

IMAGE OF AN OFFICIAL IN A COSMOS OF TATARS  
AT THE CUSP BETWEEN 19<sup>TH</sup> – 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

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On the basis of folklore, archival and memoir sources, the author analyzes the day-to-day perception of officials within in the Tatar society in late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The paper reveals information about the number of officials from the Tatars, the specifics of the Tatar nobility formation in different regions of the Russian Empire. Moreover, the article examines the visual appearance of Tatar clerical workers, and the nature of interaction between officials and Tatar merchants. Tatar folklore has an interesting image, which is called “kushtan,” a special social and psychological type, a person who is close to the circle of officials. A relationship of such informal manner between officials and ordinary people was common in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the political police persecuted Tatar clergy pan-Islamists. The practice of denunciation created a myth about the pan-Islamic threat. According to the author’s opinion, the Muslim Tatars’ views on Tatar officials changed considerably during the 19<sup>th</sup> century passed through different stages. It is indicated that officials were not divided into “insiders” and “outsiders”; the society assessed moral qualities of a public authority representative, despite his ethnic or religious affiliation. The topic has been chosen due to the fact that the given problem is utterly unexplored in research so far.

**Keywords:** Tatar society, Muslims, Tatar nobles, officials, mullah, daily routine, folklore

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The objective of our research is to show the place of a representative of power in the microcosm of a typical Tatar who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In other words, it is the period previous to the year of 1917. We had to investigate what he used to think about officials, how he evaluated them, etc. In the foreign non-fiction a system of thinking of a particular person, a complex of thoughts and emotions is called a microcosm or cosmos. For instance, “The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller” by Carlo

Ginzburg. In the Russian non-fiction it is referred to as a “world view” (“kartina mira”). In any case, we want to present the general image of an official in the microcosm of a pre-Soviet Tatar.

When the system of management of the Russian Empire became more complicated, Muslim Tatars met with representatives of different government services – law enforcement, court, municipal, tax, control bodies, etc. more often. For example, a lot of borrowed Russian words which appeared in the Tatar language during the imperial period are related to the state service: “ispraunik” (ispravnik), “sutnik” (sotnik), “käsälär” (kanceljarija), “zimlämir” (zemlemer), “ürätnik” (urjadnik), “zhalunğä” (zhalovan'e), “pristav” et al. [1, p. 34, 47–48].

Tatar fairy tales usually began with the following words: “Once upon a time, when saeskan (a magpie) was a sotnik, urdeq (a duck) served as a urjadnik”. That way a reflection of an official person began to emerge in the cosmos of Tatars. This happened gradually, an official person was supposed to have certain moral qualities, a lifestyle, a get-up dress and other attributes that characterized his association to an authority and a wealth. Tatar folklore (proverbs, humorous stories, beyits – folk songs), memoirs contain an opinion of an ordinary person about an official person, their common view on functionaries.

In the Tatar language, functionaries of all ranks are called *türä* (read as *ture*). It is interesting that this word is similar to the word *tür*, which means the most honoured place in the room where respected guests were invited. So, in people's minds, to be a functionary means to have a certain privilege that presupposes honour and respect. At the same time, there were other meanings but negative ones. For example, an adverb *türälärchä* means ‘as functionaries’, or, more precisely, arrogantly, haughty [14, p. 499].

There were not many Tatars among functionaries in the Russian state service due to the historic conditions. Muslims declaired themselves in the military service. Representatives of the regional elite, which consisted of Tatars and Bashkirs, who were heads of cantons of Orenburg Governorate, joined the Russian officialdom from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the canton system in Bashkiria was liquidized in the 1860s, children of some chiefs managed to adapt to the new conditions and continued bureaucratic traditions of their families (the Sultanovs, Syrtlanovs, Tevkelevs, etc.) [11, p. 142–143]. There was not any similar tradition of training national functionaries in other governorates. This is why the Tatars joined the environment of functionaries and nobilities without special privileges. For many people, military service was a start. Some of them moved up the bureaucratic hierarchy and all in all got the title of nobility thanks to the knowledge of languages serving as civil translators. For example, Ibragim Hal'fin became a nobleman in 1830, before this time he worked as a teacher of the Tatar language at the Kazan Gymnasium, then at the Kazan University [3, p. 585].

The number Muslim nobles and functionaries in the Russian Empire reached about 70,000 people by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the

data of 1897, 172 workers of the administration, court and police of Kazan were Tatar. Tatar functionaries numbered 1,683 people in total. So, the Tatars accounted for 10,2% in the bodies of the administration [2, p. 56, 65, 67, 70].

