

To the Problem of Understanding Historical Processes in the Context of Muslim Society Modernization Processes by the Example of H.-G. Gabashy's Research Works

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Abstract

The urgency of the problem studied can be explained by the fact that the foundation of religious schools in the Russian Federation in 1990s lead to the problem of secular-theological disciplines proportion in the curriculum. In this respect we have to examine the experience of teaching historical disciplines in mektebe and medrese in the Russian Empire in late XIX- early XX centuries. The aim of the article is studying creative heritage and historical views of one of the most prominent educators and public men of the Inner Russia – Hasan-Gaty Gabashy. The leading approaches to the study of the problem are the historical-biographical method and the essential-substantial analysis. The interpretation of the World History in the Inner Russia Muslim schools textbooks in early XX century, according to H.-G. Gabashy's views, except the prophets and the Arabic Caliphate history, was biased, fragmented and highly didactic. The history of China, Middle Asia and the whole Arabic-Muslim world is given in the context of cultural-religious contacts, while the western Christian world events stay untouched in the works of the Tatar-Muslim investigator. The current article information may contribute to further study of national historiography and public opinion of Muslim people in the Middle Volga Region and the Ural Region.

Keywords: World History, Jadidism, historiography of Muslims, tutorial, educational guidance, modernization

1. Introduction

1.1 *The Urgency of the Problem*

The foundation of religious schools in the Russian Federation in 1990s lead to the problem of secular-theological disciplines proportion in the curriculum. The analysis of the curriculum taught in the Middle Volga Region and the Ural Region Muslim schools in late XIX — early XX cc (in the period of the Inner Russia Muslim society transformation under the influence of the Russian Empire modernization processes) is of great methodological value. The World History knowledge can further broadening students' outlook, and the discipline mentioned was taught (more or less) in various school types.

The Inner Russia Muslims at the beginning of the XX century had a stable educational system consisting of a primary school (mektebe) and a confessional middle school (medrese). The curriculum of so-called cadimistic (traditional) medrese represented a complex of Koran sciences with the basic principles formed in the Middle Ages. The reference book on the World History in the Muslim world was “Tarikh ar-rusul wa-l-muluk” (“Istoriya prorokov i tzarey”) by At-Tabary, 914/1960. According to the writer, the World History starts from the world creation and includes biographies of prophets, ancient rulers, Sasanid Shahs, prophet Muhammad and four pious Caliphs. Later different Muslim historians supplemented the book with new details. Tatar Muslim historians held to the methodological scheme mentioned above till the early XX century.

The Tatar educator and scientist Jemalutdin Walidy analyzed the level of knowledge of medrese students and noted that shakirds (students) knew Koran and its interpretations quite well, as well as a lot of mythological stories and legends. However, they had no idea about any secular science (Walidy, 1925).

The Jadidistic (reformist) movement in the system of Muslim education appeared in the 80s of the XIX century. A wide complex of secular disciplines including a historical course was added to the curriculum.

The lack of basic textbooks became a serious obstacle. So, in 1890s reformist medrese teachers started writing and publishing their own textbooks. According to P. Valiullin's counting, in late XIX- early XX cc 41 new textbooks in History were published (Valiullin, 2001). The structure and content of the textbooks met educational demands of that period.

The most popular textbooks were "Tatar tarihy" by G. Battal ("Istoriya tatar") in 3 editions (Battal, 1912), A.-Z. Walidy «Turky wa tatar tarihy» («Istoriya tyurkov i tatar») in 3 editions (Walidy, 1912), H.-G.M. Gabashy «Turk iruglary» («Tyurkskiye plemena») (Gabashy, 1897), «Mohtasar taryh kaum turky» («Kratkaya istoriya tyurkskih narodov») (Gabashy, 1899), «Mufassal taryh kaum turky» («Vseobshchaya istoriya tyurkskih narodov») (Gabashy, 1909) and others.

The majority of the books mentioned above describe the Tatar ethnogenesis history with the idealized view on the Turkic civilization achievements from the Huns to the Kazan Khanate fall, and pay little attention to other regions historical events. The exception is the textbook by H.-G. Gabashy, the kasy of the Orenburg Muslim Community, "Mufassal taryh kaum Turkey" published in 1909 in Ufa (Gabashy, 1909).

