

CREATING A TATAR CAPITAL:
NATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND LINGUISTIC SPACE IN KAZAN, 1920-1941

Gary Guadagnolo

A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History.

Chapel Hill
2016

Approved by:

Donald J. Raleigh

Louise McReynolds

Susan Pennybacker

Chad Bryant

Eren Tasar

© 2016
Gary Guadagnolo
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

Gary Guadagnolo: Creating a Tatar Capital: National, Cultural, and Linguistic Space in Kazan, 1920-1941

(Under the direction of Donald J. Raleigh)

This dissertation examines the introduction and implementation of Soviet nationalities policies among Russians and Tatars in the city of Kazan, an important cultural, educational, and industrial capital in the heart of Soviet Russia. Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the creation of the Tatar Republic in 1920, Kazan functioned as a laboratory in which Party-state authorities experimented with incorporating national minorities into the new socialist society under construction. Soviet nationalities policies allowed Tatars to pursue educational, political, and social opportunities denied them under the tsarist regime. Initiatives such as *korenizatsiia* (indigenization) and the “Realization of the Tatar Language” sought to bring national minorities into the mainstream of Soviet life by recruiting and training them to work in local Party-state apparatuses, industrial enterprises, and academic institutions. Supporting native cadres would make Soviet power seem indigenous, rather than something imposed by a new form of Russian colonialism. While these endeavors constantly ran into various roadblocks, over time they did attain some success in promoting indigenous minorities into positions of authority within the local Party-state apparatus, giving them an active role in shaping their own system of rule.

Speaking to the fields of nationalities studies and urban history, this dissertation shows how residents of Kazan navigated ethnolinguistic differences and political changes in the physical and cultural spaces around them in order to create their own sense of belonging within a

new kind of city, a Tatar capital whose public spaces reflected its diverse population. The first three chapters analyze the education, training, and employment of Tatars in schools, universities, and factories. The last three chapters discuss the evolution of Tatar culture, namely its expression in theater, architecture, and public festivals, as a product of I. V. Stalin's famous dictum that Soviet minorities' culture be "national in form and socialist in content." Ultimately, I argue that urban space mediated how residents experienced, articulated, and responded to Soviet nationalities policies, leading to a new understanding of the place and purpose of Tatars and their traditions in Kazan.

To EV, WD, DJR, AA,
and many other teachers and mentors
who guided me along the way

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Despite all the hours I have spent staring at a computer screen alone in my office, I have no doubt that research is a fundamentally communal process. A host of friends, colleagues, and advisors sustained me as I labored over this project. It is my pleasure to thank many of these people for their roles in bringing this dissertation to fruition. I am particularly grateful to my mentor, Donald J. Raleigh, for his unflagging encouragement and support over the past seven years, manifested in comments on hundreds of drafts of various articles, chapters, and grant proposals, as well as a pat on the back or a kick in the rear, depending on what I needed at the time. I can say conclusively that working with Don was a gift like no other, and I am a better scholar and person for it. I am likewise thankful for the rest of my dissertation committee—Louise McReynolds, Chad Bryant, Susan Pennybacker, and Eren Tasar—and the opportunities they gave me to learn from their expertise. I must thank too other faculty across a number of institutions for their contributions, big and small, to this project: Mustafa Tuna, Michael Tsin, Ben Eklof, Julie deGraffenried, Wallace Daniel, Michael Long, and Betsy Vardaman.

Many generous sources of funding enabled me to conduct research for this dissertation, including the New York Public Library Short Term Fellowship, Foreign Language Area Studies and Title VIII language study awards for Russian and Tatar, the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Award, and the Title VIII Research Scholar and Combined Research and Language Training Programs, supported by the U.S. State Department, Title VIII Program for Research and Training on Eastern Europe and Eurasia, and administered by

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS. I appreciate in particular how these resources enabled me to connect with many scholars and colleagues in Russia who profoundly shaped my research, most notably A. A. Sal'nikova and S. Iu. Malysheva, my advisors at Kazan Federal University; I. I. Khanipova and A. G. Galliamova from the Institute of History of the Republic of Tatarstan's Academy of Sciences; and A. Sh. Iusupova, G. A. Nabiullina, E. N. Denmukhametova, and K. S. Fatkhullova, my wonderful Tatar language instructors. Special thanks goes to the extremely supportive archivists and staff at the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Central State Archive of Historical-Political Documentation, the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books at Kazan Federal University's Lobachevsky Library, the Archive of the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, and the Museum of History at Kazan State Architectural and Construction University. In particular, the resourcefulness and knowledge of L. V. Khuzeeva and L. Z. Khasanshina—not to mention daily tea breaks with them—proved so crucial to carrying out my work during long days in the archives.

Wonderful friendships, new and old alike, helped to buoy me during many research stints in Russia. I can only say the biggest *spasibo* (and *rakhmat*) to Ildar and Aygul Ayupov, Gena and Fatima Andreev, Anton Novik, Simon Kravchenko, Sergei Kazakovtsev, Aidar Gatin, Marat and El'vira Bagautdinov, Alina Usmanova, Artem Krest'ianikov, Nastya Fedotova, and Denis Kolesnikov, who opened their homes (and banyas) to me, demonstrated impressive patience as I stumbled through and eventually refined my Russian and Tatar language skills, provided great insights into that elusive “Russian soul,” and became lifelong friends. Many colleagues and friends at UNC helped to make Chapel Hill a home for many years and comprised a wonderful community of scholars, including Emily Baran, Mike Paulauskas, Dan Giblin, Stephen Riegg,

Adrienne Jacobs, and Audra Yoder. Greg Mole helped me keep local coffee shops in business as we wrote our dissertations and has been a wonderful friend since we first arrived on campus.

Beyond the walls of the university, many friends and family, too many to name, have cheered me on along this journey. Fellow scholar Trey Guinn deserves credit for keeping me laughing and reminding me why I became so passionate about higher education in the first place. My parents Tony and Beverly have supported me in every possible way since I first began this journey with a trip to Russia in 2006; finally introducing them to the people and places in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kazan that have so profoundly influenced me was a real highlight of my graduate school career. Last but not least, I must thank my wife Catherine (the Great). Her love, patience, and dedication endured many months apart as I finished my research in Russia and always kept me grounded and joyful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Kazan: Gateway to Empire	4
Historiography	16
Framework	23
CHAPTER 1: BETWEEN RHETORIC AND REALITY: LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN KAZAN SCHOOLS	26
Imperial Legacies.....	27
Muslim Education in the Soviet Context.....	33
Bolsheviks and Native Language Education	40
Russian Language and Tatar Schools	47
Russification Revisited?.....	54
Conclusion	58
CHAPTER 2: SEPARATE BUT EQUAL? NATIONALITY POLICIES IN KAZAN VUZY.....	61
Fleeing the Shadow of Empire.....	63
Workers' Faculties	70
A Pedagogical Path.....	76
Korenizatsiia and Vydvyzhenie in the Cultural Revolution	82
Sultangalievists and Chauvinists.....	87
Terror in Kazan VUZy.....	94

Conclusion	100
CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL DIFFERENCE ON THE FACTORY FLOOR: KORENIZATSIIA IN PRACTICE AND PERIL	
FLOOR: KORENIZATSIIA IN PRACTICE AND PERIL	104
Workers' Spaces	109
Korenizatsiia: Threats and Opportunities	115
Taking Advantage of One's Nationality	125
"Act Like a Bolshevik, Not a Bureaucrat!"	131
Conclusion	141
CHAPTER 4: STAGING TATAR REALITY: KAZAN'S TATAR DRAMATIC AND OPERA THEATERS	
CHAPTER 4: STAGING TATAR REALITY: KAZAN'S TATAR DRAMATIC AND OPERA THEATERS	147
The Birth of Tatar Theater	149
Realism in Old and New Repertoires.....	159
Socialist Realism and Terror on the Tatar Stage	168
Tatar Opera and Folk Culture	178
Conclusion	183
CHAPTER 5: FANTASIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION: NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN KAZAN AND MOSCOW	
CHAPTER 5: FANTASIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION: NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN KAZAN AND MOSCOW	186
Big Kazan, Big Problems.....	188
The Kazan Palace of Culture	194
Collapsing Fantasies	201
National Architecture and a New East.....	208
Conclusion	220
CHAPTER 6: THE <i>MAIDAN</i> IN KAZAN: SABANTUI, PHYSICAL FITNESS, AND NATIONAL CULTURE	
CHAPTER 6: THE <i>MAIDAN</i> IN KAZAN: SABANTUI, PHYSICAL FITNESS, AND NATIONAL CULTURE	222
Historical Roots: From China to Kazan.....	223

Red <i>Maidan</i>	227
Sports, Military Preparedness, and Health.....	233
Sabantui and National Culture	246
The Missing Festival.....	249
Conclusion	256
CONCLUSION.....	259
BIBLIOGRAPHY	271

INTRODUCTION

V. I. Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik Party and head of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), died on January 21, 1924. In the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR), one of many administrative units in the USSR created along national lines, Party officials announcing Lenin's death lamented that Tatars, one of the largest minorities in the country, had "lost the one who had freed them from centuries of national oppression and had given them the opportunity to freely build their lives on an equal footing with all the working people of the great USSR."¹ Such a momentous tragedy required a commensurate public response, an outpouring of both grief and celebration for the eminent revolutionary. In the TASSR, a Commission to Commemorate Lenin considered possibilities for honoring the fallen leader, such as erecting a statue of him; founding hospitals, daycares, and orphanages in his name; and organizing campaigns to improve literacy among workers and peasants.²

The commission also hoped to eulogize Lenin's role in freeing Tatars and other national minorities from the "prison-house of nations" that characterized tsarist rule. In searching for a worthy cause, the commission's gaze fell to a strange monument on the left bank of the Kazanka River in the heart of Kazan, the capital of the Tatar Republic: a six-story Egyptian pyramid with Grecian porticos on each side, topped with a golden cross. Designed by St. Petersburg architect N. F. Alferov and built in 1823 during a wave of Russian patriotism following the defeat of Napoleon, the Monument to the Victory over Tatars celebrated Russia's defeat of the Kazan

¹ Natsional'nyi arkhiv Respubliki Tatarstan (NART), f. R-732, op. 1, d. 514, ll. 4-5.

² NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 518, ll. 20, 22, 34-35.

Khanate in 1552 and its annexation by the expanding state of Muscovy. A chapel inside the monument served as a shrine to soldiers who died in the battle and even held some of their preserved bones.³ While the Bolsheviks closed the chapel in 1918, the pyramid itself remained intact. Local administrators found its presence in the city offensive, an ongoing reminder of the “brutal, repressive policies of the tsars toward non-Russian nationalities.” The TASSR Central Executive Committee concluded that “it is impossible to leave a monument to the victory over Tatars in the middle of Kazan” and proposed remaking the pyramid into something more befitting for the era: a Monument to the Friendship of the Peoples.⁴ In June 1924, the Commission to Commemorate Lenin expressed its support for this plan.⁵

During a joint memorial service for Lenin and a celebration of the fourth anniversary of the founding of the Tatar Republic on June 25, 1924, thousands of workers gathered on the banks of the Kazanka, vocalizing their desire for the Monument to the Victory over Tatars to undergo a facelift. Pledging their intent to honor Lenin by “maintaining the brotherhood of nationalities living within the USSR,” the workers declared, “Let this monument, built upon the bones of workers and peasants for the glory of tsars and capitalism, now serve as a banner of peace and freedom. Let this monument be a beacon for all Eastern peoples on the path to freedom!”⁶

Blueprints for the renovated monument indicate that architects adopted this same vision for transfiguring it from a symbol of national suffering to a celebration of the brotherhood of Soviet peoples. All tsarist and Christian symbols would be removed. Where the cross once stood

³ A. Efimova, *Pamiatnik voimam, pavshim pri vziatii Kazani v 1552 godu* (Kazan: Gosudarstvennyi muzei TASSR, 1954); G. V. Frolov, *Khram-pamiatnik ubiennym voimam pri vziatii Kazani v 1552 g.* (Kazan: Kazanskii arkhiepiskop, 2005); and NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 700, ll. 2-3.

⁴ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 519, l. 12.

⁵ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 478, ll. 2, 5; and “Vmesto pamiatnika poraboshcheniia–pamiatnik sodruzhestva,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 27, 1924, 2.

⁶ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 519, l. 7.

at the top of the pyramid, a new spire would shoot into the sky, topped with a five-pointed red star, evocative of a lighthouse guiding the Eastern nationalities to freedom under the banner of communism. At the base of the spire would stand figures of two workers, a Russian and a Tatar, shaking hands. Below them an inscription would read, “To the Friendship of Peoples.”⁷ Local newspapers heralded the design and circulated it widely; it also graced the cover of the Tatar Republic’s official government calendar for 1925.

The project, however, languished as local administrators debated with Moscow’s Commission for the Preservation of Monuments about the efficacy of structural changes to a relic of early nineteenth-century Russian architecture.⁸ In the fall of 1924, the TASSR’s Communal Construction Department determined that the original blueprints had been poorly conceived from an architectural perspective and should be scrapped.⁹ To find a suitable replacement, the Commission to Commemorate Lenin decided to hold a design competition.¹⁰ Guidelines suggested that submissions should “express the idea of the unity of the peoples and symbolize the torch of communism for the East.” Architects were encouraged to use the form of a lighthouse but preserve the existing structure of the monument as much as possible.¹¹ Well into 1925, before the competition even officially began, administrators continued to squabble about building materials, funding, and other issues.¹² After massive floods in the spring of 1926 completely covered the pyramid, many seemed content with forgetting about the project

⁷ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 519, ll. 3, 26.

⁸ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 519, ll. 8, 10, 12, 27.

⁹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 515, l. 9; and “V prezidiume Gorodskogo soveta: O pamiatnika na r. Kazanke,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, November 20, 1924, 3.

¹⁰ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 515, l. 8.

¹¹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 515, l. 10.

¹² “Pamiatnik sodruzhestva narodov,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 15, 1925, 3.

altogether. While the TASSR Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) briefly revived plans for the monument's renovation in the late 1930s, they did not go anywhere.¹³ Decades of neglect left the monument in a state of “complete collapse,” according to a Narkompros report from 1936, and covered in pornographic graffiti.¹⁴

Creating a Tatar Capital: National, Cultural, and Linguistic Space in Kazan, 1920-1941, uses Kazan as a case study for exploring the extent to which the nationalities policies envisioned by Lenin and I. V. Stalin (1924-53) for managing the multiethnic Soviet state got off the ground—or, if like the Friendship of the Peoples monument described above, they remained unrealized, amounting to little more than words on paper. I argue that, following the Bolshevik Revolution, Kazan functioned as a laboratory in which Party-state authorities experimented with incorporating national minorities into Soviet society. The new regime envisioned cities as crucibles for reshaping its citizens, and its leaders sought to create physical environs that advanced this objective. As Tatars assimilated into the Soviet system, Kazan was transformed into a regional capital more inclusive and representative of its non-Russian population than in the prerevolutionary era. Of course, making Kazan Soviet required remodeling people as well as space. I therefore consider attempts to influence how locals worked, studied, relaxed, and interacted with each other across ethnolinguistic boundaries.

Kazan: Gateway to Empire

In 1552, Tsar Ivan the Terrible (1547-84) annexed the Kazan Khanate, a successor state to the Golden Horde, marking the first step in the imperial expansion of Muscovy, a predecessor to the Russian Empire. From this moment forward, Tatars—the largest of the ethnic minorities in

¹³ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 752, ll. 1-10.

¹⁴ Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskoi dokumentatsii Respubliki Tatarstan (TsGA IPD RT), f. 15, op. 4, d. 283, l. 126.

the Volga River region—found themselves on the frontlines of empire. As the state encountered ethnic and religious differences while expanding into the Urals, Siberia, the Far East, and Central Asia, authorities grew increasingly aware of the importance of understanding and governing Russia’s ethnically diverse population. The tsars established religious, educational, and administrative infrastructure in Kazan to serve as a base of operations for integrating non-Russian, non-Orthodox subjects into Russian state and society. Yet, in spite of a number of efforts to convert many of the minority groups of the Volga region to Christianity, Tatars remained Muslims. Moreover, the Great Reforms of Alexander II (1855-81) in the 1860s and 1870s opened opportunities for Tatars to become involved in new political, social, and civic institutions. By the late nineteenth century, a cohort of progressive intellectuals began discussing the idea of a Tatar nation. These conversations extended beyond Kazan to include coreligionists in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Ottoman Empire. Following the 1905 Russian Revolution, some Tatars even began agitating for political autonomy from autocratic rule; this naturally drew the ire and suspicion of tsarist authorities. Russian socialists, including Lenin and the Bolsheviks, looked to harness the nationalities’ discontent.¹⁵

¹⁵ For the history of prerevolutionary Kazan, see Matthew P. Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia, 1552-1671* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012); Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); and David Schimmelpennick van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010). For the rise of a Tatar elite and its engagement with nationalism, see I. K. Zagidullin, *Tatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2014); L. M. Sverdlova, *Na perekrestke torgovykh putei* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1991); Radik Salikhov, *Tatarskaia burzhuaziia Kazani i natsional’nye reformy vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX v.* (Kazan: Master Lain, 2001); Diliara Usmanova, *Musul’manskaia fraktsiia i problemy “svobody sovesti” v Gosudarsvennoi Dume Rossii, 1906-1917* (Kazan: Izdatel’stvo Master Lain, 1999); and I. R. Tagirov, *Ocherki istorii Tatarstana i tatarskogo naroda, XX veka* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1999). For the history of other Muslims in the Russian Empire, see: Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Hasidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Paul Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia’s Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Werth, *The Tsar’s Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Allen J. Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2001); and

European Marxists, including Lenin, Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, and Rosa Luxemburg, had widely debated the “national question” since the early twentieth century. Only following the October Revolution, as national factions fought for their share of the land, economic resources, and political power up for grabs in the wake of the collapse of the Russian Empire, did they fully comprehend its relevance. On both sides of 1917, “internationalists” within the Bolshevik Party, such as Georgii Piatakov and Nikolai Bukharin, argued that nationalism, as a byproduct of capitalism, would wither away following a socialist revolution. Lenin and Stalin disagreed. In his 1913 article “Marxism and the National Question,” Stalin articulated his support for the right of nations to self-determination. In basic agreement on the emerging policy, Lenin and Stalin held that self-determination would ultimately help class distinctions emerge as backward nations developed under the watchful gaze of the Party-state. Moreover, national self-determination served as a powerful slogan that helped the Bolsheviks recruit support for their cause and ultimately win the Russian Civil War (1917-22).¹⁶

Throughout much of the former Russian Empire, Lenin and Stalin supported the formation of national territories in which primarily rural, non-Russian ethnic groups with various national, religious, and linguistic traditions would live alongside Russians. On May 27, 1920, Lenin, chairman of the All-Russian Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom), and M. I. Kalinin, chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (TsIK), signed a decree authorizing the creation of the Tatar Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic. One month later, on June 25, the Kazan Soviet of Workers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Deputies transferred power to the Temporary Revolutionary Committee of the TASSR, marking the official birth of the

Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-24* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 7-19.

republic within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). This concluded a tumultuous three years in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution during which various factions of Volga Tatars, many the political heirs of prerevolutionary nationalists, endeavored to forge their own autonomous political unit by applying the same principles of national self-determination espoused by the Bolsheviks. Several attempts to accomplish this objective between 1917 and 1920 had failed, including the short-lived Idel-Ural State and Tatar-Bashkir Republic. A power play by Bashkir nationalists in the waning months of the Civil War convinced Stalin, then commissar of nationalities, to approve the formation of the Bashkir ASSR in March 1920 in exchange for Bashkir support against anti-Bolshevik forces. This effectively ended the vision of many Tatar nationalists to establish and administer a large autonomous state in central Russia made up of the region's many Turko-Tatar ethnic groups. With the establishment of the TASSR later that year, a new era of Soviet rule began for Tatars.¹⁷

The Tatar ASSR comprised territories of the former Kazan, Ufa, Samara, Viatka, and Simbirsk provinces of the Russian Empire. In 1920, the population of the republic approached 2.8 million people, of which Tatars made up 55 percent, Russians 37 percent, and other national groups almost 9 percent. The vast majority of the population, 92 percent, lived in the countryside. According to figures from 1924, of the 8 percent residing in urban centers, 67 percent lived in Kazan, the capital of the republic. That year, the population of Kazan stood at 158,000; the second-largest city, Chistopol, had only 15,934 inhabitants. The national makeup of residents in cities and the countryside also differed greatly. In 1920, the urban population comprised 75 percent Russians, 22 percent Tatars, and 3 percent others; the rural population was

¹⁷ For more on the tumultuous development of nationalities policies during this era, see Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*, 29-107. For the history of the failed attempts at statehood in Kazan, see I. R. Tagirov, *Ocherki istorii Tatarstana i tatarskogo naroda, XX veka* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1999).

made up of 55 percent Tatars, 37 percent Russians, and 8 percent others. Although this would change over the next twenty years, such imbalances between Russian and Tatars were reflected in almost all other areas of life. For example, in 1924, the literacy rate was 38 percent among Russians and 22 percent among Tatars.¹⁸

The Tatar Republic was noteworthy too for its high turnover among the upper echelons of Party-state functionaries. Consistent with a practice prevalent in many of the Soviet Union's national republics, Moscow cycled individuals through top Party positions every few years to prevent any one official from establishing something akin to a local fiefdom. Within the TASSR, though, political conflict between various factions, often divided along national lines, prompted even more shuffling of bureaucrats than usual. In its first five years, the TASSR went through six Oblast Committee (Obkom) first secretaries, the top position within the local Party apparatus. Overall, between 1920 and 1940, fourteen individuals served as the Obkom first secretary, earning Kazan notoriety in Moscow for its political strife. Notably, not a single Tatar served in this role until after the Great Patriotic War. In contrast, all nine heads of the TASSR Sovnarkom, the highest government and executive authority in the republic, were Tatars during this period. The Central Executive Committee of the TASSR, ostensibly the main legislative body in the Soviet system that oversaw the republic's elected councils (soviets), was also led exclusively by Tatars. This national delineation only exacerbated beliefs, prevalent in the early 1920s, that Russians controlled the Party apparatus, whereas Tatars ran the state. Over time, Tatars achieved greater representation within the local Party: whereas in 1922, Tatars accounted for less than one

¹⁸ For these figures and others, see: V. M. Ermolaev, "Demograficheskii ocherk Tatarskoi Respubliki," in N. I. Vorob'ev and G. G. Ibragimov, eds., *Materialy po izucheniiu Tatarstana (Sbornik statei)* (Kazan: Biuro kraevedeniia pri akademicheskome tsentre TNKP, 1925), 2:113-31; N. B. Vekslin, ed., *Ekonomiko-geograficheskii atlas Avtomnoi Tatarskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Sovetskoi Respubliki* (Kazan: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo TSSR, 1926), 1:7; and M. R. Mustafin, *Geografiia naseleniia naselennykh punktov Tatarstana* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazan, 1993), 14-20.

of every four Bolsheviks in the TASSR, by 1941, Tatars made up 44 percent of the republic's 38,000 Party members.¹⁹ Still, the ongoing rise and fall of functionaries throughout this period, and pervasive distrust between Russian and Tatar factions, contributed to an unstable political atmosphere, particularly as debates regarding national rights raged on.²⁰ What did the future hold for Tatar cultural traditions, principally language and religion? Would the promotion of Tatars into Party-state and industrial positions come at the expense of Russians? How could Tatars respond to, or even avenge, centuries of subjugation under Russian rule? All of these issues, and more, were sources of ongoing deliberation in Kazan.

During the Twelfth Party Congress, held in April 1923, and a special Central Committee conference in June of that year, Stalin laid out the definitive content of Soviet nationalities policies. The self-proclaimed “master” of the nationalities question, given his role as commissar of nationalities and one of the leading theorists on the question in the prerevolutionary era, Stalin declared the necessity of allowing minority ethnic groups to establish some forms of nationhood, such as national territories, languages, elites, and cultures, in order to overcome backwardness under the auspices of the Soviet regime. According to Stalin, all modernizing nationalities would traverse these steps while developing what eventually would become an international socialist culture. In the meantime, the Bolsheviks would guide these forms of nationhood in a way that supported a centralized, Moscow-based state and economy bereft of any expressions of separatism that might threaten to break up the Soviet Union. To this end, Stalin announced the policy of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization), which would help bring national minorities into the

¹⁹ V. G. Sarkin, N. A. Subaev, F. S. Khabibullina, and F. S. Filimonov, eds., *Partiinaia organizatsiia Tatarii v tsifrakh i dokumentakh, 1917-1977 gg.* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1978), 47.

²⁰ For some sense of these political debates, see: V. G. Chebotareva, *Natsional'naia politika Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 1925-1938 gg.* (Moscow: Moskovskii dom natsional'nostei, 2008), 337-92; and Z. G. Garipova, *Kazan': Obshchestvo, politika, kul'tura (1917-1941)* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Magarif, 2004), 11-25.

mainstream of Soviet life by recruiting and training them to work in local Party-state apparatuses, industrial enterprises, and academic institutions. Building up native cadres through *korenizatsiia* would make Soviet power seem indigenous, rather than something imposed by a new form of Russian colonialism.²¹

As initially formulated, *korenizatsiia* would come at the expense of Russians. Lenin had long warned that Russians risked relapsing into exploitative “Great Russian chauvinism” reminiscent of the imperial era if left unchecked. He saw local expressions of anti-Russian nationalism as a historically justifiable response to the colonialism and oppression of the tsarist regime and believed that actively promoting the rights of minorities would help to rebuild trust between the nationalities. In fact, the primary conflict between Lenin and Stalin over nationalities policies concerned this issue. While discussing in 1922 the structure of the emerging Soviet state, Lenin proposed a formal union of equals among the independent Soviet republics, namely the RSFSR, Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Transcaucasian Federation. Stalin, however, argued that the RSFSR should absorb these republics, as it had done with the Tatar ASSR. Lenin subsequently rebuffed Stalin’s treatment of national minorities and began to spar with him over nationalities policies in the Caucasus, where Stalin and his lieutenants, namely Sergo Ordzhonikidze, had brutally crushed anti-Bolshevik resistance among Georgian socialists. Lenin suspected that such tactics would provoke resistance to the Russian-dominated center. As Jeremy Smith has explained, “Such behaviors and attitudes not only threatened to alienate the non-Russians, but would lose the Soviets the respect and inspiration which Lenin saw as essential to his policy of spreading the revolution internationally.” Owing to his failing health, Lenin never

²¹ *Dvenadtsati s’ezd RKP(b), 17-25 apreliia goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1968); B. F. Sultanbekov, ed., *Tainy natsional’noi politiki TsK RKP: Chetvertoe soveshchanie TsK RKP s otvetstvennymi rabotnikami natsional’nykh respublik i oblastei v g. Moskve 9-12 iunia 1923 g.: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Insan, 1992); Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*.

had a chance to confront Stalin directly. Nonetheless, in a series of deathbed “testaments,” Lenin criticized chauvinistic attitudes evident among Stalin and others in dealing with non-Russian regions and called for greater support for the use of national languages and self-rule within national republics.²²

Lenin’s final intervention into the political fray likely emboldened delegates from national republics and autonomous units at the special Central Committee conference in June 1923 to pressure Stalin to amend his theses on Soviet nationalities policies, first formulated earlier in the year at the Twelfth Party Congress. The revised version condemned any mention of the superiority of Russian culture, committed Moscow to preferential industrial investment in non-Russian regions, assured the independence and permanence of national republics, and guaranteed the rights of national languages. In an apparent concession, Stalin for the first time began speaking of Great Russian chauvinism as a “greater danger” than local nationalism.²³

At the same time, Stalin demonstrated in no uncertain terms the consequences of nationalism if it threatened the integrity of the Soviet state. During the Twelfth Party Congress, Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev (1892-1940), once the highest-ranking Tatar in the Party as the head of the Muslim commissariat within the commissariat of nationalities, critiqued Stalin’s vision for Soviet nationalities policies. Sultan-Galiev saw the Bolshevik Revolution as the beginning of a movement that would achieve worldwide social justice, especially in the East, where millions remained under the oppressive yoke of colonialism. He believed that Tatars could lead this drive for liberation by marshaling nationalism as a tool for advancing socialism and objected to Moscow shying away from this goal. Sultan-Galiev also spoke out against the proposed structure

²² Jeremy Smith, *Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 61-69. Quote on p. 68.

²³ Sultanbekov, *Tainy natsional’noi politiki TsK RKP*, 99-106.

of the Soviet Union, particularly the relegation of republics such as the Tatar ASSR to a lower hierarchical position within the RSFSR. He instead insisted that they be given more autonomy and enter directly into the Soviet Union.²⁴

Increasingly disdainful of deviation, Stalin did not respond favorably to Sultan-Galiev's public rebuke. He rejected the devolution of federal powers to the RSFSR's national republics, emphasizing that power should remain in Moscow. Stalin believed he possessed exceptional expertise in the nationalities question, and he guarded this domain closely. As a result of his insubordination, Sultan-Galiev was arrested in May 1923 on charges of orchestrating a pan-Turkic nationalist organization dedicated to overthrowing the Soviet Union. At the special Central Committee conference called by Stalin in June, delegates listened to purported evidence of Sultan-Galiev's betrayal and banished him from the Party. Former comrades called for a purge of all those associated with *Sultangalievshchina* (Sultangalievism), a term that became shorthand for the worst kind of anti-Soviet nationalism. Sultangalievism proved a terribly advantageous rhetorical device for castigating opponents as nationalists. This new line filtered all the way down to the local level: at a TASSR Party conference held in Kazan in July 1923, delegates rejected Sultangalievism as a threat to the stability of the Tatar ASSR and inconsistent with Party policy on the nationalities question. Many of Sultan-Galiev's compatriots in the Tatar Republic fell from grace and were removed from power.²⁵

²⁴ For the voluminous writings of Sultan-Galiev on these issues, as well as useful introductory essays, see: B. F. Sultanbekov, ed., *Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev: Stat'i, vystupleniia, dokumenty* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1992); I. G. Gizzatullin and D. R. Sharafutdinov, eds., *Izbrannye trudy* (Kazan: Gasyr, 1998); and D. R. Sharafutdinov and B. F. Sultanbekov, eds., *Neizvestnyi Sultan-Galiev: Rassekrechennye dokumenty i materialy* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2002).

²⁵ For more on the larger political context of Sultan-Galiev, see Gary Guadagnolo, "'Who am I?': Revolutionary Narratives and the Production of the Minority Self in the Early Soviet Era," *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 2, no. 1 (2013): 69-93.

While this dissertation is not another project on Sultan-Galiev, he undoubtedly looms large in the history of this region and nationalities policies in general. The Party resurrected the rhetoric of Sultangalievism in conjunction with three major waves of terror (1928-1930, 1932-1933, and 1937-1938) that targeted national elites. These campaigns paralleled key moments of transformation for Soviet economic, cultural, and social policies. For example, the 1928 attack on Sultangalievism fit well with Stalin's "great break" of 1928-32, which introduced rapid industrialization, collectivization, and centralization through the First Five-Year Plan. The concurrent cultural revolution sought to create a truly proletarian culture by destroying everything perceived as backward and incompatible with socialism.²⁶ Highly publicized campaigns against "Sultangalievists" criticized their devotion to Islam and desire to unite all of Eurasia's Turko-Tatars in one anti-Soviet state. During the industrialization drives of the 1920s and 1930s, the possibility of "backward" Muslims hindering progress presented a threat—real or imagined—that the Bolsheviks could not ignore.²⁷ Accusations of Sultangalievism primarily affected Tatars and Bashkirs in the Volga region, though others in Central Asia fell victim too.²⁸ Purges eliminated those the Party perceived as opposed not just to Soviet nationalities policies, but to modernization writ large. While my dissertation does not concentrate on Stalinist terror, it is important to note that purges against alleged Tatar nationalists, accompanied by the language

²⁶ Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed. *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978). For more on the usefulness of the category of cultural revolution, see Michael David-Fox, "What is Cultural Revolution?" *Russian Review* 58, no. 2 (1999): 181-201.

²⁷ Adeeb Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in Practice," in Elisabeth Özdalga, ed., *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 220.

²⁸ Mere association with Sultan-Galiev often provided pretext for arrest. For one of many examples of this, consider the case of Khadi Atlasov, which resulted in the arrest of one hundred seven people in 1937 for allegedly belonging to a counterrevolutionary organization coordinated by Atlasov. See A. L. Litvin, *Zapret na zhizn'* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1993).

of Sultangalievism, permeated the 1920s and 1930s and spiked whenever the Soviet Union embarked on major policy shifts, such as at the beginning and end of the cultural revolution.²⁹

Language is another key theme that surfaces throughout my dissertation. Stalin believed that language had a critical role to play in Soviet nationalities policies. He claimed it served as an objective, primordial, and easily comprehensible marker of national identity. Stalin even endorsed policies bolstering the legitimacy of such “speech communities” down to the level of republics, regions, and even villages. The 1923 Constitution of the USSR, for example, mandated that resolutions adopted by the Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom be published in all languages used in the constituent republics, and a 1926 decree from the USSR Central Executive Committee recognized both Russian and Tatar as the official languages of the TASSR. By that point, the Tatar Republic had been proclaiming the equality of Russian and Tatar for several years, reflecting the ambitions of local elites in Kazan—in and outside of the Party, Tatar and Russian alike—for enacting language reform of their own design. Significantly, the Tatar Republic was the first among all autonomous regions of the RSFSR to adopt legislation validating the authority of its titular nationality’s native tongue as a state language.³⁰

As described in the chapters that follow, legitimizing the Tatar language allowed Tatars in Kazan to pursue educational, political, and social opportunities denied them under the tsarist regime. Initiatives such as the “Realization of the Tatar Language” sought to bolster Tatar as a state language by teaching it to Russians, translating judicial and bureaucratic processes into

²⁹ For in-depth work on purges in the TASSR, see: A. F. Stepanov, *Rasstrel po limitu: Iz istorii politicheskikh repressii v TASSR v gody ‘ezhovshchiny’* (Kazan: Novoe Znanie, 1999); B. F. Sultanbekov and R. G. Khakimzianov, *Politicheskie repressii v Tatarstane: Zakony, ispolniteli, reabilitatsiia zhertv* (Kazan: Legrand, 2002); and A. A. Ivanov, *Politicheskie repressii v Tatarskoi ASSR skvoz’ prizmu podlinnykh dokumentov i vospominanii* (Kazan: Redaktsiia Kniga Pamiati, 2011).

³⁰ For more on language policy of the Soviet Union, see Michael Smith, *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917-1953* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998). For a close study of the laws from a contemporary, see V. N. Durdenevskii, *Ravnopravie iazykov v Sovetskom stroe* (Moscow: Institut Sovetskogo prava, 1927).

Tatar, and incorporating bilingual Tatars into the state apparatus. Complementing the objectives of korenizatsiia, preferential hiring practices gave greater consideration and even allocated bonuses to bilingual applicants. Universities adopted admissions quotas for representatives from all nationalities. While these endeavors constantly ran into financial and infrastructural roadblocks, over time they did attain some success in promoting indigenous minorities into positions of authority within the local Party-state apparatus, giving them an active role in shaping their own system of rule. For example, in 1921, Tatars comprised 8 percent of the entire government workforce in the Tatar Republic. Over a decade later, in 1933, this number had swelled to 34 percent.³¹

Language likewise had important symbolic functions for encapsulating the Communist Party's vision of integrating Tatars into the Soviet project. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Party issued a bevy of language policies that twice changed the alphabets of the Turkic nationalities living in the Soviet Union. The Arabic alphabets used for centuries by most of these nationalities were replaced first with Latin and then Cyrillic scripts. The Tatar language's own transition from an Arabic to Latin alphabet between 1928 and 1931 corresponded with Stalin's cultural revolution and signaled that Tatars should turn away from an Islamic past in favor of a future built on European efficiency and working-class principles, both of which the Latin alphabet purported to inaugurate. The deemphasis of Tatar-language instruction in schools in the late 1930s, as well as the decision to adopt a Cyrillic alphabet to replace the Latin one in 1938-39, reflected Moscow's increased centralization, bureaucratization, and control, as well as the growing role of Russian language in shaping Soviet culture. In each of these periods of

³¹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1992, l. 21; Z. N. Kirillova, *Tatar telen daulat tele bularak gamalga kuiu (20-30nchy ellar)* (Kazan: Master-Lain, 2000).

evolution, those who opposed the new alphabets were vilified as counterrevolutionary Sultangalieivists clinging to a backward and dangerous form of nationalism.³²

The transition between Tatar alphabets also provides a useful periodization for my dissertation. During the cultural revolution of the late 1920s, the traditions of the past (the Arabic script) were transformed into expressions of a modern, industrial, egalitarian, and international culture (the Latin script). By the late 1930s, Tatar became subservient to Russian language and culture as the unifying force of the Soviet Union (the Cyrillic script). The alphabet reforms helped to define the relationship between diverse nationalities and the state and integrate them into the Soviet system. The Party placed great hope in the symbolic function of language—that by writing and speaking in a certain way, that form would be brought into reality.³³ In this dissertation, I illustrate how these policies established the social and cultural norms for Tatars living in Kazan, many of which continue to the present day.³⁴

Historiography

Studies of Soviet nationalities that first emerged in the 1950s reflected the spirit of the Cold War, with Western scholars arguing that the Bolshevik Revolution had established a fundamentally oppressive and colonial relationship between the Soviet state and its minorities. Historians questioned the authenticity and legitimacy of Bolshevik rule by pointing to vocal

³² For more on the history of the Tatar language, see Kh. R. Kurbatov, *Tatar adabi teleneng alfavit ham orfografiia tarikhy* (Kazan: Tatarstan kitap nashriiaty, 1999); V. Kh. Khakov, *Tatar adabi tele tarikhy* (Kazan: Kazan universiteti nashriiaty, 1993); and Gary Guadagnolo and Trey Guinn, “The ABCs of Tatar: multilingual accommodation and Soviet language politics,” *Russian Journal of Communication* 6, no. 2 (2014): 127-142.

³³ For more on this concept, see the various essays in two useful volumes: Igal Halfin, ed., *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities* (London: Frank Cass, 2002); and Petre Petrov and Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, eds., *The Vernaculars of Communism: Language, Ideology, and Power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2014).

³⁴ For more on these practices in post-Soviet Kazan, see Helen M. Faller, *Nation, Language, Islam: Tatarstan's Sovereignty Movement* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011); and Katherine E. Graney, *Of Khans and Kremlins: Tatarstan and the Future of Ethno-Federalism in Russia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).

nationalists who had resisted the imposition of socialist ideology. Moreover, these scholars presented the apparent discontent of the non-Russian nationalities as an indicator of the instability of the Soviet Union, suggesting that indigenous national movements, principally among Muslims, threatened to undermine Soviet rule.³⁵ Those who took a more ethnographic approach to understand the historical, cultural, and linguistic particularities of Soviet nationalities worked with limited sources, as well as primordial interpretations of the development of nations.³⁶ The subsequent infusion of critical scholarship on nationalism, ethnicity, and postcolonialism, just as the Soviet Union reformed itself out of existence, provided new models for those interested in thinking about the nation as a constructed political category.³⁷

In the aftermath of 1991, scholars gained access to archival repositories both in Moscow and former borderland regions inaccessible during the Soviet era. The studies of Soviet nationalities policies that have emerged since then can be divided into two broad categories. The first examines the development of nationalities policies at the highest levels of Party-state

³⁵ See, for example: Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954); Walter Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1952); Olaf Caroe, *Soviet Empire: The Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism* (New York: Macmillan, 1953); Robert Conquest, *The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (London: Macmillan, 1960); Serge Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); Hugh Seton-Watson, *The New Imperialism* (Chester Springs, PA: Dufour, 1962); and Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

³⁶ Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978); Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986); Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987); and Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present, A Cultural History* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990).

³⁷ For some of the most significant scholarship on nationalities, see: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For some of the earliest revisionist scholarship on Soviet nationalities, see: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Yuri Slezkine, "The Soviet Union as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 414-52; and Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

leadership.³⁸ The second investigates their application from a local vantage point, usually the Soviet periphery.³⁹ Of course, the two categories often overlap in significant ways, with local studies shedding light on decisions made in Moscow. My dissertation fits best in the latter category, with two notable caveats. First, many local studies chronicle the creation in the early Soviet era of “national consciousness” among various ethnolinguistic groups, clans, tribes, and religious communities, often where none had existed before. This is chiefly true in work on the Muslim nationalities of Central Asia. In *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*, Francine Hirsch describes the organization and even invention of Soviet nationalities—carried out as a joint project among Bolsheviks, ethnographers, and local elites—as a process of “double assimilation,” defined as “the assimilation of a diverse population into nationality categories and, simultaneously, the assimilation of those nationally categorized groups into the Soviet state and society.”⁴⁰ While Tatars lagged behind ethnic Russians in terms of literacy and a number of other parameters, their long history of contact with Russians and assimilation into Russian life, even if in a colonial context, differentiated them from many other Soviet Muslims. In fact, Tatars avoided official designations of “backwardness” assigned to other nationalities of the Soviet Union.

³⁸ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); and Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question*.

³⁹ Paula Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003); Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001); Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); and Ali İğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 14.

In a second important difference between my project and many local studies, I shift my focal point away from the Soviet borderlands, long the exclusive point of entry into this topic. Focusing on Kazan, a city dominated by Russians in the heart of the RSFSR, makes the successes of Soviet nationalities policies even more apparent. In 1920, 146,495 people lived in Kazan, making it the tenth most populous city in the Soviet Union. At that time, Russians constituted 74 percent of Kazan's residents, with Tatars making up almost 20 percent, and other national groups around 5 percent. By 1939, the population of Kazan had increased to 398,000 inhabitants. While the overall percentage of Tatars had risen to only 30 percent by that year, the real numbers reflected a more significant change: 119,300 Tatars called Kazan home, an overall difference of almost 91,000 people when compared with 1920. By zooming in on Kazan, I resist the urge to separate Soviet history into Russian and non-Russian parts, particularly in a place like Kazan where the two groups were so intertwined.

My research affirms many of the claims that Terry Martin made in *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, regarding the Bolsheviks' central belief in the need to support "forms" of nationhood—such as territory, culture, language, and a native intelligentsia—in order to disarm separatist nationalism that might undermine the class-based socialism upon which the Soviet Union was founded. Martin's most original analysis comes from his investigation into the Soviet nationalities policies of Lenin, Stalin, and other elites in Moscow and their implementation in Ukraine. My work, then, serves as an in-depth case study of the application of Soviet nationalities policies in Kazan. Telling this story with the help of Russian- and Tatar-language sources allows me to pay attention to how both individuals and the Party-state conceptualized national difference and used national categories as a means of inclusion and exclusion. Rather than discussing Tatar "identity" in a way that suggests fixed and

unified definitions, I rely on the work of Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper to conceptualize ethnolinguistic identity as a system of fluid “categories of everyday social experience, developed by ordinary social actors.”⁴¹ Foregrounding the mutability of national categories pushes back against the temptation to cast this period as one in which Russians, in the guise of Communists, continued to project imperial rule over the local Tatar population. From the earliest days of the Soviet regime, Tatars joined the ranks of the Party-state to build socialism. Tatars, as well as their Russian neighbors, designed, promoted, undermined, and avoided the authority of Soviet power over their lives.

Basing this study in Kazan provides a different framework for understanding the larger political and social context of nationalities policies. The Soviet regime envisioned cities playing a powerful role in reshaping its citizens; my research emphasizes the outcomes of this objective. I assign space an active role in organizing and transforming ideology, rhetoric, and practice by examining how changes to the physical structure of the city both reflected and guided everyday social and national practices.⁴² Whether as Party cadres, members of the intelligentsia, factory workers, migrant laborers, or residents in communal apartments, Tatars interacted with the Soviet regime and Russians in a variety of spaces that mediated Tatars’ understanding of their national heritage and how they articulated its relationship to the new society under construction. One of Russia’s most important educational, economic, and cultural capitals, Kazan offers a unique and original perspective on this process.

⁴¹ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000): 4.

⁴² Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely, and Melissa K. Stockdale, eds., *Space, Place and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); James H. Bater and R. A. French, eds., *Studies in Russian Historical Geography* (London: Academic Press, 1983); Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman, eds., *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); Jeremy Smith, ed. *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* (Helsinki: SHS, 1999); and Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

My dissertation thus draws from the emerging field of “new spatial history,” a multidisciplinary approach that broadly attempts to reveal how both physical and imagined spaces shaped lived experiences.⁴³ Several recent volumes adopt this approach to examine Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities as discursive texts, paying careful attention to how their unique cultures reflected and fostered social and political change.⁴⁴ Historians have explained how architecture, city planning, interior design, and living space revealed visions for new constructed socialist environments.⁴⁵ This field additionally focuses on the use of space from a subjective point of view, ranging from revolutionary celebrations to leisure activities.⁴⁶ As

⁴³ For a useful overview of this literature and its theoretical underpinnings, see Nick Baron, “New Spatial Histories of Twentieth Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Surveying the Landscape,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 55, no. 3 (2007): 374-400.

⁴⁴ James Bater, *The Soviet City: Ideal and Reality* (London: Edward Arnold, 1980); Karl Schlogel, *Moscow* (London: Reaktion, 2005); Grigory Kaganov, *Images of Space: St. Petersburg in the Visual and Verbal Arts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); V. V. Abashev, *Perm' kak tekst: Perm' v istorii russkoi kul'tury i literatury XX veka* (Perm': Izdatel'stvo Permskogo universiteta, 2000); and Julie A. Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityshape* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Vladimir Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Catherine Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of Art, Architecture and the City* (London: Academy Editions, 1995); W. C. Brumfield and Blair A. Ruble, *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993); S. O. Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987); M. G. Meerovich, *Kak vlast' narod k trudu priuchala: Zhilishche v SSSR: Sredstvo upravleniia liud'mi, 1917-1941 gg.* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2005); M. G. Meerovich, *Kvadratnye metry, opredeliaiushchie soznanie: Gosudarstvennaia zhilishchnaia politika v SSSR, 1921-1941 gg.* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2005); I. Utekhin, *Ocherki kommunal'nogo byta* (Moscow: O.G.I., 2001); N. B. Leбина, *Obyvatel' i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoi zhizni gorozhan v gody NEPa i khrushchevskogo desiatiletiia* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003); Mark B. Smith, *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); Steven Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013); Lynne Attwood, *Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); and Christine Varga-Harris, *Stories of House and Home: Soviet Apartment Life during the Khrushchev Years* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁴⁶ V. Tolstoy, I. Bibikova, and C. Cooke, eds., *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918-1933* (New York: Vendome Press, 1990); Dale Pesmen, *Russia and Soul: An Exploration* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); N. B. Leбина, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii. 1920-1930-e gody* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'sko-torgovyi dom “Letnii sad”, 1999); A. A. Il'iukhov, *Zhizn' v epokhu peremen: Material'noe polozhenie gorodskikh zhitelei v gody revoliutsii i grazhdanskoi voyny (1917-1921 gg.)* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2007); and I. B. Orlov, *Sovetskaia povsednevnost': Istoricheskie i sotsiologicheskie aspekty stanovleniia* (Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola ekonomiki, 2010). For a useful review of this important subfield, see also: Steven E. Harris, “In Search of ‘Ordinary’ Russia: Everyday Life in the NEP, the Thaw, and the Communal Apartment,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 3 (2005): 583-614.

models for my own work, Stephen Kotkin, Katerina Clark, and Heather DeHaan have evaluated the design and construction of Soviet cities and how residents implemented and coopted those plans to various ends.⁴⁷ In honing in on Kazan, I follow the example of historians E. A. Vishlenkova, A. A. Sal'nikova, and S. Iu. Malysheva, who have written a history of Kazan that traces changes in the everyday practices and lifestyles of the city's residents.⁴⁸ Malysheva has also deconstructed the use of Kazan city space for festival celebrations in the 1920s.⁴⁹ I take this a step further by bringing Tatars and Russians into a single analytical framework, exploring how Tatars modified and invented national practices in dialogue with their Russian neighbors in Kazan. My project ultimately pushes the field of Soviet history in a new direction by combining the study of spatiality and national minorities, a move that, in the words of urban historian Thomas Bohn, can "illuminate the chaos of everyday life and point to the discrepancies between the regime's aims and the reality of city life."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); and Heather D. DeHaan, *Stalinist City Planning: Professionals, Performance, and Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). Other useful models include: Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Roshanna P. Sylvester, *Tales of Old Odessa: Crime and Civility in a City of Thieves* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005); Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010); Catherine Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province: Nizhnii Novgorod in the Nineteenth Century* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011); Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Natan Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); and Lennart Samuelson, *Tankograd: The Formation of a Soviet Company Town: Cheliabinsk, 1900s-1950s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). See too the review essay by Theodore Weeks, "Urban History in Eastern Europe," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 4 (2009): 917-33.

⁴⁸ E. A. Vishlenkova, S. Iu. Malysheva, and A. A. Sal'nikova, *Kul'tura povsednevnosti provintsial'nogo goroda: Kazan' i kazantsy v XIX-XX vekakh* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2008).

⁴⁹ S. Iu. Malysheva, *Sovetskaia prazdnichnaia kul'tura v provintsii: Prostranstvo, simvoly, istoricheskie mify, 1917-1927* (Kazan: Ruten, 2005).

⁵⁰ Thomas M. Bohn, "Soviet History as a History of Urbanization," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 2 (2015): 458.

Framework

This dissertation consists of two sections. The first, comprising chapters 1 through 3, analyzes the implementation of Soviet nationalities policies in Kazan—namely the education, training, and employment of Tatars through *korenizatsiia*, and the promotion of the Tatar language as a tool of governance and means for communicating Bolshevik ideology to the masses. Each chapter revolves around a key public space in Kazan. Chapter 1 situates schools as an ideological battleground in which the Bolsheviks sought to undermine the religion-infused curriculum of mosques by offering Tatars the right to native-language education. Party-state administrators presented this move as a decisive break from the past, though in reality it prolonged lingering debates regarding the role of education, religion, and language in integrating Muslims into Russian society. Chapter 2 traces the path of upwardly mobile Tatars through their studies in Kazan’s universities. Opportunities to pursue higher or specialized education prompted many Tatars to migrate to Kazan. Upon arriving in the city, however, they encountered roadblocks to matriculation and retention, including their lack of fluency in Russian; a shortage of Tatar-speaking instructors; a deficit of teaching materials; personal and institutional discrimination; and financial difficulties. Chapter 3 appraises Kazan’s factories from the vantage point of Russian-Tatar interaction. Nationalities policies aimed to bring Tatars into the industrial workforce, helping them become skilled laborers and move up the career ladder. Initially, the implementation of *korenizatsiia* came at the expense of Russians, who were fired from their positions to make room for inexperienced and untrained minorities. Consequently, factories in Kazan and throughout the Soviet Union were the most frequent site of interethnic violence and hostility. I describe how Tatars and Russians confronted issues of nationality at the workplace, responding to the prejudices of coworkers and bosses while at times expressing their own.

In chapters 4 through 6, I consider the evolution of Tatar culture in the 1920s and 1930s as TASSR Party-state administrators, members of the intelligentsia, workers, playwrights, architects, and athletes worked out the meaning of Stalin's famous dictum, first articulated in 1925, that the culture of Soviet minorities be "national in form and socialist in content." The chapters in this section are again organized around prominent public spaces in Kazan. Chapter 4 hones in on the Tatar State Academic Theater and the Tatar State Theater of Opera and Ballet. Drawing on a rich prerevolutionary theatrical tradition, and influenced by artistic trends popularized during the Russian Civil War, playwrights and librettists used the stage to suggest how national traditions, culture, religion, and language might translate into the new era. Chapter 5 examines important trends in city planning and architecture in Kazan and other capitals of Eastern Soviet republics. There, architects were tasked with constructing symbolic architectural forms that denoted the heritage of indigenous nationalities and their development under the banner of socialism. Chapter 6 charts the transformation of Sabantui, an annual Tatar festival. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, authorities in the TASSR refashioned Sabantui into a celebration appropriate for the new era, using the festival as an opportunity to promote sports, physical fitness, health, and military preparedness while also delineating the place and purpose of Tatar traditions in Kazan.

Ultimately, I argue in this dissertation that urban space mediated how Kazan residents experienced, articulated, and responded to Soviet nationalities policies. I must state at the outset that this is not a study of private spaces in Kazan, such as mosques, apartments, bathhouses, teahouses, or small shops, where Tatars could speak freely among themselves in their native language or engage in practices that would have been frowned upon in public, such as saying

prayers, reading the Quran, or celebrating Islamic holidays.⁵¹ Rather, my focus is on the implementation of nationalities policies in public spaces where Tatars and Russians came face to face with each other and the power of the Party-state. Second, I demonstrate that Tatar culture, far from languishing under oppression, evolved in a creative manner in response to Stalin's "national in form and socialist in content" formula. Speaking to the fields of nationalities studies and urban history, this dissertation shows how residents of Kazan navigated ethnolinguistic differences and political changes in the physical and cultural spaces around them in order to create their own sense of belonging within a new kind of city, a Tatar capital whose public spaces reflected its diverse population.

