

**NININS 2020****International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****TURKIC-MUSLIM PEOPLES IN THE VOLGA-URAL REGION  
AUTHORITIES IN 1917**

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**Abstract**

In 1917, the Russian Empire collapsed, and different ethnic and religious groups began their fight for the political rights. Muslims were underrepresented in state authorities at various levels. The bourgeois reforms of Alexander II enabled Muslims to participate in the activities of representative bodies at the level of provinces (gubernias), uezds, and cities (nobility assemblies, Zemstvos, and City Dumas). Muslims maintained their schools (madrassas and maktabas) and charitable institutions at their own expense. At the beginning of the twentieth century the ideas of national and cultural revival and the need to defend their rights, the Jadid movement, and the revolution of 1905–1907 pushed Muslims to form the all-Imperial party "Ittifaq-al-muslimin". Newspapers in the national language began to be published. The peak of the political participation of Russian Muslims during this period was the activity of the Muslim faction of the State Duma of the Russian Empire, whose members consistently fought for the political and cultural rights of Muslim peoples. The February revolution, proclaiming freedom and equality for all Russian citizens, created unprecedented opportunities for the inclusion of the Muslim population in social and political processes. The most active was the Tatar and Bashkir social movement in the Volga-Ural region. The agenda of the national organizations of the Muslim peoples of the Volga-Ural region in 1917 largely coincided with the agenda of Russian public organizations. This included the activities of national elite groups, participation in local self-government bodies, elections to local Soviets, local self-government bodies, and the Constituent Assembly.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Muslims, national-cultural autonomy, national question



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## 1. Introduction

Reconstruction of the processes of Muslims in the Volga-Ural region involvement in the social and political life of the state in 1917 is possible while taking into account the critical approach to the sources available to the researcher.

Since the gendarmes' offices no longer analyzed the social movement in 1917, and the archives of the organizations have not been preserved, the main source is the press, which contains detailed reports on various congresses and demonstrations in which Muslims participated. We also use Tatar-language newspapers such as "Yoldiz" and "Koyash" (Kazan), "Irek" and "Tormysh" (Ufa).

Published sources are of great importance. Data on the all-Russian movement of Russian Muslims was first given in the manuscript of Teregulov (1926) "Essays of the revolution and the social movement of Muslims in Russia". The development of the social movement of Muslims in the Kazan province is partially affected in the work of Grachev (1926) "Kazan October: Chronicle of the revolution of 1917". Documents on social movement in the Kazan and Ufa provinces are also published in the collections "Formation of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic: a collection of documents and materials" (Formation of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, 1959) and "Formation of the Tatar ASSR" (Formation of the Tatar ASSR, 1963), "October in Bashkiria" (October in Bashkiria, 1979).

In the Soviet historiographical tradition of the 1950s and 1960s, the events of the summer and autumn of 1917 were considered as a transition period to the October revolution (Aminev, 1966; Mukharyamov, 1958) exclusively from the standpoint of the prevailing Marxist-formational methodology. A detailed analysis of the national movement was given in the works of Tagirov (1977a; 1977b) and Yuldashbayev (1984).

In the post-Soviet period, Khabutdinov studied the movement of Muslim peoples of the Volga-Ural region in 1917 in the Kazan and Ufa provinces (Khabutdinov, 2001). The corresponding sections of the 7th volume of "The history of the Tatars since ancient times" (The history of the Tatars since ancient times, 2017) are also devoted to this subject.

On a national scale (but without knowledge of national languages), social movements of Russian Muslims are analyzed by Ischakov (2003). Documents on the social movement of Muslims of the peoples of the Volga-Ural region in 1917 are collected in the 1st volume of "100th anniversary of the formation of the Tatar ASSR" (100th anniversary of the formation of the Tatar ASSR, 2017), for the Ufa province in the collection "Bashkiria in 1917" (Bashkiria in 1917; 2017). In foreign historiography, the topic of the relationship between Tatar and Bashkir social movements was devoted to the thesis of Schafer's "Building nations and building states: the Tatar-Bashkir question in revolutionary Russia: 1917–1920" (Schafer, 1995).

## 2. Problem Statement

The participants of public movement of Russian Muslims in the Volga-Ural region were included in the all-Russian public-political structures at all levels immediately after the victory of the February revolution of 1917.

The Muslim Tatar public figures of the region had already had experience of participation in the all-Russian public organizations (parties, rural and urban self-government, the State Duma of Russian Empire in four convocations), which significantly distinguished them from non-Russian movements on fringes of Empire and other non-Russian peoples of the Volga-Ural region.