1.2 The Scientific Importance of the Problem

The prominent Tatar and Muslim public person Hasan-Gaty Gabashy (1863-1936) lived and worked in late XIX – early XX cc. This historical period was marked by significant changes in all the spheres of the Tatar public life. Thus, a number of prominent thinkers, scientists and educators came up. Their versatile activity became the basis of their nation progress and development.

The historical science was utterly important for the process of forming new self-consciousness of the Tatar nation. The achievements of Tatar historians of that period are undoubtedly interesting for modern scientists because they offer non-standard solutions of many problems and tasks that are still controversial nowadays. This fact explains the attention of modern scientists to Tatar scientists activity of late XIX – early XX cc.

Studying works of the Tatar historian and public person H.-G. Gabashy can be interesting in various aspects. Modern historiographers are specially interested in the period of late XIX – early XX cc because it was the most productive period of the Tatar society development. The study of Hasan-Gaty Gabashy's life, activity and creative heritage gives a lot of information for the most complete description of that epoch peculiarities.

In this respect it is necessary to mention Jadidism as a special phenomenon which nowadays bears a lot of controversy among estimators. The ideology of the movement arose in the Crimea and disseminated to the Volga and Ural Regions, as well as the Middle Asia and the Caucasus, owing to the efforts of Ismail Gasprinsky. The activity of Hassan-Gaty Gabashy, whose life was closely tied to educational field, had great importance for the organization of all-round education of Russian Muslims.

H.-G. Gabashy was one of the first Jadidistic teachers in the reformist medrese "Muhammadiya" in Kazan founded by Galimjan Galeev (Barudy) in 1882. He is also famous as the founder of a reformist medrese in his native village Maliy Sulabash of the Kazan district, which was really reputable in the neighborhood. Gabashy held the post of kasy in the Orenburg Muslim Community supervising educational bodies activity and thus becoming more reputable among his contemporaries. The scientist became famous among Turkic people after publishing the encyclopedia "Mofassal tarihy kaume torky" ("Podrobnaya istoriya tyurkskih plemen") (Gabashy, 1909).

The distinguishing features of the investigation presented are encyclopedic knowledge, the latest scientific information found by the author, the simplicity of language, the use of Eastern and Western sources and a wide use of Russian historiography.

1.3 The Hypothesis of the Research

The analysis of research works in the context of the problem discussed illustrated that the issues connected with the debates about the Muslim public opinion transformation problems within the frames of the Russian modernization model in late XIX- early XX cc. were still little-studied. This allowed to formulate the hypothesis of the current investigation: the study of historical processes interpretation in H.-G. Gabashy's works will help to expose the main problems faced by Muslim public people in the period of the Inner Russia Turkic-Muslim people national awareness.

2. Methodological Framework

The author has used a number of various complementary methods to check the hypothesis.

The author has analyzed scientific works and publications devoted to the study of the Inner Russia Muslim historical education condition at the beginning of the XX c. The author has also studied numerous sources of information, basically textbooks for Muslim schools of early XX c.

For the analysis of the publications given below the author used the following methods of historical study:

The essential-substantial analysis that implies discovering and explaining the facts covered from circumstantial observation and is not naturally original and unique. Description and analysis of the phenomena substance are independent but interconnected knowledge steps. Description is not a chaotic enumeration of facts about the object described, but a connected narration with its logic and sense. The description logic can to a certain extent express the true substance of the described object, but finally the scheme of events taking place depends on the methodological views and principles the author uses.

A historian has to limit a study object to only several sectors of the problem investigated. Thus, the author of the article investigates quite an extensive issue of the public opinion development in late XIX – early XX cc in the context of H.-G. Gabashy's views in his textbooks on the Turkic tribes history.