⁵¹ Moreover, access to documentation relevant to these spaces in this period remains, as of now, very limited. For some studies that have explored these topics based on archival material now inaccessible to scholars, see: I. R. Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo i vlast' v Tatarstane (1920-1930-e gg.)* (Kazan: Institut istorii AN RT, 2006); Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo Tatarstana v usloviakh politicheskikh repressii 1920-1930-kh gg.* (Nizhnii Novgorod: ID Medina, 2007); A. A. Mukhamet'yanov and Minnullin, *Transformatsiia institutov musul'manskoi obshchiny Tatarstana (1920-1930-e gody)* (Nizhnii Novgorod: ID Medina, 2008); and A. R. Mukhamadeev, *Shariatskaia komissii pri narodnom komissariate iustitsii TASSR* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo DUM RT, 2009).

CHAPTER 1:
BETWEEN RHETORIC AND REALITY:
LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN KAZAN SCHOOLS

Upon coming to power, the Bolsheviks placed great hope in schools, relying on them to transmit vital messages about the revolutionary state under construction. Almost immediately following the October Revolution, the Commissariat of Education (Narkompros), under the guidance of A. V. Lunacharskii, rolled out a bevy of ambitious initiatives designed to stamp out illiteracy and instill in youth both the technical skills needed to industrialize the country and the patterns of thinking and behaving appropriate for Soviet citizens. Schools also served as a battleground for one of the key aspects of Soviet nationalities policies, namely native- and Russian-language instruction. Lenin's government promised non-Russians the right to an education in their native languages. Although the Bolsheviks presented this policy as a decisive break from the past, the decision actually prolonged prerevolutionary debates regarding the role of education, religion, and language in integrating Muslims into Russian society. On both sides of October 1917, Russians sought to draw Tatars out from under the influence of politically suspect mullahs teaching religion in mosques and into secular environs in which the state guided both the method and content of instruction.¹

¹ For more on the Soviet government's literacy campaign and its relationship to schools, see Charles E. Clark, *Uprooting Otherness: The Literacy Campaign in NEP-Era Russia* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2000). For background on Soviet schools, see Larry Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); E. Thomas Ewing, *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Practice, and Power in Soviet Schools of the 1930s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); and E. M. Balashov, *Shkola v rossiiskom obshchestve, 1917-1927: Stanovlenie "novogo cheloveka"* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003).

In this chapter, I consider how primary and secondary schools in Kazan served as spaces for both conflict and creativity in working out the implications of Bolshevik nationalities policies, particularly regarding language instruction. As Party-state authorities, clergy, teachers, parents, and students deliberated the significance of native-language instruction, new generations of schoolchildren passed through the Soviet educational system. While Tatars increasingly understood the value of learning Russian, institutional and organizational roadblocks prevented them from doing so. Russian pupils, aware of the prominence of their own native language, found little motivation to study Tatar. This pattern, established early in the lives of new generations of Soviet citizens, helped to characterize the relationship between Russian and non-Russian cultures, languages, and traditions for the duration of the Soviet era.

Imperial Legacies

From the early nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Kazan functioned as the epicenter of experiments for educating non-Russians. In the wake of the Russian Empire's defeat in the Crimean War in 1856, Tsar Alexander II (1855-81) approved sweeping reforms to address the many ills afflicting Russian state and society. In addition to emancipating the serfs and establishing a modern judiciary and a draft military, Alexander's reforms strove to improve education within the Russian Empire. Following the Elementary School Statute of 1864, the number of primary schools in the Russian Empire greatly expanded under the auspices of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Ministry of Education, and newly created local governmental bodies called *zemstvos*. Educational reform, primarily directed at raising the literacy rates among newly emancipated peasants, also opened up unprecedented opportunities for *inorodtsy*, or non-

Russian subjects, to study in schools. The question of how to school non-Russians emerged as a key issue in Kazan and surrounding regions, where many *inorodtsy* lived.²

Nikolai I. Il'minskii (1822–1891), a Russian linguist, Turkologist, and missionary, organized one of the most prominent educational movements of the late imperial period, seeking to teach and promote Orthodox Christian doctrine through the medium of students' native languages. While studying at the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy in the 1840s, Il'minskii began attending newly created courses on *inorodtsy* languages, which sparked his interest in Russia's non-Orthodox peoples. By the 1860s, droves of *inorodtsy* who had been forcibly baptized into Orthodoxy by Church officials in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries began abandoning the Christian faith. On behalf of the Holy Synod, the governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church, Il'minskii investigated the reasons for this apostasy among *kresheny*, or baptized Tatars, one of the region's largest contingents of non-Russian Christians. He concluded that *kresheny* had converted in name only and actually understood little about Christianity. As he explained, the faith's key tenants had been communicated in Russian, a language most Tatars knew poorly, thus preventing the theological truths from taking hold.³

To stem this apostasy and circumvent the influence of Tatar mullahs, Il'minskii proposed a groundbreaking system of schools in which Russia's baptized *inorodtsy* would study the doctrine of the Christian faith in their native languages. Only later would the *inorodtsy* learn Russian and Old Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of Russian Orthodoxy. Il'minskii argued that presenting Christianity to young children in their native languages would constitute

² For more on the reforms, see John Bushnell, Ben Eklof, and L. G. Zakharova, *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

³ Paul W. Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Agnès Nilüfer Kefeli, *Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia: Conversion, Apostasy, and Literacy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

the most effective method of missionary work and also promote literacy. Where possible, teachers were to be natives, although such qualified individuals were in short supply. To remedy this situation, Il'minskii opened in Kazan the Central School for Baptized Tatars, which equipped teachers to work in village schools throughout the Volga countryside. The school also trained non-Russian clergy and translated Orthodox liturgy into native languages. With the support of D. A. Tolstoi, the minister of education, Il'minskii opened five satellite schools throughout the Kazan Educational District. During the heyday of the Il'minskii "system" in 1892, 5,000 pupils studied in 190 schools throughout the Volga-Ural region. The system enjoyed even greater influence, however, as scores of schools initially under Il'minskii's jurisdiction were subsequently transferred to the control of other institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, the Holy Synod, or provincial zemstvos, while retaining the same methodology.⁴

Not all St. Petersburg bureaucrats appreciated Il'minskii's innovative approach. Following an 1863 rebellion in Russian Poland, factions in the government called for greater Russification and questioned whether Il'minskii's emphasis on developing grammatical and writing systems for native languages undermined the supremacy of Russian. While Il'minskii hoped to ensure the conversion of baptized non-Russians and further assimilate them into Russian society through a comprehensive understanding of Orthodoxy, bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education found themselves fretting about the influence of institutions of Islamic learning. Practically every Tatar mosque had an educational mission. Tatar students, called *shakirds*, received basic reading, writing, and grammar instruction, as well as some training in Quranic recitation, in primary schools, known as mektebs, under the supervision of an imam. Upon completing their studies, *shakirds* entered the madrasa, where they received advanced

⁴ Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 116-25.

theological education from mullahs. These institutions ensured that Islamic traditions and knowledge passed from one generation to the next.⁵ Yet bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education believed mektebs and madrasas were backward, ineffective, crowded, and prone to disease. They worried that Muslim schools functioned as hotbeds of separatism, turning Russia's Muslims into a potentially uncontrollable entity loyal to the Ottoman Empire, indicative of how fears of pan-Turkism persisted on both sides of the Bolshevik Revolution. Ultimately, Muslim educational institutions served as easy targets for those anxious about Islam and its place in the Russian Empire. A Ministry of Education decree from 1870 attempted to regulate Islamic instruction in mektebs and madrasas, mandating that anyone studying Islam would also have to learn Russian. Not surprisingly, Tatars protested and even rioted in response to what they saw as the intervention of the Russian state in their educational traditions.⁶

In the late imperial era, few Muslims attended Russian schools, either due to the belief that such a secular education was sinful, or because they lacked the Russian-language knowledge necessary to study there. Following more handwringing in the wake of ongoing waves of apostasy in the late nineteenth century, the Ministry of Education decided to abandon overt missionary activities and focus instead on cultural and political assimilation, opening so-called Russian-Tatar schools. Located primarily in and around Kazan, these schools accepted Islam as the religion of Tatars and prioritized *cultural* Russification through the study of the Russian language. For example, the Ministry of Education founded the Kazan Tatar Teachers' School in 1876. That year, between twenty and thirty-five boys aged sixteen and older enrolled in the school. While Russian remained the primary focus of instruction, after a few generations, pupils

⁵ I. R. Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo i vlast' v Tatarstane, 1920-1930-e gg.* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Instituta istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, 2006), 150.

⁶ Geraci, *Window on the East*, 136-37, 142-43.

matriculating into the school already had a working knowledge of the language. School administrators hoped that graduates would serve as provincial teachers and help extricate Tatar educational institutions from conservative factions of Tatar clergy. The Tatar Teachers' School utilized the latest pedagogical approaches, with European-style laboratories for scientific experiments, and charts and maps on the walls. The Tatar language was used instructionally only for courses on Islam. Initially, few Kazan Tatars wanted to study in the school, likely due to the influence of conservative mullahs in the city. The 1905 Revolution, however, awakened interest among Tatars in political and social issues, as well as secular education. Consequently, Russian-Tatar schools, and Russian-language instruction in general, grew in popularity. More schools of this type began to open, in opposition to those founded by Il'minskii.⁷

Notably, ethnic Russians' hopes of bringing Islamic educational institutions in line with modern pedagogy coincided with initiatives championed by progressive Muslims to renovate and secularize Tatar schools. These reformers sought to transform mektebs and madrasas into key spaces for transmitting and promoting new ideas. Crimean Tatar Ismail Bey Gasprinskii (Gaspirali) (1851-1914) emerged as the leading supporter of this *usul jadid* (new method) approach to education, in which *shakirds* read religious texts in vernacular languages and studied secular subjects such as arithmetic, geography, history, and Russian. Gasprinskii and his peers feared that insular Muslim communities were on the losing side of a battle with modernization and that the traditional educational approaches of conservative mullahs did not provide young Tatars with the necessary knowledge and skills to function in society. By 1912, 90 percent of

⁷ Ibid., 137, 151-55.

Tatar mektebs and madrasas in Kazan utilized the jadid curriculum. Some of the largest enrolled hundreds of *shakirds* at a time, and courses for female students opened as well.⁸

During the early twentieth century, the focus of the jadid movement expanded from education to a larger political and cultural agenda that agitated for more rights for Muslims as subjects of the Russian Empire. Tatars assumed a leading role in assembling unauthorized congresses of Russian Muslims and forming the underground political party Ittifik (Union of Muslims). The Tatar periodical press exploded in the wake of the relaxation of censorship. Wide-ranging debates between jadids, advocates of the radical methodology, and kadids, those of a more conservative bent, filled the pages of Tatar-language periodicals. Kazan remained at the center of these debates. Of sixty-two Tatar-language periodicals published between 1905 and February 1917, twenty-three came from Kazan. After 1905, the Tatar Teachers' School, which remained in operation until 1917, became a center of liberal, and even socialist, thought, with teachers and students alike staying abreast of the latest political developments throughout Europe. All of the earliest Tatar Bolsheviks studied there. Whereas the Tatar Teachers' School once struggled with enrollment, after 1905 it had to start turning away applicants.⁹

In light of this shift toward political engagement, Russian officials agonized over what they perceived as pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic movements that threatened to unify the empire's Muslims against the Russian majority—fears later resurrected by Stalin. Likewise, Il'minskii criticized Gasprinskii's efforts to unite Tatars through language and schooling.¹⁰ In response, Prime Minister P. A. Stolypin and Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs A. N. Kharuzin organized

⁸ Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, 150.

⁹ Ibid., 265-70.

¹⁰ Mustafa Özgür Tuna, "Gaspıralı v. İl'minskii: Two Identity Projects for the Muslims of the Russian Empire," *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 2 (2002): 274.

an assault on jadids and secular Muslim educational institutions. Police carried out raids throughout the Volga-Ural region, shutting down seventy schools, publishing houses, community organizations, and bookstores. Many teachers were summarily dismissed. As Robert Geraci argued, “No matter how critical Russians had been of Islamic schools in the past, they now realized that they preferred Muslims to be parochial and ignorant rather than enlightened and active citizens. They became nostalgic for Muslims they could patronize and ridicule rather than respect as equals.” State policies subsequently eroded any possibility for interaction and rapprochement between Russia’s East and West.¹¹

Muslim Education in the Soviet Context

The Bolsheviks inherited this complicated legacy regarding the education of non-Russians, as well as the turbulent relationship between Muslims and the state. Jadids and other progressive Muslims hoped the collapse of the autocracy would accelerate their attempts to modernize Islamic education, but they soon came into conflict with Soviet attitudes toward religion.¹² One of the first indicators of the new policy came on February 5, 1918, when the Soviet government promulgated a decree, “On the Separation of the Church from the State and Schools from the Church,” which called for the disentanglement of all religious rites, practices, and teachings from state activities. The law prohibited any religious instruction in state schools, though it did permit private religious instruction for those over the age of eighteen. In order to prevent religious courses from taking the place of secular education, their curriculum could not overlap with basic academic subjects taught at Soviet schools.¹³ As one subsequent Party treatise

¹¹ Geraci, *Window on the East*, 291-92.

¹² Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, 151.

¹³ “Separation of Church and State,” in *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials*, ed. James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1934), 590-91.

emphasized, “The October Revolution destroyed the old school system based on religion and created a free school system without anything preventing the creation of a scientific outlook among students. Thus, in no way can the Soviet school permit any kind of religious teaching within its walls.”¹⁴ Indeed, in spite of a few initial concessions, by the end of 1922, the government began adopting resolutions engineered to close Muslim schools throughout the Russian Republic and stem the influence of mullahs by funneling students into Soviet schools. Within the Tatar Republic, though, Muslim schools continued to operate freely, as mullahs took advantage of the state’s disorganization during an intense famine, which began in 1921 and whose effects could still be felt throughout the Volga region for years to come.¹⁵ Furthermore, numerous Soviet schools closed due to a lack teachers and insufficient funding from local budgets. Between 1921 and 1923, the number of state schools in Kazan plummeted from 150 to 84.¹⁶ The contingent of students studying in these schools fell from twenty thousand in 1919 to fourteen thousand in 1923.¹⁷ This collapse of infrastructure bolstered the authority of mektebs and madrasas as unfaltering centers of learning among Tatars.

In 1923, the Second All-Russian Congress of Muslim Clergy convened in Ufa to discuss, among other topics, the question of religious schools. Throughout the 1920s, these congresses addressed organizational questions, such as the creation of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims (TsDUM) and the appointment of its leading muftis, as well as theological issues. At

¹⁴ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1008, l. 1.

¹⁵ K. Abliazov, *Sistema narodnogo prosveshcheniia v derevne Tatarstana v 1920-e gg.* (Kazan: Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. V. I. Ul’ianova-Lenina, 2004), 6. For more on the famine, see A. Iu. Fedotova and N. A. Fedorova, *Pomoshch’ golodaiushchemu naseleniiu TASSR sovetskimi i inostrannymi organizatsiiami v 1921-1923 gg.* (Kazan: IITs UDP RT, 2013).

¹⁶ NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 34, l. 45; NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 17-19; and NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 98, ll. 15-18.

¹⁷ NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 7, l. 57-57ob.; and NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 98, ll. 15-18.

the 1923 congress, delegates petitioned Moscow for the right to offer religious instruction again. In an apparent concession to the clergy's requests, and likely to shore up support among Muslims, in October 1923 the Central Executive Committee and USSR Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) permitted religious schools among Muslims in the Tatar, Bashkir, and Crimean republics. Meanwhile, Party-state authorities in both Moscow and Kazan continued to deliberate about the parameters for these mektebs and madrasas. On June 9, 1924, the Presidium of Moscow's Central Executive Committee affirmed the decision to allow Islamic teaching in mosques. Only those who had graduated from a primary Soviet school or reached fourteen years of age could study there.¹⁸ Over the course of the following year, though, additional resolutions limited religious teaching to mosques and just on weekends, when Soviet schools were not in session. Authorities intended this stipulation to break the prerevolutionary tradition of *shakirds* attending religious classes every day.¹⁹

In Kazan, the TASSR Narkompros and local NKVD adopted similar guidelines. Regulations from November 1925 prescribed that Islam could be taught only in mosques and by an approved mullah. All *shakirds* had to submit documentation to local authorities to prove they had either reached age fourteen or completed a four-year primary school. Moreover, three-quarters of the members of a village or urban parish (*prikhod*) had to approve the operation of a religious school. Its curriculum could not overlap with that of Soviet schools. With the exception of Arabic, knowledge of which was needed in order to read the Quran, no language study was allowed, not even Russian, in order to prevent overlap with subjects taught at Soviet schools. All lesson plans and textbooks had to be sanctioned by local educational officials. Only private,

¹⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 14, ll. 133-34.

¹⁹ Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, 154.

voluntary donations could fund the mektebs. The TASSR Narkompros promised to supervise these schools and close any that violated the rules.²⁰

In spite of the roadblocks erected by evolving and often confusing legislation, requests began to pour in from mullahs to open Muslim schools, accompanied by petitions signed by local Tatars. A report on Muslim education in Kazan from April 1926 noted that 11 mullahs taught 185 students in 8 mosques throughout the city.²¹ Between October 1925 and December 1926, the Muslim schools throughout the Tatar Republic increased from 240 to approximately 800. The number of registered *shakirds* expanded from 8,000 to more than 30,000.²² Notably, the quantity of religious schools exceeded those of primary Soviet schools in some cantons—the administrative unit used for larger regions in many republics of the RSFSR—such as in Bugul'ma canton, which had 143 religious schools and only 89 Soviet schools.²³

Not surprisingly, officials in the Tatar Republic began to fret about the resurgence in popularity of Muslim religious schools.²⁴ In some regions of the Tatar Republic, up to 30 percent of children attended both Soviet and Muslim schools. Religious schools even expanded in areas where Soviet schools, clubs, and organizations did not exist.²⁵ A report from the TASSR branch of the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU), the secret police of the Soviet Union from 1923 to 1934, chronicled the shrinking influence of Soviet schools in favor of mektebs and madrasas.²⁶ Moreover, the OGPU had begun tracking the activities of unregistered Muslim schools led by

²⁰ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1008, l. 1.

²¹ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1008, l. 76.

²² TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 54, ll. 24-25; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 32, ll. 108-9.

²³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 54, ll. 24-25.

²⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 54, ll. 24-25.

²⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 31, ll. 65-66.

mullahs who agitated against Soviet schools as well as the Pioneer and Komsomol movements, the Soviet Union's mass youth organizations.²⁷ As early as November 1924, the OGPU began investigating reports of illegal religious schools operating in private homes and offering Islamic education to children as young as six years old, a clear violation of the law.²⁸

In April 1926, the TASSR Oblast Committee (Obkom), the highest organ of the Communist Party in the Tatar Republic, signaled its own concern over the proliferation of Muslim religious activities as a whole, and the popularity of religious schools in particular, debating what measures might be taken to hamper the influence of mullahs. That month, the presidium of the Tatar Narkompros, along with the most active Tatar communists and representatives of the TASSR NKVD, discussed this issue.²⁹ One top Narkompros official, the Tatar F. Khasanov, took a hard line, advocating for the “absolute prohibition” of all religious schools. He blamed mullahs for using the schools to whip up anti-Soviet religious fervor among youth.³⁰ In another report distributed around the same time, Khasanov claimed that mullahs possessed lists of all children in their parishes from ages seven to sixteen and threatened to ban parents from the mosque if they did not send their children to the mekteb. According to Khasanov, some parents beat their children for refusing to attend the mekteb and joining the Pioneer program instead. Consequently, the number of religious schools continued to increase, with students abandoning their studies in Soviet schools. Khasanov attributed this “anti-Soviet mass movement” to the weak position or absence of Soviet schools in Tatar villages; the lack of

²⁶ Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, 156.

²⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 32, ll. 108-9.

²⁸ NART, f. R-732, op. 11, d. 28, l. 188.

²⁹ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1008, ll. 145-46.

³⁰ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1008, ll. 150-58.

Party or Komsomol cells in Tatar villages; Tatar Party members' ignorance of methods for conducting antireligious propaganda; insufficient antireligious literature; the ongoing involvement of mullahs in rituals of daily life, such as birth, marriage, and burials; and irregular policy implementation among the USSR's various Muslim republics. In the Bashkir Republic, for example, an apparently more liberal policy for opening religious schools led to rumors that religious education was flourishing there but was under attack in the Tatar Republic. Furthermore, Khasanov noted that the uptick in the number of mektebs had even encouraged Russian Orthodox clergy to campaign to open their own religious schools.³¹

Under Khasanov's guidance, Party-state authorities in Kazan went even further than Moscow in amplifying the difficulty for opening and attending local religious schools. In September 1926, the Obkom Bureau approved a proposal permitting only those students who had *both* graduated from a first-level Soviet school *and* reached the age of fourteen to study in a mekteb, whereas the RSFSR Narkompros required that just one of the two requirements be met. The amendment effectively prevented potential *shakirds* from avoiding Soviet schools, as many had done.³² Yet the Obkom needed Moscow's approval before implementing the regulations. By November, the Obkom had still heard nothing from Moscow. Consequently, Kazan authorities began inventing all kinds of reasons to delay opening religious schools. This sparked frustration among local Tatars, who noted that religious schools were opening in other parts of the Soviet Union and thus demanded the same rights.³³

Yet even as the Party-state apparatus in the Tatar Republic waited to hear from the center, Moscow began to prepare a new offensive against Islam. In May 1928, the Politburo of the

³¹ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1008, ll. 88-93.

³² TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 14, l. 131.

³³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 15, ll. 49-50.

Central Committee and the USSR Central Executive Committee annulled all previous rulings permitting the operation of Muslim religious schools. This shift, part of a maneuver to stifle religion throughout the Soviet Union, coincided with a campaign in Kazan against an “illegal madrasa.” As noted above, the TASSR OGPU had for several years tracked the existence of underground schools that functioned outside the bounds of official legislation. In May 1927, the secret police arrested a number of Kazan’s most well-known Muslim clerics. The subsequent investigation determined that these imams had illegally trained and commissioned dozens of *shakirds* from Kazan, Moscow, Leningrad, Nizhnii Novgorod, and Penza to become imams in their home parishes. Historian I. R. Minnullin has argued that the OGPU used this case as a pretext to break up the unity of Tatar clergy by isolating and eventually eliminating the most vocal and threatening imams in Kazan. The police arrested a number of *shakirds* outside of the Tatar Republic as well, likely in an effort to present the illegal Kazan madrasa as just one cell in a larger underground Muslim network. In October 1928, the majority of the imams and a number of the students associated with the illegal madrasa received sentences ranging from several years in labor camps to exile outside of the Tatar Republic.³⁴

As of the late 1920s, almost all formal vestiges of Muslim religious education had collapsed. In 1926, between eight hundred and one thousand Muslim schools, with about thirty thousand *shakirds*, operated in the Tatar Republic. By 1927, this number had fallen to somewhere between one hundred fifty and two hundred schools with six thousand students, a drop that can be attributed to repressive measures from the state, the decision of many mullahs to

³⁴ I. R. Minnullin, “Delo ‘nelegal’nogo medrese’ v Kazani. 1927-28 gg.” in *Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental’nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2002), accessed May 5, 2015, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2002_3_4/03/03_6/&searched=1. For context of this movement within the larger antireligious policy of the Soviet government at the time and similar movements against Russian Orthodoxy, see Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 169-77.

consequently abandon their posts, insufficient funding for schools and teachers alike, and worries among parents about social and legal repercussions for sending their children to Muslim schools.³⁵ In May 1928, M. M. Khataevich, First Secretary of the TASSR Party organization, noted that the number of religious schools in the Tatar Republic had decreased to less than seventy. Khataevich warned that religious schools would have become completely uncontrollable if the Party had not clamped down on their operation.³⁶ In addition to administrative restrictions against the opening of religious schools, mullahs faced either arrest or exorbitant taxes for engaging in any educational endeavors.³⁷ Mektebs and madrassas, long the primary method of transmitting moral and religious instruction between generations, simply had no place in the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly, this shift coincided with Stalin's cultural revolution, which beginning in 1928 sought to transform the Soviet Union through rapid industrialization and the mass collectivization of agriculture. The movement swept out old, bourgeois values, particularly those rooted in religion, in favor of a new, socialist way of life. Educating the new Soviet man, particularly the new Soviet Tatar, required a fundamentally different space, disentangled from religion, that could help a *shakird* assimilate into society.

Bolsheviks and Native Language Education

In spite of campaigns against mektebs and madrasas, the Bolshevik regime remained committed to universal, native-language education for all Soviet citizens. Historian Isabelle Kreindler has argued that this aspect of Lenin's nationalities policies can be attributed to Nikolai Il'minskii, the influential educator from the late imperial era discussed above. Lenin's father, I. N. Ul'ianov, moved with his family to Simbirsk in 1869 to serve as a school inspector and later

³⁵ Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, 161.

³⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 462, l. 18.

³⁷ Minnullin, *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo*, 161.

as director of schools for the region. He worked closely with Il'minskii to promote native-language schooling in Simbirsk, a region whose population was more than one-third non-Russian. During Ul'ianov's tenure, the number of non-Russians in native-language schools more than doubled. Ul'ianov, himself of Chuvash descent, regularly hosted colleagues in his home to discuss native education. In Simbirsk, Lenin tutored a native Chuvash, N. S. Okhotnikov, in the classical languages required for entering Kazan University. Lenin also became close friends with I. Ia. Iakovlev, another Chuvash and a disciple of Il'minskii. Iakovlev ran a school for Chuvash boys, served as the inspector for Chuvash schools for the entire educational region, and helped to create a Chuvash alphabet based on the Cyrillic script. He had favorable attitudes toward Russians, given their shared Russian Orthodox faith. As Kreindler argues, "Lenin's familiarity with Iakovlev and the Chuvash helps explain his persistent confidence that the nourishment of national cultures need not lead to a disruption of political unity, that, on the contrary, it only promoted good will."³⁸ In other words, Lenin believed that ending the Russification policies of the Russian Empire and creating unprecedented opportunities for minorities would stymie anti-Soviet nationalism among non-Russians.

Like Il'minskii, Lenin (and Stalin) identified native language as the primary factor in determining national difference. Following the October Revolution, Soviet nationality policies emphasized the expediency of communicating Bolshevik ideology to the people in their native languages. This approach—an early iteration of Stalin's "national in form, socialist in content" formula—adapted the work of Il'minskii, who deployed native languages to explain Russian Orthodoxy, to a new political context. Il'minskii had recruited teachers who spoke the native

³⁸ Isabelle Kreindler, "A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy," *Slavic Review* 26, no. 1 (March 1977): 93. As historian Mustafa Tuna has emphasized, though, both Il'minskii and Lenin's systems relied on ethnic Russians, rather than the *inorodtsy* themselves, to shape the content of the messages delivered in the native languages. See: Tuna, "Gaspirali v. Il'minskii," 281.

language of the local population to work in his schools; Lenin did the same. Both advocated for the publication of textbooks and other literature in native languages. Il'minskii and his supporters created entire alphabets for some languages that previously had none; the Bolsheviks continued this work. Neither Il'minskii nor Lenin believed that the Russian language needed to be forced down the throats of non-Russian students in primary schools. As the Bolshevik leader opined, "He who needs to know Russian . . . will learn it without a stick."³⁹

The search for a balance between Tatar and Russian languages in Kazan's schools occupied the attention of local Party-state authorities throughout the 1920s and 1930s and raises important questions about the relationship between ideology and practicality in the Soviet state, to be discussed later in this chapter. After declaring Tatar and Russian the official languages of the Tatar Republic on June 25, 1921, the TASSR Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom also instructed the Narkompros to organize Tatar-language courses for Russian students and workers. In order to build up sufficient cadres of workers that could speak both government languages and thus adequately serve Russian- and Tatar-speaking citizens, Tatar classes were made mandatory for all Russians studying in secondary schools, technical schools, and universities. For Russians living in cities, this requirement was extended into the upper grades of primary schools.⁴⁰ In December 1921, the Third Congress of Soviets of the Tatar Republic ratified this decision to require Tatar-language courses for Russians in secondary schools and professional or technical institutions.⁴¹

³⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th ed., 55 vols. (Moscow, 1958-65), 24:295.

⁴⁰ "Dekret Vsetatarskogo Tsentral'nogo Iсполnitel'nogo Komiteta Sovetov Rabochikh, Krest'ianskikh i Krasnoarmeiskikh Deputatov i Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov TSSR," in F. M. Sultanov, ed., *Iazykovaia politika v Respublike Tatarstan, 20-30-e gg.: Dokumenty i materialy* (Kazan: Magarif, 1998), 17-19.

⁴¹ Garipova, *Kazan'*, 67.

Introducing Tatar classes in Russian schools, however, progressed at a glacial pace. In Kazan, some Russian schools began teaching Tatar as a second language during the 1923-24 academic year, but as of January 1927, only a handful of Russian schools still offered the required courses. At least three shared the same Tatar instructor.⁴² Throughout the 1920s, the TASSR Narkompros issued only four edicts regarding the Tatar-language curriculum, leaving both schools and instructors in the dark as how best to teach Tatar.⁴³ Undoubtedly, serious economic, political, and social challenges hampered the entire Narkompros network. Infrastructural collapse following the Bolshevik Revolution, Civil War, and Volga famine haunted Kazan, as well as most places in the Soviet Union, for most of the 1920s. Between 1920 and 1924, the number of schools and teachers decreased rapidly, with primary-school enrollment falling by about 30 percent throughout the Soviet Union. Consistent with all-Union figures, from 1921 to 1922, the number of primary schools throughout the Tatar Republic fell by 30 percent, from 2,836 to 1,990. Tatar schools decreased from 1,707 to 744, while Russian schools saw a less drastic drop, from 1,289 to 997 schools.⁴⁴

In Russian secondary schools with an instructor and sufficient resources to offer Tatar-language courses, students strongly objected to studying the language. In one case, Russian students collected signatures from both peers and parents to protest the requirement, dispatching their petitions to Narkompros authorities in both Moscow and Kazan. One such appeal from October 1927 reads,

We, students of Russian School No. 11 in Kazan, request to be relieved of the mandatory study of the Tatar language, as it is a language of a less-cultured nation without any notable literature. To the extent that the Tatar language is necessary for workers, it is

⁴² NART, f. R-992, op. 1, d. 122, ll. 19ob; and NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1239, ll. 27-28.

⁴³ Enaleeva, "Tatarskii iazyk dlia russkikh," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, March 5, 1930, 3.

⁴⁴ Abliazov, *Sistema narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 6.

entirely possible to learn it in extracurricular courses without cluttering up our educational program. In order to satisfy the national pride of the Tatars, and in accordance with the principle of equality, we propose that the study of Russian in Tatar schools also be made compulsory.⁴⁵

Incidents of national antagonism could be found at mixed-nationality schools, too, such as the El'vodtram Factory School. The head of the school, a Russian, adamantly opposed admitting any Tatar pupils, relenting only when the head of the Union of Public Utilities, a Tatar, became involved. In December 1926, twelve Russian and twelve Tatar pupils studied at the school. One teacher had a history of poor interactions with Tatar students, denigrating them as "intolerable." When Tatars asked questions, this instructor shouted insults. He threatened to expel them if they did not quickly master the required technical skills. Yet these Tatar students routinely received incomplete sets of tools to complete their practical assignments in the factory, while their Russian peers had complete sets. In another incident, when ten hammers went missing, the head of the school immediately deducted the cost from the Tatars' stipends.⁴⁶ At other schools, however, a mixed-nationality student body apparently succeeded in learning both Russian and Tatar. At Kazan's Lenin Factory No. 40 School, 80 percent of students consistently passed their exams in these subjects. Available documents do not reveal any overt tension between students of different national backgrounds there.⁴⁷ Of course, tripping and shoving in the hallways or name-calling could have transpired without detection. As will be seen in later chapters, such hostile behaviors were certainly prevalent in factories and other workplaces.

In responding to manifestations of antagonism along national lines, the Agitation and Propaganda Collegium of the Obkom pointed the finger at "Great Russian chauvinists" for

⁴⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 318, l. 331.

⁴⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 355, ll. 111-18.

⁴⁷ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 565, ll. 200-201.

disrupting the friendship of nationalities and instilling a non-Soviet worldview in their children. Party-state authorities repeatedly framed schools as key spaces in the struggle against chauvinists and nationalists alike. Writing in *Krasnaia Tataria*, the local Russian-language newspaper, one commentator emphasized, “Children should understand that Chinese, Japanese, French, Mari, Tatar, and American laborers are all part of the same family of workers. We should encourage hatred toward the Tatar, German, and English bourgeoisie, but the workers of these nations should be our brothers.” The author blamed parents for transferring chauvinistic attitudes to their children. Russian students, for instance, commonly called Tatar the “language of the dogs,” and fights were common between students of different nationalities.⁴⁸ To counter these negative attitudes, the collegium embarked on a campaign to explain the necessity of teaching Tatar to schoolchildren.⁴⁹ Propaganda emphasized how Soviet nationalities policies “united workers of all nationalities into a close family” and warned of the corrupting influence of Great Russian chauvinism, Sultangalievism, and local nationalism. The campaign suggested that Soviet schools needed to understand their common responsibility to foster “international education” and “implement Soviet nationality policies by establishing close ties between Tatar and non-Tatar schools through mutual patronage.”⁵⁰

The introduction of Yangalif in 1929 as the new Latin alphabet for Tatar coincided with a renewed emphasis on teaching the language to Russians. Yangalif advocates had long argued that a Latin rather than Arabic alphabet would lighten the burden for Russians interested in learning the language. As such, weekly lessons and exercises began appearing in *Krasnaia Tataria*, promising that Russians could master Tatar in just thirteen weeks. Supporters of

⁴⁸ S. Efremov, “Shovinizm v shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 5, 1930, 2.

⁴⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 396, ll. 99-100.

⁵⁰ “Sovetskie shkoly dolzhny byt’ shkolami internatsional’nogo vospitaniia,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 5, 1930, 3.

Yangalif constantly issued implausible claims that the Latin alphabet would drastically reduce the time for learning Tatar. Yet efforts to introduce Tatar into Russian schools remained unrealized. In late 1929 and early 1930, a special investigation revealed that, in most Russian schools in Kazan, the state of Tatar instruction in Kazan had gone “from bad to worse.” In schools that actually bothered to teach Tatar, pupils studied the language in only the earliest grades, forgetting the language by the time they finished school. One report claimed that Russians graduated without knowing more than two words in Tatar and that “students both openly and secretly boycott Tatar.”⁵¹ Schools scheduled Tatar courses late in the day, when students were tired and disinterested. Tatar classrooms were generally the worst in the school. The number of Tatar teachers in Russian schools remained low, and they struggled to keep students’ attention. Discipline was lax: over the course of three months of inspections, Tatar classes were cancelled sixty-seven times across twenty educational institutions. In addition, the probe revealed that neither teachers nor students could articulate the significance of the Tatar language. Students asked, “Tatar isn’t a cultured language, so why are we studying it?” No socialist competitions among Russian students encouraged Tatar knowledge. Neither Komsomol nor Party cells affiliated with schools expressed interest in advocating for the language.⁵² In a word, the average Russian student attending school in Kazan felt no institutional pressure to learn Tatar, a sentiment that lasted through the end of the Soviet Union and into the present day. At the time of the breakup of the USSR, few Russians living in Soviet republics had bothered to learn the local language. It was simply not a priority.⁵³

⁵¹ S. Efremov, “Shovinizm v shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 5, 1930, 2.

⁵² Enaleeva, “Dekret pravitel’sтва dolzhen byt’ vpolnen,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 12, 1930, 3; and Enaleeva, “Tatarskii iazyk dlia russkikh.”

⁵³ Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 209-10.

Russian Language and Tatar Schools

If teaching Tatar in Russian schools failed so spectacularly, what can be said about Russian-language instruction in Tatar schools? Did Tatars express the same kind of opposition to language learning that Russians evinced for Tatar? How did campaigns to promulgate Russian-language instruction evolve, and what financial and infrastructural resources helped or hindered these plans? By 1926, eight primary and five secondary Tatar schools operated in Kazan. Most had some Russian language component in their curriculum. Of course, these institutions endured difficulties common to all schools, such as a shortfall of funding, textbooks, lesson plans, and properly trained teachers.⁵⁴ Remarkably, before 1932, Moscow issued no standardized Russian-language curriculum for minority schools. This left practical decisions regarding Russian to the discretion of local educational authorities. In 1930, the TASSR Narkompros conducted an investigation that confirmed most Tatar schools had failed to incorporate the study of Russian into the curriculum. Not surprisingly, Tatars graduated from school woefully incompetent in speaking Russian.⁵⁵

Even in factory schools, which often had an ethnically mixed student body and prioritized Russian-language instruction because of its usefulness in industrial enterprises, Russian language skills lagged among Tatar pupils. For example, at Vakhitov Factory School, which opened in 1921, students completed a three-year course in math, physics, chemistry, mechanics, geography, history, drawing, and politics, as well as more specific classes based on technical specialties in either chemistry or mechanics. This type of school sought to provide students with real-life training, preparing them for work at the factory after completing their education. Given the

⁵⁴ Abliazov, *Sistema narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 43-44.

⁵⁵ NART, f. R-992, op. 1, d. 122, l. 19ob.

pervasiveness of Russian as the working language at most factories in Kazan, the curriculum of factory-affiliated schools prioritized Russian. During the 1923-24 academic year, the Vakhitov Factory School had forty-two Russian and eight Tatar pupils. Tatars spent four hours a week the first year and two hours a week in the second and third years learning Russian. In addition, a Russian language circle or club was organized to provide supplementary Russian instruction to these Tatar students. Nonetheless, reports from the school bemoaned Tatars' "complete lack of training" in the language.⁵⁶

By the late 1920s, Tatars in Kazan began to realize the practicality of Russian, and this corresponded to the emerging credo from Moscow that presented Russian as the *lingua franca* of the nationalities of the Soviet Union. As one report on Russian instruction explained, "Knowledge of Russian is not only desirable but also necessary, and we see this in our daily lives." Most national minorities interacted with Russians on a daily basis and needed Russian to carry out basic tasks. Moreover, Russian had momentous ideological significance as the mother tongue of Lenin and a bevy of other Russian-speaking theorists and revolutionaries. Perhaps most importantly, national minorities needed to know Russian in order to pursue vocational, specialized, or higher education after graduating from school, a topic that will be explored more fully in the next chapter. Russian served as the language of instruction in all secondary schools and universities in the Soviet Union, except for a few that catered to minorities in Kazan. As the TASSR Narkompros insisted, "It is hardly possible to receive a complete education without knowing Russian." However, Tatar schools in Kazan continued to disregard the Russian

⁵⁶ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 568, ll. 4-10; and NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1033, l. 54.

language and even engaged in what authorities considered “unacceptable attempts to oust the Russian language from non-Russian schools.”⁵⁷

Beginning in 1932, the RSFSR Narkompros abandoned the progressive, experimental educational endeavors of Lunacharskii for practical skills useful for industrial development. Under the leadership of A. S. Bubnov, the Narkompros also introduced a common academic schedule for all Soviet schools. The following year, the TASSR Obkom mandated that non-Russian schools begin teaching Russian in the third grade.⁵⁸ In fact, the Obkom subsequently disseminated far more resolutions about Russian than it had ever done for Tatar-language study, issuing guidelines for the number of Russian vocabulary words students should know and increasing the number of instruction hours for the language. The Russian-language requirements for Tatars studying in factory schools almost doubled from 240 to 414 hours per year. Given the lack of trained instructors, the Obkom also charged Narkompros with organizing pedagogical courses during the 1933-34 academic year.⁵⁹ Still, Russian-language instruction remained stunted, given a lack of qualified teachers who knew Russian, and a deficit of textbooks and methodological literature.⁶⁰ The Narkompros organized pedagogical training courses in Kazan and elsewhere in the Tatar Republic, with various sections for Russians, Tatars, and other minority nationalities. These courses, however, remained crippled by a lack of funding, not to mention interest from potential attendees.⁶¹ The position of the Russian language in non-Russian schools continued to flounder, with some Tatar schools declining to teach Russian entirely.

⁵⁷ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1721, ll. 3-11.

⁵⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 167, ll. 70-71.

⁵⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 12, ll. 6-6ob.

⁶⁰ Peter A. Blitstein, “Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938-1953,” in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, eds., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 254.

Others only half-heartedly followed the mandate; in one school, a part-time Tatar physical education teacher doubled as the Russian instructor, with dubious results.⁶²

Educators in Moscow and Kazan alike expressed their frustration that minorities' lack of Russian knowledge ultimately hindered their ability to pursue vocational or higher education. In May 1937, a committee of educators inspecting Russian language and literature instruction in primary and secondary schools in Kazan and nearby regions discovered that, although Russian lessons began in the second grade for Tatar students, by fourth grade, most still had no conversational skills and could not answer basic questions about their grade level and age. Even in Kazan, where students ostensibly had more opportunities to interact with native Russian-speakers than peers living in predominantly Tatar regions of the TASSR, pupils had a small vocabulary and poor listening skills. According to the report, Tatar schools throughout the Tatar Republic had less than 70 percent of the needed Russian-language textbooks. School libraries lacked Russian literature for students to read on their own. School newspapers featured only an occasional Russian-language article. The committee ascribed the Tatar students' "completely unsatisfactory" knowledge of Russian to teachers that did not know Russian themselves, evinced by the "enormous" number of mistakes the instructors made in both speaking and writing. As the report concluded, Tatar students remained entirely unprepared to enter technical and higher education institutions, where all instruction took place in Russian. This furthermore helped to explain why the Tatar Republic remained behind in its plans to produce cadres of Tatar engineers and other technical professions.⁶³

⁶¹ Garipova, *Kazan'*, 68; Abliazov, *Sistema narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 43-44.

⁶² TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 167, ll. 70-71.

⁶³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1603, ll. 8-12.

A new Russian language and literature program advanced by Moscow sought to address these issues. Stalin noted at a meeting of the Central Committee in October 1937 that the decision to rescind non-Russians' exemption from conscription into the Red Army necessitated Russian lessons in schools so that soldiers would have a shared language in the military. Narkompros officials subsequently floated several radical proposals for greater Russification of minority schools in terms of favoring Russian as the universal language of instruction rather than the mother tongue. Stalin censured this approach and asked for an alternative. The final proposal that Stalin approved on March 13, 1938, raised the profile of Russian without entirely suppressing native-language instruction. Subsequently endorsed by both the Central Committee and USSR Sovnarkom, the program explained that prioritizing Russian would improve the country's economic and cultural development; enable non-Russians to pursue advanced academic and technical training; and ensure the country's military preparedness. A few days later, the TASSR Obkom Bureau ratified this decree, tasking the local Narkompros with overhauling the existing plan for teaching Russian in all Tatar educational institutions.⁶⁴ As historian Peter A. Blitstein has argued, Stalin understood that state building and industrialization, key aspects of his revolution from above, needed a "culturally uniform Soviet population" that spoke Russian. Notably, though, Moscow did not annul native-language instruction, one of the key tenets undergirding Soviet nationalities policies.⁶⁵

By the 1930s, some Tatar teachers and students seemed aware of the value of knowing Russian, even if their own language skills remained unsatisfactory. This could indicate a generational shift that no longer saw learning Russian as an existential threat to the Tatar nation,

⁶⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 56, ll. 122.

⁶⁵ Blitstein, "Nation-Building," 253.

but rather as a necessary step to greater education and social mobility within the Soviet Union. A conference of the School Department of the TASSR Obkom, convened in May 1937, provides some clues to these evolving attitudes. Kulakhmetova, a fifth-grade Russian-language teacher in a Tatar school in Kazan, explained, “We all understand the importance of Russian. We value the language. The children understand the practicality of Russian. They often ask whether it’s true they will not be admitted to university if they speak Russian poorly. For this reason many Tatar youth are really interested in Russian.” She reported that parents worried about their children’s future if they did not know Russian. Despite their openness to Russian, however, Kulakhmetova’s students struggled with actually learning it. Almost all subjects at the school were taught in Tatar, which was also the language predominantly heard and used on the streets in the Tatar district of the city where most of Kulakhmetova’s students lived.⁶⁶ Shibaev, another teacher, likewise attested to the anxieties of parents who expected their children to graduate from school with Russian fluency. Shibaev knew firsthand the difficulty of not doing so: when he matriculated into university, he could neither speak nor read Russian for an entire year and thus languished in his studies.⁶⁷

By the late 1930s, the dearth of proficient language instructors and adequate textbooks, rather than a lack of interest among Tatar pupils, had the greatest impact on their poor Russian language skills. In 1938, only 559 of 1,570 instructors slated to teach Russian in the TASSR participated in mandatory summer training, which perpetuated the trend of placing underqualified Tatars at the helm of language instruction. The number of Russian-language textbooks allocated to the Tatar Republic by Moscow also remained insufficient.⁶⁸ Ongoing

⁶⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1766, l. 87.

⁶⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1766, l. 62.

⁶⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 133, ll. 35-36.

arrests and denunciations of alleged counterrevolutionaries in the TASSR Narkompros complicated many issues related to language instruction, including the availability of textbooks, a critical resource given the ineffectiveness of many teachers. For example, the Party Control Commission labeled a grammar textbook written by S. S. Atnagulov (1893-1937), arrested in 1936, as a “clear platform for promoting counterrevolutionary nationalists and their ideologically harmful and critically condemned views.” Selections from Russian and Tatar classics included excerpts from those who had been arrested as enemies of the people. Moreover, reviewers objected to Atnagulov’s pairing of overly optimistic quotes from Lenin and Stalin about the future of the country with texts illustrating the difficulty of life in the Tatar Republic, suggesting that the leaders remained out of touch with reality.⁶⁹ After each arrest of a textbook author, the RSFSR Narkompros demanded significant alterations and additions. By late 1938, only two of fourteen planned Russian-language textbooks for Tatars had actually been printed. The remaining textbooks were no longer considered viable after their authors had been unmasked as enemies of the people.⁷⁰ The situation hardly improved by 1941, as just 28 percent of the textbooks needed in Kazan were ready for publication.⁷¹

The TASSR Narkompros repeatedly came under fire as the chief culprit for the poor state of Russian language study in Tatar schools.⁷² Articles accused counterrevolutionaries lurking among the ranks of Narkompros of “contaminating the teaching staff, hindering political work

⁶⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1737, ll. 1-4.

⁷⁰ G. Volgin, “Tatnarkompros sryvaet izuchenie russkogo iazyka v natsional’nykh shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, November 3, 1938, 3.

⁷¹ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2682, l. 11ob.

⁷² See, for example: G. Volgin, “Tatnarkompros sryvaet izuchenie russkogo iazyka v natsional’nykh shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, November 3, 1938, 3; A. Mikhailov, “O prepodavanii russkogo iazyka v nerusskikh shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, July 27, 1939, 3; and Gr. Kaminskii, A. Selinkov, “Russkii iazyk v tatarskoi shcole,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 6, 1939, 3.

and the eradication of illiteracy, and damaging the pace of school construction.” Only nineteen of the planned thirty-seven schools had been built in Kazan by 1937. Galiulov, head of the Narkompros Party cell, was denounced as the “right hand” of Party enemies for allowing counterrevolutionary activity to continue unabated in Narkompros.⁷³ A report from 1938 noted that 90 percent of Russian-language teachers in second through fourth grades of Tatar schools did not adequately know Russian. Almost all of these teachers had graduated from Narkompros pedagogical schools, which were infamous for producing instructors who did not know the material they were supposed to teach.⁷⁴ In fact, far from all schools, especially those in rural areas, actually taught Russian during the 1938-39 academic year, due largely to insufficient teachers and funding.⁷⁵

Russification Revisited?

The decision to alter the alphabet of the Tatar language again in the late 1930s, this time from a Latin to Cyrillic script, purported to simplify the study of Russian for Tatars, who would subsequently need to know only the Cyrillic alphabet for both languages. Throughout late 1938 and early 1939, the TASSR Obkom and Narkompros worked at the behest of Moscow to design and adopt the new script.⁷⁶ On May 5, 1939, the High Soviet of the TASSR finally rubber-stamped the change. Primary and secondary Tatar schools would begin teaching it on September 1, 1939, at the start of the academic year, and all Tatar-language newspapers and journals were

⁷³ N. Kozlova, “Chto zhe izmenilos’ v Narkomprose?” *Krasnaia Tataria*, December 27, 1937, 3.

⁷⁴ A. Azovskii, “Russkii iazyk v nerusskikh shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, April 19, 1938, 3.

⁷⁵ Gr. Kaminskii, A. Selinkov, “Russkii iazyk v tatarskoi shkole,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 6, 1939, 3.

⁷⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 567, l. 39.

to transition to the new alphabet by January 1, 1940.⁷⁷ The announcement emphasized that the Russian alphabet would help promote the “friendly, brotherly family” of all Soviet nationalities by making it easier for minorities to learn Russian. The Russian alphabet was described as a “new step in the convergence of Tatar culture with the richer Russian socialist culture.”⁷⁸ G. A. Dinmukhametov (1892-1951), chairman of the Presidium of the TASSR Supreme Soviet, portrayed it as commencing “a new chapter in the history of the Tatar people, marking a new stage in the development of the Tatar language and the blossoming of culture that is national in form and socialist in content.”⁷⁹ Given the primacy of Russian language and culture in the late 1930s, though, even the national form of Tatar culture began taking on Russian hues.

Throughout the fall of 1939, Tatars publically heralded the Cyrillic alphabet as a surefire path to learning Russian.⁸⁰ Teachers at Kazan’s School No. 80, a secondary Tatar school, explained, “The transition of the Tatar script to a new alphabet is an important prerequisite for the further growth of Tatars’ socialist culture, for improving the literacy of the people, and for the fundamental improvement of pedagogical work in Tatar schools. The new alphabet will help workers to master more quickly the Russian language, the common heritage of the Soviet people.”⁸¹ Kh. M. Mukhtarov, a teacher at Kazan’s School No. 7, expressed a similar sentiment: “Given the momentousness of converging to Russian culture and in order to eliminate difficulties

⁷⁷ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2610, l. 3; and “Ukaz presidiuma verkhovnogo soveta Tatarskoi ASSR o perevode tatarskoi pis’mennosti s latinizirovannogo alfavita na alfavit na osnove russkoi grafiki,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 6, 1939, 1.

⁷⁸ “Na novyi alfavit,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 6, 1939, 1.

⁷⁹ G. Dinmukhametov, “Novaia pobeda kul’turnoi revoliutsii,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 6, 1939, 2.

⁸⁰ “Preniia ob ukaze Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta TASSR o perevode tatarskoi pis’mennosti na novyi alfavit na osnove russkoi grafiki,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, August 23, 1939, 3. See also: TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 319, ll. 40, 41, 53, 71-73.

⁸¹ “Na novyi alfavit,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 6, 1939, 1.

in achieving a thorough understanding of Russian, it is time that we follow the example of other nationalities that have switched to the Russian alphabet.”⁸² In yet another letter, a group of Tatar professionals, including teachers, wrote,

We have observed how Tatar youth, having graduated from schools with top grades, could not gain admission to a technical school because of their poor knowledge of Russian. Tatar needs to adopt the Russian alphabet as quickly as possible. Of course, this will not mean that children will immediately begin speaking Russian, but it will certainly make it easier to read Russian-language texts and will minimize mix-ups between letters. There will be people, such as nationalists and religious fanatics, who will construe the change in alphabet for their own counterrevolutionary objectives. This is not strange. We will be ready to explain to the masses the political importance of this event. We consider it entirely appropriate and necessary to base the Tatar alphabet on the Russian alphabet and make this change quickly.⁸³

In spite of these positive declarations, Russian-language instruction continued to languish in Tatar schools. While Moscow approved the new Tatar alphabet at the same time it promoted Russian-language instruction, the implementation of the two initiatives remained distinct from each other. The lack of coordination led to a host of logistical problems, including the need to reprint Russian-language textbooks, as those previously published for Tatars with explanatory notes in the Latin script became useless after the alphabet change. At a meeting of Russian-language teachers in early 1941, the director of Kazan’s Institute for Teacher Improvement characterized Russian in Tatar schools as the “weakest link” in the educational system, pointing to poor levels of written, spoken, and reading levels among students and teachers alike.⁸⁴ Local newspapers continued to publish damning critiques of the dismal state of Russian in Tatar schools. During an examination of graduates from Tatar schools in the TASSR, students were

⁸² NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2417, ll. 16-20.

⁸³ “Na novyi alfavit,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, August 14, 1938, 3.

