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Author(s)	Michael, Kemper
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From Progress to Extinction: Rida'addin Fakhraddin's "Famous Women" in the Soviet Context

Michael Kemper

Abstract

In 1904 Riza'addin Fakhraddin published "Famous Women" (*Mashhur khatunlar*), a Turkish-Tatar language compendium containing several hundred female biographies from various parts of the Muslim world. In 1934 Fakhraddin produced a new manuscript version of the same book in which he included more Muslimas from Russia's Volga-Urals region. Historians have rightfully emphasized the manuscript's value for the history of female Muslim education in the Volga-Urals in the late imperial era. The present article expands this scholarship by exploring the 1934 version as Fakhraddin's personal reflections on the breaks that occurred after the Bolsheviks came to power. While the 1904 volume was a call for the advancement of Muslim women's education in imperial Russia, the revised manuscript of 1934 replaced this optimistic reformist vision by a vehement critique of Bolshevik national and religious policies. Bolshevik rule, so Fakhraddin feared, aimed at the loss of female morality and the elimination of Muslim cultural and historical identity.

Keywords: Female Muslim education, Islamic biographical literature, Tatar language reform, Jadidism, Islamic reformism, Volga-Urals, female morality, Soviet repression.

In 1904 Rida'addin bin Fakhraddin (Fakhretdinov, 1858–1936), at that time *qadi* at the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Board (OMDS) in Ufa, published "Famous Women" (*Mashhur khatunlar*), a compendium containing about 550 Muslim female biographies.[1] Published in the Turkish-Tatar language, this volume was a work of truly global scope: it covered female biographies of all times, primarily from the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey but also from the historical al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) in the West and Iran and India in the East; in addition, a few entries were devoted to Muslimas from Central Eurasia/

1 Rida'addin b. Fakhraddin, *Mashhur khatunlar* (Orenburg: Muhammad Fatih b. Ghilman Karimuf matba'asï, 1904) [in the following: *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*]. My thanks go Danielle Ross, Marsil' Farkhshatov, Renat Bekkin, and two anonymous peer reviewers, for valuable suggestions connected to the present research.

imperial Russia. Fakhraddin drew his material from a wide array of mostly medieval Arabic and Turkish/Ottoman compendia, but also from modern publications and the press. The women he presented in his compilation were known for their support of the prophet Muhammad and the spread of Islam in the early centuries, but also for their achievements in fields such as hadith transmission and Muslim poetry, in addition to a few who engaged in sciences like medicine and pedagogics; and Fakhraddin also included women who were involved in politics, either as wives, daughters or concubines of Muslim caliphs and sultans or as rulers in their own right. Demonstrating many areas in which Muslim women have engaged since the earliest era of Islam, Fakhraddin's volume was a strong call for the advancement of basic and advanced education for Muslim women in Russia's Muslim communities, and an optimistic argument for the inclusion of women into the ongoing project of Muslim educational reform.

The present article wants to draw attention to the differences between this 1904 publication of "Famous Women" and a manuscript of the same book that Fakhraddin produced towards the end of his life, in 1934. At that time he was serving as chairperson (mufti) of the Central Muslim Spiritual Board, the Soviet organization in charge of Russia's mosque communities. In that function Fakhraddin had witnessed how in the late 1920s and early 1930s all Islamic schools and most mosques of Soviet Russia were closed down by the Bolsheviks; many of his colleagues, imams and Muslim intellectuals, were exiled or imprisoned, and the Islamic written heritage was in the process of being destroyed. While Fakhraddin himself was kept alive and remained in office, he had no means of influence, and his position of mufti had become meaningless. It is in this last phase of his life, in isolation from the wider Muslim world, that Fakhraddin started to produce new manuscript copies of some of his old works, making additions and also introducing some changes.[2] One of the results of this renewed engagement with his own pre-revolutionary oeuvre is the 1934 remake of "Famous Women," which has been preserved in manuscript form.[3]

Historians have been attracted to Fakhraddin's new version of 1934 above all because it added more biographies of Muslimas from the Volga-Urals of the late imperial period, bringing their number up to thirty-three. These entries of Muslim female teachers offer valuable insight into the development of Muslim

2 For his later additions to *Athar* see Michael Kemper, "From 1917 to 1937: The Mufti, the Turkologist, and Stalin's Terror," *Die Welt des Islams* 57, issue 2 (2017), pp. 162–191.

3 Rida'addin b. Fakhraddin, *Mashhur khatunlar*, ms., Nauchnyi arkhiv Ufimskogo Nauchnogo Tsentra RAN, fond 7, opis' 1, delo 1 (novogo akta), 245 fols [in the following: *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*]. My gratitude to the late Ramil Bulgakov for helping me navigate Fakhraddin's textual legacy.

female education in central Russia.[4] The present article continues this research line but emphasizes that the 1934 manuscript version of "Famous Women" is not just a slightly enlarged version of the original published work.[5] Writing in 1934 in a completely new political and social situation, Fakhraddin assigned new purposes to his old work by changing the peritext of his biographical compilation: he dropped many of his own comments and footnotes from 1904, which he obviously found had no relevance anymore, and which he was unable to update; and he added new reflections about the contemporary situation of the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia (the "Northern Turks" as he called them) under Soviet rule. As we will see, Fakhraddin now used his compendium of female biographies as a framework for warning that the Bolshevik regime was busy with the extermination of the Muslim nation in Russia. I argue that with this turn Fakhraddin assigned a new meaning to his old book: what he had originally published as a call for progressive Muslim educational reform now became an Islamic accusation of Bolshevik policies.

The present paper thus analyzes the 1934 manuscript as a work with a specific intention, and it traces how Fakhraddin's vision of Muslim female education in Russia changed from 1904 to 1934. In the first part of the paper I suggest to treat the individual "Tatar" Muslim women that Fakhraddin included as a social cohort[6]; approaching their biographies from a network perspective enables us to reconstruct a purely female transmission line in Kazan that blossomed in the last decades of the Romanov era. Importantly, the manuscript also allows us to partially enlarge the scope of inquiry from the late imperial period into the early Bolshevik era when formal Islamic education petered out and died. In this context I pay special attention to what Fakhraddin tells us about how the female biographies of his 1934 manuscript came into being.

