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PETERSBURG IN FATE OF ZAKI VALIDI TOGAN, SCIENTIST
AND POLITICIAN

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Abstract

In hard history times, the interest in the life and work of outstanding historical figures arouses. Zaki Validi Togan being a Turkic scholar and politician of the early 20th century is one of these figures. The many-sided personality of Z. Validi, the impressive results of his scientific and socio-political work, still attract the attention of researchers. In this article, the authors set a specific task: to find out what role the city of Petersburg (Petrograd), the “cradle of 1917 revolution”, played in the fate of Zaki Validi Togan. According to the authors, the city of St. Petersburg played a key role in the development of Z. Validi’s scientific interests and political views. If long before the revolutionary events, the young researcher Z. Validi collaborated with St. Petersburg orientalist scholars, in particular, with V.V. Bartold being an outstanding scientist, founder of the Russian school of oriental studies, then with his arrival in St. Petersburg in 1916 to work in the bureau of the Muslim parliamentary party of the 4th State Duma, Zaki Validi Togan engaged into the political struggle for the autonomy of the Bashkir people and the federal structure of the new Russia. The article also covers the defense of Petrograd by Bashkir troops from Yudenich’s army in 1919, about the organization of Z. Validi’s delivery of food from Bashkiria to starving Petrograd during the Civil War.

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1. Introduction

Zaki Validi Togan is widely known not only as an outstanding scientist and historian who discovered a special approach in Orientalism but also as a politician who, in 1917–1920, headed the Bashkir national movement and founded the Bashkir Autonomous Republic being the first republic in Soviet Russia. The many-sided personality of Validi and the impressive results of his scientific and socio-political activities are still a major focus of researchers' attention. He made a great contribution to the study of the history and ethnography of the Turkic-speaking peoples of the Volga-Ural and Central Asian regions. However, a special interest in the historical fate of the Bashkir, Kazakh and Nogai peoples is a keynote of all his work. It is no coincidence that during the years of the revolution and the civil war in Russia, he became the ideological leader of the Turkic peoples in their struggle for self-determination, and closely communicated with the leaders of the Alash-Orda movement. There is a scientific reasoning according to which it was Zaki Validi who pioneered federalism in Russia.

2. Problem Statement

The personality phenomenon of Zaki Validi Togan is about being born in the small Bashkir village of Kuzyan, which is now a rural settlement of the Ishimbay region of the Republic of Bashkortostan, he became one of the world famous orientalists, an odious political figure, whose name alone still causes fierce rejection from the side of his ideological opponents. Currently, there are many books and articles devoted to the life and work of Zaki Validi Togan and published in different countries (Salihov, 1994). By the beginning of 2010, about 700 works were published on the territory of Bashkortostan only, and at present, perhaps, there are more than 1,000 of them. Among the most famous biographers of Zaki Validi Togan, are such authors as Yuldashbaev (2000), Kulsharipov (2000) and others. As for the Kazakhstani historians, Ayagan made a great contribution to the study of the relationship between Zaki Validi Togan and the leaders of the Alash Orda. The key role in the development of Validi's scientific interests was played by St. Petersburg with its world-famous scientists, scientific institutions and libraries. At the beginning of the 20th century, a pre-revolutionary atmosphere, which also exerted a direct influence on the socio-political views of Validi prevailed in St. Petersburg. The role of St. Petersburg in the fate of Zaki Validi, and, conversely, the role of Zaki Validi in saving St. Petersburg from Yudenich's army during the Civil War is not sufficiently covered in the historical literature. The authors try to bridge this gap and focus on the St. Petersburg periods of Validi's life.

3. Research Questions

Zaki Validi Togan was lucky to live a bright, eventful life. A part of his biography being the one that was mainly associated with Russia is covered in the book "Memoirs" (Togan, 1994), and the other part, no less informative and instructive, remained uncovered. "My life is not enough for this," he answered when asked about the continuation of the memoirs (Yuldashbaev, 2000). Probably, even a few lives of researchers will not be enough to evaluate and comprehend what this amazing person managed to create and leave to descendants, primarily, to his people.