⁸⁴ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2682, l. 2.

asked to recite a few lines from Russian poet A. S. Pushkin. Some made upward of one hundred thirty mistakes.⁸⁵ Many Tatar schools had no Russian-language literature or newspapers.⁸⁶

The disparity between the pervasive rhetoric about the significance of Russian and the reality of language instruction in Soviet classrooms became more and more stark. Moscow ultimately proved either unable or unwilling to provide national republics with the financial and logistical support to improve Russian instruction in non-Russian schools, given the lack of financial resources, textbooks, and teachers, as well as the distraction of the threat of war. This dissonance also reflects the center's uncertainty on how to promote Russian without abandoning native-language education. By demanding that the entire Soviet Union adhere to a standardized and unified plan for learning Russian but not providing the resources to guarantee the completion of this task, Moscow left the national regions operating in an ambiguous position. These mixed signals temper the perception of pervasive Russification under Stalin. Russian-language instruction remained a controversial issue at the highest levels of the Party-state. Until Stalin's death, the Soviet Union never gave up on supporting certain forms of national culture, even as it signaled the primary role of Russian in assimilating minorities into the Soviet mold.⁸⁷

Historian Michael G. Smith describes this as the “dual policy of Russification and nativization weaving through the Soviet experience; what became in practice a most precarious negotiation between coercion and compromise.”⁸⁸ How could the regime accommodate Tatars without relinquishing the fundamentally Russian nature of the state? The Party-state found itself

⁸⁵ Azovskii, “Russkii iazyk v nerusskikh shkolakh.”

⁸⁶ Gr. Kaminskii and A. Selinkov, “Russkii iazyk v tatarskoi shkole,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, October 6, 1939, 3.

⁸⁷ Blitstein, “Nation-Building,” 267. The TASSR Narkompros too continued issuing benchmarks for implementing indigenization and ensuring native-language education in academic institutions well into the 1940s. See NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2691, ll. 1-3.

at a loss to answer this question conclusively and instead settled into an uneasy balance between Russification and nativization that persists in Kazan even today, with many Russians still questioning why their children must learn Tatar in public schools, just as Tatars continue to fret about the extinction of their own language in favor of Russian.⁸⁹

Conclusion

Soviet schools served as a crucible for various and sometimes competing visions for constructing a revolutionary society. From its inception, the Party-state hesitated to promote Russian language and culture in a way that smacked of prerevolutionary Russification policies. Moscow demonstrated a cautious approach in addressing language instruction, even as Russian grew in prominence and popularity among Tatar youth, who understood that mastering the language could facilitate access to higher education, professional promotion, and social and political stability. Indeed, the roots of the 1938 decree introducing mandatory Russian language and literature curriculum aimed at such practical ends. Educators in Moscow and Kazan alike lamented that minorities' lack of Russian knowledge ultimately hindered their ability to pursue post-secondary schooling. Stalin emphasized the need for Russian as a common language for the effective and uniform governance of the Soviet Union's military, economic, and cultural affairs.

Of course, the Soviet Union was not the only polity to face complicated issues regarding its minority languages and cultures during the interwar period. Recent studies have begun to place Soviet nationalities policies in comparative contexts to discern how other states responded to calls for native-language education and minority rights.⁹⁰ Peter Blistein, for instance, has

⁸⁸ Michael G. Smith, *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917-1953* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), v.

⁸⁹ Diana Nevzorova, "Natsional'nyi iazyk v shkolakh Tatarstana: Za i protiv," *BBC Russian Service*, May 21, 2015, accessed January 14, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2015/05/150520_tatar_language_schools.

⁹⁰ Mark R. Beissinger, "Soviet Empire as 'Family Resemblance'," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 294-303.

noted how the 1938 Russian language decrees moved the Soviet Union close to its Eastern European neighbors, all of which taught a common state language in their schools.⁹¹ Adeeb Khalid has suggested parallels between the Soviet Union, Turkey, and Iran using the model of an “activist, interventionist, mobilizational state that seeks to sculpt its citizenry in an ideal image.” Kemalist Turkey devoted great attention to the orthography of the Turkish language, abandoning Arabic for a Latin alphabet at the same time as many Turkic languages in the Soviet Union did the same. Turkey likewise established a secular education system to replace Islamic schools and ensure the future of the state and nation.⁹²

In similar fashion, Soviet language policies emanating from Moscow served as a practical move by a modernizing state. One article agitating for improved Russian-language knowledge among Tatars in 1938 summed this agenda up well: “While stressing the importance of native languages as the foundation for instruction in national schools, we acknowledge the necessity for all Soviet citizens to study Russian as a prerequisite for strengthening the unity of the Soviet peoples and as a powerful means for cultural growth and the improvement of national cadres.”⁹³ Although Russian would remain supreme, it was never intended to supplant entirely the languages of national minorities.

This does not, however, remove ideology from the equation altogether. Even if some Soviet elites—Russian and Tatar alike—interpreted Soviet language policies promoting Russian as ideologically neutral and motivated by efficient governance, others, particularly Tatars of the older generation, saw something more nefarious and akin to prerevolutionary Russification. The

⁹¹ Peter A. Blitstein, “Cultural Diversity and the Interwar Conjecture: Soviet Nationality Policy in Its Comparative Context,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 273-93.

⁹² Adeeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 231-51.

⁹³ Azovskii, “Russkii iazyk v nerusskikh shkolakh.”

social viability of Tatar had been drastically weakened by 1941, not only as a consequence of changes to the language's alphabet, but also by a new generation of urban Tatars' own understanding of the advantages of learning Russian.⁹⁴ That year, for example, over 4,000 Tatars enrolled in Russian schools in Kazan in order to receive instruction only in Russian. Of course, this pales to the 250,000 Tatar pupils receiving primary and secondary education in their native language throughout the entire Tatar Republic, although all of these students received at least some level of Russian education.⁹⁵ Increasingly, the roadblocks to young Tatars learning Russian came not from disinterestedness in the language or ideological objections, but rather the lack of effective teachers, sufficient funding, and accessible textbooks. In this regard, schools no longer functioned as spaces of conflict, but as spaces for accommodation and generational change.

⁹⁴ For more on the collapsing viability of the Tatar language due to language changes, see Gary Guadagnolo and Trey Guinn, "The ABCs of Tatar: Multilingual Accommodation and Soviet Language Politics," *Russian Journal of Communication* 6, no. 2 (2014): 127-42.

⁹⁵ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2691, l. 2.

CHAPTER 2: SEPARATE BUT EQUAL? NATIONALITY POLICIES AND KAZAN VUZy

Beginning in the early twentieth century, Kazan served as the hub of higher learning for the entire Volga region, as well as for Siberia and Central Asia. Before the Bolshevik Revolution, all higher educational institutions (VUZy) and almost half of the secondary schools east of the Volga River were located there.¹ Kazan's prominence as a "student city" persisted into the Soviet era. In the decades following the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks realized that the Soviet Union's political, industrial, educational, and cultural bureaucracy required new cadres of trained and loyal specialists to function. In an effort to make university study more accessible for these future professionals, the Soviet government in 1918 opened all VUZy to anyone who wished to enter. Aspiring youth, as well as soldiers and experienced workers, flocked to Kazan, either of their own accord or heeding directives from Party-state institutions. Other regional capitals simply could not compete with Kazan in terms of the opportunities it offered for advanced studies. Between 1913 and 1941, the total number of VUZy in Kazan increased from 3 to 14, with the student population expanding from 3,500 to 12,100.²

The mission of Soviet VUZy included not just transferring practical knowledge to a new generation of burgeoning professionals, but attuning their consciousness to the objectives of the Party-state. Historians Michael David-Fox and György Péteri have characterized VUZy as "arenas in which the Bolshevik drive to create not only a new intelligentsia but 'new people' was

¹ Vadim Ermolaev, *Vysshie uchebnye zavedeniia g. Kazani pri svete statisticheskikh tsifr* (Kazan: Glavlit, 1926), 3.

² V. P. Kandilov, ed., *Respublika Tatarstan 1920-2000 gg.: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Kazan: Gosudarstvennyi komitet Respubliki Tatarstan po statistike, 2001), 258.

operationalized, routinized, and enacted.”³ Party-state authorities carefully curated experiences within VUZy to inculcate within students key habits that would persist in their lives beyond their university years, such as denouncing enemies, confessing individual and collective errors regarding behavior and policy implementation, and interpreting signals from propaganda and Party sources as indicators of changing political winds.⁴ From the perspective of Party authorities, students would graduate from VUZy with both the educational and political tools to contribute to the flourishing of the Soviet state.

The historiography of Soviet VUZy has focused on the educational policies and programs introduced by the Bolsheviks in the decades following the October Revolution.⁵ It foregrounds the role of political and educational authorities in Moscow, tracing utopian projects generated by Narkompros to replace bourgeois faculty and students that populated most universities with new cadres of loyal Communists and workers. Many Russian scholars have zoomed in on the famous professors and pupils, scientific achievements, and organizational structure of individual VUZy.⁶

³ Michael David-Fox and György Péteri, “On the Origins and Demise of the Communist Academic Regime,” in *Academia in Upheaval: Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*, ed. Michael David-Fox and György Péteri (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2000), 4-5.

⁴ Historian Igal Halfin has investigated this concept in relation to the participation of students at Leningrad Communist University, seeking to parse out the relation between the subject and state in carrying out the Great Purge of 1936-38. Halfin’s interest in the question of historical agency informs my own interest, not necessarily in repression, but in terms of how individuals made daily decisions that affected their ability to navigate the Soviet system. See and Igal Halfin, *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University* (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 2009).

⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Ibid., *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union: 1921-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Larry Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918-1929* (Cornell, NY: Ithaca University Press, 1997); and David-Fox and Péteri, eds., *Academia in Upheaval*.

⁶ Such literature for Kazan VUZy is vast. Take, for example: M. Z. Zakiev, *Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut* (Kazan: KGPI, 1974); I. P. Ermolaev, *Istoriia Kazanskogo universiteta, 1804-2004* (Kazan: Izd. Kazanskogo universiteta, 2004); E. A. Vishlenkova, S. Iu. Malysheva, and A. A. Sal’nikova, *Terra Universitatis: Dva veka universitetskoi kul’tury v Kazani* (Kazan: Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2005); G. G. Amalieva, “Lichnye dela studentov Kazanskogo universiteta (1917-1925 gg.) kak istoricheskii istochnik” (Candidate diss., Kazan State University, 2006); I. A. Gafarov, *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarno-*

In this chapter, my research borrows from both frameworks. I integrate into one narrative the experience of students across key institutions in Kazan, including Kazan University, the flagship VUZ of the Tatar Republic and one-time alma mater of Lenin, and the Pedagogical Institute, which had by far the greatest concentration of Tatar students. The differing paths these institutions offered Tatars helped define their place in Soviet society.

Moreover, I explore how nationality policies, particularly regarding language instruction, shaped Kazan VUZy as spaces for integration, interaction, assimilation, and conflict. Authorities in both Moscow and Kazan emphasized the responsibility of Kazan's VUZy to teach and train Tatars to fulfill minority quotas in Party-state organs and industrial and cultural institutions. Just as with primary and secondary schools, many roadblocks hindered the recruitment and retention of Tatars students into VUZy: their lack of fluency in Russian; a shortage of instructors who could speak Tatar; a deficit of teaching materials; personal and institutional discrimination; and financial difficulties. Nonetheless, by 1941, the number of Tatars enrolled in Kazan VUZy had swelled from a negligible number to 2,100.⁷ While "affirmative action" policies opened up higher education to Tatars in revolutionary ways, the larger political drama unfolding in the Soviet Union, as well as local attempts to interpret, implement, and, occasionally, subvert Moscow's directives, invariably mediated the experiences of Tatar students.

Fleeing the Shadow of Empire

Kazan University was the first institution of higher education to open in the Russian Empire outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg. In January 1803, the Ministry of Education divided Russia into six different administrative regions, outlining plans for each to have its own

pedagogicheskii universitet (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Idel-Press, 2006); and A. I. Khairullina, "Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskaiia i obshchestvenno-politicheskaiia kharakteristika studenchestva Vostochno-pedagogicheskogo instituta g. Kazani v 1920-e gody" (Candidate diss., Tatar State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University, 2011).

⁷ Garipova, *Kazan': Obshchestvo, politika, kul'tura*, 97.

university. The following year, on November 5, 1804, Alexander I (1801-25) signed an order officially founding Kazan University. Initially, the university offered students four major areas of study: moral and political sciences; physical and mathematical sciences; medicine; and philology.⁸ It also housed, for the first half of the nineteenth century, the largest center of oriental studies (*vostokeyedenie*) in all of Europe. Scholars came to Kazan to study the languages and cultures of the near and far East, including Chinese, Sanskrit, Persian, and Turkish, as well as those of the Muslim populations in the university's backyard. In many cases, these scholars worked hand in hand with the Russian Orthodox Church to advance the Christianization and Russification of local Muslims.⁹

By the late nineteenth century, the revolutionary movement gained traction among Kazan University students, some of whom regularly attended meetings, read underground newspapers, and debated political issues outside of class. Lenin's own revolutionary path began in Kazan; his involvement in student protests led to his expulsion from the university's law faculty in 1887.¹⁰ In 1917, while Kazan University students welcomed the February Revolution, conservative faculty expressed tepid enthusiasm for regime change. The university's governing board officially recognized Petrograd's Provisional Government only on April 22, 1917. Following the October Revolution, the board supported Kharkov University's denunciation of the Bolsheviks as a "group of fanatics and dark dealers" that seized power through manipulation, deception, and violence. Administrators and faculty at Kazan University worried that the Bolsheviks would cut

⁸ Ermolaev, *Istoriia Kazanskogo universiteta*, 11-16.

⁹ David Schimmelpennick van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 93-121.

¹⁰ For more on Lenin's time in Kazan, see I. Kondrat'ev, *Lenin v Kazani* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962).

off Russia from the “spiritual and material values that give life to the people, without which life is not worth living.”¹¹

The Russian Civil War brought the realities of regime change closer to home for faculty and students of Kazan University. After the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly (Komuch), sympathetic to the White movement, captured Kazan in August 1918, Kazan University professors split into different camps. The majority supported the Komuch army, with thirty-five of forty-two members of the university’s governing board pledging support and money to them. Yet on September 10, 1918, after the Red Army liberated Kazan, the head of the secret police M. I. Latsis reported that he could find no one to shoot, as the majority of the local intelligentsia, bourgeoisie, and religious elite had fled the city, including more than one hundred members of the professorial and administrative staff of Kazan University. Latsis forced the few disloyal professors who had remained in Kazan to provide the Red Army with a sum ten times greater than what they had promised to the White forces.¹²

On September 19, 1921, an edict from the RSFSR Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom) brought Kazan University under the jurisdiction of the state. Serious about reforming higher education, the Bolsheviks anticipated institutions such as Kazan University playing a key role in creating the new Soviet man, who would use his skills and knowledge to build the socialist state of the future. Over the following years, a new governing board shuffled Kazan University’s organizational structure, closing, for example, the history and philosophy departments as bastions of conservatism. Yet Marxist ideology did not sweep out old ways of

¹¹ Quoted in Ermolaev, *Istoriia Kazanskogo universiteta*, 255-57.

¹² *Ibid.*, 260.

thinking entirely. Although the Bolsheviks opposed the old professoriate, many of its members continued to teach, given the simple lack of alternatives.¹³

During these early years, Party-state authorities focused on transforming the social composition of the student body, embarking on “proletarianization” campaigns to increase the number of workers and peasants. Classes were moved to the evenings so that workers could attend them after finishing their shifts. During the 1923-24 academic year, 277 students (11 percent) at Kazan University came from working class backgrounds, and 839 (34 percent) from peasant stock.¹⁴ Administrators routinely deployed purges of student ranks to balance out these numbers.¹⁵ In May 1924, the most expansive of these purges led to the expulsion of 387 students, or 19 percent of Kazan University’s total student body, for “alien” social backgrounds and political affiliations. This artificially raised the overall percentages of workers and peasants, a key objective in the proletarianization of Kazan VUZy.¹⁶

In addition to opening VUZy for previously marginalized social classes, local educational administrators also sought to redress the lack of Tatar students. They castigated what they saw as Kazan University’s leading role in the “militant colonization” of the “occupied territories” of the Soviet East during the imperial era. As Gulag memoirist E. S. Ginzburg (1904-77), who in the 1920s reported on educational issues for *Krasnaia Tataria*, described, “All of the non-Russians inhabiting Eastern Russia lived in the shadow of the massive gold cross atop the ancient

¹³ Ibid., 266.

¹⁴ Ibid., 289.

¹⁵ Across the RSFSR, 18,000 students were expelled from VUZy in this purge, which took place on the heels of Lenin’s death in an attempt to boost the representation of workers and peasants in educational institutions and thus the Party. See Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 97-102.

¹⁶ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 724, ll. 1-56.

pediment of the university.” To Ginzburg, this missionary agenda served as a dark stain on her alma mater’s past.¹⁷

The Bolsheviks believed that easing access to VUZy for Tatars and other national students, as had been done for underrepresented social classes, would rectify such historical injustices. Before the October Revolution, few national minorities studied in Kazan universities. The handful of Tatars who gained admission came from wealthy intelligentsia and merchant families, not working-class or peasant backgrounds. They often masked their difference by adopting Russian patterns of speech and dress. By the early twentieth century, Tatar reformers began agitating for opening admission to universities. After the 1905 Revolution, progressive members of the Tatar intelligentsia, including the *jadids* discussed in the previous chapter, established organizations such as *Al’-islakh* (Reform) in Kazan to advocate for access to higher education. In subsequent years, Tatar students set up various “circles” (*kruzhki/kruzhkalar*) to study Tatar and European literature, as well as social sciences. These circles began dabbling in political issues, prompting repeated efforts by the secret police to break them up. As one Tatar Bolshevik recalled, the October Revolution of 1917 offered the potential for something new for Tatars thirsty for higher education.¹⁸

Narkompros educators struggled with how to increase the number of national students in VUZy. As they realized, the only Tatars with the necessary academic training and Russian-language skills to study in VUZy were the sons and daughters of mullahs and the bourgeois intelligentsia, whom university officials at first begrudgingly admitted in response to calls to let in non-Russian students. Subsequent purges of student ranks, which following the call to

¹⁷ E. Ginzburg, “Universitet shagaet bodro,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, November 18, 1933, 3.

¹⁸ Nur Saifi, “Sredi studentov-tatar,” *Vestnik prosveshcheniia* 3 (1921): 31-36.

proletarianize educational institutions in 1924 sought to inflate the percentages of workers and peasants, were also engineered to eliminate the children of bourgeois elite. The Tatar Republic OGPU worried that a number of these “nonworking-class elements,” including children of mullahs, had successfully concealed their social backgrounds from the screening commissions and continued to study in universities.¹⁹ The TASSR Komsomol organization spoke out against the Tatar bourgeoisie’s strategic use of favorable admissions policies to place their children in universities, where they might spread nationalist ideologies. Not coincidentally, these purges followed closely on the heels of the arrest of Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev in 1923 and the public reproach of his brand of local nationalism among top Tatar Republic officials.²⁰

The challenge of expanding the number of proletarian Tatar students received a boost in 1924 when Moscow introduced *broni*, a system of quotas that reserved spaces in VUZy for indigenous nationalities. In response to widely advertised calls for national minorities from both inside and outside the Tatar Republic to study in local VUZy, prospective students began to descend upon Kazan.²¹ In August 1925, TASSR Party official M. S. Sagidullin sent an urgent telegram to Moscow’s Central Committee regarding the “unprecedented influx of national students to Kazan from all over the Soviet Union,” primarily the Eastern republics, but also the Donbas and Siberia. Sagidullin noted that all universities in the city were already filled to capacity, and that accommodating more students was impossible without more resources.²²

As of January 1926, Kazan’s VUZy population skewed heavily toward Russians, who made up 69 percent of 4,777 students. Tatars came in at a distant second place with 11 percent.

¹⁹ NART, f. R-732, op. 11, d. 28, l. 93.

²⁰ NART, f. R-4034, op. 5, d. 14, l. 62.

²¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 1, d. 1264, l. 7; and f. 15, op. 1, d. 1265, l. 423.

²² TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 1, d. 1265, l. 377.

Other nationals could be found as well, including Jews, Chuvash, Mari, Udmurts, Bashkirs, Mordvins, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Armenians, Ukrainians, Latvians, Belorussians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Germans, Poles, Greeks, Turks, Georgians, and Yakuts. These students had a wide range of educational training: 42 percent had completed some form of secondary schooling; 20 percent came from workers' faculties; 10 percent had a technical school degree; and 28 percent had either primary or homeschool education. In terms of social backgrounds, 46 percent came from peasant stock; 21 percent identified as workers; 16 percent had clerical jobs; 8 percent were considered part of the intelligentsia; and 4 percent came from nonworking-class backgrounds.²³

Kazan was not only a place of destination, but also a place of departure. While the center of its own sphere of influence as the capital of a republic, Kazan also remained on the periphery of the larger Soviet empire. By 1926, the TASSR Narkompros formed an examination board to select students to study in Moscow and Leningrad institutions.²⁴ In 1926, the board reviewed 129 applications for 28 bronza spots reserved in central VUZy for TASSR students. In its deliberations, the board sought to balance its mission of enabling non-Russians to study in a more prestigious VUZ with the reality of their academic preparedness and social background. Not surprisingly, the board ran into problems with the insufficiently qualified applicant pool, so much so that it even approved two daughters of former mullahs to study in Moscow. According to the board, the two students retained no connections with the nonworking-class elements of their family. In the end, the board recommended thirteen Tatars, twelve Russians, two Chuvash, and one Ukrainian for matriculation into VUZy in Moscow and Leningrad that year.²⁵

²³ Ermolaev, *Vysshie uchebnye zavedeniia*, 5-7.

²⁴ One of the most prominent VUZy for minority nationalities was Moscow's Institute of Oriental Studies, founded in 1920 by the People's Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnats).

²⁵ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1154, ll. 75-77.

Workers' Faculties

The push for greater Russian and Tatar proletarian representation among Kazan students, exemplified by bronias, received yet another boost through workers' faculties (rabfaks). The Narkompros established rabfaks in key VUZy throughout the Soviet Union in 1918-19 in order to prepare workers and peasants to enter the ranks of higher education as soon as possible.²⁶ Their antecedents can be traced back to "people's universities" and other programs to provide higher education among adults in Russia following the 1905 Revolution.²⁷ According to Sovnarkom regulations, rabfak students had to come from a working class or peasant background and have at least some experience in industrial, transportation, or agricultural enterprises. They also needed something akin to a primary education and a basic command of arithmetic, reading, and writing; however, this was usually far from the case. Graduates of the rabfak program would automatically receive admission into a VUZ.²⁸

In the fall of 1919, Kazan University founded the city's first rabfak, which admitted three hundred applicants. Ambitious administrators initially believed they could prepare these students for university-level study in six months. During the 1921-22 academic year, however, the course of study was expanded to three years and finally to four years in 1928.²⁹ Combined with four or five years of work in a VUZ, rabfak students spent an average of eight years pursuing higher education. M. K. Korbut (1899-1937), the first director of the Kazan University Rabfak, insisted the institution would serve as a "new spiritual center for ideological, organization, and

²⁶ NART, f. R-1337, op. 1, d. 16, l. 4-5.

²⁷ David Currie Lee, *The People's Universities of the USSR* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

²⁸ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 945, l. 6.

²⁹ S. V. Morozova, "Iz istorii rabochego fakul'teta Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta (1919-1937 gg.)," in *Iz istorii rabfaka Kazanskogo universiteta* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 1976), 5-7.

educational influence over the proletarian and semiproletarian toiling masses.”³⁰ According to rabfak student V. Zhilinskii, he and his peers in the rabfak developed the habits of the new Soviet man, namely “perseverance and determination in overcoming difficulties, unbending integrity, consistency, enthusiasm, endurance, and discipline in both work and social life.”³¹ By the 1927-28 academic year, almost fifty thousand students had enrolled in rabfaks throughout the Soviet Union. These young workers and peasants saw in the rabfak the fulfillment of the Party’s promise of social mobility through open access to education.³²

Students arriving in Kazan to enroll in the rabfak had to contend with inadequate food, clothing, and shelter. For the 1925-26 academic year, Kazan University had just 320 beds in the dormitory for a total of 2,027 enrolled students.³³ A commission formed in September 1927 sought to improve the conditions of university students, starting with the problem of living space. It assigned some of the unclaimed rooms in Kazan hotels to various institutions, such as the Eastern Pedagogical Institute, Veterinary Institute, and Industrial Technical School.³⁴ Yet these tactics did little to allay the housing crisis. As of January 1928, around 2,000 students, or 15 percent all students in Kazan, had no place to live. Consequently, they slept in the laboratories, classrooms, and auditoriums of their institutions. Students lucky enough to live in dormitories had to make do with cramped quarters that averaged 5 square meters per person, 65 percent of the norm. Educators complained that “these difficult living conditions for Kazan students

³⁰ M. Korbut, “Dialektika v idee rabfakov,” in *Na putiakh k vysshei shkole. Vosem’ let raboty, 1919-1927* (Kazan: Rabochii fakul’tet KGU im. V. I. Lenina, 1927), 10.

³¹ V. Zhilinskii, “Rabfakovets v vyshei shkole,” in *Na putiakh k vysshei shkole: 10 let raboty, 1919-1929* (Kazan: Rabochii fakul’tet KGU im. V. I. Lenina, 1929), 118.

³² Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 49-51.

³³ Vishlenkova, Malysheva, and Sal’nikova, *Terra Universitatis*, 62.

³⁴ NART, f. R-1803, op. 1, d. 301, l. 2.

negatively affect their studies, significantly hampering their preparation for future responsibilities.” Insufficient funds from Moscow stymied construction for new dormitories, including a proposal from the Kazan City Soviet to build several large, 875-person structures equipped with cafeterias, banyas, laundry services, and daycare facilities.³⁵

Despite a never-ending series of challenges, potential students continued to converge on Kazan. According to Korbuto, hopeful applicants “dropped their plows and came from remote villages in spite of tuberculosis, famine, and extreme cold in the city.”³⁶ Studying at a rabfak and then VUZ served as a prime method for transitioning from rural to urban life. Applicants to the Kazan University Rabfak often emphasized their proletarian or peasant background; the fact that they were unemployed; and their interest in further education.³⁷ Many demobilized Red Army soldiers stepped forward to learn, too, such as M. Ia. Zinov’ev, who enrolled in 1920. As he recounted, “Every year I discovered within myself more abilities and developed a greater interest in science. I understood the purpose of the rabfak, to open wide for us the doors to higher education, so that we can achieve that about which we had previously just dreamed.” He believed that education provided the foundation for a state governed by workers and peasants: “The proletariat, the world’s oppressed class, has the power to govern itself through Soviet power. Higher education gives us this capability, and the workers’ faculty has placed us on a fast, nonstop train toward this destination.”³⁸

The few Tatars in the first class of Kazan University Rabfak students spoke no Russian and thus did not even qualify for the preparatory group established for the most remedial

³⁵ NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 452, ll. 10-11.

³⁶ M. K. Korbuto, “Rabochii fakul’tet Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta,” *Novoe delo* 1 (1922): 113.

³⁷ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 945, ll. 100-35.

³⁸ M. Korbuto, “Nashe studenchestvo,” *Novoe delo* 3 (1922): 141-42.

students. Still, the TASSR desperately needed Tatars to move through the academic ranks and gain the prerequisite education and training to serve in its numerous cultural and political institutions. Given the lack of secondary schools for national minorities, training through rabfaks served as the best stepping stone for minorities to advance into VUZy. In June 1920, the Kazan University Rabfak formed two preparatory Tatar groups, with thirty students in each, primarily made up of peasants from various regions of the Tatar Republic. Instructors who knew at least some Tatar worked with these students. By the fall of 1920, a number of them were ready to begin studying alongside Russians as first-year rabfak students. Two more Tatar preparatory groups formed in 1921. Tatar rabfak students organized cultural and social activities for their co-nationals, founding literary and dramatic clubs and hosting discussions of Tatar literature. By January 1921, the student population of the Kazan University Rabfak included 220 Russians, 89 Tatars, 71 Chuvash, 19 Jews, 7 Udmurts, and 22 other nationals.³⁹

Nur Seifi, who would later become a leader of the TASSR Komsomol organization and the editor of the Tatar workers' journal *Eshche* (Worker), enrolled in the Kazan University Rabfak after his demobilization from the Red Army in 1920. Seifi recalled that he found his studies difficult due to his insufficient knowledge of Russian and thus organized a study group, inviting more senior Tatar students with a superior knowledge of Russian to participate, hoping to learn from them. This group of Tatar students met three times a week in Seifi's rented hotel room. Seifi claimed that they often studied all night until seven or eight o'clock in the morning before heading off to classes. Living conditions were horrible. Seifi, like most rabfak students, lived hand to mouth. He worked in several positions simultaneously, such as a Tatar language instructor at Kazan University and editor of the journals *Red Youth* and *Youth of the Red East*. At

³⁹ Korbit, "Rabochii fakul'tet," 109-17.

the rabfak, Seifi organized Tatar students into political, theatrical, choir, and literary clubs. He also helped edit the Tatar-language journal *Bezneng tormysh* (Our Life). Perhaps in an attempt to trump up his own sense of service to the Party-state, Seifi maintained that this work, in conjunction with his studies, took up between eighteen and twenty hours a day. He graduated from the Kazan University Rabfak in the spring of 1922 and entered Moscow's Agricultural Academy named for K. A. Timiriazev.⁴⁰

Seifi's experiences underscore the realization of many Tatars in these years: in order to excel in VUZy and beyond, they had to learn Russian. Ideally, instructors for Tatar rabfak groups were supposed to know Tatar but teach their various subjects, whether math, natural sciences, geography, or politics, in Russian. Assignments were likewise to be completed in Russian in order to prepare Tatars for VUZy.⁴¹ According to one historian of the Kazan University Rabfak, these Russian-language courses achieved some success, as the Tatar students who completed them and entered the first course of the rabfak could keep pace with their Russians peers.⁴² As with Seifi and his Russian-language mentors, Tatars' success in making this transition often depended on someone else's support in navigating the difficulties of operating in a Russian-language environment. Official pronouncements were not enough to implement language policies, particularly when resources remained so scarce.

Tatar student Kh. Kh. Baichurova successfully mastered Russian at the rabfak, though she failed a Russian language exam upon initially applying in 1922. Over the following three years she learned to speak Russian fluently, in part because she always lived with Russian peers.

⁴⁰ Nur Seifi, "Moi vospominaniia," in *Na putiakh k vysshei shkole: 10 let raboty*, 222-23.

⁴¹ V. M. Mitrofanov, "K prepodavaniiu russkogo iazyka v tatarskikh gruppakh rabochego fakul'teta," *Novoe delo* 1 (1922): 98-105.

⁴² Morozova, "Iz istorii rabochego fakul'teta," 12-23.

In 1923, she moved into a dormitory where four of her seven roommates were Russian. One Russian roommate told Baichurova, “Your Russian is very bad, but don’t be shy. Just talk, and I will correct your mistakes.” Baichurova attributed her subsequent mastery of the Russian language to these positive interactions with Russian peers. Her Russian language teacher, G. F. Linstser, instructed his pupils to read more Russian literature, aloud when possible. He also suggested they write essays outside of class, promising to correct and explain mistakes.⁴³

Throughout the 1920s, rabfak instructors confronted the challenges of teaching adult learners who matriculated with low proficiency in basic academic skills. The presence of national minorities complicated this task further. While it was logistically impossible to teach all of them in their native languages, a number of instructors specialized in working with Tatar students. For example, B. V. Bolgarskii initially protested when university officials assigned him to teach mathematics to minorities who knew neither Russian nor fundamental mathematical concepts. The three-year program Bolgarskii had designed for Russians with at least an elementary education was wholly impractical for the non-Russians. So, he developed a new program, as well as supplementary textbooks and other teaching materials, for the minority students. In spite of his initial reservations, he soon found himself enamored with the work ethic of his students and their earnest desire to learn and assimilate into Soviet society. In an undated memoir reflecting on his time at the Kazan University Rabfak, he applauded the “wonderful students who, overcoming enormous material needs, and often hungry and dressed in the most primitive garb, sought to acquire the knowledge we teachers presented to them.” Bolgarskii

⁴³ Kh. Kh. Baichurova, “Rabfak vyvel menia na bol’shiu dorogu,” in *Iz istorii rabfaka Kazanskogo universiteta*, 73.

expressed pride at his involvement in the rabfak and its role in providing an academic foundation for the TASSR's doctors, engineers, writers, teachers, agronomists, and other professionals.⁴⁴

By 1925, the Kazan University Rabfak also adopted formal bronia practices, allocating each of the administrative regions in the TASSR a certain number of places for both Russians and Tatars. For the 1925-26 academic year, of 140 available places, 64 were earmarked for Tatars, 36 for Russians, 24 for Chuvash, 16 for Mordvins, and 5 each for Mari and Udmurts.⁴⁵ In subsequent years, 5 Mari and 11 Udmurt sections opened to accommodate these national students. By the 1928-29 academic year, 320 nationals studied at the Kazan University Rabfak.⁴⁶

A Pedagogical Path

Beginning in 1924, however, the number of Tatars in the Kazan University Rabfak steadily declined. While 114 were admitted in the 1922-23 academic year, this number dropped to 38 in the 1924-25 academic year, to 12 in the 1927-28 academic year, and to none in the 1929-30 academic year.⁴⁷ For the duration of the 1930s, the Kazan University Rabfak struggled to meet its quotas of Tatar students.⁴⁸ The disappearance of Tatars from the ranks of the Kazan University Rabfak can be attributed not only to the difficulties they experienced studying in Russian, but also to the opening of the Tatar Rabfak (Tatrabfak) in October 1923 as part of Kazan's top pedagogical VUZ, the Pedagogical Institute.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Lobachevsky Library Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, Student Memoir No. 10094.

⁴⁵ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 945, l. 15.

⁴⁶ *Sed'moi vypusk s prilozheniem uslovii postupleniia na Rabfaki* (Kazan: Izdanie Rabfaka KGU im. V. I. Lenina, 1926), 6.

⁴⁷ A. E. El'chinbaev, "Natsional'nye otdeleniia Kazanskogo rabfaka," in *Na putiakh k vysshei shkole: 10 let raboty*, 157-67; and M. I. Pekun'kin, "Rost natsional'nykh elementov v sostave Kazanskogo Rabfaka," in *Na putiakh k vysshei shkole. Vosem' let raboty*, 76.

⁴⁸ See, for example: TsGA IPD, f. 26, op. 1, d. 97, ll. 2-2ob; and NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1860, ll. 60-64.

⁴⁹ The VUZ underwent a number of rebranding campaigns, mentioned below. For the sake of consistency, I will use the term "Pedagogical Institute."

Together, the Tatrabfak and Pedagogical Institute served as the nucleus of Tatar higher education in Kazan, offering Tatars instruction in their native language, supplementary training in Russian, and a path into professional service. The Kazan Pedagogical Institute officially opened on October 19, 1918, yet its pedigree stretched back to the Kazan Teachers' Institute, founded in the wake of Alexander II's educational reforms to train teachers to work in schools throughout provincial Russia. In August 1919, the RSFSR Narkompros incorporated teachers' institutes into the VUZy infrastructure, indicative of the massive need for more teachers, particularly those that could teach in minority languages. In the 1919-20 academic year, for example, the Tatar Republic had only 8,000 primary- and secondary-school teachers out of the needed 25,000.⁵⁰ At the Pedagogical Institute, future teachers could specialize in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history, literature, fine arts, or local studies (*kraevedenie*). By the third and fourth years of the program, students practiced their pedagogical skills in local schools for several hours a day.

In August 1922, the TASSR Narkompros combined the Kazan Pedagogical Institute, Eastern Academy, and Social Sciences Department of Kazan University into the Eastern Pedagogical Institute.⁵¹ This decision effectively consolidated the main pedagogical and humanities departments across Kazan's largest VUZy into a single institution, which was tasked by the Narkompros to train teachers from among all of the Soviet Union's "Eastern" nationalities, but particularly among Tatars.⁵² A four-year course of study would prepare candidates for work in primary, secondary, and technical schools. Matriculating students had to

⁵⁰ Gafarov, *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarno-pedagogicheskii universitet*, 34.

⁵¹ B. Vishievskii, "Vostochnaia akademiia, ee organizatsiia i zadachi," *Vestnik prosveshcheniia* 4-5 (September-October 1921): 99-104; NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 837, l. 50; and NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 540, l. 135.

⁵² NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 887, ll. 50-50ob.

be at least sixteen years old with some previous schooling, or have graduated from a rabfak.⁵³

Many members of the prerevolutionary Tatar intelligentsia who remained in Kazan after the Bolshevik Revolution found employment there. Over time, the Pedagogical Institute emerged as the foremost site of Tatar patronage and networking within the Tatar Republic, in no small part due to the large concentration of Tatars among the student body and faculty. By 1926, Tatar, Chuvash, Mari, and Udmurt students could all attend courses devoted to their own culture, language, and history.⁵⁴

Upon opening in 1923, the Tatrabfak was tasked with preparing the Soviet Union's Eastern nationalities to study in VUZy. As one correspondent proclaimed upon its opening, "Here Tatars from all over the Soviet Union, as well as Bashkirs, Kreshens, Kyrgyz, Uyghurs, Uzbeks, and Turkmens, will come together in one friendly family."⁵⁵ M. Iu. Brundukov, the TASSR Commissar of Education from 1922 to 1924, characterized the Tatrabfak as a "bright star that will produce new fighters for the liberation of the oppressed masses of the East and also contribute to the cultural and economic growth of the Tatar Republic." S. P. Singalevich, head of the Pedagogical Institute, described Tatrabfak students as "the true children of October, who will bring to the people of the East not only the spirit of revolution, but also scientific knowledge, which will further reinforce political achievements." He continued, "The professors of the Eastern Pedagogical Institute are ready to meet them, to hold open the doors of science, and to walk hand-in-hand with the proletarian revolution."⁵⁶

⁵³ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 540, ll. 133-34.

⁵⁴ Gafarov, *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarno-pedagogicheskii universitet*, 44.

⁵⁵ Fuad Sallavi, "U tekhn, kotorye zazhgut Vostok," *Krasnaia Tataria*, November 20, 1924, 3.

⁵⁶ "Otkrytie Tatrabfaka," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, October 25, 1923, 3.

The recruitment of many members of the prerevolutionary Tatar intelligentsia into the Tatrabfak faculty resulted in much greater attention to Tatar-language instruction. Administrators also acknowledged the necessity of its students learning Russian. Most Tatars, if they matriculated into the Pedagogical University, would eventually teach in mixed-nationality classrooms in the Tatar Republic. Thus, they needed proficiency in both Tatar and Russian.⁵⁷ One Russian-language instructor, Leonid Pomotskii, had taught Russian to Tatars for over ten years. He characterized Russian as “the quickest tool of acculturation; the language of the proletariat, which first raised the banner of emancipation, as well as the language of the great Lenin; and the only way for the national . . . to throw off the old, shoddy clothes of national alienation, chauvinism, and hatred.” In his courses, Pomotskii focused on fluency in speaking, reading, and writing, as well as exposure to classics of Russian literature, so that students could integrate into the political, cultural, and social world of the Soviet Union outside the TASSR.⁵⁸

The Tatrabfak facilitated special events in which Tatars made presentations in Russian and Russians did so in Tatar. Excursions to the Tatar State Academic Theater promoted the achievements of Tatar music and culture.⁵⁹ This did not, however, mean that all Tatrabfak students welcomed the interethnic mingling, as evinced by the Russian student Efimov, who found the mandatory Tatar-language courses impractical. His Tatar instructor assigned students to read the Tatar-language newspaper *Kyzyl Tatarstan* (Red Tatarstan) at home, subsequently quizzing them over the material in class in order to improve their reading speed and raise their political awareness. Efimov refused to complete this task. He insisted that, since he read

⁵⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 1224, ll. 206-09.

⁵⁸ Leonid Pomotskii, “K voprosu o postanovke prepodavaniia russkogo iazyka v tiurko-tatarskoi shkole vzroslykh,” in P. M. Dul’skii, ed., *Piat’ let Tiurko-tatarskogo rabochego fakul’teta* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1929), 69-83.

⁵⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 1224, ll. 200-05.

Russian-language newspapers *Pravda* and *Krasnaia Tatariia*, he had no need for the Tatar paper. Efimov also regularly left Tatar lessons earlier than his peers, citing “social responsibilities.” A disciplinary committee censured Efimov’s behavior as “unjustified and harmful.”⁶⁰

By the late 1920s, the position of the Tatrabfak and the Pedagogical Institute as the center of Tatar learning became more and more apparent. In the 1928-29 academic year, the teaching staff comprised fifteen Tatars, sixteen Russians, and six other nationals.⁶¹ In 1931-32, 348 of 403 students were Tatars.⁶² During that academic year, all first-year instruction took place in Tatar, and 80 percent of textbooks were also in Tatar.⁶³ Moreover, the majority of Tatars who graduated from the Tatrabfak matriculated into the Pedagogical Institute.⁶⁴ The reorganization and expansion of the local rabfak system by the TASSR Obkom in 1930 further entrenched this trend. Each rabfak would offer a specialization connected to the VUZ with which it was affiliated: economics and medicine for the Kazan University Rabfak; agriculture for the Agricultural Institute Rabfak; veterinary science for the Veterinary and Zoological Technological Institute Rabfak; industry and chemistry for the Communal Construction Institute Rabfak; and pedagogy for the Tatrabfak.⁶⁵ Most graduates went on to study in the VUZ associated with their rabfak.⁶⁶ For Tatars, this meant the Eastern Pedagogical Institute, which in 1930 was renamed the Tatar Pedagogical Institute, reflective of its targeted mission to educate Tatar students.

⁶⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 1224, l. 214.

⁶¹ K. Ia. Berzs, “Itogi proidennogo za piat’ let,” 64-67.

⁶² NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1709, l. 13.

⁶³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 47, ll. 2-3.

⁶⁴ NART, f. R-2823, op. 111, d. 2, l. 6.

⁶⁵ TsGA IPD, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 41, l. 18.

⁶⁶ Morozova, “Iz istorii rabochego fakul’teta Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta,” 12-23.

For Tatars who did not know Russian or have a secondary education, the Tatrabfak was the best, if not only, option for starting down a path toward higher education, likely leading to the Pedagogical Institute. This track consigned most Tatars to a pedagogical career and served well the needs of the TASSR Narkompros, which desperately needed Tatar teachers to staff its network of Tatar primary and secondary schools. Yet these Tatars propagated a cycle in which their lack of Russian knowledge kept them from matriculating in prestigious VUZy requiring fluency in Russian. Scientific and technical degrees from state universities always carried more status than those from pedagogical institutes. Tatars in the pedagogical path rarely spoke Russian well, and this exacerbated complaints about the poor quality of teachers in schools and their insufficient Russian-language literacy. During the 1938-39 academic year, when Russian-language instruction was declared mandatory in all schools, only 30 percent of students at the Pedagogical Institute passed Russian literacy tests.⁶⁷ As illustrated in the previous chapter, poor Russian knowledge among Tatar teachers inspired little confidence in the quality of the instruction they offered in schools, particularly after Russian became a required subject.

Kazan's geography even alludes to the gulf between the Pedagogical Institute and other VUZy. Kazan University was located on the city's highest hill, near the Kremlin, and next to the most important administrative buildings of the Tatar Republic. Most of Kazan's other VUZy lined nearby Gorky Street in this upper part of the city, where the city's wealthiest Russians lived in the prerevolutionary era. In contrast, the Pedagogical Institute was situated in the lower part of the city, along Kaban Lake and the Bulak Canal in the Tatar districts, where the majority of Kazan's non-Russians lived. Metaphorically speaking, it was practically impossible for Tatars who did not know Russian to ascend the hill to Kazan University.

⁶⁷ Gafarov, *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarno-pedagogicheskii universitet*, 61.

Korenizatsiia and Vydvyzhenie in the Cultural Revolution

The introduction of Stalin's Five-Year Plan in 1928 heralded industrialization, collectivization, and centralization as the key tasks for ensuring the economic development of the Soviet Union. This socialist offensive also coincided with Stalin's cultural revolution, which sought to create a new proletarian intelligentsia. The Shakhty trials of 1928, which accused engineers and other specialists working in the North Caucasus town of Shakhty of sabotage, signaled the start of a new class-based purge of the bourgeois intelligentsia.⁶⁸ The introduction of the vydvyzhenie (promotion) campaign that same year sought to replace such bourgeois "wreckers" with a homegrown intelligentsia from proletarian ranks. Vydvyzhenie opened up many opportunities for the upward mobility of workers into higher education and managerial positions.⁶⁹ Throughout the Soviet Union, the total number of *vydvyzhentsy*—those selected to join the vydvyzhenie campaign—reached at least 150,000. By the 1932-33 academic year, *vydvyzhentsy* made up at least a third of all students in Soviet VUZy.⁷⁰

Within the national republics, the cultural revolution also prompted a renewed push for korenizatsiia, the policy aimed at training and promoting indigenous non-Russian personnel and using their languages in administrative and educational spheres. Stalin proposed accelerating the pace of korenizatsiia in order to achieve greater representation of titular nationalities in local governments and to strengthen national cultures and languages, primarily by providing greater support to native-language education in primary schools.⁷¹ Notably, while the cultural revolution

⁶⁸ Michael Reiman, *The Birth of Stalinism: The USSR on the Eve of the "Second Revolution"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

⁶⁹ Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Revolution as Class War," in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 8-12.

⁷⁰ For more on the *vydvyzhentsy*, see Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 181-98.

⁷¹ Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 25-26.

advanced the cause of korenizatsiia by seeing in every national minority the potential to fill the ranks of new Tatar proletarian intelligentsia, it also warned that the possibility of deviation lurked there too. This paranoia persisted throughout the 1930s, during which time the position of Tatars remained highly mercurial, subject to both advancement and assault.

Moscow's renewed support for korenizatsiia during the cultural revolution sought to create from among the Soviet Union's nationalities a new proletarian intelligentsia made up of professionals in every field. Within the TASSR, these initiatives were always linked with the need for more trained Tatar teachers, doctors, agriculturists, and technical specialists who could participate in the "explosive growth and rapid construction of the Soviet economy and industry, which requires training new cadres of workers to be deployed in all sectors of Soviet expansion," as the TASSR Narkompros formulated the issue.⁷² Likewise, the Obkom continually emphasized how local cultural and economic development required more national cadres, which would help the Tatar proletariat understand and support socialism in its native language.⁷³

Together, korenizatsiia and vydvizhenie in the Tatar Republic sought to increase the number of Tatars in local VUZy, which Party-state authorities deemed dreadfully low.⁷⁴ TASSR leaders anticipated that a new generation of Tatar scholars would circumvent the influence of the bourgeois Tatar intelligentsia. Indicative of the optimism of the cultural revolution, they predicted that, by the end of the First Five-Year Plan, 2,500 Tatars would graduate from Kazan VUZy.⁷⁵ In reality, though, between 1929 and 1932, just 585 Tatars received VUZy degrees.⁷⁶

⁷² NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1271, ll. 40-44.

⁷³ NART, f. R-1487, op. 1, d. 353, ll. 25-29.

⁷⁴ Morozova, "Iz istorii rabochego fakul'teta Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta," 41-42.

⁷⁵ "Piatiletanii plan podgotovki nauchnykh rabotnikov iz tatar," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 25, 1928, 3.

During the Thirteenth Tatar Republic Congress of Soviets in 1929, Kazan University Professor M. N. Cheboksarov reminded delegates, “The education and improvement of culture of local ethnic groups is the shared responsibility of all scholars in the Tatar Republic. Without exaggeration, it can be claimed that the fate of the culture of almost all Turkic nationalities of the Soviet Union rests in the hands of Kazan higher educational institutions.” He continued, “Our primary task is to prepare new scientific cadres from national minorities. While this will require an enormous exertion of strength and will, we are not afraid of these challenges.”⁷⁷

In the interest of creating a new proletarian intelligentsia and increasing the number of professional Tatar scholars, the *vydvyzhenie* initiative in the TASSR encouraged Tatars to go even further in their studies and pursue graduate degrees. In the fall of 1929, the Pedagogical Institute founded graduate programs in pedagogy and Tatar language and literature, and subsequently mathematics, physics, and chemistry. The Pedagogical Institute recruited its best students in terms of both their academic potential and social and political reliability to stay on as graduate students. As of 1930, the Pedagogical Institute had recognized fourteen Tatar, nine Russian, and eighteen other minorities as *vydvyzhentsy*.⁷⁸ By the 1932-33 academic year, this number had grown to include thirty-one Tatars, fifteen Russians, and nine others.⁷⁹

In 1929, Kazan University formed a *Vydvyzhentsy* Institute to support the advanced training of its own top students. That year, administrators designated seventy-three students as

⁷⁶ “Iz spravki Gosplana TASSR o podgotovke kadrov, kolichestve vypushchennykh ekzempliarov knig, razvitii periodicheskoi pechati za 1928-1932 gg. v Kazani,” in R. U. Amirkhanov, ed., *Istoriia Kazani v dokumentakh i materialakh, XX vek* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Magarif, 2004), 602.

⁷⁷ M. Korbut, “Universitet pered novymi zadachami,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, December 12, 1929, 2.

⁷⁸ NART, f. R-1487, op. 1, d. 278, ll. 17-19.

⁷⁹ NART, f. R-1487, op. 11, d. 217, ll. 1-2.

vydvyzhentsy, including forty-three Russians, twelve Tatars, and eighteen other nationals.⁸⁰

Memoirs of some Tatar *vydvyzhentsy*, collected as part of a project on the history of Kazan University, provide insight into the paths these students traversed. Take, for example, I. G. Validov (1902-68). Validov learned to read and write in his village's primary school and madrasa. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, Validov joined and rose in the ranks of the Komsomol. In 1922, he traveled to Kazan and began preparatory courses for the Agricultural School, which he entered in 1924. Validov excelled in his classes and was encouraged to apply to Kazan University, matriculating into the biology department. In 1929, he was selected to join the university's *Vydvyzhentsy* Institute. He reveled in the opportunity, especially as it gave him a ninety-ruble stipend, more than double what most students received. In April 1930, Validov traveled to the Fourth All-Union Conference of Physiologists in Khar'kov, an experience that stirred within him "a relentless desire and dream to be among the ranks of those scientists." While a graduate student in the Department of Animal Physiology, Validov served as a delegate to the Fifteenth International Congress of Physiologists. As he reflected, "I was proud that I had completed my first steps into joining the big family of Soviet scientists. I just wanted to work and work." In 1935, Validov successfully defended his candidate's dissertation and was offered a permanent position in Kazan University's Department of Animal Physiology.⁸¹

Another of the Kazan University *vydvyzhentsy*, Kh. M. Kurbangalieva was born in 1910 to a family of well-respected Tatar educators. Her father, M. K. Kurbangaliev, graduated in 1895 from the Kazan Tatar Teachers' School, where instruction took place in Russian. He subsequently taught Tatar in Kazan schools and throughout the Volga region. He enrolled

⁸⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 624, op. 1, d. 32, l. 61.

⁸¹ Lobachevsky Library Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, Student Memoir No. 10065. The memoir was written no earlier than 1954.

Kurbangalieva in a Tatar school in Kazan in 1916 but then transferred her to a Russian school in 1921 so that she would complete her education in Russian. Kurbangaliev understood Russian as a critical skill for his daughter's academic and career advancement. Kurbangalieva completed preparatory courses and enrolled in the Biology Department of Kazan University's Physics and Mathematics Department in 1927.⁸² Reflecting on her education in an account likely written in 1985, Kurbangalieva noted how the First Five-Year Plan imbued her studies with a spirit of socialist competition. Kurbangalieva and her peers strove to complete their education in as short a time as possible so they could begin working. In 1929, Kurbangalieva—though clearly not proletarian—joined the *vydvyzhentsy*, along with I. G. Validov, due to her status as a national minority and her interest in continuing her academic studies. In July 1931, she began graduate studies in the biology department. Owing to the need for more specialists from national minorities, Kurbangalieva was assigned to teach a first-year group of students in her native language of Tatar. Along with another Tatar graduate student who had completed a course of study at the Pedagogical Institute, Kurbangalieva wrote a first-year zoology textbook in Tatar. She also helped the Tatar students improve their Russian language skills, as all courses in the Biology Department were conducted in Russian. Kurbangalieva spent much of her time researching how to translate scientific terminology across languages.⁸³

The *vydvyzhenie* movement undoubtedly opened up new opportunities for Tatars in higher education. By 1933, the 420 graduate students across all Kazan VUZy included 186 (45

⁸² V. A. Kuznetsova and V. A. Iakovlev, *Khalima Mukhutdinova Kurbangalieva* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo Universiteta, 2002).