4 R. M. Bulgakov, "Znamenitye zhenshchiny", *Bel'skie prostory*, nos 1–3 (2008); Al'ta Kh. Mäkhmütova, ed., *Millät analarï: tarikhi-dokumental' häm biografik jïyentïk* (Kazan: Jiyen, 2012); Rimma R. Kadymova, *Vklad Rizaeddina Fakhreddina v formirovanie novogo statusa zhenshchiny v tatarskom obshchestve kontsa XIX-nachala XX vv.*. Avtoreferat diss. na soisk. uch. st. kand. ist. nauk (Kazan: Institut Istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani, 2013); Rozaliya R. Garipova, "Muslim Women's Religious Authority and Their Role in the Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Late Imperial Russia," *Tatarica* 5 (2016), pp. 152–163; Alsu A. Khasavnekh, "Rizaeddin Fakhreddin i ego biograficheskii trud 'Mäshhür khatïnnar' ('Znamenitye zhenshchiny')," *Istoricheskaya etnologiya* 5, no. 2 (2020), pp. 306–317; Aidar Yu. Khabutdinov, "Riza Fakhreddin ob abystai kak nastavnitsakh i materiyakh," *Islam v sovremennom mire* 20, no. 3 (2024), pp. 153–164.

5 The 1904 book edition has 500 individual entries but some of them contain several biographies; the overall number of personalities covered is therefore around 550, including eleven Muslimas from the Volga-Urals of the 19th century. The 1934 manuscript added at least 67 new biographies, among which twenty-one from the Volga-Urals of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

6 For a sociological study of the image of the female teacher among the Tatar population see Liliya Gabdrafikova, "Mugallima: Novaya sotsial'no-professional'naya rol' tatarskoi zhenshchiny nachala XX v.," *Vestnik RUDN: seriya: Istoriya Rossii* 18, no. 2 (2019), pp. 302–319.

The second part of the present contribution analyzes Fakhraddin's personal statements about why Muslim women need education, and whom he wanted to mobilize for this task in the first place. Who was supposed to read his book? And did Fakhraddin think Muslimas were themselves in charge of their schooling—or did he regard this as men's task? Fakhraddin discussed these questions in the "Afterword" (*khatima*) that he added to his 1904 edition of "Famous Women"; as we will see, this is the place in the volume where he formulated his Muslim reformist/modernist stances most fervently, in opposition to conservative opponents of female education. I then compare these views of 1904 with the personal statements that Fakhraddin included in his unpublished manuscript of 1934, both in a new "Afterword" that replaced the original one but also in the course of what became the most encompassing biography of the whole volume—the life of the prophet Muhammad's first wife Khadija, whom Fakhraddin portrayed as the model woman of all times. This juxtaposition demonstrates that by 1934, Fakhraddin had moved away from the inner-Islamic fault lines of the late imperial era (that is, from his own reformist critique of the Muslim "traditionalism" and Sufism) towards a defense of all Islamic expressions, and of the Muslim nation as a whole, against the onslaught of the Stalinist state.

Daughters of Imams and Merchants: Female Lines of Transmission in Kazan

Fakhraddin's biographical works are Islam-centered: they depict imams and scholars as the spiritual leaders of the Muslim nation, acting in concert with Muslim merchants and industrialists who financed their mosques and schools in the Muslim neighborhoods.[7] To capture this alignment Danielle Ross coined the term of a "Tatar Empire" of scholarly and business families whose activities followed Russian colonial expansion into the Urals, the Steppe and Central Asia.[8] In result the 19th century saw a booming Muslim publishing sector and a strong spread of Muslim basic and advanced education in the Volga-Urals.[9] Men's teaching and learning in *madrasas* is well-documented by the voluminous "male" biographical compendia of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in particular in the same Fakhraddin's multi-volume *Athar* ("Monuments"), where

7 Liliya Gabdrafikova, *Tatarskoe burzhuaznoe obshchestvo: stil' zhizni v epokhu peremen (vtoroya polovina XIX–nachalo XX veka)* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2015).

8 Danielle Ross, *Tatar Empire: Kazan's Muslims and the Making of Imperial Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

9 Danielle Ross, "Islamic Education for All: Technological Change, Popular Literacy and the Transformation of the Volga-Ural Madrasa, 1650s–1910s," Paolo Sartori and Danielle Ross, eds., *Sharīʿa in the Russian Empire: The Reach and Limits of Islamic Law in Central Eurasia, 1550–1917* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 38–80.

women appear only in passing.[10] Muslim women, by contrast, left behind less documentation and ego-documents[11]; this makes the few female biographies that Fakhraddin added to his global "Famous Women" even more valuable.[12]

As Rozaliya Garipova demonstrated, in the Tatar and Bashkir lands "traditional" Muslim female education was provided by *abïstay*s (also called *ustadbikes*), that is, wives of imams who gathered the girls of their respective Muslim neighborhoods in the imams' private homes. Fakhraddin's "Famous Women" shows that this home schooling system of the 19th century eventually produced the female teachers that in the 1890s and early 1900s staffed and directed the first "new-method" (*usul-i jadid*) schools for girls.[13] "Famous Women" includes information about home-schooling activities from various regions of the Russian Empire,[14] and about girl school projects in cities like Kazan,

10 Rida'addin b. Fakhraddin, *Athar* (Orenburg: Karimov, 1900–1908); Rizaeddin Fäkhreddin, *Asar. Öchenche häm dürtenche tomnar*, chief editor M. A. Usmanov (Kazan: Rukhiyat näshriyäte, 2010).

11 Danielle Ross, "Debunking the 'Unfortunate Girl' Paradigm: Volga-Ural Muslim Women's Knowledge Culture and its Transformation across the Long Nineteenth Century," in Paolo Sartori and Danielle Ross, eds., *Sharīʿa in the Russian Empire,* pp. 120–155.

12 R. M. Bulgakov produced a Russian translation of most "Tatar" female biographies from Fakhraddin's "Famous Women," and in the following I use his numeration (with his initials [RB]) for identifying the entries. See R. M. Bulgakov, "Znamenitye zhenshchiny," *Bel'skie prostory*, no. 1 (2008) [www.hrono.info/text/2008/fahr01_08.html] (covering biographies 1–6), no. 2 and no. 3 (2008) [www.hrono.info/text/2008/fahr03_08.html] (covering biographies 7–33) (accessed 3 July 2026). The thirty-three biographies that Bulgakov translated include some Tatar princesses of the medieval/early modern eras that do not concern us here. At the same time Bulgakov omitted the entries of four "Tatar" women from the 19th and early 20th centuries: these are Raziyya khanum whom Fakhraddin introduced as the first Muslima from Russia who received a medical education in St. Petersburg (*Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, p. 187); a Zulaykha from Kazan, noted as the first woman from the region who made the *hajj* without male company, in 1876 (ms. 116a); Labiba Husayniyya (ms. 205b–207a; on her see below); and Fatima Qazizade (ms. 187a–186b, inlay; see below).

