of his life. Some of the major controversies, which Mardjani used as a means to achieve two goals: the separation of theology and religion, and a return to a primitive Islam shorn of the complexities that had grown up around it over the centuries. As a historian and biographer, he produced a number of significant works of lasting value. Brief analyses of Mardjani as a historian can be found in G. Gubaidullin, "Razvitie istoricheskoi literatury u tiurko-tatarskikh narodov," in *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi tiurkologicheskii s"ezd* (Baku, 1926), 40-42, and M.F. Togay, "Qazan Türk tarihine bakislar: muverrih Sehabettin Mercan," *Türk Amaci*, I (1942/43), 343-348. Of immense value for a study of Mercani is S. Gubaidullin, ed., *Sihabeddin al-Mercani hazretlerinin veladetlerine yuz yil tolu (1233-1333) münasebetiyle nesri etildi* (Kazan, 1333/1914-1915).

ⁱⁱⁱ Huseyn Faizkhanov (1828-1866) was born in the village of Sabachai of Simbirsk Province. At first a student of Merdjani, Faizkhanov attended courses in the Oriental Faculty at Kazan University and later continued at St. Petersburg University, where he formed a strong academic connection with Vladimir Vel'yaminov-Zernov. He was interested in Muslim education in Russia, thus in 1860 he raised the question of reform of the Tatar medrese in a project entitled "Islah-I Medaris" (Reform of Madrasa). In this project, Huseyn Faizkhanov envisioned a Tatar secondary school in Kazan where Islamic and secular sciences, and the Russian language, would be taught according to European methods (Lazzerini, endnote 7)

^{iv} The father of famous Tatar writer and journalist Fatih Kerim. He was a teacher in local Muslim institutions. After 1899 he moved to Orenburg and opened first Muslim publishing house (Turkoglu, 25)

^v Musa Jayrullah Bigiev (1875-1949) was a close friend of Rezaeddin Fakhredin. They both were adherents of new style – *jadid*. Musa Bigiev was born in the city of Rostov on Don in a middle class scholarly family. His father was a worker on the newly build railroad of czarist Russia and served as unofficial *imam* in his community. After death of his father at an early age, his mother, enlightened woman Fatima Hanum Bgiyeva, took care of the family providing both secular and religious education to her two sons Musa and Muhammad Zahir, who later became a well-known Tatar literati and reformist. Musa received his primary education in Russian school, then in technical highschool following *Gul Boyu Madrasa* based in Kazan. Musa Bigiev traveled to Bukhara where he receive private lessons from new-style teachers Damullah 'Ivaz Efendi and Damullah Ikram Efendi focused on *fikh* and *hikmat*. He also learned mathematics from Damullah Mir Sharif Efendi. Later he traveled often from Istanbul to Cairo, where he became very close with Shaykh Bakhit, a student of Al-Afghani and close friend of Muhammad 'Abdo. Bigiev was as well a member of '*ulama*'. He castigated former respected Muslim scholars and philosophers such as Al-Ghazali, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and Taftazani. He passionately supported every new idea and sometimes he came across so radical in his views that even reformists did not accept some of his ideas. For instance, presumably the founder of *jadid* movement Ismail Bey Gasprinski found Bigiev's discussion of whether God's mercy includes non-Muslims as well as Muslims inappropriate and irrelevant, and criticized Bigiev in his newspaper *Tarjuman*. The *qadimi* (old style, traditionalist) publications harshly accused Bigiev in changing the message of Qur'an and declared him a *zindiq* (heretic) and *kafir* (non believer) (Kanlidere, 53).

^{vi} October Manifesto Russia (1905) or Russian Oktyabrsky Manifest (Oct. 30 [Oct. 17, Old Style], 1905), in Russian history, document issued by the emperor Nicholas II that in effect marked the end of unlimited autocracy in Russia and ushered in an era of constitutional monarchy. Threatened by the events of the Russian Revolution of 1905 (q.v.), Nicholas faced the choice of establishing a military dictatorship or

granting a constitution. On the advice of Sergey Yulevich Witte, he issued the October Manifesto, which promised to guarantee civil liberties (e.g., freedom of speech, press, and assembly), to establish a broad franchise, and to create a legislative body (the Duma [q.v.]) whose members would be popularly elected and whose approval would be necessary before the enactment of any legislation.

The manifesto satisfied enough of the moderate participants in the revolution to weaken the forces against the government and allow the revolution to be crushed. Only then did the government formally fulfill the promises of the manifesto. On April 23, 1906, the Fundamental Laws, which were to serve as a constitution, were promulgated. The *Duma* (parliament) that was created had two houses rather than one, however, and members of only one of them were to be popularly elected. Further, the *Duma* had only limited control over the budget and none at all over the executive branch of the government. In addition, the civil rights and suffrage rights granted by the Fundamental Laws were far more limited than those promised by the manifesto ("October Manifesto." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 26 Mar. 2008 <http://www.britannica.com/bps/topic/424878/October-Manifesto>).

^{vii} Gubaydullah Bubi (Nigmatullin) was a famous teacher, who received his education in Arabia, Cairo, and Beirut. After his and his brother's return they opened a *jadid madrasa* in the village of Ij Bubi in Viyatka Guberniya, which was closed by Russian government in 1911 due to charges of "subversive anti-government, anti-Russian activities" (Kurzman, 232).