⁸³ Lobachevsky Library Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, Student Memoir No. 10083/1. Kurbangalieva's older brother S. M. Kurbangaliev was named the first rector of the Kazan Medical Institute in 1930 upon the Medical Department's split from Kazan University that year.

percent) Tatars, 151 Russians, and 83 other nationals.⁸⁴ Tatars made up a much greater proportion of graduate students than regular university students in Kazan VUZy. While the opportunities afforded to Validov, Kurbanalieva, and their peers stemmed from their Tatar background, their ability to speak Russian ultimately proved their greatest asset. The decision of the TASSR Narkompros in 1930 to lower the educational requirements for Tatars entering VUZy to completing a seven-year technical school or trade school program, however, undercut this realization. While the change allowed for an influx of proletarian Tatars into VUZy, these students knew little, if any, Russian. Compounding this problem, administrators of some institutions admitted as many Tatars as possible without assessing their preparedness, simply to meet expanding korenizatsiia quotas. This led to a number of problems. Embarrassed by their poor language skills, many Tatars remained passive during lessons and eventually dropped out. The TASSR Narkompros pointed to the lack of Russian knowledge as the primary reason for low retention among minority students.⁸⁵

Sultangalievists and Chauvinists

At the same time it introduced vydvizhenie, the Party-state embarked on a series of campaigns that sought to root out those who obstructed the implementation of korenizatsiia, evidenced by unfulfilled plans for recruiting and retaining Tatars in VUZy. Given the spirit of the times, in which the Party-state blamed unmet industrial, political, and cultural objectives on “wreckers” among the old intelligentsia, Tatar intellectuals emerged as a natural target for attack. Within the Tatar Republic, the most extensive purges revolved around the Pedagogical Institute, and predominantly its Tatar language and literature department, which employed a high

⁸⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 193, l. 73.

⁸⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 920, ll. 37-45.

concentration of educated Tatars whose loyalty to the Soviet regime had always been considered tenuous at best. Faculty were accused of inculcating bourgeois, nationalist sentiments among the teachers it trained and sent out to Soviet schools in the countryside.⁸⁶

Beginning in 1929, critics began lambasting the Pedagogical Institute as a “nest of Sultangalievism.” First arrested in 1923 and subsequently released into exile, Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev was rearrested in 1929 and accused again of orchestrating an attempt to overthrow Bolshevik rule and unite the Soviet Union’s Muslims into a pan-Turkic, pan-Islamic state. The specter of Sultangalievism served as a useful trope for condemning enemies as anti-Soviet nationalists. Alleged “subversive activities” at the Pedagogical Institute included hanging portraits of enemies of the people in the library and including the works of bourgeois nationalists in the canon of classic Tatar literature.⁸⁷ In 1929, the Party and Komsomol cells of the Pedagogical Institute unmasked fifteen members of an alleged Sultangalievist conspiracy. According to investigators, these teachers and students, all members of the Tatar bourgeoisie, actively promoted nationalist separatism. They hoped to expand their plot for overthrowing the Soviet regime to other Kazan VUZy.⁸⁸

This initial purge of Sultangalievists from the Party rank and file portended an even greater coming purge of the Pedagogical Institute. The Soviet Union’s Sixteenth Party Congress, held in late June and early July 1930, renewed calls for vigilance against those who sought to disrupt national politics, whether through Russian chauvinism or local nationalism. Subsequently, a number of TASSR Party meetings, including the Fifteenth Oblast Party

⁸⁶ A. Saadi, “Litso tatarskoi intelligentsii,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, August 25, 1928, 3.

⁸⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 80, l. 131.

⁸⁸ P. Ivanov, “Kazanskii filial sultan-galievskogo tsentra: Fakty iz Vostochno-Pedagogicheskogo Instituta,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, December 27, 1929, 2; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 671, ll. 53-56.

Conference, demanded an increase in the tempo of implementing national politics by rooting out those who opposed this “central task” of the Tatar Republic.⁸⁹ To this end, an inspection of the Pedagogical Institute’s Tatar language and literature department concluded that its faculty focused too much on archaic topics such as the Arabic language, which further separated students from modern Tatar society, particularly given the recent adoption of Yangelif. Some teachers lectured exclusively on bourgeois nationalist literature, such as the work of the anti-Bolshevik emigrant Gaiaz Iskhaki. Others supposedly turned a blind eye to Sultangalievists working within their midst or rejected the responsibility to incorporate political and social content into their teaching, claiming that politics and academics should not mix.⁹⁰ In the course of the Party’s investigation, the web of conspiracy swelled outward to other well-known Tatar cultural institutions, such as the *Yanga Kitab* (New Book) publishing house, as many of the Pedagogical Institute faculty also worked in other cultural and Party-state roles. Such institutions were publicly censured as strongholds of nationalism.⁹¹

These investigations culminated in the arrest in July 1931 of dozens of teachers and students from both Kazan University and the Pedagogical Institute, including some of the most respected Tatar linguists, historians, and writers.⁹² While a trial was never held and the majority of those arrested were subsequently released, they could not return to their former jobs, which opened opportunities for younger scholars to move up in the ranks. Moreover, for the rest of 1931, the TASSR Obkom continued to rake the Pedagogical Institute over the coals for a range

⁸⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 643, ll. 118-118o6.

⁹⁰ Nauchnyi rabotnik, “Kak rabotniki tatarskogo otdeleniia VPI ‘progliadeli’ sultan-galievshchinu,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, April 6, 1930, 3.

⁹¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 673, ll. 31-69.

⁹² Ermolaev, *Istoriia Kazanskogo universiteta*, 329.

of shortcomings, including poor leadership from Party cell and university administrators and a lack of discipline among students and faculty.⁹³

Of course, to maintain the balance within the Tatar Republic, a purge of bourgeois nationalists demanded a reciprocal move against their ideological counterparts, Great Russian chauvinists. Such a campaign was initiated in late 1931 against five Kazan University students. The list of charges was long: ignoring the importance of political education; neglecting their responsibilities to student and political organizations; perverting the Party line in regard to studying; masking their social and class background; disregarding Marxist-Leninist ideology; demonstrating an “inveterate lack of discipline”; and practicing absenteeism. Most notably, the five students were accused of ignoring their responsibilities to promote the education of national cadres and, in several cases, of national chauvinism.⁹⁴

Unfortunately, the investigative reports do not elucidate exactly how the students sabotaged national politics, which in itself may be illustrative of the tenuous nature of the charges. The most serious accusation of chauvinism was levied against V. I. Riabokon. In 1930, Riabokon enrolled in the Kazan University mathematics department after concealing from the admissions committee a previous expulsion from Irkutsk University. Upon matriculating, Riabokon refused to attend a single Tatar language course, which at the time remained mandatory for all students. When younger students sought out his advice on how to manage their time and studies, Riabokon explained that it “would be better to use your time studying German or expanding your general knowledge than wasting time” studying Tatar. Investigative documents portrayed Riabokon as “studying whatever he deems ‘useful’ and forgetting about

⁹³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 1085, ll. 19-26.

⁹⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 624, op. 1, d. 64, l. 1.

anything ‘not useful.’” He wrote in a formal request to university administrators, “Free me from attending Tatar language classes. If you cannot do that, transfer me to a different university. I have not and will not study the Tatar language. It is completely useless for my work, as I do not intend to work in the Tatar Republic.”

Riabokon evinced no particular animosity toward Tatars themselves, but rather against what he interpreted as unnecessary coursework. Yet investigators saw Riabokon’s refusal to study Tatar as a lack of comprehension of Soviet policies. They portrayed Riabokon as an antisocial individualist who “manifested an ideology entirely foreign to proletarian students” and did not understand his social and political responsibilities. He had ignored the national question and its application in the Tatar Republic, regardless of whether he found studying the Tatar language “useful.” Consequently, Riabokon was expelled from the university as a chauvinist. The university ordered that its decision to designate Riabokon as a “swindler and counterrevolutionary” be published in the all-union journal *Krasnye studenty* (Red Students) so that no other university would admit him.⁹⁵

Despite ongoing campaigns against chauvinists and nationalists in the early 1930s, the Party-state apparatus continued to express its support for korenizatsiia in VUZy.⁹⁶ On March 27, 1933, the Presidium of the USSR TsIK reiterated the necessity of reserving spaces in educational institutions for minority nationalities and encouraged local governments to create more preparatory groups that would focus on teaching Russian to them.⁹⁷ By that year, every Kazan

⁹⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 624, op. 1, d. 64, ll. 1-3, 8-9.

⁹⁶ “Iz materialov k 2 sessii TatTsIK IX sozyva o konkretnykh proiavleniiakh shovinizma sredi naseleniia g. Kazani,” in *Istoriia Kazani*, 424-25; B. Abdullin, “Sil’nei ogon’ po demobilizatsionnym nastroeniiam v bor’be s mestnym natsionalizmom,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 23, 1934, 4; and G. Sahfiiev, E. Ginzburg, and Palimov, “Krupneishaia pobeda leninskoi natsional’noi politiki,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 18, 1933, 2.

⁹⁷ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 2306, l. 4.

VUZ had at least one *korenizatsiia* group, in which remedial Tatar students were supposed to receive instruction in their native language from Tatar instructors while simultaneously learning Russian. In February 1933, for example, Tatars made up 314 (22 percent) of 1,457 students at Kazan University. Of these 314 Tatar students, 93 studied across eight *korenizatsiia* groups. Investigations into these groups revealed, however, that administrators of many VUZy paid little attention to the quality of students admitted. In some cases, Russian-speaking Tatars who did not want to study in *korenizatsiia* groups were forced to do so anyway, just to meet quotas.⁹⁸

Kazan University administrators rarely put much effort into finding qualified Tatar teachers for the *korenizatsiia* groups. Class schedules, syllabi, textbooks, administrative orders, and academic records were almost exclusively in Russian, and thus unintelligible to many Tatars in these groups. Often, professors of *korenizatsiia* groups read their lectures in Russian and then left the classroom, delegating to Tatar graduate students the responsibility for ensuring that students understood the material (they seldom did). Given the rarity of Tatar-language textbooks, students turned to Russian-language resources, struggling to learn scientific terms and concepts.⁹⁹ These factors exacerbated Tatars' low retention rates at Kazan University, where up to 40 percent of *korenizatsiia* group students dropped out each year. As one report explained, "Under the guise of implementing *korenizatsiia*, public funds are being overspent on a massive scale in order to increase the number of Tatar students and instructors who can work with non-Russian nationalities. Yet the very state of instruction among the *korenizatsiia* groups is far from

⁹⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 193, ll. 1-5.

⁹⁹ At a meeting of the heads of all Kazan VUZy in November 1932, delegates blamed ongoing delays in printing Tatar-language textbooks as one of the major roadblocks for implementing *korenizatsiia*. See: TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 24, l 24.

sufficient in meeting basic standards.” As the report concluded, *korenizatsiia* groups “differ from other groups only in the massive amounts of wasted money.”¹⁰⁰

The Pedagogical Institute met with greater success in offering its Tatar students native-language instruction, given that it employed a more proportionate number of Tatar-speaking instructors vis-à-vis Tatar students. During the 1934-35 academic year, 46 of 88 instructors at the Pedagogical Institute were Tatars.¹⁰¹ Minority students who could not speak Russian were placed in *korenizatsiia* groups, where they received the bulk of their instruction in Tatar while also improving their Russian language skills.¹⁰² The number of Tatars who graduated from the Pedagogical Institute continued to grow, certainly at a greater rate in the 1930s as compared to the 1920s. During the 1933-34 academic year, the institute also boasted a streamlined Teachers’ Institute that prepared qualified candidates to teach in schools in two years, distance and evening education programs, and a range of preparatory courses. That year, the Pedagogical Institute’s 1,722 students included 811 Tatars, 745 Russians, and 165 other nationals.¹⁰³

Moreover, administrators at the Pedagogical Institute strove to foster a spirit of inclusiveness for both Russian and Tatar students, even as accusations of chauvinism and nationalism continued to swirl about. Entrance exams were offered in either Russian or Tatar. Students could speak in Russian or Tatar at meetings, followed by a translator. Students of different nationalities were assigned to the same room in the dormitory so that they could help each other to master Russian and Tatar, which anecdotal evidence suggests proved effective. Amateur artistic groups staged Tatar, Russian, and Chuvash music, drama, and dance

¹⁰⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 193, ll. 1-5.

¹⁰¹ NART, f. R-1487, op. 1, d. 417, ll. 18-21.

¹⁰² NART, f. R-1487, op. 1, d. 417, l. 25.

¹⁰³ Gafarov, *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarno-pedagogicheskii universitet*, 59.

performances.¹⁰⁴ Much more than any other VUZ in Kazan, the Pedagogical Institute allowed Tatars to thrive in an environment that valued their language and culture on equal footing with Russian.

Terror in Kazan VUZy

Beginning in the mid-1930s, Party-state authorities in the Tatar Republic increasingly framed korenizatsiia as a point of contention between chauvinists and nationalists. The consequences of this rhetoric affected Tatar scholars and students at the Pedagogical Institute in particular.¹⁰⁵ On March 27, 1935, the TASSR Obkom Bureau, the highest administrative organ of the local Party, responded to over a year's worth of complaints and investigations into the Pedagogical Institute, condemning the leadership of the VUZ and its Party cell for allowing bourgeois, Trotskyist, and nationalist ideologies to seep into their midst. This signaled the start of a campaign against the many "socially foreign elements" among the Pedagogical Institute faculty, who, in the language of the accusers, cultivated "fertile ground for the development of counterrevolutionary behavior." At the time, the Pedagogical Institute continued to depend on "politically unreliable" instructors as the few pedagogues with experience training Tatars.¹⁰⁶

Take, for example, the well-known historian N. N. El'vov (1901-37). El'vov published a chapter on the 1905 Revolution in the four-volume *History of the All-Union Communist Party* that Stalin publically condemned as Trotskyist. The Party sent El'vov in a state of quasi-exile to Sverdlovsk and then in 1932 to Kazan, where he served as head of the Pedagogical Institute's history department while also holding teaching positions in other Kazan VUZy and working as

¹⁰⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1279, ll. 51-52.

¹⁰⁵ G. Sakhfiev, E. Ginzburg, and Palimov, "Krupneishaia pobeda leninskoi natsional'noi politiki," *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 18, 1933, 2.

¹⁰⁶ TsGA IPD, f. 26, op. 1, d. 98, ll. 14.

an editor of the newspaper *Krasnaia Tatariia*. El'vov served in top Party positions in the Tatar Republic too. However, following the assassination of S. M. Kirov (1886-1934), widely understood as a precursor to Stalin's Great Terror, El'vov was arrested as a Trotskyist and condemned as an "example of the political blindness and loss of revolutionary attentiveness in the struggle for a pedagogical tack in line with the Party organization." He was accused of downplaying the significance of the Bolshevik Party in his lectures and blamed for the lackadaisical behavior of the Pedagogical Institute Party cell. During Party meetings, members chatted, worked on their homework, read books, or just stared off into space. Students both inside and outside the ranks of the Party could not answer basic questions about Party policies and history and openly carried on anti-Soviet conversations.¹⁰⁷

Notably, the campaign against El'vov coincided with one against F. K. Saifi (1888-1937), a historian, playwright, and public figure most famous for promoting the Yangalif alphabet for the Tatar language. He taught in the history department of the Pedagogical Institute alongside El'vov and was denounced for incorporating nationalist, anti-Party philosophies in his writing and teaching.¹⁰⁸ His accusers pointed to a quotation from Trotsky in a book on the 1905 Revolution and the inclusion of a picture of a mosque in Saifi's journal *Yangalif*. The TASSR Obkom concluded that El'vov and Saifi had shielded each other from criticism, a clear testament to the collusion between Trotskyist and nationalist forces. Saifi, moreover, allegedly helped to organize a cabal of disgruntled Tatar professors with "nationalist sympathies." This group criticized what it saw as the Soviet system's systematic persecution of Tatars and believed that

¹⁰⁷ TsGA IPD, f. 26, op. 1, d. 98, ll. 5-27. As of February 8, 1935, the Pedagogical Institute Party cell comprised seventy-six members and forty-two candidates, among which were seventy-four Tatars, thirty-four Russians, and ten other nationals.

¹⁰⁸ NART, f. R-1487, op. 5, d. 101, ll. 1, 4.

korenizatsiia in the Tatar Republic should be implemented by forcing all Russians out of leadership positions.

Nuri Iusupov, director of the Pedagogical Institute and chair of the mathematics department, was likewise accused of using his position to promote a “nationalist agenda.” According to investigators, Iusupov and his ilk derailed all attempts at improving the quality of teaching and learning at the Pedagogical Institute. They decried any criticisms of Tatar teachers as persecution, demanding that all Tatars be recognized as a protected class. The Obkom ordered that Iusupov be removed from the position as director of the institute. Over the course of 1935 and 1936, the campaigns against El’vov and Saifi led to the dismissal of even more teachers and students as national-bourgeois elements. Evgeniia Ginzburg, the author of the well-known Gulag memoir *Journey into the Whirlwind*, worked closely with El’vov at both the Pedagogical Institute and *Krasnaia Tataria*. The campaign against El’vov signaled the start of Ginzburg’s own troubles and led to her arrest in February 1937.¹⁰⁹ At that time, prosecutors revisited El’vov’s case along with those of other Pedagogical Institute colleagues. El’vov was transferred to the Kazan Psychiatric Hospital and eventually executed in September 1937. Saifi, stripped of Party membership and his position at the Pedagogical Institute in March 1935, was arrested in September 1936 and executed the following August.¹¹⁰

Throughout 1936 and 1937, the ever-widening circle of alleged pan-Turkic and pan-Islamist enemies at the Pedagogical Institute grew into a “counterrevolutionary Trotskyist-nationalist terrorist organization” at the hands of the NKVD. Thirty-four of the most prominent members of the Tatar intelligentsia, including K. G. Nadzhmi, G. B. Bogautdinov, S. V. Burgan,

¹⁰⁹ Eugenia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), 5-41.

¹¹⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 632, l. 2-7; and f. 15, op. 3, d. 1279, ll. 51-52.

S. S. Gafurov, G. G. Ibragimov, M. S. Sagidullin, G. G. Baichurin, Sh. Kh. Usmanov, S. S. Atnagulov, and many others, fell victim to this campaign. Almost all were executed. Take, for example, the well-known Tatar writer and public figure G. A. Nigmati (1897-1937). Nigmati joined the Party in 1919 and served as an editor of the newspaper *Kyzyl Tatarstan*, the head editor of the Tatar Republic publishing house Tatgosizdat, an editor of the journal *Yangalif*, and, beginning in 1929, a teacher of prerevolutionary Tatar literature at the Pedagogical Institute. A specialist on Tatar, Russian, and Western European literature, he received the title of full professor in 1934.¹¹¹ Nigmati was accused of “distorting Soviet reality” in his lectures and proposing to replace all Russians at the Pedagogical Institute with Tatars. He was arrested and executed in 1937.¹¹²

My objective here is not to expound on the consequences of terror, albeit significant, on the Tatar intelligentsia.¹¹³ Rather, I want to emphasize the centrality of the Pedagogical Institute in these campaigns. Almost all of the key members of the Tatar intelligentsia swept up in these years had some affiliation with the Pedagogical Institute. In fact, due to the unmasking, expulsion, and arrest of so many faculty members and administrators of the Pedagogical Institute, its history, Tatar language and literature, philosophy, and economics departments fell into complete disarray. Some courses could no longer meet, as all the instructors had been arrested. Yet, consistent with the spirit of the times, the political police worried that others within

¹¹¹ E. I. Iarmakeev, “Galimdzhan Nigmati: Zhizn’, otdannaia nauke,” *Filologiya i kul’tura* 28, no. 2 (2012): 314-17.

¹¹² TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 80, ll. 43-47; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 82, ll. 46-47.

¹¹³ For a more detailed analysis on the crippling blow these and other arrests delivered to the Tatar intelligentsia, see A. L. Litvin, “Repressirovannaia nauka,” *Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental’nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (1998), accessed March 5, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers1998_3_4/06/06_1/; and Garipova, *Kazan’: Obshchestvo, politika, kul’tura*, 30-48.

the Pedagogical Institute continued to harbor anti-Soviet sentiments.¹¹⁴ The NKVD maintained close surveillance of the students there, investigating forty-five cases of alleged anti-Soviet behavior from September 1935 through December 1936.¹¹⁵ Reports suggested an uptick in the number of incidents related to Russian chauvinism and local nationalism, which could either have been factual, or a pretext for further investigations and arrests.¹¹⁶

Regardless of the veracity of these claims, the Pedagogical Institute suffered from its association with nationalist and counterrevolutionary conspiracies. After the arrest of yet another director of the Pedagogical Institute in early 1937, the TASSR Obkom Bureau reinvigorated the campaign against the VUZ, warning that a subversive and intertwined terrorist network of Trotskyists and bourgeois nationalists remained hidden among the ranks of administrators, teachers, and students.¹¹⁷ Responding to this signal, denunciations began pouring in, with faculty and students reporting anti-Soviet conversations, alien class backgrounds of students, and personal relationships of peers with unmasked enemies of the people.¹¹⁸ As 1937 wore on, these enemies were blamed for all of the Pedagogical Institute's problems, including a lack of sufficient classroom space due to stalled construction plans, the deficit of trained teachers, poor language training, and unacceptable political and social content in course curriculum.¹¹⁹

The Pedagogical Institute was far from alone in enduring waves of arrests and denunciations during these years. Every Kazan VUZ unmasked its share of supposed enemies of

¹¹⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 266, l. 115-22. This was well after the arrest of many of the Pedagogical Institute's top administrators and scholars.

¹¹⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1279, ll. 6-11.

¹¹⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1279, ll. 51-52.

¹¹⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1279, ll. 15-22.

¹¹⁸ For examples, see TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 88, ll. 5, 80, 82, 94.

¹¹⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 80, ll. 165-66.

the people during the Great Terror.¹²⁰ Following Kirov's assassination, the Party cell of Kazan University conducted a purge of its ranks, expelling a number of apparent enemies, including Trotskyists, bourgeois nationalists, Sultangalievists, and kulaks.¹²¹ Yet overall, Kazan University was not targeted as an institution in the same way as the Pedagogical Institute. The purge was also much less expansive at Kazan University: of the forty instructors arrested between 1930 and the early 1950s, only ten were executed, with another sixteen dying in labor camps.¹²² In contrast, in addition to the arrest and execution of the prominent Tatars mentioned above, every person who had served as director of the Pedagogical Institute in the 1930s had been arrested by 1937: G. G. Kudoiarov, G. K. Kasymov, P. V. Bykov, M. R. Iusupov, A. T. Biktagirov, and G. K. Kasymov. Bykov, Iusupov, and Kasymov were shot, and the rest sent to prison camps. The NKVD concluded that the Pedagogical Institute remained "continuously in the hands of enemies of the people."¹²³ Indeed, until the eve of the Great Patriotic War, the NKVD kept the Pedagogical Institute under close scrutiny, reporting on everything from the truancy of students—they collectively skipped thirteen thousand hours of classes during the first half of 1939—to lax morals, including rampant promiscuity and drunkenness.¹²⁴ "Uncomradely behavior" between Russian and Tatars continued to spark concerns about nationalism and chauvinism.¹²⁵ The Pedagogical Institute found its stigma difficult to escape.

¹²⁰ Litvin, "Repressirovannaia nauka"; and Garipova, *Kazan': Obshchestvo, politika, kul'tura*, 30-48.

¹²¹ TsG IPD, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1762, ll. 6-35.

¹²² Garipova, *Kazan': Obshchestvo, politika, kul'tura*, 35; and "Materialy o protsesse represii v vysshikh i srednikh uchebnykh zavedeniakh g. Kazani v 1937-38 g., podgotovlennye k otchetu Kazanskogo gorkoma VKPb," in *Istoriia Kazani*, 431.

¹²³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1762, ll. 113-13ob.

¹²⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 108, ll. 13-14.

¹²⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 1146, op. 1, d. 82, ll. 5-6.

Conclusion

When RSFSR Commissar of Education A. V. Lunacharskii visited Kazan in 1924, he praised the city for its role as the leading center of culture and education for the Soviet Union's Eastern nationalities. He noted that neither Baku, nor Tashkent, nor Tbilisi compared to Kazan in terms of its cultural development. As Lunacharskii declared, "Kazan is attracting the most ambitious young people of the East. It has produced a core group of Tatar-speaking communists and Soviet-minded professionals who are leading a wave of education from the Tatar Republic that is communist red."¹²⁶ While the number of Tatars who could have legitimately claimed membership in this "core group" at the time of Lunacharskii's visit was small, a growing number of Tatars matriculated into and graduated from Kazan VUZy over the subsequent two decades. By the 1940-41 academic year, 2,100 Tatars were enrolled across 14 VUZy in the city.¹²⁷ Tatars' 17 percent share of the city's student population remained far from the ideal, if unrealistic, 50 percent desired by Party-state authorities. Yet it did represent progress, thanks to the Bolsheviks' opening of universities to all who wanted to study, and more specifically due to the *bronja*, *korenizatsiia*, and *vydvyzhenie* initiatives.

The application of these components of nationalities policies in Kazan VUZy sheds light on the place of Tatars in Soviet society. Tatars were unequally distributed across Kazan VUZy. While Tatars could be found in all institutions, most gravitated to the Pedagogical Institute. For example, in the 1938-39 academic year, 510 Tatars (35 percent) out of 1,470 total students were at the Pedagogical Institute, whereas only 215 Tatars (12 percent) out of 1,754 total students studied at Kazan University.¹²⁸ As another point of comparison, that year the Pedagogical

¹²⁶ "Lunacharskii o Kazani," *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 4, 1924, 1.

¹²⁷ Garipova, *Kazan': Obshchestvo, politika, kul'tura*, 97.

¹²⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 423, l. 101.

Institute had forty-seven Tatar instructors, compared to thirteen at Kazan University.¹²⁹ In spite of some fluctuation, these percentages remained fairly stable.¹³⁰ Tatars who came to Kazan with minimal education and without Russian literacy found themselves funneled toward the Tatrabfak and the Pedagogical Institute, which offered native-language instruction, combined with supplemental academic and Russian-language training.

With its high concentration of Tatar students and instructors, the Pedagogical Institute became a key space for Tatar intellectual activity and the production of knowledge related to Tatar history, language, and culture.¹³¹ Almost all of Kazan's leading Tatar intellectuals had some affiliation with the Pedagogical Institute, and their network extended into other key educational and cultural institutions in the city. The appeal of the Pedagogical Institute among Tatars advanced the interests of the TASSR Narkompros, which found itself in desperate need for teachers in its native-language schools. However, the concentration of Tatars at the Pedagogical Institute also drew the suspicion of Party-state officials in both Moscow and Kazan, wary of the ongoing influence of so-called bourgeois nationalists on the cadres of Tatar teachers that the VUZ trained and then dispatched to work in schools throughout the Tatar Republic. In this regard, while the Tatrabfak and Pedagogical Institute remained the best, if not only, option for Tatar students matriculating into VUZy, doing so involved a certain amount of risk. Available sources do not shed much light on the extent to which potential Tatar students expressed awareness about these issues upon matriculating into VUZy. Still, given the pervasive attention of the local press as well as party-state authorities to unmasking nationalist-Trotskyist

¹²⁹ NART, f. R-1487, op. 2, d. 29, ll. 41; and TsGA IPD, f. 26, op. 1, d. 423, l. 17.

¹³⁰ NART, f. R-1487, op. 2, d. 29, ll. 41; and NART, f. R-1337, op. 32, d. 12, l. 20.

¹³¹ Z. G. Garipova, "Osnovnye tendentsii v nauchnykh issledovaniakh v TASSR (1917-1941)," *Nauchnyi Tatarstan* 2 (2011): 161-74.

organizations at the Pedagogical Institute from the late 1920s to early 1940s, students were undoubtedly aware of the suspicions associated with that institution. Notably, this neither stopped the Party-state from seeking to increase the number of Tatar students nor slowed down applications. Higher education remained an essential tool for upward mobility.

The magnetism of the Pedagogical Institute among Tatars contributed to what Terry Martin has described as the “hole in the middle,” in which educated nationals took on either high-profile leadership positions in their republics or were diverted into primary school education. Nationals were much less likely to complete advanced training in technical fields, and this led to a cultural/technical split among professionals. As Martin explains, *korenizatsiia* fostered an “insatiable demand for teachers, journalists, authors, artists, and folklore specialists, as well as for visible leaders in all fields. Titular nationals naturally gravitated to those spheres and established self-perpetuating networks in those fields, whereas Russians came to dominate the technical sphere.” Data from the 1939 census illustrates this trend clearly. Within the Tatar Republic, almost 87 percent of educated Tatars worked in posts related to leadership, culture, or education. Among all skilled professionals, Tatars made up just 15 percent of engineers, 16 percent of technicians, 17 percent of doctors, and 17 percent of researchers/professors, but 49 percent of teachers, and 56 percent of authors and journalists. In the categories of teachers, authors, and journalists, *korenizatsiia* quotas were over-fulfilled.¹³²

My research indicates that Soviet nationalities policies ultimately mapped out this divide on Kazan’s geography writ-large, partitioning Tatar and Russian spaces along the lines of this cultural/technical split. Prestigious degrees—and subsequent careers—were firmly located in Russian-dominated VUZy, such as Kazan University, that specialized in technical training and

¹³² Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 385-87.

the hard sciences. The Pedagogical Institute, with its focus in teaching Tatar history, language, and “cultural” subjects, remained a Tatar space. Similar distinctions can be made for the Russianness of other technical spaces in Kazan, such as factories, as seen in the following chapter. Russian-language proficiency served as the price of admission for Tatars who wished to study in VUZy that led to fields other than pedagogy. While Soviet nationalities policies purported to open up higher education to Russians and Tatars alike, they segregated those Tatars who could pass in Russian-dominated spaces and those who could not. Russian-language abilities determined which Tatars would remain separate, even if equal.

CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL DIFFERENCE ON THE FACTORY FLOOR: KORENIZATSIIA IN PRACTICE AND PERIL

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Kazan's New Tatar District, located along the southern edge of the city, acquired a reputation as a "workers' nucleus" due to the growing number of Tatars who settled there upon arriving in the city in search of employment.¹ Unlike the nearby Old Tatar District, in which wealthy Tatar merchants oversaw the construction of mansions, businesses, and cafes to cater to their newly refined tastes, the New Tatar District reflected the conditions of its poorer inhabitants.² Shanties lined unpaved streets, and residents poured into neighboring districts for basic municipal services such as clean water and public bathhouses.³ Social and religious life revolved around mosques; at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, eight of Kazan's fifteen mosques were located in the New Tatar District, with another five in the nearby Old Tatar District.⁴

During the early Soviet era, as Party-state authorities sought to revamp national and local economies, the New Tatar District served as a prime hub for industrial expansion, given its proximity to the Volga River, the Kazan railway, and a prospective workforce. World War I and the Russian Civil War had left the economy of the Soviet Union in shambles. The subsequent

¹ "Rostok tatarskoi kul'tury," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, November 11, 1923, 3.

² A. Iu. Khabutdinov and G. N. Khadiullina, "Tatarskaia sloboda Kazani kak ekonomicheskii tsentr tatarskoi natsii," in N. R. Galeev, ed., *Staro-tatarskaia sloboda—ot proshlogo k budushchemu* (Kazan: Institut istorii Akademii nauk Respubliki Tatarstan, 2001), 169-78.

³ Povolzhanin, "Kazan', gorod griaznyi," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, April 13, 1926, 3; and "V kazanskikh katakombakh," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 10, 1926, 3.

⁴ Z. G. Garipova, "Staro-tatarskaia sloboda XIX veka kak kul'turnyi tsentr tatar," in Galeev, ed., *Staro-tatarskaia sloboda*, 205-08.

Volga famine of the early 1920s further exacerbated economic conditions in the Tatar Republic.⁵ At the time, industrial enterprises in the TASSR operated at just 35 percent of their prewar capacity. Moreover, the collapse of transportation infrastructure prevented the delivery of raw materials to Kazan, which in part contributed to massive layoffs, such as when the city's leatherworks factory let go of 2,500 workers. Kazan's textile industry received only 14 percent of the raw materials it needed in 1921-22. The efficiency of aging equipment plummeted. Some enterprises stopped production entirely. Across the city, weak labor discipline, low pay, and the lack of skilled employees and managers hampered economic recovery.⁶

By the end of the 1930s, the economic situation of Kazan and the Tatar Republic had turned around dramatically. In 1935, 138 industrial enterprises throughout Kazan employed 123,000 workers, an increase from 10,000 workers in 1913. Kazan enterprises produced 251 million rubles in revenue, as compared to 18 million in the prewar era.⁷ As of 1938, the gross output of Kazan industries had skyrocketed to 840 million rubles, consistent with the thirty-eight-fold overall growth in industrial production in the Tatar Republic between 1920 and 1940.⁸ Over the course of these two decades, Kazan emerged as a leading producer in the Soviet Union of synthetic rubber, machine building and metalworking equipment, and chemicals used in various production processes. Output of food, clothing, leather, and fur reached noteworthy levels too. Local factories produced the country's entire supply of felt shoes, 43 percent of

⁵ NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 56, l. 28.

⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 971, ll. 56-64.

⁷ NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 2567, ll. 5-6.

⁸ *Krasnaia Tataria*, November 24, 1939; Kandilov, ed., *Respublika Tatarstan*, 47.

typewriters, and 50 percent of fur clothing. Aviation factories began assembling aircraft that would meet critical needs during the Great Patriotic War.⁹

To achieve this dramatic economic recovery, the Bolshevik regime engineered the creation of a new workforce in the Tatar Republic. Soviet nationality policies aimed to give Tatars a starring role in this process, opening for them new spaces and opportunities to work and move up the career ladder, breaking through glass ceilings of the imperial era. The development of a Tatar proletariat during the 1920s and 1930s, however, faced a number of hurdles. Tatar peasants moving from their native villages to Kazan had to transition from a homogeneous, monolingual, and agrarian environment to a multiethnic industrial space where Russian reigned supreme. Chauvinism and other manifestations of national antagonism marred interethnic relations. Graffiti reading “Dumb Tatars work here” or “Down with Tatars” popped up at factories. These inscriptions, while immediately erased, quickly reappeared.¹⁰ Russians—even Party and Komsomol members—brawled with Tatar coworkers. In one factory, a Russian worker and Party member launched a campaign under the slogan “Down with Tatar Engineers!” as a protest against a Tatar superior whom she disliked. She complained that he and other Tatars had received promotions only because of their nationality.¹¹

This chapter explores the implementation of Soviet nationalities policies among Kazan workers with an eye toward Russian-Tatar interaction on the shop floor. This complements trends among labor historians, who in past decades have sought to discern how individual workers experienced, endured, and participated in the great social upheaval of the early Soviet

⁹ Z. I. Gil'manov, A. M. Zaliarov, M. K. Mukhariyev, and K. A. Nazipova, eds. *Istoriia Kazani* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1991), 2:187-95.

¹⁰ S. Tanai, “Te, kto razzhigaiut natsional'nuiu roznu,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, February 26, 1930, 3.

¹¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 71, ll. 95-97.

era, whether by enthusiastically joining in Stalinist industrialization campaigns or testing its flexibility through bargaining and resistance. By focusing on individual social actors and how they operated, these studies have undermined the totalitarian model in which an all-powerful state stripped any autonomy from its citizens.¹² Labor historians have also questioned the usefulness of “class” as a category of analysis, suggesting that it too emerged from historical discourses and political agendas.¹³ To escape the burden of class as an analytical category, some historians have embraced studies of everyday life, which has helped to account for multiple and sometimes competing aspects of identity that class can mask, including gender.¹⁴ My aim is to demonstrate the value of considering ethnolinguistic factors when considering the development of Soviet workers, thus affirming what labor historian Diane Koenker has written: “The relation of Soviet workers to one another and to the state . . . was fundamentally ambiguous and

¹² Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union*; Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin's Industrial Revolution: Politics and Workers, 1928-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Lynne Viola, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Lewis Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization: The Formation of Modern Soviet Production Relations, 1928-1941* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1986); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); David L. Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929-1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); and David R. Shearer, *Industry, State, and Society in Stalin's Russia, 1926-1934* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

¹³ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia,” *Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 4 (1993): 745-70; Stephen Kotkin, “‘One Hand Clapping’: Russian Workers and 1917,” *Labor History* 32, 4 (1991): 604-20; Ronald Grigor Suny, “Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics,” *Russian Review* 53, 2 (April 1994): 165-82; William G. Rosenberg and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, eds., *Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); and Siegelbaum and Suny, eds., *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), particularly the introductory essay by the editors.

¹⁴ Catriona Kelly, “Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Chronicles of the Quotidian in Russia and the Soviet Union,” *Kritika* 3, no. 4 (2002): 631-51; Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Lynne Viola, “Bab'i Bunty and Peasant Women's Protest during Collectivization,” *Russian Review* 45, no. 1 (1986): 23-42; Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State, and Social Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Diane Koenker, “Men against Women on the Shop Floor in Early Soviet Russia: Gender and Class in the Soviet Workplace,” *American Historical Review* 100, no. 5 (1995): 1438-64. See in particular Goldman's book on female workers during the first five-year plan: Goldman, *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

complicated, but it is this very ambiguity that makes their experience so emblematic of the making of Soviet socialism.”¹⁵

Ethnolinguistic difference emerged as a point of contention and led to confrontation when Russians perceived that upwardly mobile Tatars threatened their individual economic potential or societal position. In spite of a bevy of campaigns that fought against chauvinistic attitudes and behaviors and trained Tatars to become highly qualified specialists and managers, factories in Kazan ultimately functioned as Russifying spaces. The Soviet economy, guided by planning institutions in Moscow, had little time or interest in accommodating minority languages, or the workers who spoke them. The hierarchy of Soviet policies, in which obtaining economic goals outranked the support and promotion of national languages and cultures in the workplace, entrenched factories as spaces where the Russian language reigned supreme. Local enterprises, and individual workers, could not escape these Russifying forces. The Tatar workforce that emerged by the late 1930s certainly differed from what advocates of nationalities policies had envisioned in the early 1920s but also attests to how these policies helped Tatars embrace a world of new possibilities.

While my analysis in this chapter primarily draws on workers’ experiences in industrial enterprises throughout Kazan, I foreground two of Kazan’s largest factories, Vakhitov Factory and Lenin Factory No. 40. They merit special attention for a number of reasons. First, the history of both factories stretches back into the eighteenth century, and the two enterprises continue to operate in Kazan today. During an era of great economic uncertainty in the early Soviet period, the endurance of both enterprises provides a longitudinal perspective that few other industrial enterprises can offer. Second, the workforce of both factories numbered among Kazan’s largest.

¹⁵ Diane Koenker, *Republic of Labor: Russian Printers and Soviet Socialism, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 6.

Consequently, Party-state authorities prioritized them as flagships for implementing korenizatsiia initiatives. While smaller enterprises often got away with skirting employment laws, these two factories remained under the microscope. Third, given their size, these factories' demographics yield a useful perspective for considering how larger groups of Russians and Tatars interacted with each other. The two factories differed in significant ways too. Vakhitov Factory was located in the New Tatar District, whereas Lenin Factory No. 40 was situated on the northern edge of the city in a predominantly Russian area. They also met with varying levels of success in implementing korenizatsiia and raising the profile of Tatar workers vis-à-vis their Russian peers. These differences make comparison all the more interesting.

Workers' Spaces

During the nineteenth century, Russian colonial policies led to greater proletarianization of the Tatar peasantry as compared to other minority ethnic groups, such as those of Central Asia. Tsarist administrators in the Volga region forcibly removed Tatar farmers and peasants from the best and most arable land in order to redistribute it to Russian owners. Facing poor crop yields on land unsuitable for agriculture, as well as ongoing Russification initiatives, many Tatars picked up their belongings and spread out across Siberia, Central Asia, the Urals, and Ukraine. There, they found work not just on farms, but also in factories and mines. Others sought their fortune in industrial centers, primarily Kazan. Tatars were still on the move in the first decades of the twentieth century, looking for new opportunities to escape low agricultural yields caused by imperial policies, famine, and, eventually, collectivization. The tempo of Tatars leaving the countryside for cities increased throughout the Soviet era, leading one commentator to note, "There is no corner of Soviet industry without Tatar workers."¹⁶

¹⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 888, l. 1.

The high mobility of Tatar workers in the early Soviet era complicates any attempt to determine their number. Existing archival records are sparse, contradictory, and elusive. As most Tatars were unskilled laborers, they regularly moved between enterprises, always in search of the highest salary, often finding work in chemical and other hazardous industries where Russians were loathe to work.¹⁷ Yet, given their skepticism of urban life, Tatars resisted completely severing ties with their native villages. As one worker asked, “What if something happens and you break a leg or arm and cannot work? Then where will you go? That’s when you head back to the village.” Moreover, during planting and harvesting seasons, Tatars habitually abandoned their work in Kazan to help relatives in villages. They later returned to Kazan, confident in their abilities to find a different unskilled job. Soviet officials rightfully fretted that the transiency of Tatar workers prevented their integration into the political and cultural community of workplaces.¹⁸ As factory administrators constantly complained, Tatars were notorious for skipping important factory meetings, undoubtedly because they did not understand the proceedings, almost always carried out in Russian.¹⁹

Most Tatar workers who moved to Kazan settled in the main industrial regions, the New Tatar and Zarech’e Districts, both on far edges of the city.²⁰ The enterprises in these districts contributed to the awful smell that permeated workers’ spaces. Garbage that enterprises indiscriminately dumped in the New Tatar District only exacerbated the problem. Unpaved streets routinely caused transportation infrastructure to break down. Electricity worked only

¹⁷ G. G. Ibragimov and N. I. Vorob’ev, eds., *Materialy po izucheniiu Tatarstana* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1925), 211.

¹⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 888, l. 8.

¹⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 85, l. 64.

²⁰ “Tatary na fabrikakh i zavodakh Kazani,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, April 3, 1924, 4.

sporadically.²¹ Housing conditions were dismal, with most Tatars residing in dilapidated and overcrowded tenements.²² Contrary to expectations of workers, factories devoted little funding to construct adequate living spaces, relying instead on run-down barracks left over from the prerevolutionary era that lacked lighting or fresh air.²³ In the 1920s, local newspapers bemoaned the dismal living and working conditions for Tatar workers. Take, for example, the plight of Tatar drivers who made deliveries throughout Kazan for a local bread factory. Almost all of the drivers had come from villages, looking for new opportunities in the city. They began their shifts early in the morning, and while officially scheduled to work until five or six o'clock in the evening, they routinely remained later without compensation, in violation of labor laws. At the end of the day, the Tatar drivers returned to dismal barracks on the edge of the city. They slept naked in overcrowded bunks, trying to dry their one set of clothes overnight, a task complicated by the lack of windows that might let sunshine or fresh air into the barracks.²⁴

Tatars did not remain silent about their atrocious living and working conditions. In May 1924, around two hundred Tatars voiced their frustrations at a citywide conference of workers. Some complained of being treated poorly by their superiors, “in the old manner,” reminiscent of the prerevolutionary era.²⁵ This was not surprising, given the continued Russian dominance of factory management. At Vakhitov Factory that year, Russians held twenty-nine of thirty-one management positions.²⁶ In 1924, the Party cell of Lenin Factory No. 40 formed a special

²¹ NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 351, ll. 4-6.

²² NART, f. R-732, op. 11, d. 28, ll. 2-16.

²³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, ll. 27-33.

²⁴ Starikov, “Prosia zashchity: Tatary-vozhiki,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 8, 1926, 4.

²⁵ L. Gumerov, “Konferentsiia rabochikh-tatar,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 13, 1924, 3.

²⁶ NART, f. R-741, op. 1, d. 71, l. 6.

committee of two Tatars and one Russian to address complaints from Tatar employees and to increase their political awareness and involvement. Interestingly, the committee limited its effectiveness by conducting almost all of its work in Russian, a language few Tatar workers could speak.²⁷

In the early 1920s, workers' unions and organizations mobilized in response to some of the challenges facing Tatar workers. In 1923, the Union of Leather Workers and the Union of Chemists, both headquartered in the New Tatar District, joined together to found a Tatar Club, envisioned as a counterpoint to the "corrupting influences" of the mosques concentrated in the region. It finally opened in 1926 and hosted antireligious lectures along with other social and political events. It boasted a library of 3,500 books, of which 2,000 were in Tatar. Organizers imagined the club as "destined to play an enormous role in the lives of Tatar workers."²⁸

In fact, the Tatar Club was just one attempt to reclaim a Tatar region full of mosques and remake it into a working-class district for secular, Soviet Tatars. Beginning in the early 1920s, activists devoted particular attention to spreading antireligious propaganda among Tatar workers. They planned to carry out "serious, deliberate, cold-blooded, systematic, and scientifically-based" cultural and educational work to popularize the natural sciences and dissuade Tatars from the fanaticism of religion. Tatar atheists lectured at workers' clubs. While propagandists were warned not to "offend any religious sensibilities," they had full reign to inveigh against clergy and their backward practices. When speaking with workers, the activists emphasized that personal success depended solely on the intensity of an individual's own labor, and that no supernatural deity such as Allah could guarantee financial or social security.²⁹

²⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 1, 2, 9, 12.

²⁸ "Rostok tatarskoi kul'tury"; and "Tatarskii klub," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, February 5, 1927, 3.

²⁹ M. Budaili, "Eshche ob antireligioznoi rabote sredi tatar," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, November 25, 1923, 1.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Kazan factories were on the frontlines of campaigns to transform Tatars into loyal Soviet workers. As an example, factories and their workers played a central role during a major antireligious campaign in 1929 that sought to dissuade Tatars from celebrating Islamic holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, which marked the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Tatar workers at Lenin Factory No. 40 publicly declared their intent not to celebrate the holiday, castigating it as a backward religious tradition popular only among mullahs and the bourgeoisie. They called upon their fellow Tatar laborers from other factories to renounce its celebration as well.³⁰ Many joined the movement, pledging to work on March 13, the day of Eid al-Fitr that year. Most enterprises operated as normal, including those with a majority of Tatar workers. Not surprisingly, some Tatars chose to keep the faith, or at least to skip work. Five Tatars missed their shifts at both Vakhitov Factory and Spartak Factory. At the latter, one Tatar came to work drunk and faced the ridicule of his peers, who asked him to show them where the Quran permitted drunkenness. The Fur Factory had more incidents of absenteeism with nineteen deserters, including two Party members. At Galaktinova Factory, both Russians and Tatars skipped work and got drunk together. Forty-five workers did not show up at the Lenin Textile Factory, a “shameful stain” on the enterprise. As commentators explained, “Religious holidays, including Eid al-Fitr, are dying out. But these old and obsolete traditions live on in some of the backward and unconscious strata of the working class. These traditions must be attacked with educational work, and where this is not enough, by more administrative measures.”³¹

During Stalin’s cultural revolution, the Party-state requisitioned almost all mosques in Kazan for industrial, cultural, and educational needs. Workers rallied and gathered petitions to take over mosques in the Old and New Tatar Districts and absorb them into local school and

³⁰ “Gaide-feter ne prazdnuem,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, March 8, 1929, 3.

³¹ “Gaide-feter—v arkhiv!” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, March 15, 1929, 3.

factory infrastructure. The lack of new construction projects in the city had led to great demand for physical space. In May 1932, the Party committee of the Kazan Fur Factory submitted a request to the Kazan City Soviet that a nearby mosque, which had recently been closed, be transferred to the enterprise for use as an educational and training facility, given the lack of room elsewhere. Throughout May and June, Tatar and Russian workers from the Fur Factory gathered separately and added their own petitions to the request, collecting between thirteen and one hundred fourteen signatures on each.³²

As the number of Tatars at various enterprises grew, some factories began to draw Tatars into local political and cultural life. By early 1934, Tatars made up 37 percent of those who participated in activities organized by Kazan's various workers' clubs.³³ The Proletarian Region Workers' Club, on the north side of the Kazanka River, organized meetings in various factories to discuss Party politics, Stalin's speeches, the Red Army, and Five-Year Plans. These conversations took place in Russian and Tatar. The club hosted Russian and Tatar drama troupes, a choir, photography club, literary club, and more. In January and February of 1934, more than ten thousand Tatars attended a range of events at the Proletarian Region Workers' Club.³⁴ The Spartak Workers' Club likewise hosted political lectures, amateur youth gatherings, mass dances, movies, and theatrical performances, and Tatar variety shows. Workers could attend concerts and plays in both Russian and Tatar too.³⁵ While Party-state leaders continually criticized these clubs

³² NART, f. R-326, op. 1, d. 635, ll. 39-56.

³³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 162, ll. 22-24.

³⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 162, ll. 7-9.

³⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 162, ll. 13-14.

as needing to pay more attention to Tatar needs and attract more Tatar participation, they increased the presence and visibility of Tatars within workers' spaces.³⁶

In 1934, the Party secretary of Kazan's Stalin Region, which comprised the city's Old and New Tatar Districts, attributed the region's industrial achievements to national politics. According to him, the growth of the Tatar working class had enabled the Stalin Region to become one of the top industrial districts in the Tatar Republic. He noted that the Stalin Region, which used to have just one major enterprise, Vakhitov Factory, now had many of the republic's largest enterprises, including the Fur Factory, Shoe Factory, and Bread Factory, with more under construction. A growing Tatar national proletariat helped propel this expansion forward. In 1927, Tatars had made up less than 16 percent of workers in this region's factories, a number that by the mid-1930s had swelled to nearly 50 percent.³⁷

Korenizatsiia: Threats and Opportunities

What fueled the expansion in the number of Tatar workers? The Twelfth Party Congress, which convened in April 1923, introduced the policy of korenizatsiia, which declared that local organs of power should give hiring preference to those who knew the language, habits, customs, and traditions of the indigenous population. In an effort to boost the legitimacy of the new system, minorities were to be promoted into positions of leadership within the Party-state apparatus too.³⁸

The Tatar Republic preceded Moscow in introducing its own policies sympathetic to the position of national minorities. On June 25, 1921, the TASSR Central Executive Committee

³⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 162, ll. 22-24.

³⁷ Sibgatullin, "Pobeda Leninsko-stalinskoi natsional'noi politiki," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 6, 1934, 3.

³⁸ Z. G. Garipova, "Korenizatsiia iavliaetsia luchshim priblizheniem apparatov k massam," *Gasyrlar avazy-Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1 (2009), accessed March 6, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2009_1/09/15/&searched=1.

mandated that bureaucrats use the Tatar language when interacting with Tatar citizens. To ensure the implementation of this directive, in February 1922, the TASSR Obkom approved the Realization of Tatar Language (RTL) initiative, which sought to recruit Tatars to serve in Party-state positions. Together, korenizatsiia and RTL endeavored to: 1) equalize Tatar and Russian as state languages; 2) fill the Party-state apparatus with those who could speak both Russian and Tatar; 3) train Tatar workers in professional skills; 4) increase the number of Tatar workers; and 5) promote the use of Tatar in regions, institutions, and enterprises with sizable Tatar representation.³⁹

Industrial enterprises in Kazan, dominated by Russians, responded slowly to the RTL and korenizatsiia initiatives. With few incentives to implement the language requirements, many factories simply ignored them. In 1924, the head of Lenin Factory No. 40 openly admitted that his enterprise had not produced a single document in Tatar. Not one factory employee could speak both Russian and Tatar fluently. As the director argued, devoting time and money to train Russians to speak Tatar, a language that might be used a handful of times a year, constituted an unneeded and unfeasible “luxury,” particularly when so few needs for the Tatar language had presented themselves.⁴⁰ The Lenin Factory openly flaunted instructions to introduce RTL initiatives, snubbing repeated requests from the Central RTL Commission for additional information.⁴¹ When factory administrators finally gave in to pressure from the Party and created a factory-level RTL commission, they appointed as its head the Russian V. M. Vinogradov, who did not speak a word of Tatar, yet somehow was expected to mobilize his conationals to learn the

³⁹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1307, ll. 325-31.

⁴⁰ NART, f. R-1062, op. 18, d. 37, ll. 18-19.

⁴¹ NART, f. R-1062, op. 18, d. 37, l. 21.

language and interact with Tatars.⁴² When one of the two Tatars on the commission received a promotion to the factory committee in November 1925, RTL activities, such as Russian courses for Tatars and Tatar courses for Russians, ceased almost entirely.⁴³ A report from April 1926 noted that not a single graduate of an RTL course worked at the factory.⁴⁴

Administrators at Lenin Factory No. 40 made no effort to incorporate the Tatar language into factory management when interacting with Tatars, and this amplified the tendency for Tatar and Russian factory workers to remain almost entirely segregated from one another, relying on their own networks to understand the information passed down from managers.⁴⁵ Tatars complained that they felt excluded from administrative affairs due to their lack of Russian knowledge.⁴⁶ Without training courses or other activities in their native language, they rarely participated in factory life.⁴⁷ Segregation strained relations, with Russian and Tatar workers hurling insults at each other at every opportunity.⁴⁸ Not all Russian workers, however, approved of this state of affairs. Some younger Russian Party members lamented that the factory continued to employ “old bureaucrats” who opposed plans to improve the qualifications of Tatars. The new generation held that increasing the number of Tatar managers might alleviate some of the estrangement between Russians and Tatars at the factory.⁴⁹

⁴² NART, f. R-1062, op. 18, d. 37, l. 77.

⁴³ NART, f. R-1062, op. 18, d. 37, l. 183.