13 Garipova, "Muslim Women's Religious Authority." For Jadidism and female education see Al'ta Makhmutova, *'Pora i nam zazhech' zaryu svobody!' Dzhadidizm i zhenskoe dvizhenie* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2006). On female education also beyond the Jadids see Agnès Kefeli, "The Tale of Joseph and Zulaykha on the Volga Frontier: the Struggle for Gender, Religious, and National Identity in Imperial and Postrevolutionary Russia," *Slavic Review* 70, no. 2 (2011), pp. 373–398.

14 Fakhraddin described homeschooling teachers from various places of the Volga-Urals: Badr-i Jahan (d. 1312/1895), village in Kazan guberniya [RB 1]; Badr al-Banat (d. 1341/1923) [RB 2] from a village in Vyatka guberniya, and mother of Mukhlisa Bubi [RB 19]; 'A'isha bint Shah-i Ahmad (no date given), village in Ufa guberniya [RB 4]; 'Afifa Tuntari (d. 1291/1874), village in Malmyzh region/Vyatka guberniya [RB 8]; Mauhuba (d. 1290/1873), Kichuchat village in Samara guberniya, Fakhraddin's mother [RB 13]; Shams-i Jahan (d. 1916), Kazan [RB 33]; 'Ayn-i Jamal Yaush (d. 1346/1927), Troitsk [RB 3]; 'Alimat al-Banat [Biktimirova] (d. 1324/1906), village in Kasimov region [RB 6]; Mahiruy Barudiyya, organizer of female education in Kazan, wife of Fakhraddin's close colleague and predecessor as mufti, 'Alimjan Barudi [RB 15].

Ufa and Troitsk but also in several Muslim villages of the Volga-Urals.[15] Many of Fakhraddin's protagonists were pious daughters and wives of imams who married into wealthy Muslim merchant families, in particular the Akchurins, Aitovs, Utyamishevs, and Yaushevs. Some of these first female educators used their fortunes for the establishment and maintenance of their respective schools; others were known for their financial support of mosques.[16]

It was difficult for Fakhraddin to obtain information about the women of his own era: most of the "Tatar" entries are brief and without context,[17] with some just copying the raw responses he obtained from correspondents whom he had sent questionnaires.[18] In one case Fakhraddin acknowledged he might have lost or forgotten information.[19] This all reflects his personal isolation in the last years of his life; and while the manuscript's "Afterword" is dated with May 1934,[20] one of the documents added into the volume as a separate sheet is from July 1935,[21] indicating Fakhraddin continued to collect material until death relieved him from his duty in April 1936.

On some female protagonists, however, Fakhraddin had more to tell. One outstanding case in point is Mukhlisa Bubi (d. 1937), who from 1897 to 1911 together with her brothers operated a female school in the village of Izh-Bubi. After that school was closed by the imperial authorities, Mukhlisa started to work at the Yaushevs' girl school in Troitsk in 1915. During the revolutionary year of 1917 Mukhlisa became "the Muslim world's first ever female *qadi*," serving in the Spiritual Board in Ufa, first under Mufti 'Alimjan Barudi (d. 1921) and then under the latter's successor, Rida'addin Fakhraddin himself.[22] In "Famous Women," Fakhraddin presented Mukhlisa's "official CV" (to which he had access in the Spiritual Board), which outlines her career steps, and contrasted that with her "unofficial biography" (*räsmi tügel tärjämä-i halï*), that is,

15 Fatiha Aitova (1866–1944), director of a female school in Kazan [RB 29]; Maryambika Akchurina (d. 1928), Ufa [RB 17]; Mukhlisa Bubi (d. 1937), Izh-Bubi village in Vyatka guberniya [RB 19]; Fatima (d. 1894), village in Vyatka guberniya [RB 28].

16 'A'ishabika bint Muhammadsharif (d. 1334/1915), Kazan [RB 5]; Zubayda Apanaeva, Kazan [RB 11]; Zulaykha from Petropavlovsk (Kazakhstan) [RB 12]; Habibjamal [Tenishev], Penza [RB 30].

17 E.g. Safiyya from a village close to Kazan [RB 21]; 'A'isha bint Shah-i Ahmad [RB 4].

18 These are Badr-i Jihan [RB 1] and Badr al-Banat [RB 2].

19 Mahbubjamal Akchurina [RB 18]. This woman published articles in Fakhraddin's *Shura* journal, in 1911–1917; as he acknowledged, she might have sent him her autobiography once.

20 The *Khatima* is dated 18 Muharram 1353, which corresponds to 2 May 1934 of the Gregorian calendar; *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 245a.

21 This is a small-sized letter to Fakhraddin offering information about Maryam Temirbulad qïzï (d. 1928); the letter is dated "Moscow, 6 July [19]35" (*Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 219ab).

22 Rozaliya Garipova, "Muslim Female Religious Authority in Russia: How Mukhlisa Bubi Became the First Female *Qāḍī* in the Modern Muslim World," *Die Welt des Islams* 57, issue 2 (2017), pp. 135–161; Al'ta Makhmutova, "Fenomen Mukhlisy Bubi," *Gasïrlar awazï/Ekho vekov* 1–2 (2000), pp. 203–214.

with what he knew from her personally.[23] Here he confided that her parents—an imam and an *ustadbika*[24]—gave Mukhlisa a valuable education but refused to teach her how to write—implying they believed this was not necessary for girls, or perhaps even dangerous.[25] Fakhraddin furthermore informs us that Mukhlisa's parents forced her into an unhappy marriage; after getting divorced she went back to her family, taking her daughter with her.[26] Such observations seem to question the traditional idea that parents naturally know what is best for their daughters.

Noteworthy is that Fakhraddin does not speak of Mukhlisa Bubi as a *qadi*; rather, his formulation is that in 1917 a Muslim Congress elected her as a female "member" to the Spiritual Board (*a'za bolup saylanghan*).[27] While this official formulation is correct, it was common practice to address the "members" also as "*qadi*s," and Fakhraddin himself had carried that title at the turn of the century.[28] Not calling Mukhlisa a *qadiyya* might therefore reflect Fakhraddin's conviction that this rank would, after all, better be reserved for men, and that it comprised more than Mukhlisa's tasks in the family section of Soviet Russia's muftiate.[29]

As Fakhraddin lived in Ufa (as *qadi*, until 1906), Orenburg (as journalist, until 1918), and then again in Ufa (as mufti, for the rest of his life), for information about women from Kazan he relied on his colleague Shahar Sharaf (1877–1938). Between 1896 and 1919 Sharaf had worked as a teacher in 'Alimjan Barudi's famous Muhammadiyya *madrasa* in Kazan, and then as imam; thereafter he was for three years imprisoned in a Soviet concentration camp. In 1933 Sharaf eventually found a job at the Spiritual Board in Ufa,[30] and it is probably in this time that he composed a number of female biographies for Fakhraddin. The latter copied these texts into his manuscript, acknowledging in each case that the entry in question was Sharaf's work.