Another feature was the hereditary nature of social activity. For example, the Alkins (Kazan) and the Akhtyamovs (Ufa) families, where the fathers (Said-Giray Alkin and Absugud Akhtyamov) were deputies of the First State Duma and activists of the cadet party Bureau in their provinces during the revolution of 1905–1907, and their sons were prominent (Ilyas and Dzhigangir Alkin and Ibrahim and Ibniamin Akhtyamov) public figures after the February revolution of 1917.

In 1917–1918, within the framework of the bourgeois-national movement, three ministries were created within Milli Idare, i.e., the government of the national-cultural autonomy, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie (Maliya Nazarat), the clergy (Diniya Nazarat) and the teachers (Magarifi Nazaraty). Tatars and Bashkirs also took part in the local Soviets activities and in the Bolshevik movement.

We can outline three main groups among the Tatar political elite, depending on age, social origin and ideological views.

1. Older generation, usually over 50 years of age:

a) Clergy who made up the leadership of Diniya Nazarat

b) Bourgeoisie that made up the leadership of Maliya Nazarat

c) Murzas (nobility) and secular intelligentsia of the pre-national period. A group that didn't play a big role.

2. Middle generation: 30–50 years (mostly 35–40 years) – "Ismail Gasprinsky's generation". They come from families of the national elite, especially the clergy. They formed the backbone of the Muslim bureaus and Committees in March 1917, from July of the "Milli Idare", local "Milli Shuro". In terms of political orientation, they were liberals and moderate socialists.

3. Younger generation: 20–30 years old (mostly 20–25) – "generation of the post-revolutionary era". They generated mostly from middle-class families and represented teachers educated in Jadid madrassas, as well as secular intellectuals who received exclusively Russian-language education. In terms of political orientation, they were moderate and left-wing socialists.

a) Radical secular intelligentsia (Ufa left social-revolutionaries (SRs) – Galimjan Ibragimov group in Ufa and Muslim Socialist Committee in Kazan).

b) Students and military (left wing of Kharbi Shuro and Bolsheviks) (Khabutdinov, 2001)

### **3. Research Questions**

The research work was aimed at solving three interrelated problems. First, it is to determine the methods and forms of participation of Muslims in the Volga-Ural region in national and regional, national-oriented political organizations and government bodies in 1917. Second, to identify historical factors that contributed to the inclusion of Tatars and Bashkirs in these structures. The third task is to identify personalities and analyze real actions in defense of the ethno-confessional interests of these individuals in public authorities, public organizations and political movements.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the article is to identify the forms of social movement of Russian Muslims in 1917 (on the example of the Kazan and Ufa provinces). Since the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region were the most active group in the public life of the Russian Empire in the late XIX – early XX centuries they consistently defended their rights. The February revolution allowed the Tatars and Bashkirs to make the most of their accumulated experience and reach the regional and national levels at once with several options for the state and political development of Muslims within the framework of Russian statehood. In this article, we will try to find out to what extent they were able to implement these projects in practical political activity.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The methodological basis of the study was a systematic approach combined with the principle of historicism. The general scientific system approach assumes the use of socio-historical, general scientific and interdisciplinary methods: problem-chronological, comparative-historical, retrospective, etc. for the transmission and analysis of historical material. The principle of historicism in this article assumes consideration of forms and methods of participation of the Muslim peoples of the Volga-Ural region representatives in the work of representative authorities of different levels and directions in 1917 while taking into account specific historical facts.

The study of the activity of Tatars and Bashkirs in the social and political movements of Russia and the Volga-Ural region, the historical reasons and factors that led to the problem of participation of Russian Muslims in government bodies, was made on the principle of actualization and was based on an essential and meaningful analysis of the forms and methods of organization and evolution of the social movement of Russia in 1917.

A systematic approach to the problem and a systematic analysis of the material made it possible to identify the scientific problem, to highlight as much as possible the understanding of political processes in the Volga-Ural region in 1917, taking into account the multi-ethnic nature of the region, the problems of interaction of Russian political elites after the February revolution. The methods system-structural and problem-historical were used in order to obtain representative information from published and unpublished sources.

#### **6. Findings**

Immediately after the February revolution of 1917, organizations known as Public security Committees (or Public organizations Committees) were formed in the provincial centers. These bodies were formed in the provinces before the Soviets of workers 'and soldiers' deputies and the appointment of Commissars of the Provisional government. On March 3, the Public organizations Committee was formed in Ufa on the basis of representation from all organized forces of the province, including Zemstvos, City Dumas, peasant cooperatives, and workers ' organizations. Social Democrat attorney Ibrahim Akhtyamov (Bashkiria in 1917; 2017) was elected as the Chairman of the Committee. The Commission of the Public

security Committee of the Kazan province included merchant Valiulla Ibragimov and teacher Akhmetzhan Mustafin, Iskhak Khansuvarov and Latyf Mustafin as representatives from the Tatars (Aynutdinova, 2006).