⁴⁴ NART, f. R-1062, op. 18, d. 37, l. 232.

⁴⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 41, l. 49.

⁴⁶ L. Gumerov, “Konferentsiia rabochikh-tatar,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 13, 1924, 3.

⁴⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 1, d. 33, l. 116.

⁴⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 318, l. 296.

⁴⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 1, d. 33, l. 116.

Still, many Russians opposed korenizatsiia outright, equating such “Tatarization” as a threat to their own positions. Russians complained of being unjustly fired and replaced by undeserving and underqualified Tatars. Indeed, during the earliest years of korenizatsiia between 1923 and 1926, Russians with years of technical experience did lose their jobs to newly promoted, yet underqualified Tatars. Not surprisingly, Russians responded angrily. They protested forced Tatarization, pointing out that they could not learn to speak Tatar quickly enough to hold onto their jobs, the key requirement for continued employment.⁵⁰ Sometimes Tatars even managed to secure higher payment than Russian peers in the same position. One Russian foreman equated his smaller salary to paying a “monthly tribute” for living in the Tatar Republic.⁵¹ Such conditions only amplified tensions.⁵²

Wary of the further deterioration of relations between Russians and minorities throughout the Soviet Union, the Party-state changed its tactic in implementing korenizatsiia. On December 13, 1926, the TASSR Obkom followed suit, declaring a shift to “functional korenizatsiia.” Previously, officials had sought to improve the number of Tatars without regard to the overall functionality and efficiency of the state apparatus. Making space for new Tatars by firing trained Russians caused the quality of work to plummet and angered Russians. The new approach sought to utilize more precise planning and regulation of what positions required Tatar speakers in order to serve the local population in its native language.⁵³ The Seventh TASSR Congress of Soviets, which convened in March 1927, approved lists of specific positions whose responsibilities

⁵⁰ NART, f. R-732, op. 11, d. 28, ll. 372-73.

⁵¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 318, l. 296.

⁵² TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 318, ll. 130-36.

⁵³ Ia. Boiarskii, “Chto takoe funktsional’naia korenizatsiia?” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 21, 1927, 2.

required a bilingual candidate.⁵⁴ Responding to Russian fears, authorities emphasized, “Some workers think that the introduction of Tatars into industry means displacing Russians. No one is going to do this. The number of Tatars is growing apace with the expansion of industry. No one is assigning Tatar workers to positions occupied by someone else.”⁵⁵

Recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining Tatar workers required a massive bureaucracy that, not surprisingly, rarely worked effectively. The Kazan Labor Board was one link in implementing *korenizatsiia*, serving as the primary mediator between the Central RTL Commission, state enterprises, and Tatars looking for work.⁵⁶ The Soviet government replaced all private, for-profit employment agencies with labor boards in May 1918. They remained in operation until the “liquidation” of unemployment in the USSR in the late 1930s. Labor boards offered free work-placement services and provided state-subsidized benefits, such as food rations, to the unemployed. Ideally, the boards streamlined the organizing and distribution of labor across enterprises. Beginning in 1924, Kazan’s Central RTL Commission requested from each industrial enterprise or state organization lists of open positions that needed to be filled with bilingual workers.⁵⁷ Upon receiving the lists, the commission worked with the labor board to dispatch individuals with relevant qualifications to the new place of employment.⁵⁸

Thousands of Tatars sent cover letters and resumes to the Kazan Labor Board and Central RTL Commission, asking to be assigned work. Many applicants highlighted their abilities to

⁵⁴ Garipova, “*Korenizatsiia iavliaetsia luchshim priblizheniem apparatov.*”

⁵⁵ “*Sozdat’ kadry natsional’nogo proletariata,*” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, March 15, 1929, 3.

⁵⁶ NART, f. R-741, op. 1, d. 115, l. 7.

⁵⁷ NART, f. R-741, op. 1, d. 64, l. 1.

⁵⁸ NART, f. R-741, op. 1, d. 64, l. 3.

speaking both Russian and Tatar, submitting their requests in both languages.⁵⁹ They used these requests to make a move from the countryside to Kazan, which offered more opportunities for upward mobility. Such was the motivation for Ganiia Akchurina, who appealed to the “critical situation” in Kazan regarding the need for bilingual Tatars such as herself.⁶⁰ M. S. Karimov, a graduate of the Kazan University Rabfak, emphasized his experience in economic administration in applying for a vacancy, having previously served in various positions in rural professional and Party organizations.⁶¹ In response, the RTL Commission sent Karimov to the Administrative Department of the TASSR Sovnarkom, noting his fluency in both Russian and Tatar.⁶² Sometimes these applications came with letters of introduction or recommendation, such as when the TASSR Finance Commissariat endorsed A. Iu. Usmanov for an accounting position, praising his “accurate fulfillment of all duties and comradely relationship with peers.”⁶³ In other cases, state organs requested the hiring of particular individuals. The Commissariat of Justice, which rapidly increased its share of Tatar employees, sought out specific Tatars for employment, which suggests that these Tatars had learned how to work the system and promote themselves from within to ensure employment.⁶⁴

Of course, placing an individual in a job did not guarantee success. For example, in May 1924, the Central Department of Police Intelligence was nonplussed with new Tatar recruit A. Khairullin. The department sent to the Central RTL Commission the transcript of an interview

⁵⁹ For hundreds of these requests, see *delo* 43, 44, 50, 51, 55, 56, and 57 in NART, f. R-732, op. 101.

⁶⁰ NART, f. R-732, op. 101, d. 51, ll. 12-13.

⁶¹ NART, f. R-732, op. 101, d. 43, l. 31.

⁶² NART, f. R-732, op. 101, d. 43, l. 33.

⁶³ NART, f. R-732, op. 101, d. 43, l. 77.

⁶⁴ NART, f. R-732, op. 101, d. 44, l. 493.

with Khairullin, who struggled to answer the most basic questions about criminal investigations, legal procedures, and police techniques. The department concluded that Khairullin was “unfit for service” and questioned why he even had been recommended for employment in the first place.⁶⁵ Industrial enterprises rejected workers, too, expressing their frustration that candidates were awarded positions when they clearly fabricated their proficiency in certain skills.⁶⁶

The Labor Board’s job placement policies likewise frustrated Russians, who believed the institution demonstrated an unfair bias toward Tatars. Russians complained that Tatars were automatically bumped to the top of lists to find work, skipping over Russians who had been waiting longer.⁶⁷ Yet the Labor Board did not always work in Tatars’ favor. Defying logic, the Labor Board routinely lacked the necessary cadres of Tatar speakers to facilitate the placement of Tatar workers, relying instead on Tatars to submit their job materials in Russian. Take, for example, the case of Ismail Nurmukhametov, who worked as a menial laborer for the city’s tram system. Upon falling ill, he was removed from the books. After recovering, Nurmukhametov asked the labor board to assign him some kind of work. His request, written in Tatar, was denied, with the language marked as “invalid” (*nedeistvitelen*). Nurmukhametov then found someone to translate his request into Russian, but the job was done poorly: much of the most essential information was left out, and Nurmukhametov’s name was incorrectly spelled as Khamitov. Not surprisingly, Nurmukhametov never heard anything from the Labor Board. Other Tatars who submitted applications in their native language received answers only in Russian, and usually just one word: “Denied.” As one commentator concluded in criticizing the lack of Tatar speakers at the Labor Board, “While the Party organization struggles over the difficult task of increasing

⁶⁵ NART, f. R-732, op. 101, d. 43, l. 340.

⁶⁶ NART, f. R-741, op. 1, d. 170, l. 17.

⁶⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 355, l. 100.

national cadres, labor boards are ignoring the necessity of adopting national languages. It is not necessary to prove the silliness of this predicament. But it is also impossible to be surprised at the bureaucratism of some of our leading workers.”⁶⁸

Once assigned a position, Tatars faced the even more daunting challenge of integrating into Russian-dominated workspaces. Some of the first trained Tatars assigned to Vakhitov Factory encountered notable resistance from Russian managers. Many Tatars eventually requested a transfer to other enterprises, given the refusal of Vakhitov Factory administrators to assign them tasks commensurate with their training. Instead, accomplished Tatars were given menial positions.⁶⁹ For example, I. A. Abdrashitov was dispatched to improve Vakhitov Factory’s commercial operations in September 1923 as the Deputy Director for Commerce. Only after receiving several written instructions from the TASSR People’s Commissariat for the Economy (Sovnarkhoz) did N. G. Ketura, the director of Vakhitov Factory, reluctantly accept Abdrashitov. From his first day there, Abdrashitov detected a hostile attitude from Ketura and his deputies. The Russian administrators constantly hindered Abdrashitov’s work, providing him with false information and eventually orchestrating his firing by accusing him of engaging in anticommunist and anti-Soviet propaganda.⁷⁰

Technician D. Z. Akhmerov complained of his treatment at Vakhitov Factory too. Akhmerov successfully completed training courses at the factory and received nothing but positive feedback from supervisors. He was placed under the foreman Kovando, who displayed a “terrible hatred” toward Tatars. As with several Tatars before him, Akhmerov bounced between departments after requesting a transfer away from Kovando. Akhmerov later discovered that

⁶⁸ S. Tanai, “Na birzhe truda tatarskii iazyk nedeistvitelen . . . ,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, March 23, 1930, 3.

⁶⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 351, l. 162.

⁷⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 351, l. 159.

Kovando had slandered him among the other factory managers, souring subsequent relationships. He described the “common phenomenon” of Russian specialists trying to get rid of Tatars by making working conditions so miserable that they gave up and quit. Perhaps to make his account more compelling, Akhmerov lamented that, from his perspective, little had changed since the tsarist regime in terms of Russians expressing prejudice toward educated Tatars.⁷¹

In a written complaint, brothers Sh. and S. Kamadetdinov likewise informed the Central RTL Commission about their negative experiences at Vakhitov Factory. Both had graduated from Tomsk Technical Institute in 1925 and received an invitation from the TASSR government to work at any industrial enterprise of their choosing. They settled on Vakhitov Factory, but upon arriving, they immediately encountered roadblocks from factory administrators. First, they were assigned to a number of jobs usually completed by menial workers. The head of one laboratory, a Russian, refused to give them the necessary information and equipment to complete tasks. The Kamadetdinov brothers remained at Vakhitov Factory, hoping that these growing pains would work themselves out. Instead, everything remained the same. They rotated among six different jobs at the factory over the course of a year and a half and were regularly passed over for promotion. Some factory administrators even spread false rumors about the Kamadetdinov brothers, claiming their insufficient training slowed down production. The brothers bemoaned their constant bullying, summarizing their time at the factory as nothing more than “a series of chauvinistic tendencies, remnants of a past era.”⁷²

In response to all these appeals, the Central RTL Commission launched an investigation into Vakhitov Factory. Such a response underscores Tatars’ effectiveness in eliciting the attention of officials as much as it affirms the likelihood of their miserable treatment at the hands

⁷¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 351, ll. 160-61.

⁷² TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 351, ll. 157-58.

of Russian managers. Indeed, the commission uncovered a number of chauvinistic practices ingrained into factory operations that created a hostile work environment for Tatar workers. Some received lower wages than Russian peers with the same experience and in the same position. Tatars toiled under the threat of being fired at any moment without cause. While most Russians were hired directly by factory administrators, Tatars received jobs only through the intervention of outside organizations. The commission concluded that the factory's hiring and firing practices in no way promoted the principles of korenizatsiia. Upon presenting its findings to the TASSR Central Executive Committee, the RTL Commission recommended disciplinary action against Ketura and his peers for "willful evasion" of Soviet nationality policies, mandating that new managers take concrete efforts to make the factory more welcoming for Tatars. At the very least, each factory shop needed to have one employee fluent in Russian and Tatar.⁷³

In spite of protests from Russians at Vakhitov Factory, the TASSR government swept out the old factory administration in early 1928, just as "bourgeois specialists" throughout the Soviet Union came under attack in the wake of the Shakhty trials. At the same time, the inception of the First Five-Year Plan and cultural revolution brought renewed attention to the ill intent of class enemies in disrupting industrial production.⁷⁴ The new Tatar director and Russian deputy director of Vakhitov Factory were tasked with ensuring greater representation for Tatars among managers. Indicative of the shakeup the RTL investigation provoked, the factory's Party cell similarly underwent reorganization, with the new secretary rebuking Party members for their ignorance of the national question.⁷⁵ Factory demographics soon shifted, reflecting the powerful role of administrators in setting the tone at their plants. Within several months, the number of

⁷³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 351, ll. 147-52.

⁷⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 49, ll. 84-88.

⁷⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 64, l. 12.

Tatars at the factory had increased from 16 to 21 percent. Tatar students at the factory school jumped from 32 to 60 percent, too. Even though Tatars remained largely disengaged with the political and social life of the factory, and Tatar-language services remained sparse, the overall tenor of life at the factory had changed.⁷⁶

Taking Advantage of One's Nationality

While institutional discrimination against Tatars remained a constant feature of factory life in Kazan, during the years of Stalin's cultural revolution, incidents of interpersonal conflict spiked, or at least garnered greater attention from the local press and local authorities. As one editorial emphasized, "Only determination and toughness toward incidents of chauvinism, along with organizational work, can save us from such events. Only the vigilance of Communists, Komsomol members, and leaders of the proletariat at enterprises will allow us to get rid of Great Russian chauvinism."⁷⁷ Well-documented cases of chauvinism toward Tatars suggest, however, that vigilance remained in short supply. Yet the public response was always strong and swift in calling for justice, or at least was depicted as so in the press. Newspapers published details of the most shocking cases of abuse and mismanagement alongside transcripts of show trials and profiles of the accused. Following the Shakhty trial of 1928, agitational, show, or comrade trials (often rendered as *agitatsionnye sudy*, *pokazatel'nyi sudy*, or *tovarishcheskie sudy* in my sources) organized in workers' clubs and factories changed their purpose. Since the inception of these trials in 1919, they had functioned as a venue for debate, discussion, and critical thinking about social and ideological issues. After 1928, the agitation trials shifted from targeting imaginary defendants to castigating real people as pests, wreckers, and objects of hatred for the rest of

⁷⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 64, ll. 122-24.

⁷⁷ V. Moiseev, "Vozmutitel'nyi sluchai velikoderzhavnogo shovinizma," *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 17, 1930, 2.

society. These new forms of judgment set the stage for the prominent Moscow Show Trials between 1936 and 1938.⁷⁸

In Kazan, show trials of chauvinists initially attempted to shame individuals in front of their peers to discourage similar behavior. The Party cell of Vakhitov Factory eagerly organized show trials for those accused of national chauvinism, such as in the case of one Russian worker who interrupted a performance of the factory's Tatar drama club, shouting, "It's not worth listening to the Tatars' dog language!"⁷⁹ Lenin Factory No. 40 held its share of show trials as well. For example, the Russian telephone operator Plesneva attacked the Tatar janitor Gainutdinova while she cleaned, berating her as a "nasty Tatar." The factory committee fired Plesneva and ordered a show trial so that others would know the threat of such Great Russian chauvinism.⁸⁰

Eventually, incidents of chauvinism began to attract mass attention in Kazan. For example, in 1929, Spartak Factory received 40,000 rubles to organize courses to train Tatar workers. While the percentage of Tatar employees at the enterprise had grown steadily throughout the late 1920s, most Tatars served in menial positions. The courses would increase the number of trained Tatar workers eligible for promotion. The factory administration and Party cell endeavored to mobilize popular support for the courses. Party member Antonova, though, organized a protest among her fellow Russian workers against training Tatars. Her coworker Avvakumova, a member of the regional Party committee, joined Antonova in mocking Tatar workers. The two refused to recant their views, even in the face of criticism from peers in the

⁷⁸ Elizabeth A. Wood, *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1-14, 193-207.

⁷⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 77, ll. 12-13.

⁸⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 69, l. 22.

factory Party cell. When the Tatar worker Madeeva confronted Antonova and Avvakumova over their chauvinistic behavior, the two Russians beat Madeeva with “hysterical screams.” The factory committee condemned the behavior of Antonova and Avvakumova and decided to hold a show trial at the factory. As one Party member noted, “This is a disgrace to our cell. We have always behaved peacefully and have been one of the best in the region. But now because of these two we have all of this trouble. We must expel them from the Party!”⁸¹ During their trial, Antonova and Avvakumova were “fully unmasked” as Great Russian chauvinists. Antonova “brazenly” responded to a question about her political awareness: “I understand all of your national policies. I know perfectly well that Tatars are backward because of tsarist oppression and that they need help to get up off their knees. I just don’t agree with it!” In her testimony, Avvakumova expressed similar sentiments. Ultimately, the two were stripped of Party membership as well as their jobs at the factory. Even so, the decision did not satisfy all workers at the factory, including some who had hoped for tougher sentences.⁸²

In another high-profile case, the Komsomol member Sinkin, described by the local press as a well-known hooligan, beat up Tatar coworker and Komsomol member Akhmetzianov at the Kazan Spirits Factory. Party and Komsomol cells throughout the city strongly condemned Sinkin’s behavior, calling for him to face formal charges as a chauvinist. As the Komsomol cell from Vakhitov Factory declared, “Sinkin is not worthy to bear the title of a worker. His crime is that of a malicious chauvinist.” Workers at the Kazan Spirits Factory demanded that Sinkin face “severe punishment.”⁸³ Indeed, a show trial of Sinkin took place in late February 1930. While the

⁸¹ Iu. Motrokhin, “Izdevatel’svo nad rabotnitsei-tatarkoi na fabrike ‘Spartak’,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 23, 1929, 1; and “Voina velikoderzhavnomu shovinizmu,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 25, 1929, 1.

⁸² “Sud, kotoryi svoim prigovorom ne udovletvoril rabochuiu massu,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 26, 1929, 2.

⁸³ “Rabochie Kazani trebuiut predat’ Sinkina sudu,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 25, 1930, 3.

prosecutor presented his case, Sinkin repeatedly shouted in protest, “Lies!” He pled not guilty to charges of chauvinism, denying any verbal or physical abuse toward Akhmetzianov. He claimed that the authorities were “making a mountain out of a mole hill” and characterized the entire incident as a “joke” and a “game” between him and Akhmetzianov, as they always gave each other a hard time before eventually making up. But Akhmetzianov recounted a different scenario. He claimed that Sinkin systematically mocked and slighted him, and that the “jokes” always had an offensive character. According to Akhmetzianov and other witnesses, Sinkin would rip cigarettes out of the Tatar’s mouth, force him to pick up his dirty dishes after lunch, and physically abuse him. The prosecutor pronounced these attacks as an affront to Soviet nationalities policies and a holdover from the tsarist era, when one nationality attacked another with impunity. The court found Sinkin guilty of chauvinism, removed him from the Komsomol and his job, and recommended a punishment of six months of hard labor. Was Sinkin mature enough to understand the significance of his actions? The editors of *Krasnaia Tataria*, along with the prosecutors at the show trial, answered decisively: yes. “Sinkin tried to depict himself as politically ignorant, but someone who has been a Komsomol member since age twenty-five undoubtedly has political awareness and at least has read the newspapers.”⁸⁴

As a final example of a case that drew significant public outrage, in 1931 a group of ten Russians attacked two Tatar workers, Khismatullin and Signatullin, at the Kazan Silicate Plant. Khismatullin had announced his desire to become the factory’s first shock worker, an ambitious goal that annoyed the laid-back Russian worker Ryzhkov. One day, after mocking Khismatullin, Ryzhkov lunged at the Tatar worker with an axe, landing several blows. Other Russians soon joined in beating Khismatullin and his comrade Signatullin. The factory immediately convened

⁸⁴ Kin., “Velikoderzhavnik Sinkin pered sudom,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, February 28, 1930, 4.

an emergency meeting to condemn the Russians' violence.⁸⁵ Their behavior was presented as evidence of chauvinistic attitudes among factory workers; an investigation revealed everything from name-calling and fighting to more systematic discrimination, such as withholding wages and preventing promotions.⁸⁶

Strikingly, workers of both nationalities believed that Russians accused of chauvinism got off with light sentences. At the Hammer and Sickle Factory, Polikarpov, the secretary of the enterprise's Party cell, seriously injured the young Tatar worker Bogautdinov during an altercation at work. Polikarpov grabbed Bogautdinov by his neck, breaking a tubercular abscess, which immediately started gushing blood. Polikarpov then shoved Bogautdinov out of the factory, shouting, "I don't want to talk to any Tatar." The factory Party cell lightly reprimanded Polikarpov in private, in spite of workers protesting and writing about the event in a factory newspaper. They expressed bewilderment that this kind of chauvinistic attitude could go unchecked. Eventually the case made its way to the courts, which sentenced Polikarpov to three months of hard labor, though the sentence was subsequently reduced to one year of probation.⁸⁷

Still, the narrative of Tatar persecution in factories had its limits. Russians complained that Tatars took advantage of their position as a privileged nationality to silence criticism about their personal behavior or work performance. Certainly, some Tatars did assume a *cart blanche* to act however they saw fit. In one workers' dormitory, the Tatar worker Gareev constantly got drunk, waking everyone up with obscenities and ruckus. When fellow workers asked Gareev to calm down, he replied, "I'm a Tatar, nothing will happen to me!" According to reports, other

⁸⁵ I. Lopukhov, "Velikoderzhavnyi shovinizm–glavnaia opasnost'," *Krasnaia Tataria*, February 6, 1931, 3.

⁸⁶ Iu. Motrokhin, "Signal s silikatnogo," *Krasnaia Tataria*, February 6, 1931, 3.

⁸⁷ Kin., "Iz zala suda: Shovinisty i antisemity na zavode 'Serp i molot'," *Krasnaia Tataria*, December 26, 1929, 4.

Tatars likewise relied on their nationality to continue rowdy or rude behavior.⁸⁸ When the Tatar worker Sabaev got drunk, went to Vakhitov Factory, and discharged several rounds from a pistol in the air, he received only a warning. Coworkers suspected that his Tatar nationality prevented him from being fired, particularly at a time when Vakhitov Factory had few Tatar workers. As one lamented, letting Sabaev off the hook only exacerbated tensions with Russian workers.⁸⁹

Consider, too, the example of Gil'mutdin Miftakhutdinov, who began working at Kazan's Galaktinov Factory in 1929. As the sole specialist in diesel machines at the factory, Miftakhutdinov demanded outrageous fees beyond standard pay scales. Feeling invincible, Miftakhutdinov began showing up to work drunk, if at all. Factory managers received complaints from other employees about Miftakhutdinov's behavior, which continued to grow worse. When he received a formal rebuke for drunkenness from the factory director, Miftakhutdinov accused the administration of anti-Tatar persecution and chauvinism. Later, Miftakhutdinov unsuccessfully requested leave for a training course but decided to go anyway. Upon learning that his absence had been considered desertion, Miftakhutdinov raised a scandal, reporting to the workers' union, newspapers, and Commissariat of Labor of his persecution as a Tatar. A troika of two Tatars and one Russian subsequently investigated Miftakhutdinov's claims and found no evidence of any such persecution. As they determined, "there was only self-promotion and troublemaking." One newspaper report powerfully concluded, "Miftakhutdinov is the type of person who is taking advantage of his nationality. He is as dangerous and harmful as a chauvinist. Such attitudes must be mercilessly driven out from among workers."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ "Mne nichego ne budet," *Vakhitovets*, November 25, 1929, 4.

⁸⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 18, ll. 15-16, 71-72.

⁹⁰ S. Tanai, "O mastere Muftakhutdinove, spekuliruiushchem na svoem proiskhozhdenii," *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, March 22, 1930, 3.

Some Russian workers actually feared facing persecution as national chauvinists if they reported Tatar coworkers for improper behavior. Perhaps because of their majority status, Russians chose to remain silent, fearing that criticism from Tatars could harm them.⁹¹ Take, for example, one factory director who found himself in a difficult situation with the Tatar worker Zabiroy, who “always preferred to remain in a state of complete intoxication.” The factory director reprimanded Zabiroy several times for drunkenness at the workplace, without effect. Finally, the director fired Zabiroy “to save production and the other workers from his corrupting influence.” Zabiroy subsequently claimed to have fallen victim to national persecution. Rather than criticizing his disruption of production, the Union of Textile Workers took Zabiroy under its protection and denounced the factory director for chauvinism. Even when the Commissariat of Labor ruled in favor of the factory director, the secretary of the Union of Textile Workers continued to make a fuss, convening meetings that blamed the factory director of undertaking a campaign against Zabiroy.⁹² The tendency to take advantage of one’s nationality became all too easy in an era when a simple label, whether “chauvinist” or “nationalist,” could wreak havoc.

“Act Like a Bolshevik, Not a Bureaucrat!”

What might have prompted so many cases of antagonism during these years? During Stalin’s cultural revolution and the First Five-Year Plan, the Party-state repeatedly called for more programs to recruit, train, and retain Tatar workers in factories. On January 1, 1930, Tatars made up 4,152, or 28 percent, of the Tatar Republic’s highly trained workforce. Party-state authorities hoped to raise this number to 50 percent by the end of 1932, explaining that “the further growth of national cadres will enable the construction in the Tatar Republic of new giants

⁹¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 103, l. 12.

⁹² Tanai, “Te, kto razzhigaiut natsional’nuiu rozn’.”

of industry equipped with the latest achievements of global technology.”⁹³ Plans to expand the Tatar workforce would “enable Tatars not only to sweep the floors and courtyards of factories, but to be valuable workers at the enterprise.” Moreover, with sufficient training, the minorities could ride the wave of *vydvyzhenie* and *korenizatsiia* into higher positions within industry.⁹⁴ These opportunities threatened Russians who believed Tatars’ success came at their expense.⁹⁵

The segregation of Russian and Tatar workers likewise exacerbated tensions. Given the inability of the rank-and-file to communicate across the language barrier, the two groups worked, lived, and gathered separately.⁹⁶ As one observer noted, at every factory, “workers of different nationalities split up into their various national groups, among whom at least one . . . chauvinist or nationalist can always be found.”⁹⁷ The lack of a shared language undermined most opportunities for cooperation and interaction. This trend worked directly against Party directives, which emphasized the necessity of promoting Tatar language in order to eradicate feelings of Great Russian chauvinism: “Everyone must understand that it is impossible to serve Tatar workers in all cultural, political, industrial, and technical matters in a language that they do not sufficiently understand.”⁹⁸ Antagonism festered where segregation persisted.

Party-state officials constantly bemoaned the lack of progress in introducing nationalities policies.⁹⁹ In November 1929, the Third Plenum of the Obkom framed the problem this way:

“Every Party, professional, and Soviet organization must have a concrete plan for implementing

⁹³ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1728, ll. 17-18.

⁹⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 79, l. 13.

⁹⁵ “Sozdat’ kadry natsional’nogo proletariata,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 15, 1929, 3.

⁹⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 318, l. 326.

⁹⁷ Tanai, “Te, kto razzhigaiut natsional’nuiu roznu’.”

⁹⁸ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1728, ll. 17-18.

⁹⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 474, ll. 118-20.

national politics within its ranks. . . . Both Party and non-Party masses must feel a moral responsibility for the implementation of this plan.”¹⁰⁰ Yet Party, professional, and economic organs seemed not to understand this responsibility, devoting only fleeting attention to establishing concrete steps for improving the state of Tatar workers. The problem was ultimately one of implementation. As noted by a Tatar Party member, “We have plenty of directives regarding RTL and korenizatsiia, but they are poorly implemented, and no one really knows what kind of condition we are in.”¹⁰¹ Safa Burgan, one of the most astute observers and reporters on issues related to Tatar workers, explained that while the TASSR Obkom had repeatedly called for more trained Tatars, there had been little follow-through. In spite of all the rhetoric, the majority of Tatars remained menial workers who could speak little Russian. As such, they lacked the language to participate in cultural, political, and organizational events held at the factory. Budgetary deficits, which did not allocate enough money to train Tatars, shouldered some of the blame, though administrators at enterprises who showed no interest in promoting these initiatives were equally at fault.¹⁰² Additionally, most training programs were taught in Russian, limiting the number of Tatars who could enroll in and complete these courses.¹⁰³ Ultimately, language barriers, chauvinism, and disinterest on the part of administrators undermined the recruitment and training of Tatar workers.

Throughout the early 1930s, Tatar workers continued to complain about insufficient resources in their native language.¹⁰⁴ At Vakhitov Factory, they requested more Tatar-language

¹⁰⁰ “O plane, otvetstvennosti i tempakh,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, February 2, 1930, 1.

¹⁰¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 472, ll. 90-95.

¹⁰² Safa Burgan, “Prodolzhaia reshitel’nuu bor’bu protiv velikoderzhavnosti i mestnogo natsionalizma—obespechim dal’neishie uspekhi leninskoi natsional’noi politiki,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, June 3, 1930, 2.

¹⁰³ “Polshaga vpered.” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, April 21, 1929, 3.

¹⁰⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 103, ll. 17-20, 116-22.

journals and newspapers in factory libraries, seemingly to no avail. As one Tatar noted, “The lack of technical information in Tatar greatly damages the ability of Tatar workers to become better trained.”¹⁰⁵ According to the TASSR Obkom, the Central RTL Commission was not helping in this regard, doing “absolutely nothing” to support the expansion of the Tatar language.¹⁰⁶ By 1932, just one hundred Russian workers in Kazan had attended Tatar courses with enough regularity to attain a working level of the language. To what can this problem be attributed? The Party-state apparatus never convincingly explained the importance of learning Tatar, nor had it provided sufficient motivation—either positive or negative—to learning the language. Recurring issues related to insufficient funding, teachers, and resources compounded the problem.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, instructions from the Party Obkom to prioritize the use of Tatar at factories remained “only on paper.” Such was the case at Lenin Factory No. 40. Although the factory employed almost one thousand Tatars as of May 1930, there were no Tatar-language meetings, no Tatar literature in the library, and no Tatar articles in the factory newspaper. No Tatar-language clubs promoted the new Yangalif alphabet.¹⁰⁸ No one spoke Tatar during breaks at work. Not once had the Party cell discussed how to support the promotion and training of Tatars.¹⁰⁹ One Party member, Usmanov, noted that *korenizatsiia* interested very few people at the factory, and this explained why no concrete steps had been taken to develop more Tatar cadres.

¹⁰⁵ “Tatar telendä tekhnika äsäläre buldyryrga kiräk,” *Vakhitovets*, March 28, 1932, 2; Üzem, “Takta tsekhynda tatar telenä ik”tibar itmilär,” *Vakhitovets*, April 5, 1934, 2; and “Tatar telendä zhurnallar az tarala,” *Vakhitovets*, May 1, 1934, 3.

¹⁰⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 633, ll. 27-29.

¹⁰⁷ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1839, ll. 57-58.

¹⁰⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 676, ll. 1-9, 200-02.

¹⁰⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 822, ll. 176-79; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 143, ll. 6-7.

Mentsendorf, a factory administrator, noted that Russian workers “do not want to speak with Tatars and in general have a negative attitude toward them. . . . Such attitudes frighten [Tatars] and drive them away.” The absence of Tatar-speaking managers complicated factory administration, particularly in workshops with a large number of Tatars.¹¹⁰

Even at Vakhitov Factory, workers complained when meetings took place exclusively in Russian and without interpreters, making it impossible for Tatars who did not speak Russian to understand issues that directly affected them. Consequently, few Tatars bothered to attend. As some appealed, “Party organizers . . . must not forget about Tatar workers!”¹¹¹ The head of the TASSR Obkom expressed a similar sentiment at a Party conference, emphasizing, “We must routinely check what has been done to improve the skills of Tatar workers and offer better cultural services in their native language. In short, you have to act like a Bolshevik in implementing Leninist nationalities policies, not a bureaucrat.”¹¹²

In response to these conditions, some Tatar workers began to express their desire to learn Russian, a trend viewed favorably by many factory chiefs. One administrator at Vakhitov Factory noted that Tatars’ ignorance of Russian “leads to the eruption of misunderstandings between workers and their supervisors” and thus supported the move toward Russian language training.¹¹³ A Tatar worker at Vakhitov Factory, Kaium Valiev, explained that reading and writing in Russian would be helpful for his new life and career in Kazan.¹¹⁴ By 1933, 58 percent

¹¹⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 80, l. 69.

¹¹¹ Udarnik, “Zhyelyshlar tatarcha alыр barylmyi,” *Vakhitovets*, September 18, 1934, 2.

¹¹² “Shovinst Zhulega i slepaia redaktsiia,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, April 11, 1934, 2.

¹¹³ NART, f. R-741, op. 1, d. 111, l. 69.

¹¹⁴ Kaium Veliev, “Ruscha ukyrga telim,” *Vakhitovets*, October 10, 1934, 2.

of Tatars at Vakhitov Factory had some working knowledge of Russian.¹¹⁵ Notably, Tatar workers rejected calls to learn Yangalif. Even in 1933, four years after its introduction, most could not read the Latin alphabet. The TASSR Obkom warned that it considered illiteracy in Yangalif among Party and Komsomol members “a failure to fulfill their role on the vanguard of the cultural front and as evidence of a hypocritical, double-dealing attitude.” Yet Tatars continued to disregard these appeals.¹¹⁶ In 1936, during another literacy campaign, Tatar workers at Lenin Factory No. 40 expressed their preference to attend Russian-language courses instead of those for their native language. Tatars found Russian much more practical for their everyday work at the factory. As one worker said, “We don’t need to learn Tatar grammar, because all of the work we do is in Russian. Teach us Russian grammar!” A Tatar instructor reportedly addressed most of his Tatar pupils in Russian, claiming that they actually knew Russian better. The daily exposure to Russian had allowed workers to pick up the language quickly.¹¹⁷

The ascendancy of a new generation of workers, particularly those who came up from within the factory education system, compounded changing attitudes toward the Russian language and involvement in factory life. Vakhitov Factory administrators pinned their hopes on the factory school (FZU) for improving the position of Tatars at the enterprise. By 1929, Tatars made up more than half of enrolled students, and this percentage continued to grow.¹¹⁸ Every year, more Tatars graduated from the FZU and entered positions in the factory.¹¹⁹ Unlike the older generation of workers, Tatars who progressed through the FZU system began learning

¹¹⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 193, ll. 35-37. This statistic hovered between 30 and 40 percent in the two other factories analyzed in this report, though.

¹¹⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 13, ll. 113-14.

¹¹⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 266, l. 72.

¹¹⁸ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 2118, l. 2; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 164, l. 4.

¹¹⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 71, ll. 2-4, 34-40.

Russian in their first year, attending remedial Russian courses if necessary.¹²⁰ In 1930, Vakhitov Factory also opened up its own VTUZ (Higher Technical Educational Institution), which graduated its first class of students in early February 1933. During that time, the number of Tatar students had grown from 12 (5 percent) to 143 (46 percent).¹²¹ Newspapers heralded the VTUZ as the “decisive factor in implementing Leninist nationalities policies.” Four korenizatsiia groups, recruiting exclusively from Tatar workers, produced the first cohort of trained Tatar specialists whose skills apparently did not differ from those of their Russian peers. The VTUZ enabled Vakhitov Factory to begin creating its own “manufacturing intelligentsia” from among the working class.¹²² By 1936, 827 Tatars made up 74 percent of those enrolled in various educational courses at the factory, ranging from specific technical training to literacy classes.¹²³

The FZU at Lenin Factory No. 40 likewise offered a four-year education to children of factory workers.¹²⁴ There, students learned Russian and Tatar, as well as practical skills for use in the factory. By 1933, Tatars made up 70 percent of its students. Since most FZU graduates went on to work at the enterprise where they studied, these schools served as one of the best methods for promoting the korenizatsiia of cadres.¹²⁵ The factory Party committee ordered the FZU to accept 80 percent of its incoming class in 1933 from national minorities, hoping that a surge of Tatar workers would help overcome a spate of chauvinism at the factory.¹²⁶ By July 1934, 166 Tatars (73 percent) studied at the FZU of Lenin Factory No. 40. That year, the number

¹²⁰ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 823, l. 12.

¹²¹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 2118, l. 2.

¹²² G. Kamai, “Uspekhi leninskoi natsional’noi politiki,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, February 6, 1933, 1.

¹²³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 178, op. 1, d. 123, ll. 3-4.

¹²⁴ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 565, l. 14.

¹²⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 55, l. 84.

¹²⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 93, l. 9.

of Tatars had reached at least 50 percent in practically every Kazan FZU, with some boasting even greater numbers, such as 69 percent at Spartak Factory, and even 100 percent at the Sewing Factory.¹²⁷ Of course, no factory or educational institution ever escaped without its share of criticism. Plans were never met in full, and Party-state authorities, when they bothered to comment, bemoaned the slow implementation of Soviet nationalities policies.¹²⁸ Still, strengthening the network of factory educational institutions helped to create a new generation of Tatar workers who came of age within the factory milieu and were inundated from the start with its common practices, particularly speaking Russian.

Younger Tatar workers began participating enthusiastically in socialist competitions and the Stakhanovite movement. Beginning in 1935, local newspapers such as *Krasnaia Tataria* and *Vakhitovets*, the Vakhitov Factory journal, caught full Stakhanovite fever, highlighting many stories of Tatar workers who over-fulfilled production norms for their positions.¹²⁹ The TASSR's first Tatar Stakhanovite, Abdulkhak Nigametzianov, came from Kazan's Fur Factory No. 1. Inspired by the example of Alexei Stakhanov, Nigametzianov began to develop innovative methods for processing the skins of animals, which enabled him to over-fulfill his work plan by an incredible rate of 1,542 percent. After receiving the title of Stakhanovite, Nigametzianov spurred on competition among other furriers and eventually bested his own record, apparently reaching 2,179 percent of his quota. Nigametzianov attributed his own success, as well as that of

¹²⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 2, d. 164, l. 3.

¹²⁸ See, for example: TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, ll. 73-74; and f. 15, op. 4, d. 14, ll. 168-69.

¹²⁹ "Mylykova Zhamal," *Vakhitovets*, October 23, 1935, 2; and "Bezneng Stakhanovchylar," *Vakhitovets*, November 7, 1935, 3.

the Tatar Republic as a whole, to Leninist-Stalinist national policy, which enabled the flourishing of culture, politics, and industry within the Tatar Republic.¹³⁰

While the local press highlighted success stories of individual Tatar workers, their nationality remained in the background, although Tatar surnames remained an obvious marker of heritage. Still, Stakhanovite literature in the Tatar Republic found no intrinsic value in a particular worker's national affiliation.¹³¹ By the late 1930s, the greatest indicator of an individual's role in Soviet society was measured through his or her economic contributions. Take, for example, G. S. Sabirov, who moved to Kazan from his native village in 1931. Upon seeking work at Vakhitov Factory, he was assigned cleaning duties, as he lacked any training. After a few weeks he was transferred to a mill for grinding nickel and then to a position as a mixer. A factory boss encouraged him to study a skill, so Sabirov began staying up all night reading books about engineering to improve his qualifications. He received promotions and began taking on more responsibility, overseeing a shift in which all of his workers were named shock-workers. Eventually Sabirov received the title of a Stakhanovite. Throughout the account, Sabirov's national background remains entirely subtext.¹³²

The same can be seen in the story of Khairulla Mukhamed'iarov. When he began working at the Vakhitov Factory, Mukhamed'iarov was an illiterate, unskilled laborer, assigned the task of stapling special paper to the inside of boxes used to store and transport candles. Mukhamed'iarov found this work uninteresting and hoped to carry out "more complicated and demanding work." Given his interest in machinery, Mukhamed'iarov enrolled in courses at Vakhitov Factory to become a machinist, knowing that "the path for him was open and that

¹³⁰ V. Mart, "Abdulkhak Nigamet'ianov," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, November 17, 1936, 3.

¹³¹ N. Sokolov, "Master Ismagil Shigaleev," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, November 17, 1936, 3.

¹³² V. Bobrov, "Vydvizhenie," *Vakhitovets*, September 10, 1937, 2.

nothing could stop him from reaching his goal.” Mukhamed’iarov subsequently worked in a casting shop at the factory, learning the fundamentals of the various machines. Eventually Mukhamed’iarov’s quick ability to identify problems with machines earned him a promotion. He began designing a range of products to improve efficiency, such as new motors and rubber sleeves that prevented raw materials from leaking out during the candle-making process. Mukhamed’iarov also became literate in Tatar and Russian. He actively participated in the political life of the factory, serving as the editor of a paper. His dream? “To study more, and to be a model worker in every sense of the word.”¹³³

The diminished prominence of Stakhanovite workers’ national heritage in the late 1930s paralleled the decreasing interest in discussing nationalities policies throughout the Soviet Union. Local newspapers reflected the rearranged priorities. After 1935, *Vakhitovets* only sporadically addressed the national question, though this hardly meant that conditions had improved. The newspaper ceased publishing critiques about the state of interethnic relations or Tatar-language services, instead devoting its pages to lengthy excerpts of speeches by Party-state officials, favoring topics relevant for the entire Soviet Union over local issues. By 1937, *Vakhitovets* abandoned its dual-language format, subsequently printing all content solely in Russian. At the same time, the number of reports related to the progress of korenizatsiia dramatically decreased. But not all officials welcomed the shift; some, upon noting that korenizatsiia issues had begun to disappear from the agendas of Party meetings, warned that the state of national cadres would flounder if officials did not keep pressure on enterprises.¹³⁴ Yet the trend continued. A 154-page report from the Party cell of Lenin Factory No. 40 produced in 1940 mentioned nothing related

¹³³ “Odin iz mnogikh,” *Vakhitovets*, June 26, 1938, 2.

¹³⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, l. 151.

to the national question or native-language services for Tatar workers, a clear signal of the shifting priorities. Such was the case throughout the republic.¹³⁵

Moreover, expressing explicit preference for Tatars in hiring practices during this period carried the risk of arousing suspicions of “local nationalism.” Kasimov, the Tatar director of the Kazan Wine Factory, intervened in promotion decisions for Tatars at the factory, apparently ignoring their criminal pasts and inappropriate behavior. According to the TASSR Obkom, in so doing, Kasimov and his deputies had “sown the seeds of enmity between Tatar and Russian workers.” By applying their own interpretation of nationalities policies, they allowed nepotism and embezzlement to flourish. The Obkom indicated Kasimov had gone too far in demonstrating favor toward Tatars.¹³⁶ While the policy of *korenizatsiia* was never abandoned, by the late 1930s its implementation became almost entirely silent, and certainly never came at the expense of Russians.

Conclusion

*We are shock workers!
In the workshop, in the factory.
Faster!
Faster for victory and for yourself!
Shock work will bring victory in the struggle!
Whether in the workshop
Or on the fields of the kolkhoz,
Tatar, Mari,
And Chuvash youth are working hard.
In the factory together they
Fight to fulfill the industrial plan.
In the workshops and schools,
These shock workers
Fulfill all plans.¹³⁷*

¹³⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 167, op. 1, d. 228b, ll. 1-154.

¹³⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, l. 157.

¹³⁷ O. Gylmadov, “Bez udarnik,” *Vakhitovets*, June 29, 1932, 2.

This poem, written by a Tatar worker in his native language and published in a factory newspaper in 1932, underscores the growing presence of national minorities among the industrial workforce of the Tatar Republic. Expanding the numbers of the Tatar proletariat helped demonstrate that the Bolshevik Revolution had opened up opportunities for every Soviet citizen, regardless of his or her national background. At the same time, the Soviet Union desperately needed workers of all stripes to advance its ambitious industrialization program. During the First Five-Year Plan alone, the number of Tatar workers throughout the Tatar Republic surged from 3,102 to 18,690, making up 29 percent of the overall workforce in industrial enterprises. Of course, this number lagged far behind the ideal 50 percent, but represented a significant growth nonetheless. At Vakhitov Factory, the share of Tatars among all laborers increased from 11 percent in 1923 to 45 percent in 1940. At Lenin Factory No. 40, the number of Tatars grew from 23 percent to 43 percent between 1925 and 1935.

Introducing policies such as *korenizatsiia* and RTL into the workplace set the stage for the factory and labor markets to shine as symbols of the new era of national solidarity. Yet they also became the predominant spaces for interethnic conflict and violence. Russians were particularly sensitive to “their” jobs going to untrained and unworthy Tatars who benefitted from, and sometimes exploited, their privileged status. Tatars, accustomed to suffering at the hands of vindictive coworkers and bosses, found creative ways to work within the system to use their national heritage for their own benefit. Every hiring or firing decision had the potential to erupt into a political scandal, or devolve into a fistfight on the factory floor. Notably, Russians and Tatars conceptualized these issues very differently. When asked about problems at factories, Russians tended to bring up issues such as pay and labor conditions. If pressed about interethnic conflict, most claimed that no such issues existed, insisting that they lived and worked alongside

Tatars peacefully. Tatars told a different story, pointing to a bevy of incidents related to national antagonism, including beatings, name calling, and more.¹³⁸

Soviet nationalities policies relied on the principle of reciprocity, attempting to balance both Russian and non-Russian anxieties about the other, so that no one group could claim greater privilege—or mistreatment. Investigations into and prosecution of Great Russian chauvinism attempted to ensure that Tatars had recourse to censure Russians who overstepped their bounds and acted as colonial overlords rather than fellow citizens pursuing common economic and social goals under the banner of socialism. Strikingly, the peak years of the struggle against Great Russian chauvinism, 1928-32, coincided with an intense campaign against Sultan-Galiev and his form of “bourgeois nationalism,” as noted in the previous chapter regarding the arrest of prominent Tatar intellectuals. If the campaigns against Sultangalievism helped to establish the boundaries of how Tatars could behave in asserting their national autonomy, the assault on Great Russian chauvinism emphasized that Tatars still needed protection from lingering forms of colonial hostility. Russians, too, had their own miscreants in need of discipline.

In spite of Stalin’s previous rhetoric to the contrary, the Party-state ultimately perceived nationalism as more dangerous than chauvinism. Campaigns against it in the workplace, exemplified in the show trials organized by local Party committees, lacked the same tenor as the purges of bourgeois nationalists in 1928-30, 1932-33, and 1937-38. Unlike those charged with Sultangalievism, chauvinists might be fired and demoted, but never arrested or executed. Chauvinism was understood as a localized problem, a product of specific people in discrete spaces. When prosecuted at all, chauvinists faced criminal charges and surprisingly light punishments. In contrast, entire population categories, most markedly the national intelligentsia,

¹³⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 888, l. 24.

fell under suspicion of operating as counterrevolutionary nationalists. Their threat, political rather than criminal, provoked a much different response from the Party-state.

The campaign against Great Russian chauvinism peaked in 1931-32, just as the cultural revolution came to an end, and then completely disappeared after 1934, along with any systemic discussion of korenizatsiia among Party-state organs. It is difficult to say whether ethnic conflict actually abated, or instead was swept under the rug and ignored. Regardless, other barriers continued to stand in the way of recruiting and training Tatar workers. Economic planning organs did not devote enough resources to training Tatar workers. Factory directors brazenly ignored mandates to improve the conditions of Tatars and implement korenizatsiia.¹³⁹ The Labor Board could not recruit enough Tatar workers fast enough.¹⁴⁰ Professional organizations did not follow through on their promises to train Tatars.¹⁴¹ Tatars did not want to commit to studying and training for an additional three hours after an already long workday.¹⁴²

Consequently, even as the absolute number of Tatar workers grew exponentially in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly with the help of factory schools and educational institutions, the number of Tatars in technical positions remained low. Although Tatars served in leadership roles as factory directors or on factory committees, as well as in unskilled positions, proportionally fewer worked as middle-level managers and experts who might help Tatars solve everyday issues in their native languages.¹⁴³ While the number of white-collar, trained Tatar employees in the Tatar Republic had increased from 17 percent to 36 percent between 1926 and 1939, these

¹³⁹ G. Ksenofontov, "Na zaovde im. Vakhitova plokho vospityvaiut natsional'nye kadry," *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 17, 1935.

¹⁴⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, l. 151.

¹⁴¹ "Sozdat' kadry natsional'nogo proletariata," *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 15, 1929, 3.

¹⁴² "Podgotovka kvalifitsirovannykh kadrov rabochikh-tatar pod ugrozoi," *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 9, 1930, 3.

¹⁴³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 888, l. 23.

Tatars were very underrepresented in technical fields.¹⁴⁴ The 1939 census revealed that the TASSR had only 300 Tatar engineers, less than 15 percent of all engineers in the republic.¹⁴⁵ Every factory reflected this gap. The engineering and technical staff of Kazan's Silicate Factory included just three Tatars, while Tatars made up 45 percent of the entire workforce.¹⁴⁶ In 1935, Tatars constituted 35 percent of workers at Spartak Factory, but merely 13 percent of the engineering and technical staff.¹⁴⁷ In 1938, Kazan's industrial cable-making Hammer and Sickle Factory No. 9 employed 57 engineers and technical specialists, of which Tatars numbered 3.¹⁴⁸ Figures were slightly better at Vakhitov Factory, where Tatars made up 36 (23 percent) of the 154 technical specialists.¹⁴⁹ The SK-4 silicate plant employed 673 Tatars, or 37 percent of the workforce, though they made up less than 18 percent of the engineering and technical staff.¹⁵⁰

Seen from another angle of the 1939 census, among the 42,279 Tatars who held white-collar positions in 1939, just 13 percent worked in technical positions and less than 1 percent as engineers. Alternatively, 27 percent served in leadership roles (positions that required little formal training), 35 percent had various cultural and educational jobs, and 25 percent worked as teachers in primary schools.¹⁵¹ As noted in the previous chapter on higher education, this technical/cultural split illustrates that trained Tatars most frequently sought employment in spaces where other Tatars had already gone before and established patronage networks.

¹⁴⁴ Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 381.

¹⁴⁵ Iu. A. Poliakov, ed., *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda: Osnovnye itogi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 181.

¹⁴⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, ll. 34-35.

¹⁴⁷ S. Kamaev, "Razve tak nado vyrashchivat' natsional'nye kadry?" *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 26, 1935, 3.

¹⁴⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 164, l. 68.

¹⁴⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 164, l. 67.

¹⁵⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 331, l. 71.

¹⁵¹ Poliakov, ed., *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda*, 181-83.

Korenizatsiia thrived in secondary spaces, such as those related to education, journalism, the arts, and other cultural institutions. Given their primary role of supporting the Soviet economy, factories ascribed peripheral tasks like supporting native language training much less importance.

What, then, can be said of the thousands of workers who came to Kazan from villages in search of new opportunities and greater financial and social stability? They stood to benefit enormously from Soviet nationalities policies, assuming positions previously unavailable to them, receiving on-the-job training, and attending literacy courses. As with the career paths described in the previous chapter on higher education, language remained the greatest benchmark or hurdle for advancement. Evidence suggests that, by the 1930s, many Tatar workers in Kazan—and particularly those of the younger generation—had learned Russian, either by picking up the basics on the job, or through attending classes at their workplaces. In light of the insufficient Tatar-language training material, newspapers, and entertainment in these industrial spaces, such assimilation should not be surprising. By the late 1930s, as the Russian language assumed a dominant position in all of Soviet society, any enthusiasm for the widespread application of Tatar in industrial enterprises withered away, even among Tatars themselves. Given the increased centralization of the Soviet economy, local industrial enterprises found themselves governed exclusively by Russian speakers passing down edicts from Moscow. Tatars accommodated and adapted to speaking Russian in these environments, perhaps to diminish their difference from Russian peers, to secure access to promotions, or to understand the expectations in front of them. Tatars might chat with coworkers in their native tongue, but the language of Soviet industry was Russian.

CHAPTER 4: STAGING TATAR REALITY: KAZAN'S TATAR DRAMATIC AND OPERA THEATERS

On June 5, 1919, the Kazan City Theater, located on Freedom Square in the center of the city, burned to the ground. The massive fire, of unknown origin, destroyed not just the stage and performance hall of Kazan's primary theater, but all of the decorations, sets, costumes, and props stored there, as well as an extensive library of theatrical manuscripts. As one commentator lamented, "This is a deathblow for Kazan's theatrical life, insofar as we now have to live and breathe without the joys of art."¹ Of course, this despondent prognosis did not prove true. Just a few years later, ten professional and thirty amateur theatrical troupes performed regularly.² By 1941, Kazan boasted a multitude of cultural institutions, including the Tatar State Academic Theater, the Russian Bolshoi Dramatic Theater, the Tatar State Theater of Opera and Ballet, three puppet theaters, a circus, seven musical and artistic training schools for adults and children, a philharmonic orchestra, a Tatar Ensemble of Song and Dance, and ninety-seven amateur artistic clubs.³

While it hardly destroyed Kazan's artistic life, the fire in the Kazan City Theater still resonates with some historians as symbolic, marking the end of one artistic era and clearing the way for something entirely new to rise phoenix-like from its ashes.⁴ After the October

¹ N. Rukavishnikov, "O pozhare," *Znamia revoliutsii*, June 1, 1919.

² NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 1041, l. 298.

³ NART, f. R-7239, op. 1, d. 1a, ll. 2-4.

⁴ Iu. A. Blagov, *KEMST i teatral'naia zhizn' Kazani 1920-x gg.* (Kazan: Tatpoligraf, 2005), 9.