A small Tatar officialdom mainly belonged to the nobility. For instance, such noble surnames as the Alkins, Tevkelevs, Teregulovs, Yenikeyevs, Dashkins, Syrtlanovs and others were remarkable due to their merits in this path of life. So, Murza Shagi-Akhmed Alkin was the deputy chief of the Kazan Police Administration from 1839 to 1858. As religious figure Shigabutdin Marjani said, “He performed his work fairly, controlled everything himself,” “he was laborious and diligent, kept all people of Kazan on a leash”. Here note that the situation in the streets of Kazan in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was restless, there used to be many hooligans. “The police situation and the city economy in Kazan were in terrible desolation back then. In the evenings, it was dangerous for us to walk. In addition to cab drivers and professional crooks, law enforcement officials themselves participated in looting and violence,” that is how Moscow industrialist Konstantin Krestovnikov remembered those times [10, p. 88]. He opened a factory in Kazan in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, the famous business person wrote mostly about the Admiralty Sloboda, where his industrial establishments functioned.

Shagi-Akhmed Alkin served in Staro-Tatarskaya Sloboda (the Old Tatar Settlement). It is known that despite his official duties, police officer Alkin never forgot to pray every day and regularly visited the mosque. There were no serious conflicts between him and the people of the Muslim district [4, p. 80].

The representatives of noble and bureaucratic families differed from the bulk of the Tatar population. Even their names were written after the fashion of the Russians in some official documents though not all people were baptized. For instance, Shagi-Akhmet Mukhametovich Alkin was stated as Aleksey Mikhailovich Alkin [3, p. 51].

The nobility frequently contacted the Russian population because of their professional duties, copied their lifestyle, rules of behavior, appearance. As professor Karl Fuchs said, the Tatars who is official persons have long hair and dress in European style, but they attend the mosque like Muslims, they dress up in their national clothes and a turban [16, p. 137]. Herewith note that Muslim Tatars were supposed to shave their heads, long hair was not acceptable for the Traditional Muslim society.

The usual city population used to wear traditional clothing. Tatar nobles, especially employees at state institutions, used to wear an official outfit at work, they were forced to faster adopt European fashion. A local historian from Ufa M. Somov wrote in the mid-1860s that, “Muslim functionaries and serving people wore a Russian dress; but often off duty they wore a complete Tatar costume that consisted of a kaftan of Tatar cut or a gown, a fur hat or a white wide-brimmed hat; they rarely wore a turban. Their wives used to put on a complete Tatar or a half-Tatar dress” [7]. The lifestyle of officials was imposed by the estate-corporate rules of conduct. As another observer A. Rittikh noted, while

that Kazan Tatar women visited theatres with their husbands, they sat in the boxes “behind their husbands” and “were veiled”. “They also can be seen at festive gatherings and official balls”, the ethnographer noted [8, p. 17]. However, most of Tatars at that time visited the theater, which was considered a deviation from social norms.

Representatives of the merchant class got acquainted with the European culture a but later than the nobility and servants: but, despite a relatively traditional appearance and lifestyle, the entrepreneurs actively supported cooperation with functionaries. “Rich Tatar merchants invite, or, better to say, often have to invite the governor and other main functionaries to have a cup of tea”, Karl Fuchs reported in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “It happens at midday. Upon having had a cup of tea, the merchants treat their guests offering different fruit, the best caviar and different kinds of fish are serve after that. Champagne was pouring but the hosts don't drink it. Many small functionaries use the Tatars' hospitality and may be a burden for them” [16, p. 143]. This tradition was preserved in the following time. According to a Tatar saying, “The place of a functionary is the most honoured, together with the rich” (Тырәнеñ урны түрдä, байлар белән бергä) [12, p. 192]. Another author Edward Turnerelli wrote that at the request of the Kazan governor, merchant Iskhak Apakov entertained an English delegation in his house. Foreigners wanted to get familiarized more closely with Muslim life [15, p. 595–597].

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tatar merchants of Kazan participated in the work of municipal authorities. The Kazan Tatar City Hall had been operating until 1855. In late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Kazan City Duma was a Muslim faction. Thus, Tatar entrepreneur deputies often contacted the representatives of the city and provincial administration in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Kazan officials celebrated the “luxury apartment” of the merchant Badretdin Apanaev in 1910. He hosted guests – the Kazan governor and the Kazan mayor, as well as the ex-zivier of Ottoman sultan – Hilmi Pasha [5, p. 23].