The Kazan line of female teachers starts with Marhab (d. 1243/1827–8), wife of a certain 'Abdallah b. 'Abdassalam in a village of Kazan region called Machkara that was famous for its scholarship.[31] Fakhraddin introduces this Marhab as a sister of the well-known scholar Abu n-Nasr 'Abdannasir

23 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 215b–217a.

24 This is Badr al-Banat bint Imanqul (d. 1923) [RB 2].

25 At another occasion Fakhraddin mentions that also his own grandparents did not deem it necessary to teach their daughter Mauhuba (i.e., Fakhraddin's mother) how to write, all the while they otherwise gave her a good education; *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 222a [RB 13].

26 Cf. Gabdrafikova, "Mogallima," p. 306.

27 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 216a.

28 Rozaliya Garipova, "Divorce from Missing Husbands: Rizaeddin Fakhreddin and Reform within Islamic Tradition in Imperial Russia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 65 (2022), pp. 761–801.

29 On Mukhlisa's work see Garipova, "Muslim Female Religious Authority," p. 137.

30 For Sharaf's biography see Ramzi Valeev, "'Staraisya tak, bud'to ty nameren zhit' 1000 let'," *Gasïrlar awazï/Ekho vekov* 2 (2005), pp. 139–145.

31 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, p. 375.

al-Qursavi (d. 1812), who was widely regarded as the founding father of a Salafi-minded interpretation of Islam that was critical of traditional Muslim speculative theology (*kalam*), and that demanded that the Muslim creed be purged from items that are not based on Qur'an and Sunna.[32] With Marhab, the female line of teachers is thus linked to the origin of this regional "reformist" stream of Islamic thought whose most prominent champion in the early 20th century was Fakhraddin himself.[33]

A second woman characterized by her link to the Qursavi circle is a certain 'A'isha *abïstay*, mentioned as a granddaughter of Qursavi's brother, 'Abdalkhaliq al-Qursavi.[34] One of 'A'isha's female students was Mahiruy, who in 1882 married the well-known Muslim scholar and Jadid educator 'Alimjan Barudi, Fakhraddin's close colleague and friend.

Mahiruy was situated at the center of Jadid education in Kazan, and she would bring female education to a new level. After inheriting considerable wealth from her father Ishaq Utyamishev, an owner of textile mills, Mahiruy Barudiyya used her fortune for financing the Muhammadiyya new-method school of her husband and for giving shelter and education to poor girls and women. Importantly, Mahiruy is also described as having established and directed the first female new-method school circle in Kazan, and as having taught in it. This was not yet taking place in a designated school building but in the Barudis' home; still, the teaching process is described as a systematic endeavor employing extra female staff. As Sharaf emphasizes, Mahiruy's teaching was modelled along the model of her husband's Muhammadiyya madrasa, with a focus on Arabic and Qur'an recitation.

Mahiruy Barudiyya insisted on seclusion during the educational process; we learn that when she attended the class lectures of her husband or of the latter's adjuncts she would always sit behind a curtain, which did not prevent her from speaking up.[35] Completely independent in the management of her funds and charity, Mahiruy also supported promising Kazan students and scholars (including Shahar Sharaf himself), financing their trips to Istanbul where they would study how the new-method teaching was applied in the Ottoman capital. Sharaf does not mention any woman whom Mahiruy might have sent on an educational trip; for her, the process of education remained gendered.

32 About Qursavi and his reception in the Volga-Urals see Nathan Spannaus, "The Ur-Text of Jadidism: Abū Naṣr Qūrṣāwī's *Irshād* and the Historiography of Muslim Modernism in Russia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59 (2016), pp. 93–125.

33 About Fakhraddin's Salafi framework see Michael Kemper, "Sufi Saint or Salafi Reformer? ʿAlī Tūntārī in Fakhreddinov's Tatar Lineage of *Kalām* Critique," in Eren Tasar, Allen J. Frank and Jeff Eden, eds., *From the Khan's Oven; Studies on the History of Central Asian Religions in Honor of Devin DeWeese* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 258–283.

34 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 213a (in the context of the biography of Mahiruy Barudiyya).

35 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 213a.

Tracing the Kazan transmission line further we arrive at Labiba Husayniyya (1880–1921), one of Mahiruy's graduates and adjunct teachers; Shahar Sharaf also contributed a biography of her.[36] Married to a wealthy trader, Labiba took over Mahiruy's home school in Kazan after the latter passed away in May 1904, and with the financial support of the wives of rich traders she developed it further into what Sharaf called a Female Teachers' School (*Dar al-mu'allimat*). Remaining in close contact with 'Alimjan Barudi, Labiba applied the latter's *usul-i jadid* pedagogics, which included aspects such as formal exams. Over time Labiba's girl school produced hundreds of female new-method teachers, many of whom later found employment in villages. To reproduce Sharaf's male reformist pathos of the time, Labiba worked tirelessly for "the elevation and awakening of the world of women and girls."[37] When Labiba died of typhus in 1921 her funeral attracted a huge crowd of admirers.

Some of Labiba's graduates became teachers in another Muslim girl school in Kazan which was directed by Fatiha Aitova.[38] Like Mahiruy Barudiyya, Fatiha Aitova (1866–1944)[39] built her school with the means she inherited from her father, a wealthy merchant who passed away in 1906. Fatiha Aitova established her basic school for girls in Kazan in 1909, and had a house with two floors specifically built for that purpose. As Shahar Sharaf emphasizes, teaching included not only religious and secular subjects but also Russian, with the goal of preparing her graduates for admission to a Russian secondary school. In this direction Labiba made a genuine step forward: she turned her own school into a female gymnasium.[40] When official recognition was granted in 1916, she invited the governor of Kazan region and the director of the educational district to the opening ceremony—while imams were reciting the Qur'an. The school was closed in 1918. Shahar Sharaf, as a former camp inmate, formulated this calamity in a cautious manner: "Fatiha *khatun*'s brilliant school, which she had set onto such a good path and into which people had put so much hope, drowned in the ocean of the big changes that occurred in Russia."[41]

The final personality from this cluster of Kazan teachers that we find scattered over the 1934 manuscript is a certain Fatima Qazizade, who was born in 1902 in Simbirsk (Ulyanovsk) region. This time the biography comes in the form of a formal CV produced in a Soviet agency; it survived in Fakhraddin's

36 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fols 205b–207a.

37 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 206a.

38 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 206b (in the context of Labiba's activities) [RB 29].

39 These years are given in "Aitova, Fatikha Abdulvalievna," *Tatarskaya Entsiklopediya* vol. 1 (Kazan: Institut Tatarskoi Entsiklopedii, 2002), p. 65. Shahar Sharaf mentions 1879 as her year of birth. Fakhraddin copied the text from Shahar Sharaf's original on a separate sheet; *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 180ab.