The following method used in the current article is historical-biographical, as the author investigates a certain period of H.-G. Gabashy's activity. The historical-biographical method aims at revealing the described person's life history. The basis of the method is the didactic approach, because CV reconstruction relies upon the results or “traces” left by the historical person studied. The method implies involving a special type of sources, i.e. personal documents and papers (contemporaries' evidences, diaries, memoirs, memories), textbooks in the current work. The special feature of the historical-biographical method is a wide use of literary-artistic devices of narration (following a certain plot, figurativeness) as well as the author's emotional way of narration and his/her personal evaluation of the object studied.

3. Results

The main purpose of H.-G. Gabashy's textbook was the description of the Tatar ancestors' history in the context of ethnic and historical processes in Eurasia. The scientist's views were based on both Muslim and European traditions, so, he attempted to create his own “synthetic” method of a historical research. On the one hand, he held to the theological concept of the World History process, on the other hand, he used a popular in his epoch trinomial periodization: “Ancient Times – Middle Ages – New Age” and emphasized the necessity of studying history through various disciplines interconnections (Gabashy, 1909).

The World History, in H.-G. Gabashy's opinion, starts from Nuh's (Noah's) descendants – Ham, Sam and Yafet that produced three nation groups. Ham started the Negroid race, Sam put the beginning to the Semites, while Jafes's descendants divided into two big branches: the Aryans and the Turans settled in Eurasia (Gabashy, 1909).

The episode described above was the only example of the historian's attempt to follow the Muslim historical tradition. His works do not contain a detailed Bible – Koran prophets history, the history of the Arab Caliphate, but he was the first Tatar historiographer to describe the ancient world events briefly but emotionally: material and spiritual culture of the Skiff, their contacts with Greek colonists, wars between the Skiff and Aree and between the Massaget and Xerxes. H.-G. Gabashy does not admit the views considering the Skiff Indoaryans. He thinks that the ethnonim “Skiff” that entered historical science owing to Herodotus should be interpreted as “Iskit” or “Iske Tyurok” (“The ancient Turkic”) (Gabashy, 1909).

The historian starts “rehabilitating” nomadic world in his description and evaluation of Attila's invasions of Rome. Gabashy appreciates inclusion of the Vened (ancient Slavic people) into the state of the Hun, as he considers that the Hun leader Balamber unyoked his nation from the German Goth (Gabashy, 1909).

The same trend can be traced in the description of trade and diplomatic contacts between Turkic and Khazar kagans and Byzantine vasylevs (emperors). Morally “pure” and unmercenary Turks are opposed to “deceitful and insidious” Byzantines, who used nomads for mercenary ends. One of the “Mufassal...” chapters is headed “Vizantiyskiye “druzjya” hazarskogo kagana” (Gabashy, 1909).

After a brief review of Hungary and the Danube Bulgaria history H.-G. Gabashy moves to the history of the Khazarian empire, reminding readers of the fact that it was in the period of this Turkic state power that “in the opposite end of the world the sun of Islam started rising” (Gabashy, 1909). Further Gabashy gives a brief encyclopedic description of the Sahab missionary work in the Eastern Europe and wars between the Khazarian empire and the Arabic Caliphate (the reasons were persistent religious delusions on the part of Khazarian

aristocrats and intrigues on the part of Byzantine (Gabashy, 1909).

When covering the history of the Avarian empire, H.-G. Gabashy describes relationships between Avarian nomads and German and Slavic tribes, as well as their conflicts with Byzantine emperors. He expresses a subjective opinion on the history of the Uighur and considers them direct descendants of “Ogre-Bulgar-Bashkir-Mishar nations”, i.e. modern Danube Bulgar, Chuvash, Tatar, Bashkir and Hungarian nations (Gabashy, 1909). The idea did not find further development and proofs in ethnography and study of Turkic languages.

Gabashy does not discover the history of one of the most powerful nomadic empire (the Mongol one), except a debate between Genghis Khan and the Bukhara kasy Ashraf. This gap was successfully removed in historical books, works and articles of A.-Z. Walidy, G. Battal, R. Fahreddin, H. Atlasy, G. Gubaidullin and other Tatar writers of the early XX c. that often idealized the activity of the great conqueror and his descendants.