In Ufa, an organization focused on the inclusion of Muslims into the public activity, was also created. On March 10, 1917, the Ufa Committee on the dissemination of civic consciousness among Muslims was created with Social Democrat, Menshevik Gumer Teregulov as Chairman and left SR Galimdzhan Ibragimov as Vice-Chairman. The Committee organized special meetings for Muslims, gave lectures, hold a meeting for soldiers, delegated 5 representatives to the Public organizations Committee, elected a Committee of students headed by Ginayatulla Teregulov, and created a Commission to maintain order at meetings (Tormysh, 1917).

The process of forming national bodies was also underway in Kazan. On March 12, 1917, the leadership of the Kazan Muslim Committee was formed. The Committee was chaired by right SR Fouad Tuktarov, with Vice – Chairmans Gabdulla Apani and Validjan Tanachev and Secretaries – Amin Mustafin and Sultan-Ahmet Khabashi. Amina Muhitdinova (from teachers), Ilyas Alkyne (from the military), Valiulla Ibragimov (from the bourgeoisie), Vahid Sait (from the military) and Rahimjan Daminov (from Society of teachers), Kashaf Tarjumani and Akhmetzhan Mustafa (from the clergy) became its members. These groups: the military, the bourgeoisie, teachers, and clergy will soon hold their congresses and create corporate bodies, which corresponds to the all-Russian trends. The Committee elected members to the Executive Committee of the Kazan Soviet (Koyash, 1917).

On March 8, 1917, the Provisional government appointed landowner Molostvov as the Kazan provincial Commissar. On March 10, the city police headed by M. Bukhov started functioning. His deputies were ensigns Alkin and Golanov (Grachev, 1926).

On March 12, 1917, a meeting was held in Belebey, Ufa province, where the Muslim Bureau was elected. It included Akhun Jamaletdin Khuramshin (deputy of the First State Duma), instructor of the Belebey small credit Bureau SR Gumer Enikeev, head of the Russian class, teacher Khayretdin Sakaev, representative of the bourgeoisie Iskhak Vahidov, and teacher Gasim Kasimov. Among other members we can note representative of Belebey Zemstvo Mirvali Nagaev (Tormysh, 1917). The Muslim Committee introduced representatives to the Civil Committee of Belebey (Akhun Jamaletdin Khuramshin), to the Committee of public organizations (teacher Mohammed Chanyshiev), to the Union of teachers (teacher Fatih Saifi) (Tormysh, 1917). In the Sterlitamak uezd in the Committee of public organizations since its creation on March 6, 1917, the Union of Muslim workers was given 8 seats and the Muslim Bureau 10 seats (Bashkiria in 1917; 2017).

In regions with a significant Muslim population, immediately after February revolution of 1917, Muslim military units began to be created. The leader of the "Tatar uchagi" circle, Ilyas Alkin, his brother Jigangir Alkin, and later members of the circle, Sultanbek Mamliiev and Usman Tokumbetov, initiated the unification of Muslim warriors and the creation of Kharbi Shuro (the Military Council). On March 8, 1917, delegates from military units were sent to the Kazan Muslim Committee. (Yoldiz, 1917). On April 30, a meeting of Muslim warriors began in Moscow, where the Interim Central Council of Kharbi Shuro was formed under the leadership of Ilyas Alkin. (Koyash, 1917). On May 24, 1917, at a soldier's meeting in Ufa, the Chairman of the Ufa Muslim Military Committee, ensign Ibragimov, made a report on the first

all- Russian Muslim Congress and meeting of Muslim warriors. Mullahs were appointed to the garrison and the Bureau of Ufa Muslim Military Council (Kharbi Shuro) was formed under the leadership of Galimjan Aminov.

17 Muslims were elected to the Ufa City Duma in July. The victory was won by a single list of socialists, which included eight Muslims, including Galimjan Ibrahimovic, Sharif Sunchaley, Abruy Saifi and Ibrahim Akhtyamov. The remaining 9 Muslim deputies represented the list of Milli Shuro (the National Council), which was headed by Gumer Teregulov. The Bashkir list was not put up for elections to the City Duma. The reason for this can be understood by the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Ufa. Here, the list of provincial Milli Shuro received 1,279 votes (19 from soldiers), and the list of Bashkir Shuro received 251 votes (214 from soldiers) (Irek, 1917).