Meanwhile, the St. Petersburg period of his life, during which he plunged into the St. Petersburg academic environment and the pre-revolutionary atmosphere of the capital city, is an integral part of Validi's fate, in his formation as a scientist and public and political figure.

Zaki Validi was born on December 10, 1890 in the village of Kuzyan, which belonged to two Bashkir clans, Sukly-Kaila and Ungut. The aul was located on the slope of the Southern Urals, surrounded by mountains and forests on one side, and by a steppe on the other side. The ancestors of Validi came from the Sukly-Kaila clan – Suklykai, revered in these parts. His parents were educated people. His father Akhmetshah was an imam, kept a madrasah, knew Arabic, Persian, Islamic theology well, and managed to instill an interest in knowledge in his son. In his memoirs, Validi describes his childhood years in his native village, the people, the nature of his native land, and the legends he heard from the aksakals.

In 1908 Validi completed his studies at the local madrasah, and in 1909 the one at the Kasimiya madrasah in Kazan. It was a higher educational institution, where he started teaching Turkic history, the history of Turkic and Arabic literature. In Kazan, he enthusiastically studied Eastern history and philosophy, general and Russian philology, worked on the book “History of the Turkic-Tatars” published in 1912 and immediately became the focus of attention of the country's leading orientalists.

During the Kazan period of his life, Validi established close scientific ties with St. Petersburg, where Vasily Vladimirovich Bartold (1869–1930) being the famous academician, orientalist, an expert on the history of Central and Central Asia, lived. There was a lively correspondence between the academician and the talented Bashkir scientist. After the successful expedition of Validi to Fergana (1913), organized by Kazan University, the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences became interested in its results. Apparently, this period includes his first visit to St. Petersburg, where Validi meets with Bartold, gets acquainted with other scientists-orientalists (Bergdolt, 1981). This acquaintance of two outstanding scientists develops into a strong friendship, to which they abided throughout their lives.

By referral of Bartold in 1914, the Academy of Sciences sent Validi to Bukhara. The Bukhara expedition was also successful. Bartold highly appreciated its results. In his note sent to the leadership of the Academy of Sciences, he wrote: “... In the collection of archaeographic and ethnographic materials on site, the benefits of local scientists, enjoying the full confidence of the population, are obvious, and this is irrefutably proven by the expedition of Validi” (Yuldashbaev, 2000). Validi managed to collect the most valuable collection of ancient manuscripts. Among them, in particular, was the Koran, translated into the common Turkic language back in the 10th century. The materials of the Bukhara expedition of Validi made up the golden fund of the oriental manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences called “Collection of Validi”. In the personal archival fund of Academician Bartold there was a photograph of the young Z. Validi and the letters he wrote to Bartold in 1914–1915.

Zaki Validi Togan's political activities began in autumn of 1916, when he was sent to St. Petersburg as a representative of the Muslims of the Ufa province in the Duma (Yuldashbaev, 2000). It was the other side of Validi's life.

The parliamentary party of Russian Muslims, which included deputies from the Bashkirs, was formed during the period of the State Duma of the 1st session (April–July 1906) and existed for 10 years until the dissolution of the State Duma of the 4th session by the Provisional Government in October 1917.

The most active in protecting the interests of their voters were the Muslim deputies of the State Duma of the 4th session. In March 1916, a bureau was formed under the Muslim party. The need to prepare a number of important bills prompted the members of the bureau to ask the editorial offices of Muslim newspapers to send employees who knew the situation on the ground to St. Petersburg. Maksudov came from Tatarstan, Bukeikhanov – from Kazakhstan, and Validi – from Bashkortostan to work in the bureau.

By that time Validi had worked in Ufa, knew the situation in the Ufa and Orenburg provinces. Working in the bureau under the Muslim party of the State Duma enabled him to be on the spot of the political life of both St. Petersburg and the entire country. The fall of the tsarist regime and the February Revolution of 1917 were greeted by him with enthusiasm. “Tears covered my eyes,” Zaki Validi would write later in his memoirs (Togan, 1994).

After the February Revolution, in the forefront of an all-democratic upswing in Russia, the general Muslim movement gained impetus under the leadership of the Muslim party of the State Duma. In March, preparations for the First All-Russian Muslim Congress, which was to be held from 1st to 11th May, 1917 in Moscow, began.