Revolution, the Bolsheviks emphasized that old forms of art needed to make way for innovative, socially productive styles that would communicate the ideals of the regime and forge the public into Soviet citizens. As Lenin explained, “Every endeavor—politics and education generally and art specifically—must be permeated with the spirit of the proletariat’s class struggle in order to accomplish successfully the aims of its dictatorship.”⁵ Still, the activists leading the transition from the old to new culture lacked a shared vision of what they were creating. They did agree, however, on the unique ability of theater to transmit political and social values to the public. Among all artistic forms, theater facilitated the most direct interaction with the audience, bringing together both actor and spectator in an intimate amalgamation of color, light, music, movement, words, and emotions.⁶ Following the Bolshevik Revolution, theater exploded in popularity. Soldiers, workers, peasants, students, and many others saw in theater an opportunity to involve themselves in creating the revolutionary Soviet vision for the future. As historian Lynn Mally has demonstrated, revolutionary Russia’s many amateur theaters transformed clubs, factories, and even storage rooms into new Soviet public spaces. Performances took the form of classical plays, improvisations, recitations, and live readings of newspaper articles, all of which helped to communicate the Party-state’s objectives to the public.⁷

Progressive Tatars in Kazan knew the power of the theater too, having used it to great effect in advancing reformist ideologies in the prerevolutionary era.⁸ Many had also seen

⁵ V. I. Lenin, “O proletarskoi kul’ture,” *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1926-27), 14:409.

⁶ Katerina Clark, “The ‘Quiet Revolution’ in Soviet Intellectual Life,” in *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture*, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Richard Stites, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 210-30.

⁷ Lynn Mally, *Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 4.

⁸ Madina V. Goldberg, “Russian Empire–Tatar Theater: The Politics of Culture in Late Imperial Kazan” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2009), 167.

firsthand the potential for using the stage as an ideological platform for the Soviet state in Red Army troupes and amateur theaters of the Civil War era. The creation of the first state-supported Tatar theater in 1922 offered Tatar directors, playwrights, and actors newfound legitimacy. With financial and infrastructural support, they began to work out on the stage the place of their language, history, and culture against a Soviet backdrop. By eschewing avant-garde artistic forms throughout the 1920s in the interest of providing Tatar audiences with clear messages about important social and political realities, they formed a repertoire that bore an uncanny similarity to socialist realism, the dominant cultural dogma of the 1930s that required, in the words of one scholar, “to describe life in direct, understandable ways, but in ways that would uplift the subject toward the goals of fulfilling socialism.”⁹

Beginning with Tatar theatrical and operatic productions, the case studies presented in this and the next two chapters situate Moscow and Kazan in dynamic relation with each other as Tatars in Kazan sought to develop culture that adhered to Stalin’s “national in form and socialist in content” formula. Playwrights and librettists used the stage to suggest how national traditions, culture, religion, and language might translate into the new era. In the wake of the introduction of socialist realism, the Great Terror cleared the way for a younger generation to produce a new, folklore-rich repertoire focused on an idyllic past. In a theme that will span the second half of this dissertation, I will demonstrate that Tatars on the cultural front sought to blend “authentic” representations of their culture with Soviet ideology to promote the friendship of the peoples.

The Birth of Tatar Theater

The beginning of theatrical life in Kazan dates to 1791, when Kazan Governor S. M. Barataev decreed the formation of the city’s first troupe of professional actors. The Kazan

⁹ David R. Shearer, “Stalinism, 1928-1940,” in Ronald Grigor Suny, ed., *The Cambridge History of Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3:207.

Theater, which evolved into the Soviet-era Russian Bolshoi Dramatic Theater, served as a stopping point for many Russian directors and actors on their way to more prestigious roles in Moscow and St. Petersburg. After 1852, the Kazan Theater was based at the new City Theater, the same that burned down in 1919.¹⁰ As in many of the Russian Empire's other large cities, theatrical performances constituted one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the late nineteenth century.¹¹ Even elite Tatars frequented the Russian-language performances at the City Theater. Adopting such European cultural practices signaled their own progressive habits, given the disdain of many conservative Tatar religious figures for the theater. In a curious infusion of traditional practices into a modern space, the City Theater had special boxes outfitted with curtains behind which Tatar women could sit and preserve their modesty while watching a play. Yet as elite Tatars more fully embraced European culture in the years to come, they found less of a need to keep up these appearances of public morality. Imitating their Russian counterparts, Tatar women appeared at the City Theater unveiled and without a head covering, much to the ire of conservative mullahs. The City Theater was one of the few places where men and women, as well as Russians and Tatars, mixed freely in the prerevolutionary era.¹²

In the late nineteenth century, Tatar elites in large cities such as Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg began expressing interest in Tatar-language theater as a vehicle to promote political and social change among their conationals. Wealthy Tatars hosted private literary, musical, and

¹⁰ For more on the history of Kazan's Russian-language theater, see: I. Kruti, *Russkii teatr v Kazani* (Kazan: Iskusstvo, 1958); V. V. Fedulenko, *Zarozhdenie i rastsvet teatr v Kazani* (San Francisco: S&K, 1970). During the Soviet era, the Russian Theater operated in an entirely separate cultural sphere from the Tatar Theater, exclusively performing plays that had been approved by and disseminated from Moscow. Only in 1940 did the Russian Theater first perform a Tatar play, Galiaskar Kamal's *Bankrot*, described later in this chapter, in Russian translation.

¹¹ E. Vishlenkova, S. Malysheva, and A. Sal'nikova, *Kul'tura povsednevnosti provintsial'nogo goroda: Kazan' i kazantsy v XIX-XX vekakh* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2008), 163-66.

¹² L. R. Gabdrafiqova, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' gorodskikh tatar: V usloviakh burzhuaiznykh preobrazovaniy vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX veka* (Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani, 2013), 211-12.

theatrical events in their homes. Tatar students at progressive educational institutions, such as the Kazan Teachers' School, staged Russian- and Tatar-language plays for each other. Of course, conservative Muslim forces opposed this trend, considering such performances a violation of Shari'a law.¹³ After the 1905 Russian Revolution loosened censorship laws and the stranglehold of the state on the development of national cultures, progressive Tatars met with more success in organizing theatrical events in public. Newly founded Tatar clubs functioned as centralized spaces for Tatars to gather and socialize, discuss politics, read newspapers, and engage in commerce. These clubs also facilitated public consumption of modern forms of culture among a broader swath of Tatars. For example, the *Shärik kluby* (Eastern Club), founded in 1906 in the Bolgar Hotel in Kazan's Old Tatar District, hosted literary and musical evenings, public lectures, and theatrical shows. An orchestra, men's and women's choirs, and other musical groups practiced there too.¹⁴

On December 22, 1906, a date popularly considered the "birth" of Tatar theater, a group of progressive youth staged Kazan's first public, Tatar-language theatrical performance at the city's *Yanga klub* (New Club). The troupe presented the plays *Kyzganych bala* (Miserable Child) and *Gyishyk bälase* (Trouble from Love), translated from their Turkish originals, to two hundred men and women. Police guarded the building from an unruly mob, comprised of local religious figures and those sympathetic to conservative Islamic practices, that hoped to disrupt the event. May 1907 saw the formation of the first official Tatar theatrical troupe, which the following year came under the leadership of Gabdulla Kariev (1886-1920), recognized as the "father of Tatar theater." Kariev remained at the helm of the troupe until it disbanded in 1918. At the suggestion of Gabdulla Tukai (1886-1913), the enormously popular and famous poet known as the "Tatar

¹³ "Put' Tat'teatra," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 31, 1926, 4.

¹⁴ Gabdrafikova, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' gorodskikh tatar*, 218-21.

Pushkin,” the troupe adopted the name Sayar (Wanderers). Although Sayar initially lacked state sanction, it nonetheless traveled throughout the Russian Empire, performing in large cities with sizable Tatar populations. By the fall of 1911, Sayar found a permanent home in Kazan’s Eastern Club, in the heart of the district where most Kazan Tatars lived, worked, and socialized. Tours throughout the Russian Empire continued in the summer months.¹⁵

Between the 1905 and 1917 Russian Revolutions, Kariev recruited young, talented Tatar actors to join Sayar. Many of them, such as Karim Tinchurin (1887-1938), Zaini Sultanov (1882-1952), and Bari Tarkhanov (1892-1935), continued to perform during the first decades of the Soviet era. Under the sponsorship of wealthy Tatar merchant families such as the Amirkhanovs and Isakhovs, Sayar staged plays written by progressive Tatar playwrights that promoted nationalism, democratic ideals, Europeanization, the reformation of religion, and the importance of education. Sayar’s summer tours throughout Russia facilitated an even greater impact of these ideas.¹⁶ One of Sayar’s most pioneering moves in the prerevolutionary era came from recruiting to the troupe in 1907 the actress Sakhibzhamal Gizzatullina-Volzhskaia (1892-1974). She was not just the first Tatar actress, but the first female to take to the stage in the entire Muslim world, indicative of the appeal of the feminist movement among urban Tatar women in the early twentieth century.¹⁷ Gizzatullina-Volzhskaia faced scathing criticism from conservative sectors, but her debut on the stage had enormous implications for Tatar theater and Tatar women as a whole.¹⁸ Kazan’s Tatar clubs, theaters, and musical evenings likewise played

¹⁵ Luara Shakirzhan, “Tatar teatry gasyrlar chatynda,” in Mirkasym Usmanov, ed., *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi akademicheskii teatr imeni Galiassgara Kamal. Sto let*. (Kazan: Zaman, 2009), 1:8-12, 23-24.

¹⁶ For more on this period of the Tatar theater, see: Gali Arslanov, *Tatarskoe rezhisserskoe iskusstvo: 1906-1941* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1992), 5-110.

¹⁷ For more on the birth of the Tatar feminist movement, see: Gabdrafikova, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' gorodskikh tatar*, 290-309.

¹⁸ For more, see Dzhaudat Minnullin, *Sakhibdzhama Gizzatullina-Volzhskaia* (Kazan: Zhien, 2012).

a key role in the emancipation of Tatar women in the late imperial era. As historian Madina Goldberg has concluded, in the prerevolutionary era, the Tatar theater and the Eastern Club “were the only public spaces in which both Tatar men and women could socialize in such a ‘purely’ Tatar space that was also secular and modern, unlike the traditional mosque and the marketplace.”¹⁹ Still, not all Tatar women wanted to attend mixed-sex gatherings; this prompted the creation of theatrical performances exclusively for women.²⁰

World War I, the October Revolution, and the ensuing Russian Civil War disrupted the work of Sayar and the main Tatar troupes in the Russian Empire, as almost every prominent Tatar actor was called up for service in the Red Army. There, they continued their theatrical and musical performances in agitation and propaganda brigades. Red Army theatrical troupes helped keep morale high among soldiers while also disseminating important Bolshevik ideology. These troupes staged conventional plays but also other innovative performances, such as sketches revolving around relevant political and social themes; “living newspapers” in which actors presented dramatic interpretations of current events; agitational trials that provided a forum for debate and judgment about figures such as Rasputin and Lenin; and mass spectacles that presented the history of the Bolshevik Revolution for popular consumption.²¹ Tatar troupes, embedded in practically every non-Russian brigade of the Red Army, were no exception, supplementing the above forms of theater with classics of the Tatar stage and original works about the October Revolution and the Civil War composed on the frontlines.²²

¹⁹ Goldberg, “Russian Empire–Tatar Theater,” 165.

²⁰ Gabdrafiqova, *Povsednevnaia zhizn’ gorodskikh tatar*, 221-22.

²¹ Mally, *Revolutionary Acts*, 40-46.

²² Arslanov, *Tatarskoe rezhisserskoe iskusstvo*, 97-100.

The absence of professional Tatar actors in Kazan opened up space for amateurs to take to the stage in factories, schools, and parks. The artistic institution Proletkult (Proletarian Cultural-Educational Organizations) helped to found hundreds of such theaters, clubs, schools, workshops, and choirs that advocated sweeping cultural transformations based on the values and principles of the working class. Taking seriously the idea of the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” Proletkult aimed to advance proletarian morality and ethics in the cultural sphere. By 1920, its peak year of activity, Proletkult included four hundred thousand members in three hundred branches throughout Soviet territory.²³ One such Proletkult troupe, sponsored by a Kazan factory, used its plays to lambast mullahs, who subsequently sought in vain to shut down the theatrical performances.²⁴ In Kazan, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, amateur troupes spread the message of the revolution, attracting urban youth with their sharp political commentary and spirit of ushering in a new cultural era. Their network, supported by trade unions, individual factories, and local governments, continued to expand. By 1921, four workers’ theaters and eleven amateur troupes operated in Kazan.²⁵

In 1922, as the Russian Civil War drew to a close, the Tatar Republic formed the First State Model Dramatic Tatar Theater. The Party-state believed that supporting European forms of art—such as theater, opera, ballet, and orchestra—among the Soviet Union’s Eastern nationalities would further their evolution into refined, secular citizens, a key step in their cultural and political development under Soviet tutelage.²⁶ The TASSR government invited the actor,

²³ Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), xv-xxix.

²⁴ P. T., “Tatarskii teatr v zarechnom raione,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, March 10, 1923, 3.

²⁵ Arslanov, *Tatarskoe rezhisserskoe iskusstvo*, 100.

²⁶ Laura L. Adams, “Modernity, Postcolonialism, and Theatrical Form in Uzbekistan,” *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 339.

playwright, and director Karim Tinchurin, an apprentice of Kariev, to lead the theater. Tinchurin began recruiting the best Tatar actors from throughout the former Russian Empire to join the new Tatar Theater, including Miftakh Absaliamov, Tazi Gizzat, Asgat Mazitov, Sitdik Aidarov, Shakir Shamil'skii, and Mukhtar Mutin. Notably, all the actors Tinchurin brought into the first state Tatar Theater had cut their theatrical teeth in amateur and Civil War troupes, attesting to their familiarity with the messages at the heart of the agitational works popular during the early years of Bolshevik rule. Tinchurin also enlisted Salikh Saidashev (1900-54) from Orenburg to conduct the orchestra and the poet Khadi Taktash (1901-31) from Tambov to refine scripts.²⁷ In 1926, Kazan's recently established Theatrical Technical School, in which leading Tatar directors and actors taught, produced its first class of graduates, including a noteworthy number of Tatar women, such as the famous actresses Galiia Bulatova and Galiia Kaibitskaia. At the time of its creation, the school was the only educational institution in the USSR that trained actors and actresses for the stage from among Eastern nationalities. The work of the Theatrical Technical School reflected the objectives of Soviet nationalities policies to promote cadres of professional artists that could advance European cultural forms among "backward" nationalities.²⁸

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Tatar Theater lived up to its prerevolutionary name—Sayar, meaning Wanderers—in terms of the physical space it occupied in Kazan. Tsarist officials had repeatedly denied Sayar a permanent building, so the troupe operated out of private homes of the city's Tatar elite, and later in the New Club and Eastern Club, both located in Tatar districts. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, newly appointed cultural administrators purportedly decided to transfer the City Theater building to the Tatar troupe,

²⁷ Arbatov, "Bor'ba za proletarskuiu kul'turu v Tatarstane," in *10 let sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva v Tatarstane* (Kazan: Tatglavlit, 1930), 1-10.

²⁸ "O tatarskom teatral'nom tekhnikume" *Krasnaia Tatariia*, August 19, 1926, 3.

though the 1919 fire cut these plans off at the knees. Regrouping, city authorities held a ceremonial groundbreaking for a new building in Kazan's Old Tatar District on June 25, 1920. The famine that gripped the Volga region diverted the attention and budget of the local government, preventing the project from going anywhere.²⁹

In 1921, the TASSR Narkompros assigned to the Tatar Theater the Merchants' Club on Voznesenskaia Street. Located far from where most Tatars in the city lived, the building was hardly an ideal option; in May of that year, an architectural commission from the Kazan City Soviet assessed the suitability of that structure and expressed its doubts whether even exhaustive remodeling could transform the building into an adequate theatrical space. Its small size could not accommodate many spectators, and a stage would need to be built, among other renovations. Nonetheless, the TASSR Narkompros moved forward with the plan to retrofit the Merchants' Club.³⁰ The Tatar Theater's tenure there was short-lived, in part due to the objections of playwright and director Fatkhi Burnash (1889-1942). On behalf of theater management, he complained to the Narkompros that the small size of the building threatened to stifle the growth of the theater's popularity. In response, Kazan authorities proposed moving the Tatar Theater into the building occupied by the Russian Bolshoi Dramatic Theater, a renovated cinema, forcing the two troupes to share a stage. Burnash strongly objected to this plan too. First, he argued, the demand for more performances could not be met if resources had to be split with the Russian troupe. Second, the Russian Theater was in the center of a predominantly Russian area of the city, which would minimize the potential for Tatar spectators. Third, Burnash feared a "clash of interests" between the troupes, leading to highly undesirable conflicts that could take on a

²⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 290, ll. 117-19.

³⁰ "Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi teatr: Otkrytie zimnego sezona," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, November 18, 1923, 4; and NART, f. R-417, op. 1, d. 209, ll. 77-78, 90, 92-94.

“national form.” In order to guarantee the flourishing of Tatar theatrical arts, the theater needed its own building close to Kazan’s Tatar districts.³¹

By 1926, the Tatar Theater achieved some semblance of stability upon moving into what would become its permanent home, another former club building on Bolshaia Galaktionovskaia Street. Located closer to the Tatar part of the city, albeit still in a central district populated primarily with Russians, the building was constructed in 1902, with a stage and concert hall capable of accommodating an audience of just over 1,100 people added in 1912.³² In January 1926, the Tatar Theater celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a three-day celebration in the new building. The special event included speeches by leading Tatar political and cultural figures, including a lecture by beloved author Galimdzhan Ibragimov (1887-1938) on the history of Tatar dramatic arts. M. M. Khataevich (1893-1937), first secretary of the TASSR Obkom, discussed the leadership of the Party in supporting Soviet and national culture. The theater staged selections from classic Tatar plays and a special production for Tatar workers.³³ That year, the Tatar Theater received an “academic” designation and officially became the Tatar State Academic Theater (TGAT), operating under the auspices of the TASSR Narkompros.

From its inception, TGAT benefitted from remarkable state support. Beginning in the early 1920s, the TASSR Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom) decided that the Tatar Theater’s “important role in spreading Tatar culture” justified the relief of its financial burdens.³⁴ Year after year, Moscow excused all of TGAT’s state taxes and utility fees so that theater could

³¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 290, ll. 117-119.

³² NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 20, ll. 1-3.

³³ S., “Teatr: 20-letie tatarskogo teatra,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 28, 1926, 5; and “Teatr: Iubilei tatteatra,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 30, 1926, 3.

³⁴ “L’gota tatarskoi drame,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, January 2, 1923, 5.

focus on fulfilling its cultural and educational mission among the local Tatar population.³⁵ Yet TGAT constantly had to ask for supplementary subsidies from the state. The desperate need for ongoing renovations to the theater building, along with growing salaries for an expanding staff with ambitious plans, amplified financial strains.³⁶ However, beginning in the mid-1930s, funding for all cultural institutions within the Tatar Republic fell, a product of tightening purse strings throughout the Soviet Union due to the threat of war. The move hampered theater operations, such as when the Committee for Artistic Affairs withheld a promised 44,100 rubles for the third quarter of 1936, along with an additional 20,000 rubles allocated for renovations to the theater building. TGAT administrators repeatedly appealed to the Obkom to remedy this problem, to no avail.³⁷

In spite of its many limitations, though, the significance of state support for the Tatar Theater should not be underestimated. While a constant source of complaint, TGAT's building provided rehearsal and performance space. The state allocated resources to hire directors, actors, and orchestra musicians and to establish prop and costume workshops. The latter enabled increased artistic creativity in staging new plays, as TGAT no longer had to cycle through the nondescript costumes and sets used in the prerevolutionary era. The Soviet regime, of course, maintained great expectations from TGAT in return. As one commentator articulated, the Tatar theater functioned as a "temple for the communist education of the Tatar working masses" and a "powerful weapon for communist agitation and propaganda" among the Eastern nationalities.³⁸

The TASSR Sovnarkom described the Tatar Theater as "a model national theater for pursuing

³⁵ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 290, ll. 120-21.

³⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1303, ll. 51-52.

³⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1303, ll. 118-19.

³⁸ A. Umerov, "Teatr i muzyka: O tatarskoi stsene," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, July 16, 1922, 5; and A. Umerov, "Ocherki o tatarskom teatre: II," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, January 4, 1923, 5.

cultural and educational objectives and serving the working masses of the TASSR, as well as a cultural organization with widespread artistic, creative, and ideological influence over the entire masses of the USSR.”³⁹ The TASSR Narkompros further enumerated the objectives of TGAT as “advancing among the masses of Tatar workers the achievements of contemporary theatrical arts; educating the masses in the ideological spirit of the revolutionary era; and developing and raising to the necessary heights the artistic level and aesthetic tastes of Tatar workers in conjunction with the ideological demands of modern society.” Moreover, TGAT hoped that its performances would “identify and consolidate the historical and psychological characteristics of Tatars” and “preserve and supplement the expressive and imaginative ethnographic peculiarities of the Tatar language in accordance with the demands of the stage and literary arts.”⁴⁰ TGAT was on mission for both the Party and nation.

Realism in Old and New Repertoires

Given the experience of so many Tatar directors, playwrights, and actors in amateur and Red Army troupes during the Civil War, the ideological demands placed upon TGAT came as no surprise. Yet unlike amateur theaters, which after the conclusion of the Civil War began staging “small” theatrical forms such as skits, satire, mime, and vaudeville, TGAT had to live up to its position as a professional state theater, performing more traditional plays.⁴¹ In crafting the new TGAT repertoire, Tatar artists brought together works that spoke to Tatar culture, past and present, within the ideological constraints of the period. This process provides unique insight

³⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 290, ll. 120-21.

⁴⁰ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 290, l. 122.

⁴¹ Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 106-07.

into the development of a culture that sought to measure up to Stalin's "national in form and socialist in content" rubric.

Following the consolidation of various amateur Tatar troupes into a single state theater in 1922, a robust debate emerged in the local press about the future of its repertoire. Karim Tinchurin, one of the greatest Tatar playwrights, actors, and directors of the early twentieth century and the first head director of TGAT, profoundly shaped this discussion. Born into a peasant family in a village outside of Penza in 1887, Tinchurin moved to Kazan in 1900 to study in the Mukhammadiia madrasa, though he subsequently left the institution in protest of its conservative politics. In 1910, Tinchurin joined Sayar. During the Russian Civil War he directed an actors' brigade within the Red Army. Afterward, Tinchurin briefly led theatrical organizations in Samara and Orenburg before returning to Kazan in 1922, when he took over what would become TGAT. In 1926, during celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of Tatar theater, he received the title of Honored Artist of the TASSR. By his arrest by the NKVD in 1937, Tinchurin wrote more than thirty plays, many of which entered into the pantheon of classic Tatar theater.⁴²

During his tenure as the director of TGAT, Karim Tinchurin wielded enormous influence in setting the tone for the theater's repertoire. In his influential article "Which Path Should the Tatar Theater Take?" published in *Kyzyl Tatarstan* in 1923, Tinchurin outlined his vision for the Tatar Theater, which he believed should serve as the "ideological leader" in explaining the new Soviet order to the masses. Tinchurin emphasized that the Tatar Theater could best establish its position as a proletarian theater through realism. He argued that other artistic forms, particularly futurism and similar avant-garde styles, were too inaccessible and vague to the majority of Tatar

⁴² Farit Bashirov, "Ul kabyzgan utlar mängege ianar," in *Karim Tinchurin: Dramalar, komediialär, khikäialär* (Kazan: Tatarstan kitap năshriaty, 2007), 5-16.

spectators. In contrast, presenting truthful, realistic scenes from the everyday lives of individuals with clear ideological messages would best carry out the Tatar Theater's mission of providing education, enlightenment, and entertainment for the masses. Tinchurin acknowledged that the Tatar Theater needed a new, revolutionary repertoire, though he claimed that many of the plays of the Civil War era were too saturated with catchphrases at the expense of plot and character development to be worthy of staging in a serious state theater. Until presented with better alternatives, Tinchurin proposed staging prerevolutionary plays that criticized everything obsolete and restrictive about the old regime, particularly privileged classes' religious prejudices, outdated mores, and unsuccessful attempts at building a happy life.⁴³

Theatrical professionals throughout the Soviet Union joined Tinchurin in bemoaning the lack of ideologically adequate plays in the early 1920s. In response, Narkompros chief Lunacharskii signaled that, given the lack of alternatives, theaters should turn to prerevolutionary plays that could speak to contemporary audiences through their critique of the old regime.⁴⁴ TGAT followed suit by staging the work of playwrights such as Galiaskar Kamal (1879-1933), for whom the theater was named in 1939. Soviet critics applauded how Kamal skewered the Tatar religious establishment and bourgeoisie. As the son of a merchant, Kamal knew this social stratum well. Take, for example, *Bankrot* (Bankrupt), one of the most popular classics of the Tatar stage, which Sayar debuted in November 1911. Bankruptcy often surfaced as a fear, real or imaginary, among the emerging Tatar merchant class, constantly chasing after the latest fashions

⁴³ K. Tinchurin, "Tatar teatry nindi iul belän baryrga tiesh?" *Kyzyl Tatarstan*, August 7, 1923. Tinchurin's emphasis on authenticity in Tatar theater can be attributed to the influence of his mentor Kariev, the head director of Sayar. In the prerevolutionary era, reform-minded directors and playwrights such as Kariev believed that presenting social ills and the difficulties of life in a straightforward manner would convince the audience of the necessity of changing contemporary society. From Kariev's point of view, the realistic portrayal of life was the most effective means to advancing the educational aims of Tatar theater. For more on these trends, see S. Ar., "Tatarskii akademicheskii," *Ezhenedel'nik*, October 23, 1927, 6; and A. Aldan, "Tatarskii teatr," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 12, 1935, 3.

⁴⁴ Lynn Mally, "Autonomous Theater and the Origins of Socialist Realism: The 1932 Olympiad of Autonomous Art," *Russian Review* 52, no. 2 (1993): 200.

to denote their wealth and social standing. Kamal adopted a satirical approach in criticizing this obsession with status. In *Bankrot*, the merchant Sirazetdin plans to cheat a Kazan bank by taking out a large sum of cash on credit before reporting it stolen en route to Moscow. To avoid suspicion, he intends to pretend that he has gone crazy from grief over the money's loss. His wife, aware of the scheme, begins making extravagant purchases of her own. The comedy ensues when the money is actually stolen, causing Sirazetdin to lose his mind, upheaving his family's financial and social stability. Indicative of the popularity of *Bankrot* and its support among cultural administrators, TGAT presented new stagings in 1925, 1933, and 1935.⁴⁵

In spite of the popularity of this and other plays from the prerevolutionary era, Tatar cultural elites continued to call for new work that would advance more directly the ideological objectives of the Party-state. Akhmed Umerov, who later became the head of the Tatar Rabfak, wanted a revolutionary-minded repertoire featuring "red characters" that would depict on stage the transformations ushered in by the Bolshevik Revolution.⁴⁶ Yet few suitable plays were written. To remedy this situation, the Tatar Theater announced in 1924 a competition for Tatar-language plays that were "easily understandable to the working masses and consistent with proletarian ideology." Monetary prizes were offered for the best manuscripts, which would help both to reinvigorate interest in the Tatar theater and disseminate Soviet principles.⁴⁷ As late as 1927, however, playwright Burnashev complained of the lack of progress on this front.⁴⁸

During the 1920s, Tinchurin crafted a Soviet repertoire based on his realist vision for the Tatar Theater. In doing so, he frequently partnered with the enormously talented and famous

⁴⁵ Gali Arslanov, "Bankrot," in *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi akademicheskii teatr*, 1:40-51.

⁴⁶ A. Umerov, "Teatr i muzyka: O tatarskoi stsene," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, July 16, 1922, 5.

⁴⁷ "Konkurs na tatarskie teatral'nye proizvedeniia," *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 24, 1924, 4.

⁴⁸ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 318, ll. 14-17.

composer Salikh Saidashev. One of the first professional Tatar musicians, Saidashev joined Sayar at age thirteen, playing piano accompaniment and writing string arrangements of Tatar folk songs for intermissions. Saidashev learned to play the piano from Zagidulla Iarullin (1888-1964), a pianist for silent films, and O. O. Rodzevich, a teacher at the Kazan Musical School. During the Russian Civil War, Saidashev played the piano for a troupe of Tatar performers in the Red Army. Throughout the 1920s, Saidashev wrote musical arrangements for more than thirty plays. He initially adapted Tatar folk melodies but later began composing his own original music. Saidashev served as the head musician, conductor, and composer for TGAT until he was recruited to join the Tatar Opera Studio, discussed later in this chapter, in 1934.⁴⁹

Together, Tinchurin and Saidashev created an entirely original genre of theatrical production, the musical drama, which helped to modernize Tatar folk elements—songs, dances, legends, and histories—in the context of a new repertoire. By the late 1920s, musical dramas consistently attracted the largest audiences to TGAT, though unfortunately archival documents only once provide any indication of actual numbers.⁵⁰ The most popular musical drama, *Zengär Shäl* (The Blue Shawl), written by Tinchurin with original music by Saidashev, premiered in the fall of 1926. To this day, it opens every season of Kazan’s Tatar State Academic Theater. The play begins in a prerevolutionary Tatar village where Ziganshi, a despotic *kushtan* (a kind of protokulak, the wealthy peasants demonized by the Soviet regime), reigns supreme. His niece Maisara is in love with Bulat, a poor peasant. Ziganshi opposes the match and decides to marry Maisara off as the fifth wife of a local *ishan*, a religious elder, in order to increase his own

⁴⁹ Guzel’ Iunusova, “Salikh Saidashev i teatr,” *Gasyrlar avazy—Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental’nyi zhurnal* 2 (2006), accessed March 11, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2006_2/001/01_4/. Saidashev was also well known throughout the Soviet Union for composing the Red Army March.

⁵⁰ NART, f. R-4088, op. 1, d. 10, ll. 1-17. In this case, the musicals vastly outperform all other productions, particularly those of a more avant-garde nature, in terms of audience size.

authority. When Ziganshi attacks Bulat in a fit of rage, the young peasant kills Ziganshi in self-defense and flees the village to avoid mob justice. Hiding in the woods, Bulat becomes the leader of a group of bandits and other outcasts. Together, they storm the house of the *ishan* and free Maisara, who kept as a sign of her faithfulness to Bulat a blue shawl that he had given her. The play progresses in step with lively songs and dances composed by Saidashev and based on common Tatar melodies. Critics raved about the music, dialogue, and acting.⁵¹ They applauded the scathing portrayal of Ziganshi as he cruelly lords over the peasants of the village. Moreover, Tinchurin presented Islam as a backward religion of female repression and imprisonment, evidenced by the *ishan* bartering with Ziganshi over the fate of Maisara; this undoubtedly contributed to the support the play received from Party-state authorities, given the antireligious tone of the day.⁵²

Many of the works staged by Tinchurin in the 1920s featured “authentic” historical, folkloric, and ethnographic content brought to life.⁵³ Along with his artistic director P. P. Ben’kov, a native of Kazan and a St. Petersburg- and Paris-trained painter, Tinchurin spared no detail in rendering the mores of a Tatar village on stage, as evident in the lifelike recreation in *Zengär Shäl* of the courtyard of Ziganshi’s home in the first act and the home of the wealthy *ishan* in the final act.⁵⁴ Other directors took their obsession with the authentic to new levels, traveling to the countryside and returning with clothing, towels, and tablecloths embroidered with Tatar patterns, in addition to other household items common to Tatar villages, for use as costumes and props. In 1929, director Gumer Devishev revived *Galiabanu*, a prerevolutionary

⁵¹ Fuad Sallavi, “Siniaia shal’,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, December 28, 1926, 3.

⁵² Arslanov, *Tatarskoe rezhisserskoe iskusstvo*, 163-67.

⁵³ Kh. K. Makhmutov, ed., *Traditsii i novatorstvo v tvorchestve Karima Tinchurina* (Kazan: Akademiia nauk SSR, 1990).

⁵⁴ Arslanov, *Tatarskoe rezhisserskoe iskusstvo*, 163-67.

play written by prominent author and poet Mirkhaidar Faizi, whose oeuvre bridged 1917.⁵⁵ *Galiabanu*, a love story between the title character and the peasant Khalil, featured national music, songs, and dances, which undoubtedly contributed to its wide appeal among Tatar audiences.⁵⁶ In his staging, Devishev not only collected costumes from actual Tatar peasants, but used real hay and released live chickens on the stage in order to simulate the sights and smells of a village. Historian Larisa Donina has documented the great extent to which TGAT directors chased after this idea of authentic culture, concluding that it helped to cement in the minds of urban spectators the behaviors and customs of prerevolutionary Tatars and villagers.⁵⁷

Though most of TGAT's repertoire in the 1920s focused on rural topics, Tinchurin did support the work of playwrights who set their work in the contemporary Soviet era, as long they met his artistic standards. Adel Kutui (1903-1945), for example, focused on the experiences of young Tatars finding their place in the modern Soviet city. Kutui moved to Kazan from his native village in 1922 and studied in the Eastern Pedagogical Institute while simultaneously serving in various Komsomol positions. Best known for the poems, novels, and short stories he penned in the 1930s, Kutui also wrote for the stage and published widely in newspapers and journals as a theater critic.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Asaf Faizullin, "'Struny dushi' roda Faizi," *Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1/2 (2011), accessed March 11, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2011_1_2/10/10/&searched=1.

⁵⁶ NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 15, l. 6.

⁵⁷ Larisa Donina, "Tatarskii natsional'nyi kostium v teatre," *Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2012), accessed March 11, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2012_3_4/09/10/&searched=1.

⁵⁸ Dinara Zainutdinova, "Prozaik, poet, dramaturg, publitsist (K 105-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Adelia Kutuia)," *Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2008), accessed March 11, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2008_2/07/03/&searched=1.

In *Baldzkai* (Sister-in-law), which premiered in 1926, Kutui depicts contemporary Kazan in a style that one critic labeled as “new realism,” as the play was set in the shared room of a communal apartment decorated in a Tatar style familiar to the Kazan audience. *Baldzkai* revolves around the singer Mukhamed, a parasite on Soviet society. Mukhamed subsists on the earnings of his wife Rabiga, a factory manager, while carrying on an affair with his sister-in-law Gülshat, a negative figure who pursues all forms of pleasure in fear of boredom. The three live together in a communal apartment along with students Masha and Khamdiia. Mukhamed is likewise romantically involved with these women. When Gülshat, Masha, and Khamdiia discover that they are all pregnant, Mukhamed must for the first time confront the harsh realities of his lecherous lifestyle. Disgusted, Rabiga divorces her husband and starts a new life with the upwardly mobile and politically astute Girfan, a Tatrabfak student who also lives in the communal apartment. As one favorable review of the play commented, Kutui “delivered a resounding slap to hooliganism, which is so caustic to our society.”⁵⁹ *Baldzkai* also proved timely, engaging with the widely debated Revised Soviet Family Code of 1926, which in part simplified divorce procedures, an avenue Rabiga pursues as the best change for her attaining freedom from Mukhamed.⁶⁰ Kutui’s new realism, which situated the daily lives of modern Tatars in urban environs, served as a counterbalance to the Tatar culture that Tinchurin and many of his colleagues primarily situated in rural settings.

The beginning of Stalin’s cultural revolution in 1928 signaled a turning point for theater, and new plays at TGAT reflected the changing times, focusing on socialist construction and the

⁵⁹ Fuad Sallavi, “Tatarskii teatr,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, November 17, 1926, 3; and Sallavi, “Baldzkai,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, November 23, 1926, 4.

⁶⁰ Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chapter 6.

lives of workers and kolkhoz farmers in the context of collectivization and the Five-Year Plans.⁶¹ For example, Kutui's play *Kuk Kugarchen* (The Pigeon), which premiered in the spring of 1929, reflected the cultural revolution's preoccupation with class warfare. The hero of the play, Fazyl, is suspected of masking his class origins during a purge of student ranks. In the process of proving his innocence, Fazyl interacts with a range of students, including Dzhilil, a Party member who attained great fame during his service in the Civil War, and Valeev, an "unprincipled" nationalist. The play was reviewed very positively, in part for its lively music, featuring Salikh Saidashev's *March of the Komsomol*, but moreover for its clear depiction of the merits and shortcomings of each character, a product of their social and class backgrounds.⁶²

In the play *Kandyr bue* (On the Kandyr), which premiered in April 1932, Tinchurin brought to life the organizational and economic challenges of building socialism. The play revolves around a series of conflicts between collective farmers and kulaks while establishing the kolkhoz Red Star. After some of the farmers summon outside help to ward off local kulaks, an international student team comes to the rescue, chanting and waiving red flags. Yet, as was common for Tinchurin's plays, romance threatened to overshadow the political themes. Farida, one of the farmers, spends more time crying about a lost love than she does working. Another farmer, Akberdin, labors not for the glory of the state, but in order to catch the attention of the beautiful Guliandem. Tinchurin was likewise criticized for not assigning the local collective farm Party committee or other regional Party organizations a leading role in resolving the problem.⁶³

⁶¹ A. Aldan, "Tatarskii teatr," *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 12, 1935, 3.

⁶² Al. Fedotov, "'Sizaia golubka', p'esa G. Kutuia," *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 21, 1929, 4; and Tamashache, "'Kuk kugarchen' ('Sizyi golub')—p'esa Kutuia, v 4 deistviiakh," *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 29, 1929, 4.

⁶³ Ia. Ch., "Na prem'ere v Tatarskom akademicheskom," *Krasnaia Tataria*, April 18, 1932, 4.

While the public applauded *Kandyr bue*, the local Party organization found in it much to be desired. In 1933, the TASSR Obkom unleashed a scathing criticism of TGAT for the “unsatisfactory ideological and artistic content” of its repertoire, targeting *Kandyr bue* as symptomatic of wider trends. Party authorities believed that the playful and lighthearted musicals popularized by Tinchurin prevented the theater from wrestling with the serious issues befitting a Soviet dramatic theater. As such, the Obkom ordered TGAT to scrap all musicals and only stage dramatic works. To guide this process, the Obkom created an Institute of Playwrights as a subsidiary of the TASSR Union of Soviet Writers to provide ideological oversight for the repertoire. Moreover, all original Tatar productions would subsequently need to be sent to Moscow for approval by the Central Committee. The Obkom also recommended that TGAT begin staging translated versions of Russian-language Soviet plays whose popularity, and ideological purity, had already been proven in Moscow theaters.⁶⁴ This move, of course, undermined the relative independence TGAT had previously enjoyed in developing its own homegrown repertoire throughout the 1920s.

Socialist Realism and Terror on the Tatar Stage

Intervention into the TGAT repertoire reflected the increasing centralization and standardization of the Soviet Union’s cultural doctrine under the banner of socialist realism. First coined by Stalin in 1932 and then refined by the writer Maxim Gor’kii during the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, socialist realism became the yardstick for measuring all culture in the Soviet Union. As described by historian James von Geldern, socialist realism “called for clarity of language and narrative, simplicity and steadfastness of character, and a

⁶⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 12, l. 44ob; and NART, f. R-7239, op. 1, d. 1, l. 16. Simultaneously, the TASSR formulated the Second Five-Year Plan for Artistic Development, which committed all theatrical performances to the formulation of the Soviet “new man.”

forthright political stance.”⁶⁵ The doctrine was based on the principles of accessibility (*dostupnost’*) and Party-mindedness (*partiinosť*), and it required a positive hero who either possessed or developed moral and political consciousness that led to concrete action in service of the Party-state.⁶⁶ Socialist realism was designed to serve didactic ends, presenting the expected norms for how Soviet citizens should think and behave.⁶⁷ Ultimately, in the words of one scholar, socialist realism would demonstrate that “the cause of building socialism was greater than the individual, that the individual found self-realization only by denying selfish interests, by dissolving individual will into the will of the collective, and by giving the self completely to the cause of socialism and in the striving for socialism.”⁶⁸

Socialist realism rejected the artistic experimentalism of the 1920s and the cultural revolution, as expressed in constructivism, futurism, and similar avant-garde approaches to literature, music, painting, theater, film, and other artistic genres. Consequently, historian Lynn Mally sees continuity between the realism advocated by some Soviet playwrights, such as Tinchurin, during the 1920s and the tenets of socialist realism that emerged in the following decade. Realist playwrights sought to present stories that positively depicted the revolution and the political and social change it introduced. As Mally elaborates, “Supporters of this direction believed their work nurtured a socialist consciousness, while the loosely structured plays inspired

⁶⁵ James von Geldern, “Culture, 1900-1945,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, 3:956

⁶⁶ Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, 286; Katerina Clark, “Socialist Realism with Shores: The Conventions for the Positive Hero,” in *Socialist Realism without Shores*, eds. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 27-50; and David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 29-37. For more on socialist realism, see: Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); and Evgeny Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁶⁷ David L. Hoffman, “Was there a ‘Great Retreat’ from Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (2004): 664.

⁶⁸ Shearer, “Stalinism,” 3:207

by the avant-garde only confused audiences. Their insistence on uplifting tales and stellar heroes, still very fluid in the 1920s, eventually solidified into the fixed rules of socialist realism.”⁶⁹ They called for compelling characters, understandable plots, and a positive treatment of Soviet heroes, rather than the fragmented structure and strange staging of the avant-garde theatrical left.⁷⁰

Such rhetoric was at the heart of Tinchurin’s argument for supporting realism on the TGAT stage as well as his critique of leftist forms of theater. In the 1920s, some younger Tatar playwrights, particularly those who had been trained at Kazan’s Theatrical Technical School, had resisted Tinchurin’s preference for realism, favoring instead the avant-garde traditions popularized by V. E. Meyerhold, the Soviet Union’s most famous experimental director, whose work had great impact on world theater. These young Tatars formed the literary and theatrical organization *SULF*, an abbreviation of *Sul front* (Left Front), a nod in Tatar to Maiakovskii’s *LEF* (Left Front of Art), a group of artists dedicated to exploring the application of revolutionary literature and art in service of the Bolshevik Revolution. *SULF* sought to mimic the experimental work of the Soviet Union’s leading avant-garde theaters, including Kazan’s amateur KEMST Theater, which operated from 1923-26. KEMST’s name came from an acronym of its five principles: Constructivism, Experimentally, Professionalism, Modernity, and Theatricality. It staged original Russian-language productions and improvisations that incorporated bright costumes, unexpected imagery and staging, and intense music and dancing. Spontaneous discussions lasting several hours about the relationship between aesthetic values and the working class often followed.⁷¹ Acquiescing to the younger generation of playwrights in the interest of developing new talent, Tinchurin declared that, while the Tatar Theater would continue to

⁶⁹ Mally, *Revolutionary Acts*, 9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁷¹ See: Blagov, *KEMST i teatral’naia zhizn’ Kazani 1920-x gg.*

prioritize realism as its guiding method, beginning in the 1925-26 season, two or three experimental plays would be included in its repertoire each year. Tinchurin emphasized, however, that the theater remained committed to its goal of connecting with the Tatar masses in as broad a way as possible, which he doubted the avant-garde theater could do.⁷² Indeed, when TGAT staged experimental plays, the audience stayed away, much to the chagrin of advocates for avant-garde theater. Even plays of Russian or global provenance translated into Tatar did not provoke much interest among Tatar audiences in the 1920s. As one critic noted, uneducated Tatars simply had trouble understanding or relating to those works.⁷³

The ascendancy of socialist realism seemingly validated Tinchurin's approach to the TGAT repertoire and provided the foundation for his final play, the comedy *Alar öchäü ide* (There were Three of Them, 1935). The hero Gülshat is a young woman from a kolkhoz, a shock worker, and the best member of her Komsomol cell. Given her reputation as a model citizen, the Komsomol sends her to Kazan to study. Although Gülshat's father is reluctant to part with his beloved daughter, her desire for further education wins out. She leaves for the city with Ravil, a Party member, who discounts the possibility of women successfully balancing family responsibilities and socially useful work. Gülshat sets out to disprove Ravil's understanding of the role of women and the family in Soviet society. She rejects her mother's appeals to return to the village after completing her schooling and instead continues on to graduate study. She marries Ravil, who becomes increasingly jealous of his wife's devotion to science. He fears the mockery of those who recognize that he is less educated than Gülshat and begins to speak of science as a third member of a love triangle with his wife and him. Gülshat, however, does not want to become like the other wives she sees languishing at home. Eventually she divorces Ravil

⁷² K. Tinchurin, "Sezon achylu ungäe belän," *Kyzyl Tatarstan*, November 4, 1925, 2.

⁷³ A. Umerov, "O tatarskom teatre," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, August 5, 1926, 4.

to escape from the toxic relationship. Gülshat intensifies her studies and, upon graduating with an advanced degree, receives an invitation to travel to Moscow for a scientific conference. Through their interaction with fellow students, Komsomol members, and others in their academic circle, Gülshat's successes prove a counterpoint to Ravil's ignorance of socialist morals. Critics reviewed the play favorably, particularly given its depiction of a strong female character. They worried, however, that it framed academic study and family life as incompatible, particularly at a moment when the family structure was becoming more traditional, with men exerting patriarchal values of patriotism, duty, and discipline, and women providing moral and emotional support from the home and contributing to socialism through childbearing.⁷⁴

Implementing socialist realism in Tatar theater did lead some playwrights to introduce revolutionary heroes who more forthrightly demonstrated the values of the Soviet era. Gaziz Idelle's play *Davlet Badriev*, first performed in 1936, presents Badriev as one such hero engaged in an ongoing struggle against counterrevolutionary Tatar nationalists.⁷⁵ The play opens with loud cannon fire as the Red Army drives occupiers out of Kazan during the Civil War. At the forefront of the Red Army is a unit of Tatar soldiers led by the brave Badriev. During the fighting, the counterrevolutionary nationalist Safargali shoots Badriev, severely wounding him. Recovering in a hospital, the Tatar hero survives yet another attempt on his life when a band of nationalists attempts to swap his water for poison. The play then skips forward several years, when Safargali assumes leadership of one of Kazan's largest industrial enterprises. He staffs the factory with counterrevolutionary allies loyal to Trotsky, Zinov'ev, and Hitler, all of whom seek

⁷⁴ K. Tinchurin, *Alar öchäü ide* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1935); and NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 12, l. 260. The play, however, did attract attention from other national theaters, such as the Uzbek Academic Theater, which included the play in its 1936-37 season in an effort to expand knowledge about the cultures of "brother nations" of the USSR. See: NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 12, ll. 304-305. This conservative shift was echoed in the revised family legislation of 1936; see Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*, chapter 8.

⁷⁵ S. Uralets, "Novyi sezon v Tatarskom akademicheskom teatre," *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 3, 1936, 4.

to undermine the industrialization and socialist construction of the Tatar Republic. For his part, Safargali provokes antagonism between Tatars and Russians at the plant to grind production to a halt. Eventually, the TASSR Obkom sends Badriev to the plant to serve as the cell's Party secretary. He takes on the task of purging all counterrevolutionary elements from the plant and training in their stead a new generation of workers, including the manager Vasilii, the Komsomol member Nafisa, the engineer Zagit, and the university graduate Shamsi. Their attentiveness to Party-state objectives enables Badriev to uncover Safargali's counterrevolutionary plot to sell valuable industrial information to the Nazis. In reviewing the play, the TASSR Obkom enthusiastically supported its production, praising the clear distinction between Badriev, a hero devoted to the construction of Soviet society, and Tatar nationalists such as Safargali.⁷⁶

Of course, not all plays rose to the standards set by administrative organs that oversaw the theater, such as the TASSR Narkompros, Management for Theatrical and Performance Enterprises (UTZP), and the Committee for Artistic Affairs, established in 1935 to oversee the production of Soviet theater, film, literature, music, and visual arts and purge all remnants of pre-1930s cultural ideas in what became known as the "antiformalist campaign." By the 1936-37 season, critical articles in local newspapers signaled an immanent campaign against TGAT based on accusations that its directors, playwrights, and actors used their privileged positions to support anti-Soviet nationalist and counterrevolutionary conspiracies. The theater was criticized for its reluctance to embrace the ideals of the Soviet era, as seen in its plays that apparently "slander socialist endeavors" and "distort the history of the Tatar people." Take, for example, Fatkhi Burnash's play *Tkachikha Asma* (Asma the Textile Worker). It debuted on the TGAT stage in 1934, depicting the daily life of workers in Kazan's Lenin Textile Factory. The play

⁷⁶ NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 16, ll. 1-4.

imaginatively renders the industrial enterprise as made up entirely of Tatar workers, with the few Russians all serving as negative types. Not surprisingly, critics lambasted the play for not accurately depicting the factory as a site where Russians and Tatars labored side by side in a spirit of internationalism to fulfill industrial plans.⁷⁷

Throughout 1937, dozens of directors, playwrights, and actors associated with TGAT were unmasked, arrested, and repressed as enemies of the people, Sultangalievists, and Turkish agents.⁷⁸ According to investigators, the theater erred in operating so autonomously in developing its repertoire, seeking no input from Party-state organizations. The lack of Bolshevik vigilance had led to enemies of the people using the TGAT stage for their own counterrevolutionary ends.⁷⁹ “Conspirators” were charged with using the theater as a platform “to expand their ideology associated with the colonizing politics of the Tatar bourgeoisie in the East, an extension of Sultangalievism.”⁸⁰ Take, for example, the case of G. Ismagilov, at the time serving as the head director of TGAT. In 1937, during a play about the growth of the revolutionary movement among Tatars, the TGAT stage featured a curtain decorated with an enlarged version of a Bolshevik newspaper, printed in Arabic-script Tatar, consistent with prerevolutionary usage. Ismagilov was accused of organizing this display in order to support bourgeois-nationalists in their struggle over Tatar orthography. The visual power of the Arabic script was apparently too direct of a reminder of this best-forgotten chapter of Tatar culture. The

⁷⁷ B. Abdullin, “Sil’nei ogon’ po demobilizatsionnym nastroeniiam v bor’be s mestnym natsionalizmom,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 23, 1934, 4; and F. N. Bagautdinov and I. I. Ilialova, “Dva dela Fatkhi Burnasheva,” in Bagautdinov and Ilialova, eds., *Kogda na stene pogas svet* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2012), 76-95.

⁷⁸ L. M. Zabbarova, “Vlast’ i razvitie tatarskikh teatral’nykh kollektivov TASSR v 1930-e gg.,” in O. V. Sinitsin, ed., *Istoricheskoe kraevedenie v Tatarstane* (Kazan, Kazanskii pedagogicheskii universitet: 2004), 142-47.

⁷⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 441, op. 1, d. 18, ll. 124-27; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1778, l. 79.

⁸⁰ NART, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1779, ll. 1-4.

charge served as the opening bell for a bevy of incriminations against Ismagilov and others for promoting plays written by counterrevolutionaries as an attempt to slander Soviet rule.⁸¹

The purges wreaked havoc on TGAT. With so many playwrights unmasked as enemies of the people, the theater found itself in a bind as to which plays were acceptable. The theater performed to audiences far below capacity. When Kh. A. Alkhanov took over leadership of TGAT in 1938, he promised to distance the theater from its troubled past. Likely a Party functionary, almost no biographical information exists about Alkhanov in archives or other sources. At the helm of TGAT, Alkhanov assembled a revitalized artistic council that worked closely with playwrights and directors to oversee the ideological content of all productions. This council met much more frequently and maintained a greater level of involvement in theatrical affairs than ever before. It declared that TGAT would no longer stage “immature, unfinished dramatic works that do not meet the theater’s ideological and artistic requirements.” Rather, it committed the theater to highly refined, socialist-realist productions that would promote “the communist development of the spectator.”⁸² As Alkhanov explained, “We have no right to present to our audience unfinished and artistically defective plays, as has happened in the past.”⁸³

One of the most significant changes in the wake of the Great Terror was a shift to a new generation of younger playwrights, such as Mukhamed Abliev (1902-41), Akhmed Faizi (1903-58), Salikh Battal (1905-95) and Fatykh Khusni (1908-96).⁸⁴ Abliev’s drama *Shamsikamar* premiered at TGAT in 1938 and starkly contrasts class differences in a prerevolutionary Tatar village. The play centers on the life of the poor peasant Iunus as he

⁸¹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1777, ll. 105-108.

⁸² NART, f. R-7239, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 164-173.

⁸³ NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 21, ll. 37-39; and NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 26, ll. 1-8.