40 Documents about Aitova (including her Russian autobiography) are reproduced in A. X. Mäkhmütova, ed., *Millät analarï*, pp. 393–396.

41 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 180b.

manuscript as a separate sheet. Composed by a certain Najib Sharaf Abïz on 9 July 1927,[42] this Turkish-Tatar language document (still in the Arabic script) explains that Fatima Qazizade graduated from Labiba Husayniyya's school in Kazan and then worked there for a year as a teacher. Fatima attended some pedagogical courses in 1918 and 1920 but then found employment as a translator; in fact, the author of this document knew Fatima Qazizade from several months in 1921 when they both worked for a publication titled *Säürä vä Sänghät* ("Revolution and Manufacturing"). Fatima then had jobs in several villages before returning to Kazan in 1924; in 1926 she worked for communist outlets such as *Qïzïl Tatarstan* ("Red Tatarstan") and *Tatarstan Säüdä vä Sänghäte* ("Tatarstan Trade and Manufacturing"). The CV ends with a list of Fatima's publications/translations, including titles such as "The Machinery of the Village Economy."

The document also characterizes Fatima Qazizade's ideological qualities: we learn that Fatima is a good translator from the Russian all the while she does not speak it that well; that she did jobs for the Kazan branch of the *Bezbozhnik* Antireligious Movement (*Dingä qarshï häräkät*),[43] but that "from the perspective of [revolutionary] consciousness (*vijdän*) she did not accept" (the Bolshevik revolution, apparently). The document ends with stating that Fatima lives separated from her husband and has two children.

This ideological CV can be seen as emblematic for what remained from the Jadid-educated young women: the discipline and practical skills that they had received in the elitist and pious girl schools of Kazan city remained useful for Soviet white-collar jobs, in this case not only assignments in village schools but also translating technical literature. Historians have analyzed the integration of Jadid-educated Muslim personnel largely from the perspective of men, arguing that before the Great Terror, the Bolshevik administration was forced to accept the circumstance that individuals did not yet have the correct revolutionary "conscience." Obviously, a similar history can be written about graduates of the Jadid-minded Kazan girl schools.[44]

42 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fols. 186–187. I do not know whether this Najib Sharaf Abïz was related to Shahar Sharaf or the latter's two brothers, Burhan and Galimjan.

43 Cf. Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998); Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, "Islamskii diskurs vizual'noi propagandy na sovetskom vostoke mezhdu dvumya mirovymi voinami (1918–1940)," *Islamology* 7, no. 2 (2017), pp. 53–73.

44 Cf. Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Rafilya Gimazova, *Prosvetitel' skaya deyatel' nost' Nigmatullinykh-Bubi (konets 19–nachalo 20 veka)* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2004). On Soviet policies targeting Muslimas of the Volga-Urals, see Yulia Gradskova, "Opening the (Muslim) Women's Space: The Soviet Politics of Emancipation in the 1920s and 1930s," *Ethnicities* 20, no. 4 (2020), pp. 667–684. On female journalism before and after the 1917 revolutions see Azade Ayşe Rorlich, "Intersecting Discourses in the Press of the Muslims of Crimea, Middle Volga & Caucasus: The Woman Question and the Nation," in Feride Acar and Ayşe Günes-Ayata, eds., *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 143–161.

Writing for Whom? Reflections on Changing Purposes and Readerships

Presenting so many impressive female role models, did Fakhraddin write "Famous Women" for a female readership? In his "Afterword" to the 1904 book edition he emphasized that people can learn from biographies of both positive and negative characters,[45] implying he hoped that Muslimas would read the book and take inspiration from it. But throughout the book women are rarely addressed directly as readers; and in some of his comments Fakhraddin is clearly speaking to men, for instance when he warns of alcohol consumption[46] or speaks against husbands who terminate their marriages hastily and without due reflection.[47]

That Fakhraddin thought primarily of a male readership is most evident in his 1904 "Afterword": there he explains that if women are treated with respect, and if they are educated systematically, then they can attain all kinds of knowledge and perfection.[48] This was an appeal to men to educate women. In fact, women will only be able to read Fakhraddin's "Famous Women" after men stopped keeping them in ignorance:

> We are living in a time when many scholars[49] say that girls do not have to be sent to school, that they do not have to learn how to write; and these scholars even claim that they speak in the name of *shari'a*. In such a time, will a book like this [i.e., "Famous Women"] find a reader?
>
> There can be no doubt that there will be no reader in such a time. But who can be sure that this will go on endlessly? There might be a time when the scholars on the *minbar*[50] will fear nothing but God, and when they will not flatter anybody. Instead, they will call upon people saying: "If you want the progress of the nation, and if you still cherish the hope that the light of Islam will illuminate even the smallest hut, then teach your daughters! When they later become mothers there will be [well-educated] children!..."[51]

These rhetorical questions and answers reveal Fakhraddin's modernist and reformist insistence that Islam is the religion of science and rationality, and his critique of conservative imams who—as he claims—do not understand the

45 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, p. 412 (*khatima*).

46 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, pp. 188–189 (mentioning Jadhima, ruler of the pre-Islamic Arab kingdom of Hira, who gave his sister Raqash away during a drinking party).

47 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, pp. 179–180 (in the biography of a certain Dhilfa' from the Umayyad period).

48 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, p. 412.

49 Fakhraddin's formulation is "men who occupy the positions of scholars," implying these contemporary imams might not deserve to be regarded as scholars.

50 The *minbar* is the elevated wooden preacher's chair in the mosque.

51 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, pp. 415–416.

necessity of progress. The result is, in Fakhraddin's account, a miserable cultural and intellectual level of contemporary Muslim women. But improvement will come if the right measures are taken:

> Instead of [today's] women who can only talk about eating, drinking, and dressing, about "*qunaq* and *qalpaq*,"[52] there will be women who can discuss the holy duties of improving family life, of organizing the house administration, of educating the children, of keeping the home in good order. The girls who [today] waste their time with [folk] writings about "Tahir and Zuhra," with dream interpretation and similar [superstitions], will be replaced by girls who appreciate the reading of books about the foundations of teaching, about the system of education, about good morals and the fundamentals of social interaction and the purification of the mind. […] When that time comes, God willing, our book will no longer be deprived of readers, and people will want to take it into their hands.[53]

This was his vision of a bright Islamic future. Fakhraddin's demand that women actively engage with pedagogical literature is indicative of the broader *usul-i jadid* obsession with the adaptation of modern sciences for pious goals. Equally characteristic is that Fakhraddin placed his call for female education into the social Darwinist discourse of his time about national survival and progress:

> Women will achieve all perfections and learn all sciences if they are treated with respect and receive a systematic education. If a nation has well-educated women then its children will be knowledgeable and of high morals; they will love virtue and strive towards progress (*teraqqi*). For the unity [of the nation] and for serving the common weal they will sacrifice all their time; they will be loving the nation; they will be servants of knowledge, and in all affairs they will be energetic and courageous. These things are the spirit of a nation.[54]

The purpose of female education is to produce great men:

> Why is there today no new al-Farabi or Ibn Sina emerging from among the Muslims, why are there no new personalities like Bukhari, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn al-Athir, Awza'i, Malik, Abu Yusuf, Shaybani, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Shafi'i, Abu Hanifa, Ibn Mubarak, Sibawayh, Khalil, and Ibn Rushd? The answer cannot be that we are not living in the right time to produce a personality of the format of those mentioned. […] The real reason is […] that in the early epochs [of Islamic history] there were plenty of mothers who educated their children to become great personalities, but that in our time, such mothers have become extinct

52 Literally, "guest and [female?] headgear," implying women are above all busy with preserving the family's public image by exaggerated hospitality and fine dress.

53 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, p. 416.

54 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, p. 412.

> among the Muslims. If our time still had mothers able to apply the science of pedagogics to produce great men, then the Muslims would have personalities of a noble mind, and scholars with a pure heart and good character; they would have *mujaddid*s ["renewers" of Islam] and inventors who serve the world of mankind.[55]

It is of course telling that Fakhraddin ends his 1904 collection of female Muslim biographies with this list of outstanding *male* Muslim scholars of the distant past, presented as indications of what *males* might achieve in the future.[56] It does not seem to occur to him that female education might one day produce outstanding *female* philosophers, hadith scholars, jurisprudents, theologians, historians and linguists, ranking as high as the men from the early centuries of Islam that he mentioned in the quote above.

For after all, the perfect woman is in Fakhraddin's eyes a Muslima who does not challenge male excellence but, to the contrary, facilitates it. Women are called upon to engage with education only as long as they do not neglect their traditional tasks of serving the family, educating the children, and giving support to their husbands. From among the contemporary "Tatar" women biographies in his volume the image of a self-sacrificing woman is best reflected in Fakhraddin's entry about Zuhra Akchurina (Gasprinskaya, 1862–1903), the wife of the famous Crimean Tatar journalist and educator Ismail Gasprinskii (1851–1914, widely regarded as the founding-father of "Jadidism"). This is how Fakhraddin described Zuhra's role in the emergence and functioning of Gasprinskii's famous *Tarjuman* newspaper:

> [After having met Isma'il Bek Gasprinskii] Zuhra khanum understood his ideas and activities on the path towards the nation and education, and she started to believe that one day the drops coming from his pen would add up to a stream that sends its water into all four directions. So they married. As people have reported, from the point that *Tarjuman* started to appear in 1300/1883 Zuhra *khanum* became its first servant. From *Tarjuman*'s start she used to take care of the correspondence [with the customers] because she knew the Turkic dialect (*shive*) of the Volga-Urals Muslims better than Isma'il Bek. […] She spent all her wealth and property, she gave up her calm life, and she decided to devote her life to a person who had nothing of value but his pen; from this we see that she sacrificed herself for knowledge and education.[57]

This role model also comes back in many biographies that have nothing to do with Russia. Arguably, the Islamic archetype of the pious wife who does

55 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, pp. 412–413.

56 Equally revealing is that in an appendix to the 1904 book edition Fakhraddin offers his biographies of two great men, al-Suyuti and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, without any link to the issue of female education; *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, pp. 417–421.

57 *Mashhur khatunlar 1904*, pp. 209–211, here: 210; [RB 9, as "Zagira khanym"].

everything to support her husband's projects is Khadija bint Khuwaylid (d. 619), the wealthy trading woman of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca who became the prophet Muhammad's first wife. Khadija is of course already present in the 1904 version of Fakhraddin's "Famous Women," where her entry of five pages gave a factual account of her life before and with Muhammad. In the 1934 version Fakhraddin enlarged this original entry to 26 manuscript pages, making it the largest biography in the whole volume.[58] Like Zuhra Gasprinskaya, Khadija used her wealth to support her husband and gave him comfort. Fakhraddin stresses that when Muhammad was thrown into confusion by his first revelations, it was Khadija who brought him to the wise old Christian monk Waraqa b. Nawfal who, with his knowledge of the Holy Books, strengthened Muhammad's belief in his own revelation.[59] Khadija herself became the first person to accept Muhammad's message; as Fakhraddin explained, the fact that Muhammad married such an intelligent woman prepared the broader reception of his revelation,[60] and thus the victory of Islam.

Within "Famous Women" Fakhraddin designed his new biography of Khadija as a little opus in its own right, intended as his gift (*hädiyä*) to the young and pious female teachers of his time; as he formulated it, he wanted to provide "the mothers of the nation" with the biography of the "mother of the whole [Muslim] *umma*."[61] The coming of the Bolsheviks, however, thwarted these plans:

> But then we were suddenly hit by a catastrophic blow of fate (*dähshätli qaza'*), one that only a few people had predicted and that nobody had imagined even in their dreams. An eternal verdict (*äzäli bulghan ber hökem*) came into force: the people of Islam, oppressed and violated for centuries, saw all their desires shattered, all their hopes and ambitions destroyed. Even today it is impossible to describe this situation with words, to imagine it in your heart. It seems only in Paradise one will be able to fully describe this situation, for in Paradise there is no ……..[62]

Here Fakhraddin used thirteen dots as a placeholder for a word he would not spell out—was it *dinsiz kommunist*, "atheist communist"? At the same time he did little to camouflage whom he meant when he spoke of devils who destroy female morality, religion, and the nation:

> Most of those [young Muslimas] who were about to become the mothers of the nation […] were struck by a verdict of God (*qaza'-i ilahi*). The result is that today they are walking in the streets with their bodies half-naked, no different from the cannibals [of Africa] (*yämyämlärdän farqsïz räväshendä*), resembling

58 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934,* fols. 77a–89b.
59 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934,* fol. 88a.
60 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 82.
61 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934,* fol. 77a.
62 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 77a.

> men (*ärlär misalïnda*), and with men putting their arms around their shoulders. So [couples] walk around as if they were glued together. As the women are walking in this outfit, the devils say: "Only religions were strong enough to make sure that a subjected nation (*mäghlüb millät*) remains a nation; this is why we separated them from their religions. After this they will resemble the nation that subjected them (*ghalib millätkä tämässül itäjäklär*). We will stick to them!"[63]

The devils' words reflect a famous saying reported from the prophet Muhammad, "Whoever imitates a people is one of them," typically used in pamphlets against the acceptance of European dress or practices, and in particular against Muslim reformists. By appropriating this saying Fakhraddin in fact borrowed from the toolkit of his former Muslim adversaries who opposed Jadid cultural modernism!