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the collaboration of the army of the officialdom and the Tatar community was closely connected with a phantom menace of Pan-Islamism. For this reason, social changes took place in the Tatar world: the authority had a hypersensitivity to the reformation of educational institutions, appearance of national press and public associations. The incomprehension of modernization changes was conditioned by the interior spy mania policy, which was actively supported by the conservative strata of the Tatar community. Mullahs often used to play this role.

During this period, a word *functionary* in the Tatar language was often associated with the word *kushtan* (a person who pleases functionaries and unofficially was close to the authority). *Kushtan* was quite a distasteful word and was used only in a negative connotation. There are a number of sayings dedicated to the functionaries and their yes-men. Insincerity and flattery of the latter were stressed; functionaries treated them with disdain but they were dependent on *kushtans* [13, p. 266]. Cadimist Mullahs used their contacts to fight against li-

beral Jadids and used such methods as a tip-off, that is why there were many so-called kushtans among them. Famous scholar Ishmukhamet Dinmukhamov's behaviour is a good example [9, p. 152]. On the one hand, he forbade ordinary Muslim parishioners to learn the Russian language, to get secular education and propagandized a closed lifestyle, on the other hand, he was one of the most stalwart kushtans of the Russian officialdom.

After all, representatives of almost all strata started to closely contact the functionaries by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Tatar population's opinion about the co-religionists functionaries is of interest. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such people, in spite of all their merits and recognition in the Russian community, were outcasts in the Muslim society. As a writer Nazhip Gasry noted, Mullahs boycotted the Murzas and pronounced an anathema against Tatar noble militaries who sent their children to Russian educational institutions saying that they were “disloyal people who blindly believed in the spirituality” [6, p.169]. However, by the end of the century, the attitude to the state service changed together with social changes. An increase in the number of Tatar functionaries by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the growth of the quantity of the Tatars in Russian educational institutions prove it.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that the image of officials in folk literature were not related to based on whether he is an “insider” or an “outsider”. It turned out that, there was an important general quality of a person who has the power. For example, there were types of honest officials and corrupt officials. Certainly, negative proverbs about officials prevailed. This is their indifference, corrupt practices, narrow thinking, and a special place in society [12, p. 187–189, 191–192, 194]. Folklore appeared based on popular experience. In proverbs we see recommendations about how an average person should talk to officials. For example, they should not quarrel, criticize officials, even if an official is mistaken. The basic idea of proverbs: an official is power, he is always right. “A person with a seal has no mercy” is one of such proverbs [13, p. 261].

Nevertheless at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century even Mullahs sent their children to non-classical secondary schools and gymnasiums of the city. Many Tatar shakirds who graduated from a madrasah dreamt of finding a job with a fixed salary. They raved about getting in a university. As a result, Tatar students, who studied in different higher education institutions in the 1910s, consequently became the main national intelligentsia and bureaucratic apparatus not only in Tatar and Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, but also in the republics of Middle Asia and Caucasus.

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**ОБРАЗ ЧИНОВНИКА В «КАРТИНЕ МИРА» ТАТАР  
В КОНЦЕ XIX – НАЧАЛЕ XX ВЕКА**

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В статье на основе фольклорных, архивных и мемуарных источников анализируется повседневное восприятие чиновников в татарском обществе конца XIX – начала XX вв. Приводятся также сведения о численности чиновников - татар, об особенностях формирования татарского дворянства в различных регионах Российской империи. В работе рассматриваются вопросы внешнего вида служащих-татар, характер взаимодействия чиновничества с татарским купечеством. Выделяется образ «куштана» как особый социально-психологический тип, лицо, приближенное к чиновничеству. Делается заключение о том, что такого рода взаимоотношения чиновничества и населения стали особенно распространенными в период жандармских преследований татарского духовенства в начале XX в. Автор приходит к выводу, что взгляды татар-мусульман на татар-чиновников на протяжении рассматриваемого периода менялись и проходили разные этапы. Указывается на отсутствие разделения чиновников на «своих» и «чужих», общество оценивало моральные качества представителя власти, невзирая на его этническую или религиозную принадлежность. Обращение к данной теме обусловлено абсолютной неизученностью данного вопроса.

**Ключевые слова:** татарское общество, мусульмане, татарские дворяне, чиновники, муллы, повседневная жизнь, фольклор

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