Validi was one of the brightest representatives of Ufa Muslims in the bureau of the Muslim party of the State Duma. He was instructed to travel to Turkestan and organize the election of delegates to the All-Russian Muslim Congress. On March 28, he left for Tashkent via Orenburg. In Orenburg, he organized the work of nominating delegates from the Bashkir people (Kulsharipov, 2000). Obviously, the first contacts of Validi with representatives of the Alash-Orda movement occurred in this time. Subsequently, in 1920–1921, after the establishment of Soviet power in the Volga region and Bashkiria, the center of the all-Turkic national liberation movement transferred to Central Asia, near Bukhara, where the Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkmen intelligentsia rallied around Validi (Bukanova, 2010).

At the All-Russian Congress of Muslims, the question of the internal state structure of Russia was one of the key issues on the agenda. Zaki Validi, who, along with other delegates from the Caucasus, Turkestan and Kazakhstan, believed that Russia had to be a federation based on national autonomies, also covered this issue. Tatar Muslims adhered to a different viewpoint, which implied the idea of national and cultural autonomy as part of a unitary state. Opinions were divided. Having recognized a general need to proclaim the territorial autonomy of the Caucasus and Turkestan, the congress disapproved the self-determination of the Bashkir people.

Such a decision of the All-Russian Muslim Congress could not satisfy the Bashkirs, who in the middle of the 16th century became part of Russia with their vast ethnic territory and on the condition that they would retain their allodial rights. The issue of land and the protection of land rights has been the most acute task throughout the history of the people. It was decided to hold a separate Bashkir congress. The first Bashkir congress was convened on July 20–27, 1917 in Orenburg, where the Central Shuro (council) was established and its composition was determined. The Central Shuro had the task to lead the struggle of the Bashkir people for autonomy.

On August 25–29, 1917, the Second Bashkir Congress, which made appeal to a joint struggle for the federal structure of the new Russia and the autonomy of “brothers on belief and blood” from the Crimea, the Caucasus, Turkestan, Kazakhs, Turkmens and others was held in Ufa (Yuldashbaev, 2002).

The collapse of the Provisional Government in Petrograd and Bolsheviks' accession to power were perceived by Zaki Validi's associates with caution. Although the slogan of the self-determination of nations, adopted by the ideologists of the Bolshevik Party and the adoption of the "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia", on November 2, 1917 contributed to national liberation movements activization on the national outskirts of Russia, there was no clear program of state structure in the post-imperial space. The Bashkir Central Shuro understood that it was impossible to resolve the issue of "federalization from above" by convening the Constituent Assembly amid the outbreak of civil confrontation. Therefore, in Farman (order) No. 1 of the Central Shuro of November 11, 1917, it was stated that the only way of Bashkiria salvation is the seizure of power by the Bashkir, the people's care for themselves, the protection of their lives, blood, and their souls by their own effort (Yuldashbaev, 2002).

On November 15, 1917, Farman No. 2, which actually proclaimed the creation of an autonomous Bashkurdistan, was published (Yuldashbaev, 2002). Soon, urgently, the third congress was convened in Orenburg on December 8–20, 1917. It went down in history as the All-Bashkir constituent kurultai of the Bashkirs. Validi was the chairman of the congress. It is noteworthy that the agenda of the constituent kurultai included discussion of the main provisions of the future Constitution of Bashkortostan. Clause 1 of this document said: "The Russian Republic consists of a union (federation) of autonomous nationalities and outskirts. Bashkurdistan is part of Russia as one of the national-territorial states" (Yuldashbaev, 2002, p. 271). At the beginning of 1918, another draft of the Constitution of Bashkortostan, which also indicated that the autonomous republic was part of Russia, was developed. That is, the Bashkirs did intend to separate from Soviet Russia.

During the Civil War, on the eastern front line, which was drawn through the territory of Bashkortostan, the destiny of the country was resolved. The Bolshevik government was forced to recognize the autonomy of the Bashkir people. On March 20, 1919, the "Agreement between the central Soviet power and the Bashkir government on Soviet autonomy of Bashkiria" was signed in Moscow. The Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BASSR) became the first republic within the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic). Validi, who was at the head of the Bashrevkom, was directly involved in the process of preparing and signing the interstate bilateral agreement. Until 1920, the BASSR remained the only republic within the RSFSR.