Fakhraddin again failed to reach a female readership: "Those tasteless and nauseating young women whom we see today have no interest in a Khadija, or in any pious and kind woman."[64] In his manuscripts from the 1920s and 1930s he repeatedly expressed the idea that he was just writing for himself, and that the copying of his own old works just gave him consolation.[65] But he realized that very soon, also his published works from before 1917 would no longer be accessible to anyone. This fear is central to the new "Afterword" (*khatima*) that he produced for the 1934 manuscript. The original "Afterword" of the 1904 edition, with its optimistic vision of female education reviving the Muslim nation, was replaced by a new "Afterword" that spoke of the imminent erasure (*inqiraz*) of the Muslim nation as a whole.

The danger he saw was not physical annihilation but assimilation. As Fakhraddin argued, a people disappears from the face of the Earth not because its genealogical reproduction stops; rather, extinction occurs "when its line of transmission ceases, when its identity (*imtiyazï*) is lost, when its families are getting swallowed by others, and when they take over the names of others."[66] To survive, a people must maintain the customs of its forefathers, preserve their narratives and cherish their models—not necessarily in all details but definitely in its fundaments. This is all the more difficult when living under the dominance of an alien nation:

> A nation like ours—the Turks of the North (*shimal törekläre*)—is doomed (*mähküm*) to live among foreign nations with other religions and other ways of life; therefore the fundament [of our identity] is to preserve our language as well as the form of writing (*yazu räväshe*) that have come down to us from our forefathers, and also our religion.[67]

63 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 77a.

64 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 77b.

65 Cf. Bulgakov, "Znamenitye zhenshchiny," *Bel'skie prostory*, no. 1 (2008).

66 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 243ab.

67 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 243b.

Fakhraddin here formulated his vehement rejection of the Bolsheviks' campaign of replacing the Arabic alphabet for the Volga Tatar language by a new Latin script, launched in 1926.[68] In a similar manner Fakhraddin still refused to call his people "Tatars" or "Bashkirs"—the modern designations that the Bolsheviks used and prescribed, and that Fakhraddin rejected for historical and genealogical reasons (as he wrote elsewhere, the term "Tatars" refers to a pagan people from East Asia that in the 13th century subjected the Muslims of the Volga-Urals and brought them devastation).[69] The ethnonym that Fakhraddin employed in his works, "Northern Turks," emphasized the racial/linguistic and thus primordial basis that he assigned to the nation, and its being part of a broader family of Turkic nations. From a Bolshevik perspective this would clearly be seen as a token of anti-Soviet "Panturkism."

This primordial mindset contrasts with Fakhraddin's rather constructivist use of the concept of "cultural heritage" (*mirath*), as a combination of contents and forms that over time shaped the character of a particular nation:

> There can be no doubt that nations with the same social and political relations (*ijtimägi vä siyasi hälläre*) as our nation will inevitably [also] face extinction if they are cut off from the heritage (*mirath*) of their forefathers, that is, from their religions, languages and writing styles.[70]

Here the "Northern Turks" share the fate of other minority nations of Russia; with his remark that various minorities are characterized by similar social and political structures Fakhraddin briefly transcended his Islamic framework, adopting a sociological perspective instead. For all of them, the enforced change of the alphabet will lead to the obliteration of the national language as such, and thus to the erasure of historical memory:

> To give up one's language and to change the form of writing means to make the young and the future generations clueless about their national history; it makes them ignorant about the biographies of their forefathers and about events that have educational value; it makes them forget their religion and knowledge as well as their social activities and literary works. A person forced to grow up in ignorance of these matters and to mix with other [nations] will believe that he is one of them; and this will lead to the extinction of his own nation.[71]

68 For the dynamics leading to the imposition of the Latin alphabet for Kazan Tatar see Andreas Frings, *Die tatarische Schriftreform und das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (Mainzer Arbeitspapiere zur Geschichte Osteuropas 1/2004), pp. 17–29. Ten years later the Bolsheviks replaced the Latin alphabets for minority languages with Cyrillic variants.

69 On Fakhraddin's understanding of the national genealogy of the Volga-Urals Muslims see Michael Kemper, "From Regional Islamic Reform to Global Anti-colonialism? Jamaladdin al-Afghani and Russia's Muslims," *Journal for Central Asian History* 3, issue 2 (2024), pp. 296–326, here: pp. 318–320.

70 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 244a.

71 Ibid.

In this sense the historian/biographer, and thus Fakhraddin himself, is responsible for the preservation of the nation. History-writing has however become almost impossible under the Bolshevik regime:

> For peoples that are doomed to live under tyrannical governments like ours (*bezneng kebek möstäbädd hökümätläre*), and to suffer from all kinds of oppression, it is not a child's game to produce their national histories, and to compose independent works about the biographies of their famous men and women. […] In fact, writing [works of history and biography] is one way to save the nation from the catastrophe of extinction; and this message needs to be taught to our youth, needs to be instilled in them.[72]

For Fakhraddin, preserving the traditional way of writing, the native language, and the national history and cultural heritage, was all linked to religion. In his mind, Islam was the spirit of the nation, and there was no national survival without it:

> Religion has always been the spirit of the Muslim nation when it is living under an alien government that is professing another religion, or now atheism (*dinsizlik*). To sever this nation now from its religion, to accept an alien way of writing […] means to reach the hour that the nation will disappear. Only days remain to respect the lives of those who will come later.[73]

These notes reflect Fakhraddin's feeling of responsibility for the nation's future generations. While firmly grounded in Islamic language, his warnings of extinction by assimilation are therefore fundamentally different from the eschatological images about the imminent End of Times that also circulated among Russia's Muslims at that time.[74] In Fakhraddin's accounts we find none of the traditional narratives about the coming of the Dajjal or the Mahdi and the final battle before Judgment Day. Rather, Fakhraddin's reflections about the ongoing extinction of his nation remain firmly grounded in his professionalism as a historian and biographer, and in his modernist understanding of the rise and fall of historical nations.

Conclusion

While Fakhraddin's "Famous Women" has widely been recognized as an important source for the regional history of female Muslim education, the

72 Ibid.

73 *Mashhur khatunlar 1934*, fol. 244ab.

