

“UKU KITABY” (1935) AS ONE OF THE MAIN TEXTBOOKS OF THE TATAR FINNISH DIASPORA

^aALLA ARKAD'EVNA SALNIKOVA, ^bDILYARA MAGZUMOVNA GALIULLINA

^a*Doctor of History, Professor, Department of Russian History, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, Kazan Federal University, Kremlyovskaya St, 18, Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, 420008, Russia*

^b*Candidate of History, Associated Professor, Department of Russian History, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, Kazan Federal University, Kremlyovskaya St, 18, Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, 420008, Russia*
E-mail: ^aAlla.Salnikova@kpfu.ru, ^bgaliullinadm@mail.ru

Abstract: Uku Kitaby, the first reading book, specially designed for teaching the Tatar language to children of Finnish Tatars, published in 1935 at the initiative of the Center for the creation of textbooks organized by the Muslim community in Finland and with the support of Tatar philanthropists, is treated by the authors as scientific subject. The textbook, written in Arabic, almost without any special transformations, had been widely used in Tatar Finnish schools until the 1950s, until the Finnish Tatars switched to Latin script based on Finnish writing. Particular attention is paid to the circumstances of the appearance and history of the origin of the school primer, its links with the Tatar Jadid national community. The authors also acknowledge the significant contribution of Uku Kitaby to the preservation of the ethno-cultural and linguistic identity of the Finnish Tatars.

Keywords: cultural history, school, school primers, cultural heritage, the Tatars of the Diaspora, Finland, the 1930s.

1 Introduction

The modern Tatar Finnish diaspora largely refers to the “old” part of the Russian foreign countries, for it has been formed as a result of migration flows of the second half of the 19th century. However, for the first time the Tatars settled down in Northern Europe even earlier – according to diverse sources, in 1808–1812, upon Finland’s joining the Russian Empire as a result of the Russian-Swedish war of 1808-1809, the so-called service class Tatars were sent to the garrisons of the Russian army accommodated here mainly for the construction of military fortresses on the Aland Islands and near Helsinki (Belyaev, 2017). Upon completion, almost all of them returned to Russia. Now their staying is evidenced only by the Islamic cemetery in Bomarsund – a fortress laid down by the Russian army in 1832 on the island of Aland (Senyutkina & Mukhetdinov, 2007).

The ancestors of today’s Tatars came to Finland from the villages of the Sergach district of the Nizhny Novgorod province, where they lived in the 13th – 15th centuries when these lands became part of the Golden Horde, in the mid 70’s of the 19th century. They were mainly merchants who dealt in furs, leather, fabrics and clothing. Initially, they sold their goods in St. Petersburg, and then in Finnish Vyborg and Terioki, gradually expanding into other regions of Finland. At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries a small Tatar community began to organize here (Senyutkina & Mukhetdinov, 2007). At first, Tatar merchants did not break the connection with their homeland, which was due in many respects to the widely practiced system of seasonal work. By the beginning of spring work in the fields, they usually returned home, taking their staying in Finland for temporary, seasonal (Belyaev, 2017). The situation radically changed after the revolution of 1917 and the end of the civil war in Russia (Usmanova, 2019), when, thanks to the 1922 introduction of the system of free travel to Finland, the largest number of Tatars in the history of Tatar emigration had left for the country: according to the data from the Archive of the community of Muslims in Finland their number was 231 people in 1926, and 216 of them moved in the country in 1924. The main centers of resettlement of the Tatars were the cities of Helsinki, Tampere, Terioki and Turku (Belyaev, 2017).

One of the most important tasks that faced the Tatar emigration in Finland in the 1920s and beyond was the task of preserving their own cultural and linguistic identity. “Living away from

Turkic-Muslim countries, among highly cultured peoples, as a small colony, we had to live together, being aroused over a constant threat of extinction,” said Zuhur Tahir, the head of the Islamic Society of Finland in 1921–1961 at a national evening in Tampere. An oversized role in solving this difficult problem was played by vernacular education (Akhmetkarimov, 2019), which was closely connected with the problem of supplying Tatar students with the necessary educational literature, including books for reading in elementary school.

2 Methods

Despite the fact that the history of the Tatar Finnish diaspora has recently attracted an increasingly greater attention of the scholars (Belyaev, 2017; Belyaev et al., 2016; Gimadieva, 2008), the history of Tatar national education in Finland, especially the subject of the course books used to teach Finnish Tatars to their native language and in their native language, has been given insufficient study so far: from advanced works we can single out only the dissertation by M. M. Mahmutova (2005). Meanwhile, the study of this particular aspect allows us to show the uniqueness of the historical experience of the Tatar Finnish diaspora in the preservation of the traditional cultural values of the Tatar people.