⁸⁴ S. Uralets, “Novyi sezon v Tatarskom akademicheskom teatre,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, October 3, 1936, 4.

suffers greatly under the oppression of the insidious *bay* Salakhi, who lords over the entire district with impunity, having bought off all of the local officials and mullahs. Salakhi lusts after Shamsikamar, the daughter-in-law of Iunus. Through bribery, slander, and murder, Salakhi attempts to eliminate Hafiz, Shamsikamar's husband, relying on the close cooperation of local mullahs and the manipulation of religious law. Eventually the village peasants, discontent with Salakhi's cruel rule, rally to support Shamsikamar and Hafiz, driving Salakhi away. Soviet critics hailed Abliev's denunciation of Islam's social and religious oppression, especially of women.⁸⁵

In 1939, TGAT staged Battal's *Synau* (The Test), set at one of Kazan's aviation factories. In advance of a test flight for a state-of-the-art airplane, a foreign spy arrives in Kazan posing as a tourist. He connects with fellow conspirator Zaini, a traitor working at the factory. Upon infiltrating the inner circle of the pilot and local hero Murat, Zaini discovers a key detail about the aircraft that will allow the spies to sabotage the test flight. Through a series of somewhat unbelievable circumstances, Liliia Alekseeva, a decorated parachutist and member of the USSR Supreme Soviet, uncovers the plot. With Alekseeva's tip, the NKVD catches the foreign spy and Zaini and arrests them both as enemies of the Soviet people. Of course, this play attested to the importance of vigilance against enemies and preserving state secrets, particularly given the threat of war in Europe. Notably, it was one of just a few plays in the late 1930s that depicted Tatars as having integrated into Soviet society as skilled, industrial workers.⁸⁶

Other plays in the late 1930s took more direct aim at religious culture, a trend that coincided with a renewed campaign against Islam in 1939.⁸⁷ Tazi Gizzat's play *Kiiu kyzlar* (Brave Girls) celebrates the desire of young Tatar girls to go to school yet laments the obstacles

⁸⁵ B. Velikanov, "Shamsikamar," *Krasnaia Tataria*, April 2, 1938, 4.

⁸⁶ Kh. Gil'deev, "Teatr: 'Ispytanie'," *Krasnaia Tataria*, April 9, 1939, 4.

⁸⁷ NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 38, l. 1; and NART, f. R-6663, op. 1, d. 33, l. 6.

they faced in doing so. The comedy exposes the hypocrisy of local religious figures and the backwardness of madrasas, arguing that the institutions ultimately undermined the education of young Tatars. The play's harsh criticism of Islam as a backward religion oppressive of women certainly contributed to the decision to premiere the play on November 22, 1939, during Eid al-Adha celebrations marking the end of the annual Hajj.⁸⁸ Naki Isanbet's *Hodzha Nasretidin*, which premiered in 1940, also adopted an antireligious tone in its satirical representation of the thirteenth-century Sufi philosopher as emblematic of the backwardness of Islam.⁸⁹

In the late 1930s, bourgeois nationalists came under fire like never before. Take, for example, Isanbet's historical drama *Bolak arty respublikasy* (The Zabulachnaia Republic), which ridiculed the Tatar bourgeois nationalists who holed up in Kazan's Old Tatar District during the Russian Civil War, believing themselves capable of withstanding the might of the Red Army and forming their own independent state as a manifestation of national self-determination. Isanbet sought to inculcate within the audience feelings of hatred toward enemies of the revolution. One critic described this approach as "particularly appropriate now, when our Party and people are carrying out a decisive struggle with all remnants of the old bourgeois society, especially with any expressions of bourgeois nationalism."⁹⁰

The introduction of socialist realism and Stalin's articulation of writers as "engineers of human souls" reiterated the importance of ideology within cultural institutions. As evidenced by the socialist-realist plays of the 1930s, there could be no room for nationalist, religious, or capitalist sympathies on the Tatar stage. Yet determining what counted as acceptable socialist realist art often relied on arbitrary decisions and even personal politics of union organizations,

⁸⁸ NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 29, l. 2; d. 35, ll. 17-20.

⁸⁹ NART, f. R-4088, op. 2, d. 35, l. 21.

⁹⁰ NART, f. R-7239, op. 1, d. 1, l. 168.

censorship boards, and individual theaters.⁹¹ In general, the TGAT plays of the 1920s did not differ substantially from those of the 1930s, maintaining their commitment in both decades to the principles of accessibility (*dostupnost*'), Party-mindedness (*partiinnost*'), and the success of a positive hero. These trends underscore Katerina Clark's argument that "the only thing that was absolutely new about Socialist Realism was the term itself."⁹²

Tatar Opera and Folk Culture

While socialist realism did not fundamentally transform the repertoire of the Tatar stage, it did contribute to the development of Tatar national culture through the revival of folklore and folk culture. The iconoclastic cultural revolution of the late 1920s rejected folklore in favor of a mass proletarian culture yet never succeeded in connecting with the general public. Socialist realism sought to rectify this misstep by appealing to the Soviet people more directly, a move that Evgeny Dobrenko has described as a "cultural compromise between two currents, the masses and state power."⁹³ Folklore dovetailed well with socialist realism's objective of legitimizing and building up the regime, as it had a strong emotional appeal and advanced a unified image of "the people" with an eternal past and future. As David Hoffman has argued, following the declaration of the achievement of socialism at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934 and the deemphasis of class, "It became possible to conceive of a people united and organically whole. Folk culture was the ideal medium to express this (fictitious) organic unity, because it was allegedly created by the people as a spontaneous form of self-expression."⁹⁴ This paired nicely with the inception of the "Friendship of the Peoples" campaign that began in

⁹¹ Shearer, "Stalinism," 208-09.

⁹² Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 33.

⁹³ Evgeny Dobrenko, "The Disaster of Middlebrow Taste, or, Who 'Invented' Socialist Realism?" in Lahusen and Dobrenko, *Socialist Realism Without Shores*, 160.

⁹⁴ Hoffmann, "Was There a 'Great Retreat'," 667.

December 1935, which Terry Martin has described as a “dramatic turn away from the Soviet view of nations as fundamentally modern constructs and toward an emphasis on the deep primordial roots of modern nations.”⁹⁵ Following Stalin’s much-publicized speech in which he declared the friendship of the peoples as the “most valuable thing that Bolshevik nationalities policies had produced,” the mantra of friendship began to permeate the Soviet landscape.⁹⁶

Among all cultural organizations, the Tatar State Opera and Ballet Theater, established in the late 1930s, best demonstrated the effects of infusing folk culture onto the stage. The history of Tatar opera actually began in the early 1920s, when composer Sultan Gabashi (1891-1942), musician V. I. Vinogradov (1874-1948), and librettist Gaziz Al’mukhametov (1895-1936) collaborated to compose two Tatar operas, both of which premiered on the TGAT stage. *Saniia*, the first opera, opened on June 25, 1925.⁹⁷ Critics pronounced the opera, a simple love story between the peasant girl Saniia and the horseman Ziia, a “huge success not just for Tatar culture, but a celebration of the victory of Leninist national politics for the entire Soviet Union.”⁹⁸ Others heralded it as “one of the most significant cultural achievements of the young Tatar Republic,” given the novelty of opera among Eastern nationalities.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 442-43.

⁹⁶ “Rech’ tov. Stalina,” *Pravda*, June 12, 1935, 3; and Lowell Tillet, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

⁹⁷ Guzel’ Iunusova, “Pervaia tatarskaia opera,” *Ekho vekov–Gasyrlar Avazy: Nauchno-Dokumental’nyi zhurnal* 1 (2005), accessed March 11, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2005_1/07/07_1/&searched=1.

⁹⁸ Safa Burgan, “O tatarskoi opere,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, April 4, 1930, 4.

⁹⁹ “Teatr: K postanovke opery ‘Saniia’,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 16, 1926, 3; M. Simokii, “San’ia,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, March 4, 1927, 4.

Eshche (Worker), the second Tatar opera, premiered on February 22, 1930.¹⁰⁰ *Eshche* focuses on the decision of the worker Nigmat to break from the backward masses of Tatar workers in prerevolutionary Russia and join with revolutionaries in pushing for social and political change in opposition to the bourgeoisie. With *Eshche*, the composers expanded beyond the traditional Tatar songs featured in their previous work. Experimental music, indicative of the avant-garde artistry of the cultural revolution, sought to mimic factory sounds as a nod to its Soviet context. Some critics contended, though, that, apart from the language in which the performers sang, “There is actually nothing very Tatar about the opera. . . . It lacks ethnographic elements, which is uninteresting to a European viewer.” Others disagreed, arguing that the opera demonstrated how a Tatar could assimilate into the identity of a modern Soviet worker.¹⁰¹

While interest in opera as a genre subsequently waned among Tatars, the reestablishment of traditional cultural forms at the end of Stalin’s cultural revolution in 1932 served as a prime opportunity to revive it. In November 1933, the TASSR Obkom announced the creation of the Tatar State Opera Studio. Hosted by the Moscow State Conservatory from 1934-38 alongside similar groups from other national republics, the vocalists, composers, and writers trained in the art of opera at the studio, which provided time and space for the development of original Tatar operatic productions, as well as Russian and world classics. The Obkom hoped these operas would overshadow what local cultural administrators had come to describe as Tinchurin’s ideologically vapid musicals.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ “Teatr: V tatarskom akademicheskom,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, February 7, 1930, 4.

¹⁰¹ Safa Burgan, “O tatarskoi opere,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, April 4, 1930, 4.

¹⁰² L. I. Salikhova, “Organizatsiia Tatarskogo gosudarstvennogo opernogo teatra i pervye gody ego deiatel’nosti,” *Filologiya i kul’tura* 27, no. 1 (2012): 171-77.

Of course, the resurgence of folkloric art forms and exotic displays of national culture could in no way advance social, religious, cultural, or traditional values contrary to those of the Party-state.¹⁰³ Artists preparing the new operatic repertoire at the Tatar Opera Studio in Moscow disparaged the first two Tatar operas for doing so. While the composers of *Saniia* and *Eshche* had prided themselves in incorporating into their work “authentic” forms of Tatar music and culture, the Opera Studio rejected them as having “nothing in common with anything actually national.” They described the music of *Saniia* as “false folk music imbued with religious motifs.” Similarly, they claimed that the leitmotif of Nigmat, the hero of *Eshche*, was a variation of an Islamic *maqam*, a melody common to traditionally Arabic music. Religious undertones and inauthentic folk attributes compromised their ideological usefulness.¹⁰⁴

Upon returning to Kazan in 1938, the Opera Studio staged its first production, *Kachkyn* (The Fugitive), on June 17, 1939, on the TGAT stage.¹⁰⁵ Composed by Nazib Zhiganov and based on a libretto by Akhmed Faizi, *Kachkyn* takes place during the Pugachev Rebellion, a series of peasant and Cossack revolts that spread throughout southern Russia from 1773 to 1775 under the leadership of Emil’ian Pugachev. The opera’s hero is the runaway serf Bulat, who had fought alongside Pugachev and returns to his native village to persuade other serfs to join in the rebellion. Fearing that news of Pugachev’s military success will cause her own serfs to rise up, the noblewoman Bike announces that Pugachev and his compatriots have been defeated, their bodies strewn along the Volga River. Upon hearing this false report, Raikhana, believing her

¹⁰³ Hoffmann, “Was There a ‘Great Retreat’,” 666-68; and Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990).

¹⁰⁴ Kh. Tukhvatullin, “Tatarskaia opera,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, December 16, 1935, 3; and “Na putiakh k sozdaniiu tatarskoi opery (Anketa Krasnoi Tatarii),” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, July 11, 1936, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Plans to build the Opera Studio its own building failed, forcing it to share a stage with TGAT, along with technical support staff. The two troupes were each assigned fifteen performance days a month on the TGAT stage and told to work out amongst themselves a rehearsal schedule. See: NART, f. R-6663, op. 1, d. 7, l. 45.

lover Bulat to be dead, prepares to kill herself by throwing herself into the river. Bulat saves her at the last minute. He later meets with other peasants of the village, appealing to them to join Pugachev's uprising. When Bike's steward Ablai learns of Bulat's return, he instructs the local authorities to arrest him. Although Bulat escapes a trap, Ablai abducts Raikhana and tortures her to discover where Bulat has gone. Simultaneously, the peasants rebel against the landowners, setting fire to the manor where Raikhana is imprisoned. In the dramatic conclusion, Raikhana dies under torture, remaining true to her lover, just as fire engulfs the manor.¹⁰⁶

The second national opera, *Irek* (Freedom), premiered in 1940, again with music by Zhiganov and based on a libretto written by Z. V. Safin about Tatar peasants in the October Revolution. That year also saw the first staging of *Galiabanu*, an operatic rendition of the play discussed earlier in this chapter. The opera lambasted the subordinate position of women in prerevolutionary Tatar society. The opera *Khodzha Nasretdin*, a satire of the legendary Islamic philosopher, debuted in 1941. Despite a number of serious logistical challenges, including the lack of its own stage, in the first two years of its existence, the Tatar State Opera and Ballet Theater premiered twelve different operas, five of which were original Tatar-language productions, a notable testament to Party-state support of national culture.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, the Tatar State Theater of Opera and Ballet was primed to be the star of the Week of Tatar Literature and Culture, originally scheduled to take place in Moscow in the summer of 1941, though postponed following the outbreak of war with Nazi Germany until 1957. In the late 1930s, Moscow began hosting weeklong celebrations of the cultural achievements of the USSR's various nationalities. Between 1936 and 1965, forty-two

¹⁰⁶ S. Bergol'ts, "Kachkyn," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 8, 1939, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Salikhova, "Organizatsiia Tatarskogo gosudarstvennogo opernogo teatra i pervye gody ego deiatel'nosti," 171-77.

nationalities prepared exhibitions of their best choral, theatrical, and operatic numbers and organized lectures and discussions of their literature. The festive atmosphere of these events displayed the diversity of cultures within the Soviet Union, literally performing the “friendship of peoples” on the stages of the capital.¹⁰⁸

In the Tatar Republic, cultural institutions engaged in vigorous preparations in planning for the showcase in Moscow. The Tatar State Theater of Opera and Ballet intended to stage several of the national operas discussed above, as well as the first Tatar ballet, *Shurale*, based on a popular folk story written by Gabdulla Tukai. Cultural administrators in the TASSR vacillated between premiering *Shurale* or *Tagir-Ziurgia*, a love story set in the feudal East. *Shurale*, which boasted “real” Tatar dances and musical motifs, ultimately won out over *Tagir-Ziurgia*.¹⁰⁹ Performing Tatar culture, even invented folk art forms, required some semblance of authenticity under the rubric of socialist realism.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

From its inception, the Tatar State Academic Theater—and later the Tatar State Theater of Opera and Ballet, which operated on the same stage—functioned as a flagship Tatar space in Kazan, a bastion of Tatar language and culture in a city largely dominated by Russians. While the mantra of “national in form and socialist in content” rarely appears in the documentation concerning Tatar theater, TGAT engaged directly with this concept. In the early 1920s, Tinchurin wrestled with how to deploy the ideological power of the theater, instilled in him

¹⁰⁸ E. V. Bureeva, “Dekada tatarskoi literatury i iskusstva v Moskve 24 maia-4 iiunia 1957 goda: Podgotovka, itogi i znachenie,” *Vestnik Cheliabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 216, no. 1 (2011): 97-101.

¹⁰⁹ A. Kutui, N. Kozlova, “Pokazat’ podlinnoe tatarskoe iskusstvo,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 19, 1941, 3; Arslanov, “Tatarskii teatr v 1941-1945 gg.”

¹¹⁰ For more on this concept, see Alison Hilton, “Humanizing Utopia: Paradoxes of Soviet Folk Art,” in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 3 (2002): 459-71.

during the prerevolutionary and Civil War periods, to advance the cultural, educational, and political development of the Tatar masses. The realistic style he championed for its unambiguous content and accessibility to an uncultured audience suggests a prehistory for socialist realism as it emerged in the 1930s. Yet in spite of their involvement in laying the groundwork for socialist realism on the Tatar stage, Tinchurin and many of his peers fell victim to Stalin's purges, which opened up opportunities for a new generation of Tatar playwrights to ascent to prominence.

As Tatar theatrical and operatic productions of the late 1930s revived the so-called "authentic" folk culture of prerevolutionary Tatar villages, playwrights and librettists largely avoided setting their work in the modern Soviet city, as the opera *Eshche*, Kutui's *Baldzkai* and *Kuk Kugarchen*, Tinchurin's *Alar öchäü ide*, and Battal's *Synau* had done. Of course, beautiful ethnographic costumes and jewelry on Tatars singing about love and loss looked best on stage and attracted larger audiences. Folklore disarmed the threat of Tatar nationalism by allowing an outlet for colorful, fun, flamboyant, and ultimately harmless expressions of national culture. The Tatar stage helped to cement the bond between "authentic" Tatar culture and the idealized countryside. Rooted in the tastes and traditions of common people and advancing the agenda of the Party-state, Soviet folk met with great support in both official and popular circles. Still, a profound irony undergirds the growth of Tatar national culture during this period. The "real" and "authentic" life that Tatar audiences saw on stage differed greatly from the much more complicated and ambiguous reality that they actually inhabited in Kazan, as described in the previous three chapters. As historian Susannah Lockwood Smith has observed, these new forms of folkloric culture "were as closely related to traditional folk as socialist realism was related to the actual reality of 1930s Soviet society."¹¹¹ It would have been much more difficult, and

¹¹¹ Susannah Lockwood Smith, "From Peasants to Professionals: The Socialist-Realist Transformation of a Russian Folk Choir," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 3 (2002): 406.

dangerous, to depict the uncertainty Tatars faced in Kazan as they struggled to integrate into industrial, educational, and social spaces shared with Russians.

CHAPTER 5:
FANTASIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN KAZAN AND MOSCOW

Perhaps the most famous building never to be built, the Palace of Soviets was conceived as a monumental testament to the ascendancy of the Soviet Union and the “new Moscow” under construction in the 1930s. Rising from the ashes of Christ the Savior Cathedral, which was demolished in December 1931, the Palace of Soviets would serve as a temple extolling Lenin and his Bolshevik Revolution. The final design for the palace, developed by architects B. M. Iofan, V. A. Shchuko, and V. G. Gel’freikh and approved in 1934, featured a towering, layered wedding-cake structure engulfed in classical Roman columns. Soaring 1,365 feet into the air and topped with a 328-foot statue of Lenin, the Palace of Soviets “would have reached beyond the clouds, as if in challenge to the biblical Babel,” as one scholar has noted.¹ Yet the Palace of Soviets, like Babel, remained a fantasy under construction. Only its foundation was in place by 1939, and further work ceased in December 1941 following Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union. Stalin expressed no interest in reviving the project after the end of hostilities, and the site remained vacant until N. S. Khrushchev (1953-64) had an open-air swimming pool built there in the late 1950s.²

In this chapter, I consider how architectural trends emerging from Moscow, and culminating in monumental projects such as the Palace of Soviets, intersected with and

¹ Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 92.

² Sona Stephan Hoisington, “‘Ever Higher’: The Evolution of the Project for the Palace of Soviets,” *Slavic Review* 62, no. 1 (2003): 41-68.

contributed to the search for a Tatar architectural style in Kazan that conformed to the “national in form and socialist in content” paradigm. Capitals of Central Asian and Caucasian Soviet republics such as Tashkent, Baku, Tbilisi, and Erevan were likewise involved in reimagining and redesigning the Soviet “East” under the auspices of socialism. Compared with the nationalities of other republics, however, Tatars had fewer indigenous architectural forms—and architects—capable of influencing the Kazan cityscape. Kazan existed in an uncertain middle ground: in spite of its position as the homeland of Tatars and its ties with the larger Islamic world, the city remained in the geographical and cultural heartland of the RSFSR. Foregrounding the dynamic tension between Moscow, Kazan, and other Eastern capitals helps to elucidate the hierarchy of urban spaces in the Soviet Union.

To address these issues, I focus on how Kazan city planners and architects attempted to evoke “Tatariness” in Kazan through symbolic architectural forms. Their most ambitious project, the Kazan Palace of Culture, was to sit on the boundary between the Tatar and Russian districts of the city, testifying to the friendship of the peoples achieved through socialist culture. As with the Moscow Palace of Soviets, however, the Kazan Palace of Culture was never built. Grandiose plans for the palace, first approved in 1934, gradually gave way to a more modest opera theater haphazardly erected over the next twenty years in a different part of the city. I then pivot to explore the work of the first professional Tatar architect, I. G. Gainutdinov (1908-77), who attempted to bring Tatar architectural forms to life in both Kazan and Moscow. His work elucidates the creativity necessary for applying socialist realism to national contexts, as well as the limits to its implementation in a city such as Kazan.

Big Kazan, Big Problems

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet architects engaged in exhaustive theoretical debates on practically every urban and architectural issue imaginable. As one historian has described, “To many of Russia’s revolutionaries, architecture seemed a kindred spirit. Like Bolshevism, it epitomized the possibility of taking history into one’s own hands and daring to create a new physical environment in which men can live his life.”³ Throughout the 1920s, architects and urban theorists, in addition to sociologists, journalists, economists, and planners, saw themselves on the frontlines of creating the new socialist man through the construction of modern spaces for housing, leisure, labor, and socialization. One group, collectively known as disurbanists and led by theorists M. A. Okhitovich and M. Ia. Ginzburg, expressed hostility toward the modern city as the epicenter of crime, injustice, disease, and other social evils. They sought to dissolve the urban-rural divide by evenly distributing the population and necessary residential, labor, and recreational infrastructure along massive highways throughout Soviet territory. In contrast, urbanists, particularly L. M. Sabsovich and the Vesnin brothers, saw in cities the possibility to implement communal living on a massive scale. Efficient planning and use of resources would alleviate many of the problems traditionally associated with urban living.⁴ In spite of their opposing approaches, the visions of these two groups, influenced by European and Russian architectural traditions alike, sought nothing less than the complete transformation of urban space in accordance with socialist values.⁵

³ S. Frederick Starr, *Melnikov: Solo Artist in a Mass Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 6.

⁴ Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 190-204.

⁵ Blair A. Ruble, “Moscow’s Revolutionary Architecture and its Aftermath: A Critical Guide,” in William C. Brumfield, ed., *Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 111-15.

Stalin's consolidation of power and the beginning of the cultural revolution in 1928 brought an end to the utopian dreams of urbanists, disurbanists, and the constructivist architects working in the Organization of Contemporary Architects, known by its Russian acronym of OSA. The social and logistical demands of rapid industrialization eclipsed any interest of the Party-state leadership in futuristic architecture. L. M. Kaganovich, a powerful Communist functionary and close confidant of Stalin, quelled calls to revolutionize urban planning during a plenum meeting of the Party in June 1931, noting that Soviet cities had become socialist by definition the moment that the Bolsheviks assumed control in 1917. The Bolshevik Revolution, after all, had been formed in cities such as Leningrad and Moscow. Coordinated attacks on utopian trends from Party-state institutions emphasized that extravagant schemes about remaking everyday life were out of step with the new economic and political realities of the 1930s.⁶

Confident in the economic and political achievements of the First Five-Year Plan (1928-32), the leaders of the Communist Party determined that Moscow needed a complete overhaul to reflect better its role as the paragon of socialism in one country. In June 1931, the Party Central Committee approved guidelines for modernizing the Soviet capital. Construction of the metro and on other large projects began shortly thereafter, though the General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow—also known as the Stalin Plan—was officially approved only on July 10, 1935. Until the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War in 1941 necessitated redirecting physical and financial resources elsewhere, the entire city seemed to be under scaffolding. Streets were widened and straightened; squares were enlarged; canals and waterways were refurbished and lined with granite. Consistent with contemporaneous developments throughout Europe,

⁶ S. Frederick Starr, "Visionary Town Planning during the Cultural Revolution," in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 207-40. See also Hugh D. Hudson, Jr., *Blueprints and Blood: The Stalinization of Soviet Architecture, 1917-1937* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Moscow's planners devoted attention to the physical environment, introducing zoning ordinances to ensure residents had greater access to light, fresh air, and green space. The Party also embraced Moscow's transformation as an excuse to jettison many old structures of capitalism, imperialism, and religion. A campaign to demolish hundreds of churches culminated in most spectacular fashion with the detonation of Christ the Savior Cathedral.⁷

Following Moscow's lead, many cities throughout the Soviet Union, including Kazan, announced plans for reconstruction. Although these projects never reached the scale of Moscow in terms of grandeur or funding, their designers did look to the Soviet capital as a source of inspiration. In the case of Kazan, devastating years of civil war, famine, fire, and disease following the Bolshevik Revolution had left the city in desperate need of renovation. The city's historical center lay in ruins, a remnant of the Red Army's devastating campaign to free Kazan from occupation by White forces in 1918. Fires ravaged the city, even claiming Kazan's City Theater in June 1919. By 1922, practically each of Kazan's ten thousand residential buildings needed major repairs. The city's feeble streetcar system had ground to a halt. In April 1926, Kaban Lake, Bulak Canal, and the Kazanka River, all located in the center of the city, spilled over their banks, flooding over 2,600 buildings and leaving thousands of people in search of shelter in a city already struggling with a beleaguered housing stock.⁸ Unlike in Moscow, the symbolic importance of refashioning Kazan always remained secondary to the more immediate needs of providing basic communal services and suitable housing.

Kazan's rapid population growth only compounded these dismal conditions. Peasants fled the countryside for Kazan, hoping to find in the city relief from famine, collectivization,

⁷ Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 94-96.

⁸ "Pomoshch' navodnentsam," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 4, 1926, 3; see too V. P. Ostroumov, *Kazan': Ocherki po istorii goroda i ego arkhitekturi* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 1978).

repression, and general poverty. Others came to Kazan to study in one of its institutions of higher education. Particularly during the years of the New Economic Policy (1921-28), the city's recovering leather, garment, timber, chemical, and plastics enterprises attracted thousands of potential workers, often with the promise of housing. Between 1926 and 1939, the population of Kazan shot up from 180,000 to 406,000, the sixth fastest urban growth rate in the entire Soviet Union.⁹ Yet even with hastily constructed barracks, the average amount of living space hovered around four square meters per person, below the official norm of six square meters.¹⁰

Following the announcement of plans for Moscow's renovation in 1931, the Kazan City Soviet and the TASSR Party Oblast Committee (Obkom) contracted with architect A. I. Dmitriev and later I. S. Nosov from the Leningrad State Institute of Urban Design (Giprogor) to develop a comprehensive plan, nicknamed Big Kazan, to guide all construction in the city. Giprogor, the Soviet Union's primary urban design bureau, also developed general plans for Minsk, Baku, Erevan, Sverdlovsk, Gor'kii, and Novosibirsk. As was the case with Moscow, rhetoric describing a metamorphosis from "old" to "new" pervaded the planning of Kazan. The city's Lenin District, located across the Kazanka River from the historical center, became a locus of new construction, with a number of multistory apartment buildings and cultural centers erected to serve both domestic and social needs. Other nonmonumental construction projects sprung up along the northern and southwestern edges of the city, home to many of Kazan's newest and expanding industrial enterprises, to provide infrastructure for both the factories themselves and the workers employed there. Yet the center of Kazan remained largely the same as in the prerevolutionary era, only with more rubble, much to the chagrin of natives and visitors to the city alike. In an

⁹ NART, f. R-6078, op. 1, d. 1, l. 278.

¹⁰ Gil'manov, et al., *Istoriia Kazani*, 2:144; see too Kh. Kh. Khusnullin, "Stanovlenie i razvitie zhilishchnogo stroitel'stva v Tatarstane v 1920-1959 gg." (Candidate diss., Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, 2004).

attempt to reclaim the area for the growing student population, structures were built for Kazan's Medical School, Institute of Soviet Law, Veterinarian Institute, and Chemical-Technological Institute along central streets formerly lined with mansions of the prerevolutionary elite. Overall, though, the dilapidation that permeated Kazan's cityscape continued to overshadow these new undertakings, which were often stymied by insufficient finances and inexperienced builders.¹¹

Attempts to give Kazan a facelift also stalled as the Big Kazan project bounced between Leningrad, Moscow, and Kazan for most of the 1930s. Never-ending cycles of proposals, reports, and resolutions reflected disagreements about funding, design, and oversight on both the all-union and local levels. In fact, Moscow approved the final version of Big Kazan only on June 19, 1941, days before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, which consequently stalled any serious attempts at implementation until the late 1950s. In light of the delay for any official plans, in January 1934 First Secretary of the TASSR Obkom A. K. Lepa instructed the Kazan City Soviet to form an Architectural Council to oversee Kazan's planning and construction. A. S. Kazarnovskii, the head of the Kazan Party Committee, took the helm of the Architectural Council. During its first meeting on February 28, 1934, he explained that the council would "help to change the face of the city, which should correspond to the current era. We must . . . develop and expand our work to conform to the tasks that are necessary to construct a socialist city."¹² Kazarnovskii and his colleagues were painfully aware of how far Kazan remained behind the curve in terms of its urban planning. As one member of the Architectural Council commented, "If we look at both Kazan and Moscow, then Kazan is obviously much more chaotic and unsystematic. As the capital, Moscow gets much more attention. In Moscow, one doesn't

¹¹ S. Iu. Malysheva and A. A. Sal'nikova, "Sovetskaia Kazan': Vremia stanovleniia (1920-1930-e gg.)," in *Gasyrlar avazy-Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2005), accessed March 9, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2005_2/01/01_92/.

¹² NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 4ob.

encounter so many improperly constructed buildings and incorrect decisions, whereas in Kazan they can be seen at every turn.”¹³

The poor state of Kazan’s urban development can be explained in part by the collapse of the city’s architectural education system in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, when most qualified instructors either moved to Moscow or fled the country altogether. Established in 1889, Kazan’s United Industrial School trained hundreds of architects before the Bolshevik Revolution. The school subsequently underwent several reorganizations, emerging as the Kazan Institute of Civil Engineering and Public Works (KIIKS) in 1932.¹⁴ An Architectural and Design Department operated as part of KIIKS in early 1933, though it closed by year’s end, with all students transferring to either civil or railway engineering departments.¹⁵ Otherwise, between 1917 and 1941, no architectural education existed in Kazan, inhibiting the development of a cadre of local, trained architects. Of the ten people employed by the Kazan City Soviet’s Architectural and Design Studio in 1935, none had formal training in architecture; this partially explains shoddy architectural work throughout the city and the pervasive “box buildings” that, while easy to build, had no aesthetic value.¹⁶ As one architect lamented, “When it comes to architectural design in Kazan, we have nothing to boast about. We have none of the successes that can be found in other cultural centers, such as Moscow, Leningrad, and Sverdlovsk. We do not have a single street corner that presents the true face of a Soviet city.”¹⁷

¹³ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 1, l. 14.

¹⁴ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 2, l. 76.

¹⁵ V. N. Kupriianov, *Iubileinaia kniga Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo arkhitekturno-stroitel'nogo universiteta* (Kazan: Akvarel', 2005), 28-39.

¹⁶ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 2, l. 47.

¹⁷ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 2, l. 79.

What might this architect have meant by the “true face of a Soviet city”? Historian James Bater has identified a number of principles for socialist city planning that emerged in the early 1930s in the process of finalizing Moscow’s General Plan. They include state control of housing, planned development of residential areas, spatial equality in the distribution of consumer and cultural services, limited journeys to work, extensive green space, and overt symbolism in the city center.¹⁸ Together, these principles would help the planned Soviet city usher in a higher form of society based on socialist, collectivist values. As Kazan city officials and architects lamented, however, planning had progressed in an extremely haphazard manner. They repeatedly acknowledged deficits in each of the components described by Bater. Delays in receiving a final version of Big Kazan only further frustrated their efforts.¹⁹

The Kazan Palace of Culture

On June 16, 1934, the USSR Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom) announced plans to build in Kazan a Palace of Culture to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Tatar Republic in 1920.²⁰ Kazan architects and engineers, who formed a branch of the Union of Soviet Architects in the Tatar Republic in October 1934, expressed excitement to create a monumental structure befitting their socialist era, an approach that reflected the influence of Moscow’s Palace of Soviets.²¹ The USSR Sovnarkom did not set a budget for the project, though an initial estimate put construction costs somewhere between fifteen and twenty million rubles.²² G. Barannikov, an engineer and deputy chairman of Kazan’s Architectural Council, noted the

¹⁸ Bater, *The Soviet City*, 27-31.

¹⁹ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 1-158; NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 7, ll. 1-191; and NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 1-181.

²⁰ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 62.

²¹ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 25-26.

²² NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 65.

Palace of Culture should be, “from an architectural perspective, exceptionally large, extremely interesting, and important.” As the nucleus of social and political life, it was to be outfitted with a public square that could accommodate parades and other mass demonstrations of workers on behalf of the entire region and Tatar Republic, which Party officials saw as essential for drawing the public into the process of reorganizing society and culture.²³ The area surrounding the Palace of Culture would also be beautified with fountains, statues, flower gardens, and other landscaping. One architect noted that the Palace of Culture could help Kazan shed its old image for something new, modern, and more emblematic of a Soviet city.²⁴

Kazan authorities intended to use the Palace of Culture to provide the city with desperately needed infrastructure for various leisure and cultural activities. Early proposals included a 2,000-person theater; a 700-person auditorium for clubs; billiard rooms; an indoor swimming pool; a men’s barbershop and women’s beauty salon; an exhibition hall; a 100,000-volume library; a city museum; and storage space for 100-150 bicycles.²⁵ Over time, this plan expanded to contain a 2,500-person theater; a million-volume library with ten reading rooms; a movie theater; art studio; sports hall with a weight room, billiards, and table tennis; cafeterias; childcare facilities; a radio station; and more. Similar to Moscow’s Palace of Soviets, the scale of this project reflected the monumentality of the era.²⁶

As befitting a national republic, the Palace of Culture needed to embody some kind of synthesis between the local Tatar and Russian population. Kazan remained largely segregated in terms of its residential districts. Most Tatars lived on the left bank of Kaban Lake and the Bulak

²³ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 66ob. For more on this phenomenon, see Malte Rolf, *Soviet Mass Festivals, 1917-1991* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

²⁴ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 402, l. 15.

²⁵ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, ll. 80-81; and NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 402, l. 10.

²⁶ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 402, ll. 11-14.

Canal in the lower part of the city. After the annexation of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible in 1552, Russian administrators expelled Tatars from the city and resettled them in nearby villages. As Kazan grew over the coming centuries, these Tatar settlements were reincorporated into urban infrastructure. Tatar districts, however, were much more prone to flooding as well as to fires, due to the prevalence of wooden buildings there. Russians primarily lived in upper parts of the city, which comparatively had more brick and stone buildings, as well as almost all administrative, educational, and cultural institutions.

Kazan's Architectural Council proposed placing the Palace of Culture on the right bank of Kaban Lake, on the border between Russian and Tatar districts of the city. They lauded the visual power of seeing the Palace of Culture towering over Kaban Lake, a perfect venue for admiring the monumentality of a new era. Representatives from Moscow, including V. A. Dediukhin, the deputy head of the Department of Planning for the Moscow City Soviet, and architects and engineers from Giprogor, attended many of the meetings discussing the Palace of Culture. The Moscow specialists encouraged Kazan's Architectural Council to build the Palace of Culture on Haymarket Square in the Old Tatar District, a few blocks away from both Kaban Lake and Bulak Canal. They suggested extending a large square for demonstrations toward Kaban Lake, demolishing the buildings—many the oldest and most noteworthy of the Old Tatar District—that stood between the palace and the lake. At the conclusion of one especially contentious meeting, Kazan City Soviet Chairman V. L. Shtukater acknowledged that, while Kazan was grateful for the input of the Moscow experts, local cadres needed to take the lead in planning the future of their own city. He accused the Moscow representatives of demanding a level of involvement and supervision over Kazan that was unheard of for other cities. As Shtukater concluded, "It is the opinion of the TASSR Sovnarkom and Party Obkom to build the

Palace of Culture on the banks of Kaban Lake, no matter what.” Not surprisingly, the architects and builders from Moscow were befuddled and even offended that their expertise and experience were so easily dismissed. They cautioned against constructing such a massive building on ground whose suitability for the monumental undertaking remained unknown. Still, upon the departure of the Moscow experts from Kazan, plans went forward with building the Palace of Culture on the right bank of Kaban Lake.²⁷

The Kaban Lake location enjoyed almost universal support in Kazan. The Kazan City Soviet expressed as much in a resolution from June 1934, maintaining that the location would bring together “the center of the city’s administrative and economic life with the center of urban transportation.”²⁸ Their insistence on the Kaban Lake site suggests that Kazan authorities believed the location had a larger, symbolic meaning. G. I. Respublikanets, director of the Central Museum of the Tatar Republic and a member of the Architectural Council, described the Kaban Lake site as “taking advantage of a national moment.”²⁹ Built on the border between the Tatar and Russian parts of the city, the Palace of Culture could serve as a new “semantic center” that would transcend national differences in the pursuit of socialist culture.³⁰ As with Moscow’s Palace of Soviets, in an age of monumentality, the allegorical value of the structures trumped all logistical concerns.³¹

²⁷ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, ll. 88-97.

²⁸ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 66ob.

²⁹ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, ll. 68.

³⁰ M. M. Iskandarov and A. Iu. Mikhailov, “Dvorets kul’tury–glavnyi nerealizovannyi proekt general’nogo plana ‘Bol’shoi Kazani’ (1930-e gg.),” *Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i iuridicheskie nauki, kul’turologiia i iskusstvovedenie: Voprosy teorii i praktiki* 16, no. 2 (2012): 73.

³¹ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 402, ll. 15-20.

The Palace of Culture also presented an opportunity to bring together and accommodate both Tatar and Russian artistic forms, testifying to the brotherhood of nationalities living under the same socialist roof.³² As described in the previous chapter, since 1926 the Tatar State Academic Theater had performed in a run-down club that had been retrofitted as a theater. The building was located outside the Tatar districts of the city, inconveniencing its most likely patrons. The city's Russian theatrical troupe likewise occupied a renovated movie theater in the city center. Since 1934, a group of Tatar actors, composers, musicians, and writers had been training in the Tatar Opera Studio in Moscow and would need a rehearsal and performance space upon returning to Kazan. Yet when it came to hammering out the details, the Architectural Council could not agree which artistic troupe would be the primary tenant of the Palace of Culture. The heads of Kazan's Tatar, Russian, and opera theaters each submitted itemized requests for what they needed from a theater building.³³ Disagreements stemmed in part from uncertainty about the name of the structure, and thus its function. At various times, it was called *Dom kul'tury* (House of Culture), *Dvorets kul'tury* (Palace of Culture), and *Dom tatarskoi kul'tury* (House of Tatar Culture), each of which conveyed a different message about the building's purpose. Commenting on the latter iteration, Kazan architect P. T. Speranskii (1880-1964) noted, "The name speaks for itself, as the building will be designed first and foremost to serve the interests of developing Tatar artistic endeavors. Thus, Russian-language performances will not be of primary importance." Others disagreed. The engineer Makhonov reminded delegates that the majority of Kazan's population was Russian. He proposed that separate facilities for Tatar and Russian troupes within the palace would best accommodate local needs. G. P. Barannikov, another engineer and committee member, remained committed to a one-stage

³² NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, ll. 65-76.

³³ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 81.

plan. He said, “We know that, in the Soviet Union, culture is not separated into Russian, Tatar, and other national divisions. We have a particular saying for this: national in form, proletarian in content. Based on this concept, we believe that this Palace of Culture will be a site of culture where Russian and Tatar theaters will be allotted an equal place.”³⁴

As debates continued over such logistical questions, the Kazan Architectural Council organized a design competition for the Palace of Culture. Four Moscow studios, those led by academician A. V. Shchusev, academician I. A. Fomin, architect D. F. Fridman, and architect G. V. Kriukov, were invited to participate, along with one group of Kazan architects.³⁵ All studios submitted initial designs by the end of 1934. Kazan residents expressed great excitement about these proposals. In late January 1935, six hundred people attended a public lecture at which local architect Speranskii presented the design of the Kazan architects.³⁶ Capitalizing on this wave of popular interest, in February 1935, KIIKS hosted an open exhibition of all the proposed designs, giving the public an opportunity to examine them up close. Several thousand people visited the exhibition, including key members of the TASSR Party-state apparatus. Workers, engineers, architects, artists, and students were all invited to report their impressions.³⁷

On behalf of the Fomin Studio, architects Arkin and Mashinskii proposed a structure well suited for demonstrations and parades, with two paths flanking the primary building and leading to a central square that spilled onto Kazan’s main thoroughfare. Yet reviewers condemned its “gloomy, ancient Oriental design” that they claimed resembled the “tombs of the ancient slave-owning East.” Such a negative and oppressive association did not communicate the joy and

³⁴ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, ll. 65-76. Quotes on ll. 67ob, 70, and 72.

³⁵ NART, f. R-1583, op. 2, d. 629, l. 62.

³⁶ “Proekty stroitel’sтва dvortsia kul’tury,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, January 29, 1935, 4.

³⁷ P. V., “Vystavka proektov Kazanskogo dvortsia kul’tury,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, February 27, 1935, 4.

celebration expected in a monument to the victory of socialism. Architect A. Sporkus criticized this design as resembling an “Assyrian church, which in our time is totally unacceptable.”³⁸

Architects Kesler and Vainshtein of the Kriukov Studio submitted a design based on the architectural forms of a Venetian palazzo. Its facade evoked the Doge’s Palace, and the surrounding square was lined with columns to imbibe Kaban Lake with the feeling of the Grand Canal. Commentators in the newspaper *Krasnaia Tatarsiia* (Red Tatarsiia) speculated that Renaissance elements functioned as a nod to the combination of Eastern and Western styles in fifteenth-century Gothic architecture. They praised the Palace’s majestic, eighty-five-meter column crowned with an enormous statue of Lenin.³⁹

Architects Alexandrov and Pavlov created the proposal from the Fridman Studio. At 450,000 cubic meters, it greatly exceeded the ideal parameters for construction, and the *Krasnaia Tatarsiia* commentators harshly criticized its lack of architectural unity, describing it as overloaded with columns and decorative elements. One local engineer found this design “entirely unacceptable,” not only for its size, but also for closing off the building in a “forest of columns.”⁴⁰

Reviewers applauded the submission from the Kazan architectural team of Speranskii, Dubrovin, and Gainutdinov as “a significant victory for the local architects,” having proven their worthiness to be considered alongside architectural heavyweights from Moscow. Still, rather than presenting a single, unified structure, the Kazan architects submitted a plan with several separate buildings, a style that detracted from the desired spirit of monumentality. Their proposal

³⁸ L. Ginzburg and P. Dul’skii, “Piat’ proektov,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, March 12, 1935, 3; and A. Sporkus, “Interes k vystavke ogromnyi,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, March 12, 1935, 3.

³⁹ Ginzburg and Dul’skii, “Piat’ proektov”; and P. V., “Vystavka proektov.”

⁴⁰ Ginzburg and Dul’skii, “Piat’ proektov”; P. V., “Vystavka proektov”; and G. Barannikov, “Za arkhitekturu, sozvuchnuiu nashei epokhe,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, March 12, 1935, 3.

nonetheless drew popular acclaim; workers and students from various Kazan institutions praised the design as beautiful and well executed.⁴¹

According to *Krasnaia Tataria*, the plan advanced by architects Likhachev and Teplitskii from the Shchusev Studio delighted Kazan residents most of all.⁴² Experts also favored this design, describing it as a “tightly soldered unit” that represented a unified architectural idea. Likhachev and Teplitskii explained in their promotional materials that they based their design concept on “ancient Eastern” construction; however, other experts were more skeptical, seeing instead a rather plain classical style.⁴³ Commentators insisted that a grandiose monument to Lenin would need to be installed on the parade ground to help capture a monumental ethos.⁴⁴

Collapsing Fantasies

In spite of so much popular enthusiasm for the Kazan Palace of Culture and its promise to celebrate the cultural, economic, and national successes of the Tatar Republic, the fantasy never got off the ground. On May 10, 1935, D. Sulimov, head of the RSFSR Sovnarkom, informed the Tatar Republic that Moscow was withdrawing its support for the project. According to Sulimov, the Sovnarkom was following the lead of the RSFSR State Planning Commission (Gosplan), which had denied any funding for the project.⁴⁵ Sulimov explained that Moscow did not see the need to build a large theater as part of the Palace of Culture when Kazan already had two theaters with a total of 2,300 seats, alluding to the retrofitted movie theater and club building occupied by

⁴¹ P. V., “Vystavka proektov”; K. Stroeve and V. Vtorov, “Otdelana kazhdaia detal’,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 12, 1935, 3; S. Iakushin, “Khorozhee arkhitekturnoe oformlenie,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 12, 1935, 3; Shevchenko, “Moe mnenie,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 12, 1935, 3; and Nadeev, “Otrazit’ radost’ nashei zhizni,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 12, 1935, 3.

⁴² F. Egorov, “My—za proekt arkhitekтора Likhacheva,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 12, 1935, 3.

⁴³ Ginzburg and Dul’skii, “Piat’ proektov”; and P. V., “Vystavka proektov.”

⁴⁴ A. Abakumov, “Vozdvignut’ dostoinyi pamiatnik Il’ichu,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 12, 1935, 3.

⁴⁵ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 402, l. 3.

the Russian and Tatar theaters, respectively. The Sovnarkom suggested that, given the “general impracticality of building a Palace of Culture of this size and cost in Kazan,” the Tatar Republic reconsider its plans and come up with a different proposal. Sulimov explained that the Sovnarkom would be willing to support the construction of a building no more than 70,000 cubic meters (as a point of comparison, the favored design from the Shuchsev Studio was 285,000 cubic meters) and at a cost between 5 and 6 million rubles (the original project was capped at 20 million rubles). He further suggested that the Tatar Republic build a prefabricated structure, such as those occupied by trade unions throughout the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ Thus, the size and budget, not to mention symbolic value, of the Palace of Culture would have to be drastically altered. The fifteenth anniversary of the TASSR, the event originally meant to be celebrated by the opening of the Palace of Culture, came and went on June 25. An entire page of *Krasnaia Tataria* lauded ongoing and completed construction projects in Kazan, yet not one word mentioned the Palace of Culture, which at one time had been envisioned as the centerpiece of Soviet Kazan.

What might explain Moscow’s decision to derail the Palace of Culture project? The relationship between administrative and architectural authorities in Kazan and Moscow had soured over previous years. The disdain many Kazan architects expressed for Moscow’s involvement in local affairs likely exacerbated their mutual scorn. At the TASSR’s Second Architectural Conference, convened in late February and early March 1936, delegates bemoaned the “capital fetishism” that resulted in too much reliance on architects from Moscow and Leningrad, rather than on locals who better understood Kazan’s cultural and physical environment.⁴⁷ In 1935, Kazan’s inability to pay Moscow design studios for their work led to several suits against the Tatar Republic in the Sovnarkom’s arbitration court, which may have

⁴⁶ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2335, l. 83.

⁴⁷ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 7, l. 12ob.

irked Moscow architects further and led to subsequent foot-dragging.⁴⁸ Moreover, Kazan's architectural cadres, understaffed and underqualified, did not have a great track record of completing projects on time or within budget. K. A. Abramov, head of the TASSR Sovnarkom, had recently appealed to Moscow for almost five million rubles to finish a number of ongoing construction and renovation projects.⁴⁹ The large Printing House project in Kazan had likewise veered far off course, suggesting the inability of the Tatar Republic to execute large, expensive showpieces.⁵⁰ This lack of confidence in Kazan undoubtedly dovetailed with Moscow's decision to tighten its own purse strings during the Second Five-Year Plan as military expenditures increased in preparation for war.

Regardless, Moscow's pronouncement left Kazan scrambling for an alternative to the Palace of Culture. In November 1935, Moscow approved a proposal to build a 1,200-seat theater on Kazan's Freedom Square, next to where the old City Theater had burned down, at a cost of 8 million rubles.⁵¹ As the home for the Tatar Opera Studio, the new theater would need to open by 1938, when the troupe was slated to return from training in Moscow.⁵² As authorities in the Tatar Republic attempted to begin construction on the theater, they encountered nothing short of a bureaucratic nightmare. In an apparent effort to ensure as much efficiency as possible, Abramov, head of the TASSR Sovnarkom, requested from his Moscow counterparts the authority to oversee and approve all plans and budgets for the theater without waiting for Moscow's input.⁵³

⁴⁸ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 402, ll. 24, 27, 30, 31.

⁴⁹ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2335, ll. 84-85.

⁵⁰ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2335, l. 72.

⁵¹ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 407, l. 2.

⁵² NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 407, l. 1; and NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 3193, l. 41.

⁵³ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2335, l. 192.

Moscow flatly denied this request, insisting that RSFSR Gosplan and Sovnarkom representatives give their blessing to every decision.⁵⁴

To speed up the planning process so that construction could begin in 1936, Kazan city authorities asked the Architecture and Design Bureau of the RSFSR Narkompros to enlist architect N. A. Skvortsov of Moscow's Shchusev Studio to prepare designs and a budget, which were then forwarded to the RSFSR Narkompros Scientific and Technical Council for the final endorsement.⁵⁵ After first reviewing the plans on December 26, 1935, the council decided that further consideration was necessary, giving a green light for construction only on January 8, 1936, which ostensibly prevented the Tatar Republic from meeting the deadline for inclusion in Gosplan's budget for the year.⁵⁶ Blueprints and budgets bounced back and forth between Kazan and Moscow for the rest of the decade, with the recently formed All-Union Committee for Artistic Affairs in Moscow, its branch in Kazan, the USSR Sovnarkom, the Tatar Republic Sovnarkom, and the Kazan City Soviet all clamoring for the right to approve each change.⁵⁷

In Kazan, the responsibility for overseeing construction of the theater shifted from the Office of Theater Construction to the Committee for Artistic Affairs, then to the Kazan City Soviet, then back to the Committee for Artistic Affairs, and finally to the director of the Tatar Opera Theater.⁵⁸ By the end of 1936, construction had not yet begun, with builders waiting on Moscow's authorization to purchase seven hundred tons of cement and one hundred sixty tons of

⁵⁴ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2335, l. 220.

⁵⁵ "Proekt gosudarstvennogo opernogo teatra v Kazani," *Krasnaia Tataria*, January 4, 1936, 4.

⁵⁶ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2654, ll. 25-30.

⁵⁷ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 407, l. 17.

⁵⁸ NART, f. R-6663, op. 1, d. 19, l. 2; and NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2654, ll. 25-30.

steel needed to lay the foundation.⁵⁹ The persistent lack of cement, iron, and nails resulted in significant delays, forcing builders to negotiate with other industrial enterprises in Kazan to acquire materials, as the USSR Gosplan frequently denied all such requests.⁶⁰ By the end of 1937, the project was less than 9 percent complete, with only the foundation having been laid.⁶¹ The lack of progress on the construction front served as fertile ground for unmasking wreckers and saboteurs throughout 1937.⁶² High turnover in the local Party-state apparatus, including the arrest and execution of A. K. Lepa, first secretary of the TASSR Obkom, P. V. Aksenov, head of the Kazan City Soviet, and G. K. Al'mukhametov, head of the TASSR Committee for Artistic Affairs, only further hampered progress.

Construction also ground to a halt while Kazan's architectural cadres argued over the location of the theater. Original plans called for its construction on Freedom Square, next to the location of the former City Theater. In late August 1936, the TASSR Obkom and Sovnarkom decided to transfer construction less than 100 meters away from Freedom Square to Pugachev Garden, citing poor soil conditions at the original site.⁶³ This move provoked intense opposition among Kazan's leading engineers and architects. Almost everyone voiced disapproval for the new site, although throughout 1937 administrators devoted six hundred thousand rubles to razing Pugachev Garden and laying a new foundation there. Still, many demanded restarting construction on the other side of Freedom Square.⁶⁴ In May 1938, Tycherov, head of the Tatar

⁵⁹ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 3, d. 1018, ll. 3-4.

⁶⁰ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2654, l. 76.

⁶¹ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2654, ll. 25-30.

⁶² NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2654, l. 24.

⁶³ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 407, l. 4.

⁶⁴ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 3193, ll. 45-62; and NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 407, l. 33.

Republic Sovnarkom, petitioned the USSR Sovnarkom for permission to move construction back across the square, along with a budget increase to 9.3 million rubles and an advance of 3.5 million rubles for 1938. He decried the Pugachev Garden site as an example of wrecking “clearly made against the will of the working masses of the Tatar Republic and totally inappropriate in architectural and planning terms.”⁶⁵ As usual, either bureaucratic red tape or willful silence swallowed up any specific directive on this point from Moscow authorities, and construction continued in Pugachev Garden in spite of almost universal opposition in Kazan.⁶⁶

As time wore on, local authorities began to worry about what the Tatar Opera Studio would do without a theater once it returned from training in Moscow. Kazan Party officials began making personal appeals to key figures in the capital, including Stalin, for intervention and financial support. These petitions shared several common characteristics. First, they appealed to nationalities policies as a basis for completing work on the theater, which would stage Tatar-language operas with considerable cultural impact in the Tatar Republic. Second, Party officials condemned the idea of wasting so much money on construction of the theater if the project was suddenly abandoned. Third, they asked for Stalin’s personal intervention, pointing out that the All-Union Committee for Artistic Affairs in Moscow had withdrawn all funding for the construction of the opera theater for both 1938 and 1939, with the All-Union and RSFSR Sovnarkoms and Committees for Artistic Affairs declining to explain why. Yet Moscow still refused to respond in what increasingly appeared to be a conspiracy of silence.⁶⁷ While the

⁶⁵ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 407, ll. 34-36.