74 Iyuliya Guseva, "Musul'mane Volga-Ural'skogo regiona v ozhidanii kontsa tsveta: narrativy, aktory, i teksty 1920kh–1940-kh godov," *Istoricheskaya etnologiya* 9, no. 4 (2024), pp. 548–564; Al'frid K. Bustanov, "An Emotional History of Soviet Experience: Eschatology and the Great Terror, 1920s to 1930s," in Amieke Bouma and Michael Kemper, eds., *Socialism in One Room: Studies in Honor of Erik van Ree* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2022), pp. 161–190.

thoroughly Islamic framework in which Fakhraddin situated his discussion of women's education and female social activities have received less attention. A concentration on the relatively small number of "Tatar" biographies, while very valuable for regional social history, tends to obscure the circumstance that "Famous Women" has a truly global approach, and that it places Muslim regional identity into broader frames. We know that solidarity with the wider Muslim World was particular close to Fakhraddin's heart, and anti-colonial agendas can also be found in some of his earlier writings that escaped censor-ship.[75] It was the threatening climate of the Stalinist years that spurred him to put to paper his most outspoken rejection of the regime—at the end of his life, to be sure, but still with the risk that another house search would bring him and others into prison. Bolshevik repression made him assign a new purpose to the book that he had already published in 1904.

Our comparison of the 1904 edition with the unpublished manuscript of 1934 reveals Fakhraddin's change of priorities in the face of Bolshevik religious and nationality policies. At the turn of the century, his optimistic reformist agenda was to enlarge the space for Islamic female education; the hundreds of pious biographies from all over the world would serve as testimonies that this is possible and even desirable from the viewpoint of Islam. But the women of the past were not only presented as role models for contemporary Muslimas to emulate—they were above all to convince Muslim men that Islam has always been open to female educational, intellectual, artistic and professional engagement. Women must be knowledgeable so they can give a good education to their children, who will then bring the Muslim nation to new heights. Yet this can only happen if men—and in particular the conservative Muslim clergy—facilitate this process by educating their wives and daughters. Wrapped in this male-centered reformist discourse, Fakhraddin's original message was a very positive forecast.

In the 1934 manuscript this optimism is completely gone; in his new "Afterword" Fakhraddin did not even mention any call for female education anymore. Rather, he bemoaned what the Soviets had made of Muslim women—and he did that in a rather affective language. Sure, with the help of Shahar Sharaf he was able to enlarge his volume by more pious role models from Kazan area, but these women of the late imperial era—impressive as they were—were already a thing of the past: the girl schools of pious directors like Mahiruy Barudiyya, Labiba Husayniyya and Fatiha Aitova had all been closed many years before, and their pious transmission lines were discontinued.

In both versions of "Famous Women," Fakhraddin's perspective is limited to Islamic paradigms: he did not include any Muslim women who graduated, for example, from one of the Russian schools of the region, or who taught

75 Kemper, "From Regional Islamic Reform to Global Anti-colonialism?"

at one of the Russian-Tatar schools of the time.[76] To be sure, the 1904 edition still featured one Muslima who graduated from a Saint Petersburg Medicine School[77]—but tellingly, in the 1934 manuscript Fakhraddin had eliminated this entry. And while Fakhraddin had so much praise for Zuhra Gasprinskaya, the wife of the ground-breaking journalist and educator Ismail Gasprinskii, he remained silent about their daughter Shefiqa Gasprinskaya (1886–1975), all the while he must have known that Shefiqa edited *'Alam-i Nisvan* ("Women's World"), Russia's first Muslim women's journal devoted to education and morality (published in Crimea between 1906 and 1911, in close collaboration with her father's *Tarjuman*).[78] Perhaps Shefiqa's post-1917 political activism excluded her from Fakhraddin's Islamic framework.[79]

In both versions of the book, Fakhraddin formulated his expectation that his writings would find no readership: in 1904, because both women and men were not yet ready for appreciating his calls (or so he said), and in 1934 because he had no one to share his thoughts with (or so he wrote). In 1904 this trope of "writing for no-one" is of course a rhetorical device, as his book was primarily addressing a male Muslim readership that did exist, and that did appreciate his publications.[80] By 1934, however, Fakhraddin's notes indeed took the form of an ego-document written for himself—and perhaps for a distant posteriority. As we saw from his Khadija entry, in the absence of a reader he felt free to speak his mind. In his new "Afterword" he described the Bolsheviks as devils.

And devils they were. When Rida'addin Fakhraddin passed away in his home on 11 or 12 April 1936, the TsDUM muftiate had lost its popular figurehead. In subsequent weeks and months the NKVD arrested the remaining members of the Spiritual Board, including Fakhraddin's close collaborator Kashshaf Tardzhemani (died in prison in 1943) and the above-mentioned Shahar Sharaf (executed 17 June 1938). Most were accused of anti-Soviet Tatar or Bashkir nationalism, in addition to allegations that Mufti Fakhraddin and his chief co-workers had conspired to declare the self-dissolution of the Central

76 For instance, Fakhraddin does not offer an entry on Mahiruy Muzaffariyya, an imam's daughter who started teaching at the Tatar-Russian girl school in 1901 after her husband had lost his position as imam. Cf. Gabdrafikova, "Mogallima", pp. 304, 312 (and passim for more examples of female teachers that Fakhraddin did not include).

77 This is Raziyya khanum [Raziya Söläymanova/Kotlïbaeva] (*Mashhur khatunlar 1904,* p. 187). Her photo is reproduced in *Millät analarï* (inner photo section).

78 El'mira Abibullaeva, "Prichiny, povliyavshie na zakrytie zhurnala 'Alem-i nisvan' ('Zhenskii mir') (k 170-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya Ismaila Gasprinskogo)," *Krymskoe istoricheskoe obozrenie* 2 (2021), pp. 97–114.

79 L. Z. Chubukchieva, "Zhenskii vopros na Vserossiiskom musul'manskovm s"ezde v Moskve: po materialam lichnogo arkhiva Shefiki Gasprinskoi," *Uchenye zapiski Tavricheskoogo natsional'nogo universiteta im. V. I. Vernadskogo. Seriya 'Istoricheskie nauki"* 25, no. 1 (2012), pp. 199–208.

80 Rimma R. Kadymova, "Osobennosti vospriyatiya gendera, izlozhennye v trudakh Rizaetdina Fakhreddina," *Teoriya i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiya* 10 (2012), pp. 175–179.

Spiritual Muslim Board.[81] Also arrested was Fakhraddin's son 'Abdarrahman, who died in prison later in 1936; another son, 'Abdalahad, was executed in September 1938. Mukhlisa Bubi was arrested in November 1937, and killed on 23 December. [82]

81 Bekkin, *People of Reliable Loyalty… ,* pp. 165–169.

82 Cf. Rävil Utäbay-Kärimi, "Dähshätle däver korbannarÿ," *Gasïrlar awazï/Ekho vekov* no. 1–2 (1996), pp. 174–180.