This article is dedicated to only one textbook, specially designed for the children of Finnish Tatars – a book for reading *Uku Kitaby*, published in 1935. Following on from the task of a monographic description of this book, we methodologically focused on the historical-genetic approach applied in reconstructing the history of writing and provenance of the textbook, the textological and interpretative approaches used in the analysis of the structure, content and language of the texts, and the sociocultural approach required to identify the interplay between text and context. In addressing the latter issue, the collections – bulletins *Махалла хабәрләре (News of the Community)* of the press organ of the Islamic Society in Finland, issued in Helsinki in Tatar in 1949–1963, and containing important information on the history of the national communities of the Finnish Tatars were useful. We have developed and expounded the methodology of the monographic study of Tatar school primers in the 1930s (on the example of Soviet Tatar primers) in a number of previous publications (Salnikova & Galiullina, 2016; Salnikova & Galiullina, 2017).

3 Results and Discussion

For the first time, the question concerning the establishment of ethnic schools for Finnish Tatars was in contemplation in 1925 – from when the Finnish Muslim community gained official status as an independent national religious organization – the Finnish Islamic Association (“Финляндия жәмгыя исламия”) (in accordance with the Law on Freedom of Religion adopted in 1923 after Finland gained independence). The Board of Trustees for the establishment of the school was registered on November 8, 1930, and the very Turkic People’s School (“Төрөк халык мәктәбе”) was opened in Helsinki on September 1, 1948 (Belyaev, 2017). In addition, since 1918 – in Terioki, from the beginning of the 1920s – in the village Järvenpää, and subsequently in Abo, Wilmanstrand, Vyborg, Kotka, Kuopio, Raumo, Tammerfors, Tampere, Helsinki, Hyvinkää and other settlements where the Tatar population lived, national religious courses for children and adolescents affiliated with the parishes had been organized. One of the leading schools was the Türkic (Tatar) school of native language having been operative in Tampere since 1923 (Haniff, 2005). The foundation of such schools and courses required the availability of textbooks and applied educational material.

In the 1930s under the Muslim community of Finland, the Office for the compilation of textbooks (*Дәрәсләкләр хәзерләү хяяте*) supported by the Finno-Türkic publishing society (*Финляндия*

төрөк нәширият җәмгыяте) was organized (Gimadieva, 2008). Thanks to the activities of this society with the support of Tatar patrons in the second half of the 1930s a number of textbooks were published in Arabic script, and among them – a book for reading *Uku Kitaby* (1935).

The book begins with the words “Бисмилләһир-рахмәнир-рахим”, which are sacred to every Muslim, followed by the text of *Дога* (*Prayer*), “Oh, the Almighty, lift up the covers. Let light shine before my eyes. Show me a path of bright. May happiness be revealed to me in the future. Oh Tengri, I will take this way. I will have tried until I find a ray of happiness. Tengri, I will have tried until a happy daylight in the country”. To the happiness of which country was this prayer given? To the children born in a foreign land, Finland was “their” country.

However, the textbook also contained a text about the historical homeland – *Ватаныбыз* (*Our Homeland*), “The Idel – Ural Region is one of the regions (мәмлөкәт) of the Turkic world. This is our homeland because our parents were born and raised there. Grandparents also lived there. We love our homeland with all our hearts. Everyone loves their homeland. Even the Eskimos love their cold and snowy homeland. They, unlike us, do not have forests, songbirds, fragrant flowers in meadows and streams with clear water. But, despite this, they love their homeland and are ready to render their lives for it. Our homeland has clean air, tasty water, and fertile soil. In our homeland there are many wide steppes, forests, high mountains and rivers. We love our homeland of paradise with all our hearts. We are ready to give all our strength, wealth, lives for the freedom and happiness of our people”.

At the same time, the Turkish influence is clearly in evidence in the textbook, primarily in the texts propagating the ideas of pan-Turkism. The socio-political movement that arose at the end of the 19th century in Turkey, brought, as everybody knows, the ethnic and cultural unity of the Turkic peoples to the fore. The Tatar intelligentsia interpreted the ideas of pan-Turkism more broadly and believed that it should be expressed in the development of national culture, national identity, in the study of the culture of related Turkic peoples. On the one hand, the textbook had the poems by prominent Turkish pan-Turkic poets of the late 19th – early 20th centuries, Tefvik Fikret *Төрөк бөз, кардаш бөз* (*We are the Türks, we are Congeners*) and Zia Gökalp *Төрөкмен* (*I am a Türk*), as well as the text explaining the origin of a single “tribe of Türks” who sprang from the children of the son of prophet Noah, Japheth and divided into Tatars, Bashkirs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks only in length of time. On the other hand, the book includes many poems by Gabdulla Tukai, Tatar fables. A special place is held by the famous Tukai’s poem *Туган тел* (*Native Language*) – essentially a hymn to the native Tatar language.