The history of the Osman Empire takes an important place in “Mufassal...”. Being loyal to his methodological principles, H.-G. Gabashy gives a brief review of Porta's power and its geographical boundaries formation, but avoids mentioning the current condition of the state (the so-called young Turk revolution broke out in the Osman Empire in 1908-1909) to be safe from censors' interference (Gabashy, 1909).

When describing the history of Mediterranean states, Mongolia, China and Japan, H.-G. Gabashy limits his description to their political and ideological condition at the beginning of the XX c. The interest to Far-Eastern states among the Tatar community increased after the “boxers” rebellion in China had been suppressed and the Russian-Japan war had taken place in 1904-1905. The historian uses newspaper articles and Muslim military men impressions as scientific sources for his description.

In ethnographical reviews of Northern nations H.-G. Gabashy deals with the problems of intercultural connections between morally “pure” savages and “educated” representatives of the Western civilization: «American whalers learned to make alcohol drinks and besides, were infected with various diseases” (Gabashy, 1909).

H.-G. Gabashy relied upon some principles inherited from traditional Muslim historiography in his research. He completes them with up-to-date ways and methods of historic investigation that were used in Europe and Russia. On the one hand, we can find in his works a wide range of topics, encyclopaedic knowledge, entertainment, vivacity, trust to the ancient, and as a result, trustful attitude to Muslim legends sources. On the other hand, we can observe the author's attempt to analyze the documents critically and hold objective views on them, as well as the use of auxiliary historical disciplines data and a trinomial periodization of history. In particular, he marks out three periods in the state formation history in the Volga Region, i.e. the Ancient Era, dating deep back to the beginning of times and finishes in the Bulgar fall (? - 1236), the Middle Ages dating from the Mongol to the Kazan fall (1236 - 1552) and the New Age dating from the Kazan fall to nowadays.

In general, in spite of a number of factual mistakes (reckoning the Chuvash in Finno-Ugric nations as a result of overestimating the cultural-economic factor of ethnic development, denoting consistent genetic continuity of the Uighur and the Bulgar, mentioning the Mishar as a nation that started in early Middle Ages, overestimation of the ethno-psychological factors in a historical process) one should note that the historian's books and textbooks played a significant part in the following development of historical science among Turkic nations. He was the first Muslim scientist in Russia that investigated in detail the most ancient periods of the Turkic and Finno-Ugric tribes history and described their lifestyle, crafts, trade, ethnic nature, political processes and the reasons of start and finish of tribal communities and state formations. The ethnic map of Eurasia in early Middle Ages depicted by the historian, except several archaisms, connected with the traditional thinking vestiges, reflected the scientific achievements of that period.

4. Discussions

There are few studies of H.-G. Gabashy's works and almost all of them date back to two periods with quite a long time gap between them. The first one dates back to early XX century while the second one starts in late 80s – early 90s of the XX century and relates to political changes in Russia that took place when a lot of bans on studying Tatar scientists' works were removed.

N.F. Katanov, an orientalist who reviewed “Mofassal tarihe kaume torkey” (Podrobnaya istoriya tyurkskih plemen) was the first one to pay attention to Gabashy's works. He made the report “A short review of Tatar historical books” at the Historic and Ethnographic Society conference on 15th of November 1911. In the report he analyzed the current condition of the Tatar historical science. N.F. Katanov said about Hasan-Gaty's book, “The Tatar are also interested in the Turkic tribes history”. In this respect I can specially mark out Hasan-Gaty Al-Gabashy' work

“Mofassal tarihe kaume torky” (Podrobnaya istoriya tyurkskih plemen). Its first volume was published in Ufa in 1909. One of Gabashy's work shortcomings is that the author considers many Finnish and Mongol tribes Turkic ones in attempt to increase their number” (Katanov, 1911). In general, N.F. Katanov gave a positive review of H.-G. Gabashy's book. It was utterly important for its publishing, because N.F. Katanov was the main censor who gave the permission to publish the scientist's book.