On August 11–12, 1917, all national organizations of Kazan participated in a single list in the elections to the newly formed Kazan Provincial Milli Shuro. The list includes 4 people from the Kazan Muslim Committee; 2 from the Kharbi Shuro, 3 from the Muslim Socialist Committee, 1 from the Clergy Bureau, 1 from the clerks, 3 from Society of teachers, 1 women, 1 from Bureau of the Muslim workers of Yagodnaya Sloboda, 1 from the Admiralty workers ' organizations, 1 from Muslim trade unions. At the same time, representatives of the Tatar big bourgeoisie were absent from the list. The proletariat was represented only by organizations of workers ' enterprises that had non-Tatar owners (Khabutdinov, 2001).

After the defeat of the Kornilov revolt and the beginning of the Bolshevization of the Soviets, a split occurs between the centrist and left-wing socialist movement, accompanied by the radicalization of the lower strata of the population. In the elections to the Kazan city Duma on October 8, 1917, the Bolsheviks won 22 seats, the left SRs – 17; the joint list of the Muslim Socialist Committee, Kharbi Shuro, the Society of clerks and the Society of soldiers received 11 seats. The right-wing cadets and their allies won 32 seats. The centrists received 24 mandates (the socialist bloc represented by the Mensheviks and right – wing social revolutionaries – 16, the Kazan Muslim Committee – 6, and the Poaleitsion – 2). As a result, the Duma was headed by the Menshevik V. I. Ivanov, and I. Alkin was elected as a Vice-Chairman (Grachev, 1926).

On August 15, 1917, in Ufa, the provincial Milli Shuro elected an Executive Committee, which included (the list is compiled by the number of votes received) Gumer Teregulov, Zakir Kadyri, Gulmunira Nugayeva, Farhi Akhmerov, Galimjan Ibragimov, Sagit Salikhov. Teregulov's supporters also won a majority at the provincial level. Ibragimov's group remained part of the provincial Milli Shuro, calling itself the "left faction of Milli Shuro", and thus emphasizing its purely national character (Tormysh, 1917).

In Ufa, the position of the Menshevik Ibragim Akhtyamov was unique. After the February revolution, he headed the local Committee of the social-democratic workers 'party (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks). In June 1917, he even headed the Executive Committee of the Ufa Soviet of workers 'and soldiers' deputies, but on July 5, he resigned because he did not share the position of the majority of the Council in assessing the Petrograd events of July 3, 1917 (Bashkiriya in 1917; 2017).

The highest point of development of political activity in the period between February and October 1917 for the Tatar-Bashkir political elite was the participation in the last democratic elections on a national scale. Muslims of the Volga-Ural region received 16 seats in the Constituent Assembly. The

Kazan province was represented by two deputies from the list No. 4 (Muslim Council or Milli Shuro), Samigulla Salikhov and Najip Khalfin, and two from the list No. 10 (Muslim socialist list), Ilyas Alkin and Mullanur Vakhitov. Ufa province was represented by one Deputy from the list number 4 (Muslim national Council) – Gumer Teregulov and five deputies from the list number 3 (left faction of the Muslim National Council) – Muhetdin Akhmerov, Galimjan Ibragimov, Gizatulla Ilyasov, Sharifjan Sunchaley. Two deputies from the list No. 11 (Muslim Shuro) were elected from the Samara province – Shakir Mukhamedyarov and Fuad Tuktarov. Simbirsk province was represented by one Deputy from the list N 8 (Muslim Shuro) – Ossetian Ahmed Tsalikov. Fatih Nasretudinov was elected from the Tatar-Bashkir group of the Perm province. The Muslim congresses of the Astrakhan and Vyatka provinces were represented by Fatih Usmanov and Sahib-Giray Yambayev, respectively.

In Ufa province, in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the votes of Muslims were distributed as follows: list No. 1 – 16.8 % of votes, No.3-57.6 %, N 11 (Bashkir autonomists) – 25.7 %. The Bashkir list received 50.8 % of the vote in Sterlitamak uezd and 58.2 % in Zlatoust uezd. In other uezds of the province, Tatar lists received a majority. According to the list of Bashkir Federalists, Ahmad-Zaki Validi and Gumer Kuvatov were elected in the Ufa province, and Sharif Manatov and Gabdulakhat Fakhretudinov (son of Diniya Nazarat member Riza Fakhretdin) were elected in the Orenburg province. Thus, the list of Milli Shuro received nine seats, the left socialists took six seats, five of them in the Ufa province, and Kharbi Shuro received one mandate. Milli Shuro's base was seven provinces, and the socialist base was limited to two provinces.

## 7. Conclusion

Therefore, in the activity of national organizations of the Muslim peoples of the Volga-Ural region in 1917( for example, Kazan and Ufa provinces), we see participation in all-Russian bodies (Public security Committees, police, Zemstvos, City Dumas, local Soviets, elections to the Constituent Assembly), and the creation of their own structures (Muslim committees, Milli Shuro, party organizations, Kharbi Shuro, Milli Idare).

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