The term “the Tatar language” in the textbook is replaced by the term “the Turkic language”. This term was used in most educational publications of Kazan Tatars in the late 19th – early 20th centuries, although these very textbooks did not directly propagate the ideas of pan-Turkism.

The depiction of the daily routine of the Tatars reproduce not so much the lifestyle of the Tatar diaspora in Finland as ordinary patterns of the Tatar pre-revolutionary Russian village. Here, for example, is the text *Кичке эшәр* (*Evening work*), “In the evening we all gather at home. when darkness falls, the sister turns a hanging lamp. Home becomes bright and comfortable. Then we all begin to saki and have tea. After tea, grandfather goes to bed on the stove. The rest stick to their business. My sister is spinning, mom is doing housework. Father is twisting the rope, brother is reading the newspaper. And the grandmother is knitting socks and telling various interesting tales. We are listening to them with a great relish”. The author was likely to write the story from his childhood memories.

Neither Russia nor the USSR are mentioned in the textbook. It is known that the Finnish Tatars in the 1920s practically shrank from discussions in Soviet Russia on nation structuring and

nation system, and in the 1930s the borders of the old homeland were virtually closed to them. However, the book comprehended some of the most famous classic works of Russian literature for children, in particular, the story by L.N. Tolstoy *The Old Man and His Grandson*.

According to the tradition generally accepted for Tatar textbooks, *Uku Kitaby* paid great attention to the ethical and religious upbringing of children and contained a number of protreptic and insightful texts written by Islamic canons. The text *Тәрбияле бала* (*Well Bred Child*) is devoted to cleanliness and hygiene as one of the important principles of Islamic education, “Bahia is a very well-mannered child. Therefore, he seems to be good. Before eating, he thoroughly washes his hands, rinses his mouth. He takes a seat specially reserved for him. He eats what he is given. He never asks his mother: “give me this, give me that.” He nibbles, chews thoroughly, never stains a napkin. After eating, he reads a prayer, thanks his parents, and asks the Almighty for many long years of life for them. Then he rinses his mouth and washes his hands with soap. After a meal, he does homework or, with his parents’ permission, goes to play in the yard or goes out with his friends”. This topic was delved into not only with edifying but even humorous slant. So, the text *Кем зәенле?* (*Who is to Blame?*) tells, “The children played in the meadow and sweated profusely. Gali was very thirsty. He drank water from a stream and sat down to rest under a tree. Suddenly he felt a sensible chill. He was ill for two weeks. When he began to recover, he told his mother, “If I knew that this water was poisonous, I would not drink it!” Mother replied, “Water is not to blame for your illness. You have only yourself to blame. Who drinks cold water streaming with perspiration?”.

The textbook contains many useful texts on the value of education, books and schools, “Biktimir and Baku moved up to their second grade. They already know how to read and write. Father bought them interesting stories to read. First, they looked through all the pictures with animals, birds, flowers in the book, and then began to read. Biktimir and Baku liked the story about the fox mostly”. Why do we go to school?” – this is exactly the theme of the composition that the teacher gives to his pupils. Lazy Timer replies, “We go to school because we are afraid of our parents.” Hakim writes, “We go to school to deserve the praise from our teacher and play with the boys.” And only Galima answers, “We go to school to receive new knowledge. When I grow up, this knowledge will be useful to me.” The teacher praised her for such an answer. The reading book included the rules of conduct laid down for Muslim children – “Төрөк балаларының әдәпләре”, “Türk always keeps his word. Türk always and everywhere acquires himself like a man. Türk should remain human in any situation and help others. Türk is a friend of everybody and always helps others.” These covenants were much reminiscent of scout.

Separate texts were devoted to Muslim traditions, holidays and ceremonies. Thus, the text *Җомга көн* (*Friday*) explains the meaning of Friday and Friday prayers for Muslims, “Friday for Muslims is an important holiday. On this day, Muslims who live in cities and villages stop working and begin celebrating. Their servants also take a rest. On Thursday, everyone goes to the bath house. The next day they put on their best clothes and go to the mosque at dinnertime for Sabbatical namaz. After the mosque, having lunch, they go to visit their relatives, friends or to visit their ancestors in the graveyard, where they read prayers. Every Muslim who worships his religion respects Friday. On this day, he/she tries not to say bad words and spend it in a fun and friendly atmosphere”. However, a special religious part, characteristic of the pre-revolutionary Tatar educational literature, was absent in the book.