The following record of H.-G. Gabashy's works can be found in Jamalutdin Walidy's book “Ocherk istorii obrazovannosti i literatury tatar (do revolutzii 1917 goda)” (Walidy, 1925). His review is brief and utterly critical, “Hasan-Gaty Gabashy, born in Sula-Bash village of the Kazan district, used to be kasy, i.e. a member of the Muslim Community. He wrote two historical books – short and complete histories of the Turkic-Tatar nation. His works are rich in factual information, but suffer from the absence of system and adequate description of historical facts. The language is also badly worked out and rather archaic” (Walidy, 1925). J. Walidy's purpose was not to analyze the content of the scientist's concept. Therefore, a talented critic paid almost no attention to positive and innovative aspects of the historian's work, although he marked out Gabashy's works shortcomings quite correctly.

There are very few further records of Hasan-Gaty Gabashy's works reviews, because he was exposed to political repressions. Only in late 80s – early 90s of the XX c. scientists regained their interest in the Tatar historian works. It is notable that the first signs of interest to historical heritage of the Tatar researcher of early XX c. came from Uzbek scientists that completely republished “Mofassal tarihy kaume torky” in the Uzbek language in 1994. In the conclusion to this book the researcher P. Ravshan highly appreciated the work of the Tatar historian. He points to the fact that a lot of Gabashy's conclusions are not only old-fashioned, but on the contrary, have confirmation in modern science. P. Ravshan considers that Hasan-Gaty Gabashy managed to reflect an integral picture of Turkic nations development (Ravshan, 1992).

One can notice that Hasan-Gaty Gabashy's historical conceptions get gradually recognized with modern scientists. His name is among active followers of the Bulgar-Tatar origin of the Kazan Tatar people. A prominent ethnolinguist, the Academy of Science of the Republic of Tatarstan member M.F. Zakiyev wrote the book “Etnogenez tatarskogo naroda” where he mentioned Hasan-Gaty Gabashy in the context of the debate about the Skiff ethnic origin being Iranian or Turkic. (Zakiyev, 1995).

In early 1990s Tatar scientists published a number of research works as separate articles devoted to various aspects of H.-G. Gabashy's activity. In 1994 the “Miras” journal (“Naslediye”) published some extracts from the book “Mofassal tarihe kaume torky” (Podrobnaya istoriya tyurkskih plemen). The same issue also included a brief outline about the book written by Professor M.I. Akhmetzyanov. The scientists appreciated the fact that Hasan-Gaty Gabashy widely used European historiography methods in his studies. He also marks out that revealing ethnogenetic closeness of the Syberian peoples and the Turkic ones is a valuable idea. M.I. Akhmetzyanov points to the historian's objective attitude to many historical events (Akhmetzyanov, 1994).

A.Yu. Khabutdinov mentions H.-G. Gabashy as an active member of Muslim congresses in 1917 in his Candidate theses “Tatarskoye obschestvenno-politicheskoye dvizheniye v pervoy chetverty XX v.” (Khabutdinov, 1996) and the textbook “Tatarskoye obschestvenno-politicheskoye dvizheniye v dosovetsky period: 1900-1918” (Khabutdinov, 1997). In the books the author considers the historian's ideological position as moderately reformist one.

R.R. Salikhov, one of the authors of the collaborative monographs “Ocherky istorii Vysokogorskogo rayona” and “Duhovnaya kultura i tatarskaya intelligentsiya: istoricheskiye portrety”, was the first one to publish H.-G. Gabashy's biography. He highly appreciates Hasan-Gaty Gabashy's activity in the field of public education. He gives a lot of attention to the analysis of public and scientific activity of the Muslim public person (Salikhov, 1999).

5. Conclusion

The interpretation of the World History in the Inner Russia Muslim schools textbooks in early XX century, according to H.-G. Gabashy's views, except the prophets and the Arabic Caliphate history, was biased, fragmented and highly didactic. The history of China, Middle Asia and the whole Arabic-Islamic world are depicted in the context of cultural-religious contacts and Turkic rulers military campaigns, while the western Christian world events stay untouched in the works of the Tatar-Muslim investigator.

6. Recommendations

The material of the current article may be useful for the people interested in the Muslim public opinion development history in the period of modernization processes in late XIX- early XX cc in the Russian Empire, as well as the Middle Volga and the Ural Regions Muslim people national historiography and public opinion.

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