In August 1919, a new stage of state building of the autonomous Bashkortostan began. The administrative center of the BASSR was the small Bashkir town of Sterlitamak, where the government moved; schools and hospitals were opened, and state institutions were created.

By the autumn of 1919, the threat of being captured by the White Guard army of Yudenich impended over Petrograd. The military operation was driven by political interests of England. In early September 1919, the Bolsheviks decided to engage Bashkir troops into the defense of Petrograd. Lenin addressed Bashrevcom with a telegram for military assistance. Bashkir troops stationed in Bashkiria and on the southern front were sent to the defense of Petrograd. The Bashkir group of troops consisting of 10,000 soldiers was created. The brigade's newspaper was the "Salavat".

Zaki Validi was in continual contacts with the Bashkir troops. In the autumn of 1919, he visited Petrograd several times. A train with food for the Bashkir soldiers and starving Petrograd came from Sterlitamak. A train from Petrograd transported a variety of technology and equipment.

In Petrograd, Validi met with the representatives of the authorities, scientists-orientalists, purchased and sent to Bashkortostan printing presses, typewriters and other equipment for publishing venture in Sterlitamak. He managed to enlist the cooperation of Ilyas Boragansky, a high-caliber professional in his field, a well-known owner of the first Muslim printing house in St. Petersburg. The front-line newspaper “Salavat” was published in the printing house of Boragansky. In 1920, together with the Bashkir soldiers, Boragansky arrived in Bashkortostan, organized the publication of newspapers and magazines.

In May 1920, Moscow headed for political centralization by infringing on the rights of the autonomous Bashkir Republic. Due to disagreements with the Bolshevik government in early 1923, Validi was forced to leave Russia.

After emigration, Zaki Validi Togan diligently worked in the archives and libraries of Iran, Afghanistan, India, in the famous depositories of Paris, Berlin, Prague and Budapest. A major event in world oriental studies was his discovery of the manuscripts of Arab travelers and scientists, their publication in the original and in translations into German with detailed commentaries. However, even after many years, having become a professor of history at Istanbul University, Validi did not get out of contact with St. Petersburg, continuing to maintain scientific ties with the academician Bartold. His outstanding work “Ibn-Fadlan’s Travel Notes”, published in 1939 (Togan, 1939), was dedicated to the memory of a friend.

4. Purpose of the Study

In this article, the authors aim to find out how Zaki Validi Togan got involved in the scientific research environment of prominent Orientalists of the 20th century and how he embarked on the course of political struggle for the autonomy of the Bashkir people and the federal structure of the new Russia being challenging not only the “unitarists” but also to the all-Russian Muslim movement.

5. Research Methods

The authors have adhered to the principles of scientific, objectivity and historicism. The applied methods are as follows: historical-genetic, socio-anthropological, reconstruction, consistency and holism. In addition to literature, the work used published documents, as well as the memoirs of Zaki Validi Togan and other participants of the described events.

6. Findings

For the first time, the authors specially considered the episodes from the life and work of Zaki Validi Togan linked with St. Petersburg. The role of St. Petersburg as a center of science and socio-political life has been revealed both in the formation of Validi as a scientist and politician, and in the rise of the national liberation movement of the peoples of Russia. At the same time, it shows the way Validi

organized the delivery of food to hungry Petrograd during the Civil War, and how the Bashkir troops saved the city and brought a General Yudenich's offensive to a halt.

7. Conclusion

The study of the life and work of Zaki Validi Togan appears relevant. He pioneered the founding of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BASSR), now the Republic of Bashkortostan, and Russian federalism. His name, on the one hand, is a symbol of the revival and democratization of public thought in Russia and Bashkortostan. On the other hand, Zaki Validi Togan is a personality of a geopolitical scale, who, not only through his scientific works, but also through his practical activities, contributed to the humanization and modernization of Russian society, the integration of the cultures of the East and West.

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