4 Summary

The first generation of Tatar immigrants in Finland, when teaching children of the Tatar language, used the literature that they brought back from Russia. Stable propagation of innovation schools among the Tatars of Russia at the beginning of the 20th

century suggests with a high degree of obviousness that among the books brought back there could be Jadid textbooks, as well as Tatar secular literature, published in Kazan, the largest center of Muslim book printing in Russia in the late 19th – early 20th centuries.

The analysis of the content of one of the first special textbooks for children of the Tatar Finnish diaspora *Uku Kitaby*, published in 1935, confirms its close resemblance to the pre-revolutionary Tatar textbooks, which probably continued to be widely used as the basis for creating a new generation of textbooks for the Finnish Tatars. One can hardly agree with the assertion of some scholars that “Turkish textbooks and literature have been taken” as the basis for many of the textbooks for the Finnish Tatar diaspora of the 1930s (Gimadieva, 2008). In the preface to the book, its authors express their concern about the national-cultural upbringing of Tatar children who study in Finnish schools, and about the fact that the “new script” adopted in Turkey are used in ethnic religious courses under the mahalla. According to the compilers of the textbook, this is unacceptable, since it leads to the loss of the native language: textbooks should be written only in the Kazan vernacular. Only under such a condition *Uku Kitaby* could become an important tool for gaining and preserving national identity within the framework of the space of another nation and another culture. This textbook was widely used in Tatar Finnish schools until the 1950s, until the Finnish Tatars switched to Latin script based on Finnish writing.

5 Conclusions

Tatar emigrants in Finland in the 1930s managed to retain the best that was laid down by the Tatar Jadids in the late 19th – early 20th centuries, which contributed to the preservation of their native language, and national culture, and Islam. *Uku Kitaby* was not a simple copy of pre-revolutionary Tatar and especially Turkish textbooks, although Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s penchant for the then strong independent Turkey cannot be ignored. Probably, it was a rather successful synthesis of Tatar pre-revolutionary educational traditions, enriched by the European cultural experience of the country of residence, close cultural contacts with the Tatar diasporas of other countries, primarily Turkish, and the achievements of Russian pre-revolutionary pedagogical thought, not directly declared, but taken into account.

Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

Literature:

1. Akhmetkarimov, B. G.: Common sense is not so common: integration and perceptions of ‘traditional Islam’ in Russia’s Volga-Ural region. *Contemporary Islam*, 2019. 1-24.
2. Belyaev, R.: *The Tatar Diaspora in Finland: Issues of Integration and Preservation of Identity*. 2017. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Helsinki.
3. Belyaev, R. F., Zaripov, I. A., & Safarov, M. A.: CONTACTS OF TATAR RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF FINLAND AND THE USSR IN THE 1920s-1980s. 2(7), 99–108.
4. Gimadieva, G. I.: Islamic Community of Finland: Organization, Structure and Activities, *Kazan State University Transactions. Humanities*, 150(8), 2008. 189–192.
5. Haniff, G. M.: Muazzez Baibulat: The Tampere Islamic Congregation: The Roots and History. *JOURNAL OF MUSLIM MINORITY AFFAIRS*, 25(3), 2005. 464.
6. Makhmutova, M. M.: Development of Pedagogical Culture of the Tatars of Finland in the Context of Community of Sub-Ethnos of the Tatars of the Volga Region, 2005. Thesis for Cand. of Sc. Education, Kazan, KSPU.
7. Salnikova, A., & Galiullina, D.: The revolution and the national primer: the Tatar «Alifba» of the 1920s-early 1930s. *History of Education & Children's Literature*, 2016. 11(1).
8. Salnikova, A., & Galiullina, D.: Enzhe is writing ‘Lenin, Nail is writing ‘Stalin’’: The Tatar primer alifba in the 1930s–early 1950s. *Ab imperio*, (2), 2017. 55-92.
9. Senyutkina, O. N., & Mukhetdinov, D. V.: The Nizhny Novgorod Origin of Mishar Tatar Community in Finland, D. V. Mukhetdinov (ed.), *Islam in Nizhny Novgorod: Encyclopedia, N. Novgorod, Medicine*, 2007. 132–134.
10. Usmanova, D.: Transformation of Islamic Institutions in Revolutionary Russia: The Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly and the Muslim Clergy of the Volga-Ural Region in 1917—early 1918. *Gosudarstvo, Religii, TSerkov v Rossii i za Rubezhom*, 37(1-2), 2019. 434.

Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AB