⁶⁶ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 562, l. 29. The last document mentioning this issue is from July 1, 1938, in an appeal from the TASSR Sovnarkom to N. A. Bulganin, head of the RSFSR Sovnarkom, asking for a decision on this issue. None was forthcoming.

⁶⁷ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 2654, l. 16; NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 3193, ll. 43-44; NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 3380, l. 54; and NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 562, l. 6.

priority of the theater certainly decreased as Moscow shifted its focus to military preparedness, the deliberate prolonging of all approvals and silence from Moscow suggests a more deliberate attempt to stymie the project.

A report from August 1939 gives a sense of how far construction had fallen behind. Builders faced deficits of 724,000 bricks, 72 tons of cement, 507 cubic meters of wood, 228 cubic meters of gravel, 56 tons of iron, and almost 1 ton of nails. Problems with the labor force were pervasive, with one report from August 1939 noting that only 15 of 45 bricklayers and stonemasons, 42 of 60 carpenters, and 40 of 100 manual laborers regularly showed up to work.⁶⁸ Labor stoppages were common due to the lack of workers, materials, and even blueprints. As of January 1940, no detailed architectural or electrical plans had been delivered to Kazan.⁶⁹ The last available report on the state of construction, submitted in July 1940, explained that given the lack of funding to purchase needed construction materials, all work for the year would halt on July 10, with the overall project estimated as only 25 percent complete.⁷⁰

The failure of this project had real consequences, which the Tatar Opera Studio, renamed the Tatar State Theater of Opera and Ballet (TGTOB), experienced firsthand. Upon returning to Kazan in 1938, the troupe had no theater in which to operate. Artists were initially allocated the Flour Millers' Union and a few rooms in the House of Kazan Researchers for rehearsals, though building administrators constantly refused to distribute keys and often disrupted rehearsals.⁷¹ As noted in the previous chapter, TGTOB eventually agreed on an elaborate and confusing schedule

⁶⁸ NART, f. R-1130, op. 2, d. 837, l. 17.

⁶⁹ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 3380, ll. 31-32.

⁷⁰ NART, f. R-1130, op. 2, d. 837, l. 15.

⁷¹ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 562, l. 34.

with the Tatar State Academic Theater to share rehearsal and performance space.⁷² Z. Bermileev, the first head director of TGTOB, pleaded for construction of their theater to be completed. As he wrote, “Only when the Tatar Opera Theater moves into the new building can our work acquire some sense of normality and fulfill the tasks entrusted to us by the Party and state.”⁷³ Such normality was not immediately forthcoming. The new building, constructed using German prisoners of war, opened only on September 28, 1956.

National Architecture and a New East

The failure of the Palace of Culture project and its transformation into something barely recognizable when compared with the monumental proposals from 1935 becomes all the more curious given the contemporaneous imperative among architects to incorporate architectural styles indigenous to local nationalities in designing projects for cities throughout the Soviet East. In fact, experts had decried the proposals submitted to the Palace of Culture competition in 1935 for neglecting to depict anything uniquely Tatar. According to one critic, the proposals instead based their depiction of national forms on “ancient Oriental architectural monuments that primarily evoke the idea of a religious cult.”⁷⁴ Tatars, however, as a product of their long history of Russification, had no specific architectural traditions to call their own, unlike Uzbeks, Armenians, Azeris, and Georgians, to name a few examples. Attempts at creating a Tatar national architecture reveals the tenuous balance between authenticity and creativity in developing culture that was “national in form and socialist in content” in the Soviet Union.

Following the October Revolution, interest in reclaiming national architecture and reinterpreting it through a socialist lens developed unevenly throughout the Soviet Union,

⁷² NART, f. R-7239, op. 1, d. 1b, l. 199; NART, f. R-6663, op. 1, d. 24, l. 2; and NART, f. R-6663, op. 1, d. 7, l. 45.

⁷³ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 855, l. 12.

⁷⁴ P. M. Dul'skii and V. P. Popov, *Konkurs proektov doma kul'tury v Kazani* (Kazan: KIIKS, 1935), 1.

gaining more traction among Central Asian and Transcaucasian nationalities with notable architectural traditions of their own. For example, in Baku, N. G. Baev developed an Azerbaijani style through projects such as the Sabunchinskii Railway Station (1926), which incorporated local Islamic architecture, particularly *peshtaks*, the large, framed portals that served as entranceways into mosques. In Erevan, A. O. Tamanian developed a new national style in the 1920s by combining neoclassical themes with well-known architectural allusions to Armenia's monasteries and churches, such as Zvartnots Cathedral.⁷⁵ Tamanian described building Erevan's People's Commissariat for Agriculture (1927-28) as an "experiment in using artistic heritage in contemporary construction." He reiterated his commitment to the Armenian context of his work by utilizing locally sourced construction materials, namely tufa, a pink-hued limestone.⁷⁶ As capitals of Soviet republics, these cities boasted significant professional, infrastructural, financial resources that supported their development as hubs of architectural creativity. Kazan, on the other hand, lacked educational programs to train cadres of local architects. Moreover, unlike Central Asian and Caucasian capitals, Tatars had no monumental forms of architecture that easily lent themselves to reinterpretation.

The shift toward economic, social, and cultural modernization in the Soviet Union following the introduction of Stalin's cultural revolution and First Five-Year Plan in 1928 empowered a younger generation of constructivist and modernist architects based in Central Asia and the Caucasus to abandon what they saw as archaic and backward national styles.⁷⁷ In Uzbekistan, avant-garde architects such as S. N. Polupanov rejected the region's Islamic

⁷⁵ Greg Castillo, "Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (1995): 720-25.

⁷⁶ N. Sokolova, "Rozovaia stolitsa: iz putevykh vpechatlenii," *Arkhitektura SSSR* 11 (1934): 14-20.

⁷⁷ M. Ia. Ginzburg, "National'naia arkhitektura narodov SSSR," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 5-6 (1926): 113-14.

architectural heritage, focusing instead on the modernization of residential and communal spaces. Architectural historian Greg Castillo has described the work of this period as “equally at home in Moscow or Samarkand.”⁷⁸ Young Armenian architects M. D. Mazmanian and K. S. Alabian spoke out publicly against their predecessor Tamanian’s style, emphasizing their preference for simple, proletarian forms of architecture without the pomp of classical and national styles.⁷⁹ During this era, class and generational conflict overshadowed national culture.

In 1932, as the First Five-Year Plan and the cultural revolution drew to a close and Stalin declared the achievement of socialism in one country, Soviet architecture began a tumultuous transition away from modernism and constructivism toward socialist realism, broadly interpreted in architecture as the reworking of classical monumental forms with contemporary methods of construction. Neoclassical architecture linked Soviet culture to a universal, timeless tradition that appealed to all people; it stood in stark contrast with the avant-garde proposals that symbolized a break with the past.⁸⁰ The consolidation of various architectural organizations into a single Union of Soviet Architects in 1932 signaled the end of debate on modernist trends, although holdouts certainly remained, which in part delayed the organization’s first congress until 1937.⁸¹

In terms of its application within national architecture, socialist realism borrowed heavily from folk traditions. During a speech explaining the purpose of socialist realism at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, Maxim Gor’kii called for a revival of folk traditions, saying,

⁷⁸ Castillo, “Peoples at an Exhibition,” 724.

⁷⁹ G. Kochar, “Arkhitektura sovetskoi Armenii,” *Arkhitektura SSSR* 11 (1934): 8-13.

⁸⁰ David L. Hoffmann, “Was there a ‘Great Retreat’ from Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (2004): 661-63. See too Vladimir Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and S. O. Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

⁸¹ Danilo Udovički-Selb, “Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin’s Revolution from Above, 1928-1938,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68, no. 4 (2009): 467-95.

“Collect your folklore, study it, work it over. . . . The better we come to know the past, the more easily, the more deeply and joyfully we will understand the great significance of the present we are creating.”⁸² The mouthpiece of the Union of Soviet Architects, *Arkhitektura SSSR* (Architecture of the USSR), likewise began to promote the study of national culture in developing architecture that blended together vernacular forms of the nation with the monumentality of the Soviet era. For example, architect A. V. Shchusev emphasized that merely copying old forms of Eastern architecture, particularly the Islamic architectural monuments of Central Asia, would no longer suffice.⁸³ Given the “impossibility of uniting the architecture of Egypt, India, China, and Japan, as well as Armenia and Georgia,” architects needed to understand each nationality’s unique forms of music, literature, art, and daily life in order to achieve a more authentic depiction of national culture.⁸⁴ The revival of folk cultural forms for each nationality, of course, could not promote separatist nationalism or any other ideology other than that of socialism. As David Hoffman has argued, “Folklore represented a cultural medium by which nationalities could express an identity in a way that did not threaten Soviet unity.”⁸⁵ As noted too in the previous chapter on Tatar theater, folklore had a key role in developing the concept of culture that was “national in form and socialist in content.”

In the mid-1930s, I. G. Gainutdinov (1908-77), known as the “first Tatar architect,” emerged as the primary, if not only, advocate for Tatar national architecture in Kazan. Born in the Tatar village of Oly Menger in what would become the Tatar Republic’s Arsk canton, Gainutdinov entered a Russian school in Cheliabinsk in 1924, graduating three years later. In the

⁸² A. M. Gor’kii, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1953), 24:493.

⁸³ A. V. Shchusev, “Arkhitektura Sovetskogo Vostoka,” *Arkhitektura SSSR* 8 (1934): 8-10.

⁸⁴ S. N. Kozhin, “Dvorets kul’tury v Nal’chike,” *Arkhitektura SSSR* 8 (1934): 17.

⁸⁵ Hoffmann, “Was there a ‘Great Retreat’,” 668.

fall of 1927, Gainutdinov moved to Kazan upon being accepted to the Kazan Industrial Technical School, subsequently reorganized into KIIKS. Gainutdinov received no formal training as an architect and instead studied engineering and construction.⁸⁶ After graduating in 1931, he worked as a foreman on a number of projects in Kazan. Within a few years, Gainutdinov took a teaching position at KIIKS and began designing his own projects, including a school for the synthetic leather factory on Zhdanov Street (1933-34); the Fur Industry Workers' Club on Tukai Street (1934-35); and an academic building for the Chemical and Technological Institute on Karl Marx Street (1935-37). Gainutdinov wrote several books in Tatar relating to architectural skills that were translated into Russian, including *How to Read and Draw Blueprints* and *Font Samples*. Upon the creation of the TASSR branch of the Union of Architects in 1934, he was elected its first secretary, undoubtedly a product of his nationality.⁸⁷

Gainutdinov publically addressed the concept of Tatar national architecture at the First Architectural Conference of the Tatar Republic Union of Architects, held in Kazan from May 3-5, 1935. Delegates embraced the conference as a major opportunity to revive discussion about the architecture of the Tatar Republic and its capital, particularly as the Big Kazan city plan remained in draft form. When Gainutdinov took the podium on the final day of the conference, he noted that the theme of national architecture had been all but absent in the reports and discussions of the three preceding days. As he argued, "Recreating national forms of architecture is the most important task for which an architect living and working within the Tatar Republic

⁸⁶ NART, f. R-2858, op. 51, d. 433, l. 5.

⁸⁷ S. S. Aidarov, *Arkhitektor Gainutdinov* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1972): 3-7. Muzei istorii KGASU, Fond I. G. Gainutdinova, op. 9.

could be engaged.” Local architects had fallen behind in this duty, and he exhorted them to explore this concept in their upcoming projects.⁸⁸

Little progress, however, was made on this front. During the Second Architectural Conference, which began in February 1936, even Russian architects began to acknowledge the deficit of Tatar architectural forms in Kazan. One admitted that Gainutdinov was the only architect working on this issue, and another noted the irony that a banner calling for architecture that was “national in form and socialist in content” hung in the conference hall, even though nothing tangible had been accomplished. The slogan had become empty in the Tatar Republic. Gainutdinov inveighed against his fellow architects for not showing any interest in this issue, which could not help but “lead to architectural enrichment and also helps to create the appearance of a national republic.” As so many had complained, Kazan did not look the part of a capital of a national republic. Gainutdinov insisted that creating local architectural forms should be a task everyone supported, regardless of nationality. He called for his colleagues to develop specific projects by the next conference that incorporated Tatar architectural forms.⁸⁹

The dearth of such projects in Kazan can be attributed at least in part to the ambiguity of what Tatar architectural forms should actually look like. As noted earlier, unlike many Central Asian and Caucasian nationalities, Tatars had no obvious architectural traditions of their own to use. Even Kazan’s mosques, built in the nineteenth century, replicated trends in Russian architecture.⁹⁰ Responding to Gor’kii’s call for a closer investigation of folkloric traditions, Gainutdinov spearheaded the professional study of Tatar decorative designs. In 1935,

⁸⁸ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 110-13.

⁸⁹ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 7, ll. 45-46.

⁹⁰ N. Kh. Khalitov, “Poiski ‘natsional’nogo stilia’ v arkhitekture tatar Kazani v kontse XIX-nachale XX veka,” in D. K. Valeeva, ed., *Iskusstvo Tatarstana: Puti stanovleniia* (Kazan: Institut iazyka, literatury i istorii im. G. Ibragimova, 1985), 115-33.

Gainutdinov proposed in an article devoting renewed attention to the ruins of Bolgar, an ancient city that served as the capital of Volga Bulgariia beginning in the eighth century.⁹¹ Absorbed into the Golden Horde in the early thirteenth century, Bolgar functioned as the center of political, religious, and economic life in the region. Many Volga Tatars considered Volga Bulgariia a predecessor state to the Kazan Khanate and thus claimed the artifacts of Bolgar, such as grave markers and partially-standing stone mausoleums, mosques, and minarets, as antecedents to their own traditions. While local scholars had previously conducted research into these relics, Gainutdinov repurposed their work in his interpretation of national architecture.⁹² In his search for “authentic” Tatar images, Gainutdinov did not reproduce the buildings of Bolgar, as they fulfilled purely religious functions, but rather turned to intricate patterns of flowers, vines, stars, moons, and other geometric shapes carved into stone. Even after Bolgar was repeatedly sacked and burned in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, these decorative themes survived and continued to appear in Tatar handicrafts, ceramics, and jewelry.⁹³ In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, designs of Bolgar origin even surfaced in the fences and capitals of homes of wealthy Tatars in Kazan, although the actual buildings largely imitated those of Russian neighbors. National motifs appeared in only the smallest aspects of applied design. Still,

⁹¹ I. G. Gainutdinov, “K voprosy ob arkhitekture pamiatnikov drevnego Bolgara,” *Trudy Kazanskogo instituta inzhenerov kommunal'nogo stroitel'stva im. M. Gor'kogo* 2 (1935): 117-20.

⁹² See, for example, *Arkhiturnye chertezhi razvalin Drevnikh Bolgar, sniatye s natyry arkhitektorom A. Shmidtom v 1827 g.* (Moscow: 1832); A. S. Bashkirov, *Pamiatniki bulgaro-tatarskoi kul'tury na Volge* (Kazan: 1928); I. N. Berezin, *Bulgar na Volge* (Kazan: 1853); A. Dmitriev, “Drevnii Bulgar i tatarskie o nem predaniia,” *Izvestiia Obshchestva arkheologii, istorii i etnografii pri Kazanskom universitete* 7 (1889): 1-16; N. Kalinin, “Bytovye predmety Volzhsko-Kamskoi Bulgarii,” *Vystavka bolgarskikh drevnostei* (Kazan: Izdanie DTK, 1929): 35-47; V. A. Kazarinov, “Razvaliny drevnikh zdani pri sele Bolgarakh,” *Izvestiia Obshchestva arkheologii, istorii i etnografii pri Kazanskom universitete* 6, no. 2 (1988): 17-36; A. A. Shtukenberg, “Materialy dlia arkheologii Kazanskoi gubernii: Poslednie raskopki v Bolgarakh,” *Izvestiia Obshchestva arkheologii, istorii i etnografii pri Kazanskom universitete* 10, no. 1 (1892): 109-10; V. F. Smolin, “Sredi razvalin velikogo goroda Bolgar,” *Magarif* 11-12 (1926): 109-24; and M. G. Khudiakov, “Razvaliny velikogo goroda,” *Kazanskii muzeinyi vestnik* 1-2 (1921): 78-83.

⁹³ P. Dul'skii, “Ornament kazanskikh tatar,” *Arkhitectura SSSR* 1 (1937): 75-78.

Gainutdinov saw in them elements that could be incorporated into a new idea of Tatar national architecture.⁹⁴

In 1936, Gainutdinov left Kazan to study at the prestigious All-Union Academy of Architecture in Moscow. Without anyone to lead the charge, national architecture fell to the wayside in Kazan, underscoring the importance of Gainutdinov as a transformational individual in the city. During the Third Architectural Conference of the Tatar Republic, held in April 1937, the topic was barely mentioned.⁹⁵ While several other Tatars eventually joined the ranks of Kazan architects, they rose to positions of authority only after the Great Patriotic War.⁹⁶ R. M. Murtazin (1911-87) and A. G. Bikchentaev (1911-85) both studied at KIIKS from 1931-34 before being sent to the architectural department of the Leningrad Institute of Engineering and Communal Works for further training. After graduating in 1937 and 1938, respectively, Murtazin and Bikchentaev returned to Kazan and worked alongside each other in the architectural and planning workshop of the Kazan City Soviet while also teaching at KIIKS.⁹⁷ M. K. Iglamov (1908-73), U. G. Alparov (1914-2003), and A. M. Subaev (1908-2003) also made inroads into the architectural establishment of the Tatar Republic.⁹⁸ Yet even Moscow noted the slow pace of

⁹⁴ Khalitov, "Poiski 'natsional'nogo stilia'," 115-33.

⁹⁵ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 1-181.

⁹⁶ P. M. Dul'skii, "Tatarskoe isskustvo," (1940): Unpublished manuscript, Natsional'nyi muzei Respubliki Tatarstan, Fond P. M. Dul'skogo, d. 5, l. 8.

⁹⁷ Bikchentaev Akhmed Gadievich, Muzei istorii KGASU, accessed March 9, 2016, http://museum.kgasu.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=93:2013-06-25-06-07-55&catid=2:2013-02-11-09-00-17&Itemid=3; Murtazin Rashad Musich, Muzei istorii KGASU, accessed March 9, 2016, http://museum.kgasu.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47:2013-04-23-12-23-27&catid=2:2013-02-11-09-00-17&Itemid=3.

⁹⁸ P. M. Dul'skii, *Arkhitektura Kazani: Stolitsy Tatarskoi Respubliki za 25 let* (Kazan: Izdanie Upravleniia gorodskogo arkhitekтора, 1945), 14-15; P. M. Dul'skii, *Tatarskoe iskusstvo*, ll. 8-9.

training Tatar architectural cadres, and the presidium of the Union of Soviet Architects criticized this trend in March 1940.⁹⁹

Upon arriving in Moscow in 1936, Gainutdinov continued to develop his interest in national architecture. As the foremost, and only, trained Tatar architect at the time, Gainutdinov received a commission to design and build the Tatar Republic pavilion for the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV), which opened in 1939 after several years of delays. Twenty-two of fifty-two pavilions at VSKhV depicted national republics and territories of the Soviet Union, testifying to the “friendship of the peoples” and the diverse range of cultures united under the banner of socialism. Occupying a prominent square in the center of VSKhV, the national pavilions tested whether Soviet architects had learned to “examine carefully and lovingly their own native, national architecture” and focus on features that exhibited “immediacy, honesty, and clarity,” in the words of one architect.¹⁰⁰ As the architect A. V. Shchusev elaborated, “Each nation will solve the issue of national forms in its own way, but the principles of style are the same. It is necessary to study artistically valuable architecture of past eras and take into account the domestic, economic, and cultural needs of the people for whom we are building.”¹⁰¹ The most celebrated designs featured simple folk motifs drawing on past traditions while also pointing to the shared communist destiny of the future.

At VSKhV, the pavilions of Soviet Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan all garnered significant praise for successfully executing authentic national styles. For example, the Uzbek pavilion, designed by architect S. N. Polupanov, captured the “sunny and bright” feel of

⁹⁹ NART, f. R-746, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 25-26.

¹⁰⁰ F. Pashchenko, “K voprosu o natsional’noi forme v sotsialisticheskoi arkhitekture,” *Arkhitectura SSSR* 7 (1939): 4-5.

¹⁰¹ A. Shchusev, “Natsional’naia forma v arkhitekture,” *Arkhitectura SSSR* 12 (1940): 57.

the republic, according to one critic, while another extolled the “creative recycling of elements of old civic architecture and rich folk art, revealing the charm and patterns that are characteristic of sunny Uzbekistan.”¹⁰² Rather than relying on the traditional arcs, cupolas, and *peshtaks* of Islamic architecture, Polupanov turned to vernacular, “folk” forms. As he described, it was “impossible to use existing elements of Uzbek architecture. Therefore, the national form was utilized in a revised style, which still maintained a feel of Uzbek national culture.”¹⁰³ Polupanov replaced traditional Islamic symbols with images of cotton, transforming the region’s primary crop into a design element that helped to frame the role of the Uzbek SSR in the Soviet Union. The Islamic eight-pointed star, a common theme throughout Uzbek ornamental design, was reimaged as a ten-pointed star made from two five-pointed Soviet stars superimposed on top of each other. Polupanov’s pavilion, modeled on a traditional Uzbek courtyard dwelling, left one side open to the street, attesting to how the modern Uzbek household had thrown off the old tradition of segregating the sexes and now had nothing to hide.¹⁰⁴

The architects of pavilions whose national republics and regions lacked unique forms of monumental architecture struggled to portray their own culture and heritage. Describing the offerings of the Tatar, Bashkir, Kyrgyz, and Kazakh pavilions, Gainutdinov observed, “In searching for images reflective of the creative spirit of the people, these architects were inspired primarily through the study of household items, handicrafts, paintings, ornaments, embroidery, carvings, and coins, so that they could try to show in architecture some small and elusive aspect

¹⁰² I. Pabinovich, “Arkhitkturnye motivy natsional’nykh pavil’onov,” *Arkhitktura SSSR* 10 (1939): 9-13; I. Gainutdinov, “Pavil’ony soiuznykh i avtonomnykh respublik,” *Arkhitktura SSSR* 10 (1939): 4.

¹⁰³ S. Polupanov, “Opyt razrabotki natsional’nykh motivov v arkhitkture Uzbekistana,” *Arkhitktura SSSR* 5 (1937): 31-32.

¹⁰⁴ Greg Castillo, “Soviet Orientalism: Socialist Realism and Built Tradition,” *TDSR* 8, no. 2 (1997): 38-39.

of national character.”¹⁰⁵ As with theater in the previous chapter, authenticity, however contrived and contorted it might be, had a key role to play in the development of socialist-realist architecture among Soviet nationalities.

In designing the pavilion for the Tatar ASSR at the VSKhV, Gainutdinov, like Polupanov, focused on a revised vernacular form, building an idealized, prerevolutionary Tatar manor that surrounded a central courtyard, open and visible from the main pedestrian thoroughfare. P. T. Speranskii, who also worked with Gainutdinov on the proposal for the Kazan Palace of Culture, served as the artistic director for the Tatar Republic pavilion. He decorated the pavilion with ornamentation based on Gainutdinov’s interpretation of Bolgar source material.¹⁰⁶ Gainutdinov strove to make an “exceptional visual impact” by filling the courtyard with exaggerated national ornamentation. He directed the attention of visitors to Tatar patterns, made from plaster and colored glass, which framed the blind arcade of the central courtyard. The courtyard also featured two large fountains designed in the style of Tatar skullcaps, called *tiubetekas*.¹⁰⁷ Gainutdinov composed the Tatar manor according to the principles of proportion and symmetry of the ancient Bolgar monuments.¹⁰⁸ While little information is available about the interior of the pavilion, it certainly teemed with Tatar ornamentation too. Several exhibition stands inside depicted agricultural and industrial achievements of the TASSR.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Gainutdinov, “Pavil’ony,” 6.

¹⁰⁶ P. T. Speranskii, *Tatarskii narodnyi ornament* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1948), 18.

¹⁰⁷ Gainutdinov, “Pavil’ony,” 6-7.

¹⁰⁸ N. S. Kinos’ian, “O tvorcheskom metode arkhitektora I. G. Gainutdinova,” *Kazanskaia nauka* 4 (2010): 4.

¹⁰⁹ NART, f. R-1150, op. 1, d. 564, ll. 36-37.

In summarizing his impressions of the VSKhV, Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexø revealed that the exhibition reminded him of a scene from *Arabian Nights*.¹¹⁰ This image fits well with Katerina Clark's description of the "new Moscow" emerging in the 1930s as a Soviet utopia, an "ideal place where the contingent and the ephemeral have been transcended, an essentially aesthetic project."¹¹¹ The VSKhV placed the peoples and nations of the Soviet Union side by side, inviting comparison of individual features while also suggesting the harmony of a socialist paradise. The TASSR pavilion presented an idealized past that sought to resurrect Tatar architectural and cultural forms after centuries of Russian dominance in a way that did not threaten the ascendancy of socialist ideology. As Greg Castillo summarized, "Fairground architecture was expected to link each member of the family of socialist nations with an identifying style and weave the results into a harmonious ensemble of pavilions: a project that simultaneously acknowledged and disarmed nationalist sentiments in a multinational state."¹¹² The TASSR pavilion reflected the trend of supporting beautiful, folkloric Tatar culture, as long as it remained subservient to socialism. Of course, the pavilion revealed nothing about the messiness of life back in the Tatar Republic, with plans to remake Kazan into a Soviet city faltering due to a lack of cadres, lack of funding, lack of building materials, and a lack of understanding of how to incorporate Tatar and Russian representation within urban space. Yet this is what socialist realism, particularly when on display in Moscow, was all about: presenting an image of the "friendship of the peoples," in which each nationality had its own indigenous culture that blended into the tapestry of socialism in one state.

¹¹⁰ Gainutdinov, "Pavil'ony," 4.

¹¹¹ Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 27.

¹¹² Castillo, "Peoples at an Exhibition," 717.

Conclusion

In the summer of 1941, when war broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany, partially constructed buildings stood in central squares in both Moscow and Kazan. They evinced, however, completely different realities. The Palace of Soviets in Moscow remained the key symbol of the capital's massive facelift, a testament to the unshakable future of the country and the monumentality of its socialist vision, even if only part of a wire frame had been erected. The shell of the opera theater in Kazan, on the other hand, bespoke half-fulfilled promises of remaking Kazan into a Soviet city. Whether due to incompetence of architectural cadres, budget and material deficits, conventional bureaucratic lag, the purposeful interference and foot-dragging of Moscow policymakers, or a combination of all these factors, the failures of the Palace of Culture and opera theater projects attest to the complicated position of a capital of a national republic within the RSFSR. Just as before the Bolshevik Revolution, the inertia for Kazan to remain a provincial Russian city persisted, seen most explicitly in comparison with Central Asian and Caucasian capitals where the presence of indigenous nationalities was apparent in its architecture and urban development plans.¹¹³

This is not to say, however, that Gainutdinov's work on Tatar architecture had no influence in Kazan. The renovations carried out by P. S. Borisov in 1938 for the Union Movie Theater on Bauman Street claimed to draw on Tatar ornamentation, although the intertwined half-circles on the theater's façade seem more inspired by ambiguous Oriental themes than anything specifically Tatar.¹¹⁴ Speranskii, who worked with Gainutdinov on both the Palace of Culture proposal and the TASSR pavilion in Moscow, also reportedly incorporated Tatar design

¹¹³ See, for example, Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

¹¹⁴ Dul'skii, *Arkhitectura Kazani*, 14-15; Dul'skii, *Tatarskoe iskusstvo*, 8-9.

elements into kiosks, bridges, and pavilions he built around the city, though images of this work no longer exist.¹¹⁵ Notably, Gainutdinov briefly returned to Kazan in the postwar period to oversee the completion of work on the Kazan Opera and Ballet Theater following the death of N. A. Skvortsov, the primary architect. Gainutdinov incorporated the Tatar ornamentation he helped to pioneer two decades prior in finishing the facade and interior of the theater. Yet based on its overall appearance, the small, neoclassical theater that opened in 1956 could have been found practically anywhere in the provinces of Russia. On the whole, Tatar architectural forms in Kazan remained practically undetectable. Imagining that Kazan remained anything besides a Russian city was indeed a fantasy.

¹¹⁵ Malysheva and Sal'nikova, "Sovetskaia Kazan'."

CHAPTER 6:
THE *MAIDAN* IN KAZAN:
SABANTUI, PHYSICAL FITNESS, AND NATIONAL CULTURE

Every summer, Tatars around the world gather to celebrate Sabantui, the immensely popular summer festival that combines fun and games with serious athletic competitions under a veneer of national and folk elements. Renowned Tatar historian Bulat Sultanbekov has equated Sabantui as fundamental to Tatar culture as the Olympic Games for the Greeks, bullfighting for the Spanish, *maslenitsa* (Lent) for the Russians, or *hanami*, the festival of cherry blossoms, for the Japanese.¹ Tatars often ascribe to Sabantui an ancient pedigree that stretches back to the thirteenth century, if not primeval China. No other Tatar cultural tradition has achieved such staying power across tectonic cultural, political, linguistic, and social shifts from the late nineteenth century to the present. Even now, in the post-Soviet era, each president of the Russian Federation has traveled to the Republic of Tatarstan to participate in Sabantui, a nod to the country's multiethnic composition and an opportunity to roll up his sleeves in a "man of the people" gesture. In 1996, Boris N. Yeltsin (1991-99) took part in a traditional Sabantui game in which he smashed a clay pot while blindfolded. When visiting Kazan for the event in 2000, Vladimir V. Putin (2000-08, 2012-present) famously donned a *tubeteika*, the traditional Tatar cap, and danced around the *maidan*, the central arena of the Sabantui celebration. He even fished a coin out of a bowl of *katyk*, fermented milk, using only his mouth. Upon returning to Sabantui in 2013, Putin avoided these antics, observing events from the stands in a suit and tie, reflective

¹ Bulat Sultanbekov, introduction to *Sabantui: Obraz zhizni naroda*, by D. R. Sharafutdinov (Kazan: Ekho vekov, 1997), 36.

of his desire to cultivate a more serious image as a leader. During his obligatory visit to the city in 2011, President Dmitrii A. Medvedev (2008-12) also wore a *tubeteika* and tasted a range of Tatar national dishes.²

Yet to what can we attribute the endurance of Sabantui during the 1920s and 1930s, particularly when so many other prerevolutionary Tatar traditions fell under attack? This chapter argues that Sabantui proved a highly malleable social space in which local Party-state authorities experimented with how to respond to Stalin's call for culture that was "national in form and socialist in content." *Fizkul'tura*, or physical culture—an expansive rubric that consisted of sports, military preparedness, and personal health and hygiene—served as a useful concept for reimagining Sabantui in the Soviet era. The high profile of Sabantui in Kazan, and its massive popularity among Tatars and Russians alike, proved an efficient platform for promoting physical culture. In this chapter, I explore and assess the efforts to reconceptualize Sabantui as a *fizkul'tura* competition dressed up as a national festival. Sabantui provides one of the clearest examples of what Stalin's model of constructing culture that was "national in form and socialist in content" looked like on the ground—or better yet, on the *maidan*—during this critical period of Soviet history.

Historical Roots: From China to Kazan

"Sabantui" is an amalgamation of two Tatar words: the first, *saban*, means plow, and the second, *tui*, connotes a wedding or celebration. The few historical accounts of Sabantui claim for the festival ancient Chinese roots. According to legend, in the twenty-eighth century BCE, storied Chinese ruler Shennong designed a plow and for the first time made a furrow in a field,

² "Sommerfest in Tatarstan: Spaß mit Putin," *Spiegel Online*, June 25, 2000, accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/sommerfest-in-tatarstan-spasse-mit-putin-a-82596.html>; Marat Valeev, "Dmitrii Medvedev—tretii prezident Rossii, kotoryi priidet v Kazan' na Sabantui," *Tatcenter*, June 24, 2011, accessed February 11, 2015, <http://info.tatcenter.ru/article/102306/>; and "Dmitrii Medvedev otmetil Sabantui v Kazani," *Vesti.ru*, June 25, 2011, accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=488611>.

“inventing” agriculture in China and signaling the start of the planting season. Every spring, the Chinese would celebrate this accomplishment with a festival of singing and dancing. As the story goes, Mongols subsequently carried this celebration with them during their conquest of Eurasia, where various Turkic tribes adopted and transformed it within the context of their own cultures.³

In July 1979, linguist and historian F. S. Khakimzianov found in the village of Iske Salman in the Al'keevskii Region of the Tatar Republic an epigraph, dated June 15, 1292, with the inscription, “Day of Sabantui.” Using this archeological find, historians have suggested that Tatars have observed the holiday for well over seven hundred years, stretching back to the ancient Volga Bulgariia period, usually dated between the seventh and thirteen centuries. In its earliest manifestations, Tatars celebrated Sabantui as a “spring festival” that heralded the awakening of nature and the inception of a new farming cycle after the long winter. Traditionally, Tatars gathered for Sabantui soon after all the snow melted and a few weeks before spring plowing, depending on factors such as weather and concurrent religious celebrations.⁴ In her analysis of the genesis of Sabantui, historian R. K. Urazmanova concluded that, during the earliest Sabantui celebrations, Tatars sought to coax the spirits of fertility into providing them with a good harvest during the coming year. Over time, Sabantui lost such pagan components but continued to mark the start of the planting season.⁵

In most Tatar villages, elders formed an unofficial commission a few weeks in advance of Sabantui to work out details for the program. Young men went from house to house collecting

³ N. Semenov, *Saban-Tui* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1929), 3.

⁴ D. R. Sharafutdinov, “O proiskhozhdenii traditsionnogo prazdnika tatarskogo naroda sabantui,” *Gazyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1/2 (2002), accessed February 11, 2015, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2002_1_2/08/05/&searched=1.

⁵ R. K. Urazmanova, *Sovremennye obriady tatarskogo naroda (Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie)* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1984): 52.

prizes for the winners, such as money or elaborately embroidered towels and clothes. Similar to the rites of other Turkic tribes, the Sabantui program included wrestling, bow-and-arrow shooting, and horse racing. Sabantui began early in the morning, with guests arriving from surrounding villages on their strongest horses, always decorated with ribbons and flowers, to compete in the races.⁶ The *maidan*, a Turko-Tatar word (also shared with Ukrainian) meaning a central square or gathering place, functioned as the main arena of Sabantui. The chief Sabantui event, a wrestling tournament known as *koresh*, took place on the *maidan*. The winner of the wrestling competition was declared the Sabantui champion and, along with other prizes, walked away from the *maidan* with a ram around his shoulders.⁷ This tradition continues in the present day, though the victor receives a new car or various home appliances in addition to the ram. Historically, linen towels embroidered with Tatar patterns were one of the most desired prizes, as they carried great cultural currency as a national symbol. Many Tatar wrestlers even left wills insisting that their towels be buried with them.⁸

By the early nineteenth century, Tatars began celebrating Sabantui in Kazan too. For decades, the Kazan Sabantui took place just outside the city limits at Arsk Field. In the mid-nineteenth century, Sabantui moved to a meadow in the New Tatar District, not far from the Tatar cemetery, closer to where most Tatars lived. While Sabantui lasted only one day in the villages, it typically continued for an entire week in Kazan, from one Friday to the next. The

⁶ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 6-8.

⁷ Sharafutdinov, "O proiskhozhdenii traditsionnogo prazdnika tatarskogo naroda sabantui." As noted by Sharafutdinov, according to one of the "unwritten rules of the *maidan*," no one was supposed to leave Sabantui without a gift, even those who performed poorly in the competitions.

⁸ N. Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki v Tatarii i ikh fizkul'turnoe znachenie* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1945), 29.

city's wealthiest Tatar merchants took responsibility for organizing Sabantui.⁹ These patrons often reserved for themselves the right to compete in the wrestling tournaments, the celebration's most prestigious and popular event, without going through the prerequisite preliminary competitions.¹⁰ The most successful athletes from surrounding villages eagerly traveled to Kazan to compete, easily besting the Kazan merchants. Stories abounded of preeminent wrestlers returning to their villages with a cartload of gifts, prizes, and cash.¹¹

Historian S. Iu. Malysheva has argued that, even in the prerevolutionary period, Sabantui functioned as a place of meeting and dialogue between Tatars and Russians in Kazan.¹² The Sabantui of 1834 merits significant note in this regard. Prior to the opening ceremonies, Tatar heralds carried colorful signs, banners, and embroidered towels throughout the city, inviting everyone to the celebration. Previously, the only Russians who joined in the festivities were elite merchants and the nobility. Beginning in 1834, the lower levels of Russian society not only began attending Sabantui, but competing in events too.¹³ Russian newspapers recounted the successes of Russians in wrestling matches.¹⁴ As one Russian commentator remarked about Sabantui in a Kazan periodical in 1878, "We now have something to see here. We read about the Olympic games of the ancient Greeks, so why wouldn't we be interested in the Tatar horse races,

⁹ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 6.

¹⁰ Ibragim Zainullin, "Obnovlenniy prazdnik," *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 2, 1936, 4.

¹¹ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 15.

¹² S. Iu. Malysheva, *Prazdnyi den', dosuzhii vecher: Kul'tura dosuga rossiiskogo provintsial'nogo goroda vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX veka* (Moscow: Academia, 2011), 31-33.

¹³ Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki*, 19.

¹⁴ Malysheva, *Prazdnyi den', dosuzhii vecher*, 32.

games, and footraces of the modern Achilles, as well as the wrestling competitions among contemporary *bogatyry* (knight-warriors)?”¹⁵

Following the 1905 Revolution, progressive Tatar elites took over the responsibility for coordinating Sabantui, seeing the event as an opportunity to promote their vision for a liberal and modern Tatar society on the sidelines of the competitions. Under the auspices of the Eastern Club, these Tatars organized theatrical performances by Sayar and other troupes known for their progressive ideology, along with literary and musical gatherings, lectures by scientists, and other events designed to increase the cultural and educational level of Kazan’s Tatars. Well-known liberal Tatar poets such as Gabdulla Tukai, Fatykh Amirkhan, and Galiaskar Kamal voiced their support for Sabantui as well, describing the celebration as useful for promoting national self-consciousness.¹⁶ Naturally, this progressive agenda did not please all elements of Tatar society, especially conservative clergy, who associated Sabantui with creeping secularization and an uptick in public intoxication, gambling, and other “sinful” habits. Orenburg mullah Abu Sagit Ash-Shodavi described Sabantui as the “Wedding of Satan” (a play on the dual meaning of *tui* as a celebration or wedding) and called on his peers to work to “prohibit such holidays, which only weaken our morality.”¹⁷

Red Maidan

In the summer of 1917, Sabantui for the first time took place at Arkadiia Garden, on the far southern edge of the city next to the west bank of Lake Kaban, not far from Kazan’s historically Tatar districts. Guests reached Arkadiia, four miles from the city center, by either

¹⁵ Quoted in D. R. Sharafutdinov, *Sabantui: Prazdnik truda* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1987), 62.

¹⁶ D. R. Sharafutdinov, *Istoricheskie korni i razvitie traditsionnoi kul’tury tatarskogo naroda* (Kazan: Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov, 2004), 216-18.

¹⁷ Quoted in Sharafutdinov, *Sabantui: Prazdnik truda*, 63.

boat or bus, though both were notorious for breaking down. Even after the Bolshevik Revolution, Tatar merchants continued to finance and plan the “unofficial holiday of Kazan” in conjunction with representatives from Party-state bodies, such as the TASSR Obkom, Pomgol (the famine relief organization), labor unions, the Red Army, and the Tatar military commissariat.¹⁸ In 1924, the TASSR Central Executive Committee took over responsibility for Sabantui but allowed Tatar entrepreneurs to operate at the festival, as these merchants footed the bill when state coffers came up empty, particularly during the cash-strapped years of the New Economic Policy (NEP).¹⁹ Donations from Tatar backers even underwrote the construction of a 1,500-person grandstand around the Sabantui *maidan* in Arkadiia Garden soon after the October Revolution.²⁰

The organizers of Sabantui celebrations in the early Soviet era used the festival as an opportunity to collect donations for orphans, workers on strike throughout Western Europe, Red Army soldiers, and victims of famine and fire. In 1919, Tatar Bolshevik, revolutionary, and propagandist M. A. Dulat-Ali oversaw the Sabantui committee in conjunction with Tatar charitable organizations *Zhämgyiati khörriia* (Public Will) and *Hönärmendlär* (Craftsmen). He arranged for all monetary contributions to go to regiments of Tatar soldiers fighting in the Civil War.²¹ Similarly, organizers of the 1922 Sabantui used that year’s event to raise money for famine relief. They hoped the festival would improve the overall mood in Kazan after an especially harsh winter and “revive within the general population a spirit of cheerfulness and a tangible hope for the rapid improvement of living conditions.” The Sabantui committee also

¹⁸ Malysheva, *Prazdnyi den’, dosuzhii vecher*, 31; and “Polozhenie o provedenii prazdnika vesny i Saban-tuia,” *Izvestiia*, May 28, 1922, 3.

¹⁹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 378, l. 3; M. Berezin, “Na maidane,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 27, 1928, 3; and Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 16.

²⁰ Sharafutdinov, *Istoricheskie korni*, 219.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 221. That year, admission to Arkadiia Garden cost ten rubles, or twenty-five rubles for access to the *maidan* itself, though Civil War-era inflation certainly contributed to the price hike.

wanted to induce sympathy toward the starving peasantry. One Sabantui advertisement in a local newspaper appealed to citizens of Kazan, “Do not forget the hungry village! We will encourage and support it. Citizens, by allowing yourself a well-deserved rest and a little fun, you will support the hungry.”²²

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, the celebration did take on decisively Soviet elements. Opening ceremonies included a cannon salute, a ceremonial raising of the red Soviet flag, speeches from local Party-state functionaries, and the singing of the *Internationale*.²³ Throughout revolutionary Russia, Bolsheviks used public ceremonies to honor revolutionary heroes, promote and explain revolutionary concepts, and boost morale. In an effort “to remake the world according to their ideological visions,” they exerted control over social space through the public celebration of festivals and holidays.²⁴ Bolsheviks promoted the celebration of new holidays, such as May Day (May 1) the anniversary of the October Revolution (November 7), International Youth Day (September 4), Red Army Day (February 23), International Women’s Day (March 8), and a host of others. Kazan city administrators moved the celebration of Sabantui to align with June 25, an important date in the local revolutionary calendar marking the anniversary of the establishment of the Tatar ASSR. These “red” festivals helped to create a new

²² “Polozhenie o provedenii prazdnika vesny i Saban-tuia,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, May 28, 1922, 3. In spite of the pessimistic mood, the Sabantui committee created a surprisingly ambitious program, including horse, boat, and bicycle races; a simulation of a naval battle on Kaban Lake; airplane rides; open-air orchestra performances; and other sporting events. Open-air opera, drama, and ballet performances, as well as fireworks displays, were scheduled for other parks throughout the city. Profits from stands selling artwork and handcrafts made by Kazan university students went directly to famine relief. Most notably, a daily raffle was held to raise money for Pomgol, the organization coordinating famine relief. The featured prizes included a cow, eight hundred roof tiles, and shoes. Indicative of the attractiveness of these goods, tickets for the raffle sold out every day. See: *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, June 3, 1922, 4; “Pervyi den’ prazdnika vesny,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, June 6, 1922, 4; and “Prazdnik vesny–pomoshch’ zemlerobam,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, June 7, 1922, 2.

²³ Semenov, *Natsional’nye narodnye prazdniki*, 9.

²⁴ Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia’s Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 215-26. Quote on p. 243.

collective historical memory of the Bolsheviks' achievements through mass demonstrations and reenactments depicting the October Revolution and key Civil War victories, thereby legitimizing and strengthening the authority of the Party-state among the public, while also providing a reprieve from the war, hunger, and terror of the early Soviet years. Throughout the Soviet Union, mass dramatizations helped support Bolshevik rituals and situate observers within the "mythic history" unfolding around them, offering a glimpse into the utopia ushered in by the revolutionary events of October 1917.²⁵ Moreover, Bolsheviks intended these festivals to replace religious holidays that were ideologically antithetical to the new order. Sabantui contributed to this objective, too, as TASSR authorities scheduled Sabantui to overlap with and thus divert participation away from Uraza-bairam (Eid al-Fitr), the feast day celebrated by Muslims at the end of Ramadan.²⁶ By exerting control over public spaces and celebrations in Kazan, the Bolsheviks sought to overcome provincial and religious backwardness and ingrain in the public an understanding of their value and place in society.²⁷

Beyond its political agenda, Sabantui functioned as a key space of leisure and entertainment in Kazan, an opportunity to take a break from work and enjoy the return of spring weather.²⁸ For most of the Sabantui celebrations of the 1920s, daily advertisements appeared in local newspapers, enticing visitors with promises of elaborate firework displays, parades, athletic

²⁵ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 79-100; Stites, "Bolshevik Ritual Building in the 1920s," in *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Russian Society and Culture*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 295-309.

²⁶ "Saban-Tui—prazdnik bedniakov, prazdnik sovetskoi obshchestvennosti," *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 18, 1928.

²⁷ For the development of festival culture in Kazan, see S. Iu. Malysheva, *Sovetskaia prazdnichnaia kul'tura v provintsii: Prostranstvo, simvol, istoricheskie mify (1917-1927)* (Kazan: Ruten, 2005), 29-58. For festival culture in the larger Soviet context, see: Rolf, *Soviet Mass Festivals*, 31-63; James von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

²⁸ M., "Saban-Tui," *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 25, 1927.

competitions, and snack bars full of wine, beer, tea, ice cream, and other food. Hawkers milled throughout the crowds, selling cigarettes, nuts, and candy. One notice in 1926 even promoted a fight between a man and a bear.²⁹ Other entertainment included singing, dancing, live music, circus performers, and mass dramatizations of revolutionary accomplishments.³⁰

Beginning in the 1920s, women began participating in Sabantui in new ways too. In the prerevolutionary era, Sabantui remained a highly segregated space between sexes, with women observing events at a distance while drinking tea and socializing. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, their presence at Sabantui increased. Few sources elaborate on this point, except to testify to their growing presence initially as spectators, and later as athletes.³¹ As historian N. P. Tagirova has noted, conservative Muslim clergy continued to insist that prayer trumped physical activity in ensuring good health, a sentiment that initially hindered many Tatar women from joining in the *fizkul'tura* movement. Only by the mid-1930s did Tatar women participate with greater regularity in Kazan's athletic and sports societies.³²

Throughout this period, the purpose of Sabantui remained in contention. In the early 1920s, local Party-state authorities opposed Sabantui altogether, casting the festival as “unnecessary,” “chaotic,” “entirely foreign,” and too closely associated with religion. These critics believed Sabantui to be a “relic of the past” and proposed getting rid of it entirely. Others wanted to preserve the event, but remove everything “unnecessary, unhealthy, and uncultured.” During the 1923 Sabantui, held in conjunction with the celebration of the third anniversary of the

²⁹ *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 20, 1926, 4.

³⁰ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1150, ll. 52-60.

³¹ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 5.

³² N. P. Tagirova, “Istoriko-pedagogicheskii aspekti fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta zhenshchin Tatarii” (Candidate diss., Kama Polytechnic Institute, 2000).

founding of the Tatar Republic, these organizers renounced the drunken spectator sports of wrestling and horse racing, reminiscent of the bacchanalia of prerevolutionary *maslenitsa*, in favor of a modern celebration of “sports, strength, and agility.”³³ Descriptions of Sabantui as a “kingdom for drunks and hooligans” continued to plague the event well into the 1930s, which undoubtedly contributed to organizers’ hope that the focus on physical fitness would curb these unhealthy behaviors.³⁴ Upon attending the Kazan Sabantui for the first time in 1924, one Tatar observer insisted on the need to “bring this national holiday to life and make it into an actual celebration with healthy entertainment while also driving out any religious hues.”³⁵

N. A. Semenov, one of the first organizers of the *fizkul'tura* movement in the Tatar Republic and the main advocate of Sabantui during the early Soviet era, proposed preserving the “tastes and traditions” of Sabantui but also transforming them “in the spirit of modernity.” He called for the exclusion of kulaks, merchants, and other foreign class elements from involvement in Sabantui as organizers, financiers, and patrons. Semenov believed that enlisting the participation of “a wide swath of Soviet society, proletariat, and poor peasantry” would build interest in more modern forms of sports and entertainment with “greater revolutionary-class coloring.” As he argued, the Sabantui program needed to “meet the needs of the present day.”³⁶ The question remained, of course, about what those needs encompassed. Semenov contended that the answer could be found in *fizkul'tura*.

³³ “Saban-Tui,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, June 27, 1923, 2.

³⁴ S. Tanai, “Pervye dni Saban-tuia,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 17, 1930. Beginning in 1929, the sale of all alcoholic beverages, except beer, was banned at Sabantui. See: TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 714, l. 38; and NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1307, l. 8.

³⁵ K. Shigaev, “Na tatarskoi ‘Olimpiade’: ‘Saban-Tui’,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 20, 1924, 3.

³⁶ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 19-22.

Sports, Military Preparedness, and Health

Uncertainty over the role of Sabantui in Kazan reflected the thorny issue of how to reconcile national traditions with Soviet culture.³⁷ As Stalin emphasized, while culture might take discrete tracks among various national groups, it should convey the same socialist message. The specifics about how this “national in form and socialist in content” concept should play out on the ground, however, remained blurry.³⁸ Local Party-state leaders saw Sabantui as an opportunity to bring Stalin’s famous dictum to life. By expanding their control over Sabantui following Stalin’s directive, they sought to “Sovietize” the event and bring it into the ideological fold. Political, educational, and athletic organizations helped Sabantui achieve new relevance by linking the festival with key *fizkul’tura* objectives, namely the promotion of sports, military preparedness, and personal health and hygiene. Providing all nationalities in the Tatar Republic equal access to the event tempered any nationalist undertones. The ideological content of Sabantui, while appealing to a Tatar audience, remained relevant and applicable to all citizens.

Sports and athletic culture began growing in popularity in Russia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since the 1860s, interest in noble forms of leisure—horse riding and racing, hunting, fencing, and yachting—had expanded alongside newer activities imported by foreigners living in Russia, such as tennis, cricket, rowing, skating, weightlifting, and gymnastics.³⁹ As Louise McReynolds has observed, sports served as a “democratizing”

³⁷ I. V. Stalin, “O politicheskikh zadachakh universiteta narodov Vostoka. Rech’ na sobranii studentov KUTV, 18 maia 1925 g.,” in *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1952), 5:138. In the earliest formulations of the phrase, “proletarian” replaced “socialist.”

³⁸ Scholars have approached this concept through the lens of national languages and their alphabets, music, and cuisine. See: Erik R. Scott, “Edible Ethnicity: How Georgian Cuisine Conquered the Soviet Table,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 4 (2012): 831-58; Marina Frolova-Walker, “‘National in Form, Socialist in Content’: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 331-71; and Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 182-207.

³⁹ Robert Edelman, *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the USSR* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28-29.

medium, helping to redefine social and estate boundaries in the late imperial era.⁴⁰ Yet these sporting activities were primarily concentrated in the largest cities of the empire, such as St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Kiev.⁴¹

Historian S. Iu. Malysheva has argued that residents of smaller provincial cities such as Kazan expressed only limited interest in sports in the late imperial era. A number of social organizations based on shared interests, such as hunting, fishing, gardening, and beekeeping, did emerge in Kazan at that time, and people certainly enjoyed strolls through parks, particularly Arkadiia Garden and “Russian Switzerland” (later renamed as Gorky Park and the site of Sabantui celebrations beginning in 1933). Yet apart from bicycle riding, which became relatively popular in Kazan, modern sports like boxing, soccer, hockey, and tennis gained only a modest foothold.⁴² Still, sports had become enough of a social phenomenon to provoke debate among Kazan Tatars regarding the value of physical exercise and its relationship to Shari’a law. As they encountered new scientific ideas about wellness through medicine, physical activity, and diet, Tatars began to reconsider the will of Allah as the primary factor in determining individual health. Progressive mullahs at the Galiia madrassa in Ufa incorporated physical education classes into the curriculum for Tatar pupils beginning in 1912 and later expanded them elsewhere. Students had access to textbooks describing sports such as gymnastics, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. At the same time, Tatar publishers in Kazan printed brochures, most of which were translated from other languages, explaining the benefits of various athletic endeavors, such as swimming and stretching. In one, Tatar theologian Riza Fakhretdin described physical exercise

⁴⁰ Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 2003), 76-112.

⁴¹ Ekaterina Emeliantseva, “Russian Sport and the Challenges of Its Recent Historiography,” *Journal of Sport History* 38, no. 3 (2011): 361-72.

⁴² Malysheva, *Prazdnyi den*, 87-88, 158.

and labor as benefitting circulation and appetite, strengthening muscles, and increasing brain activity. Historian L. R. Gabdrafiikova has concluded that, by the early twentieth century, sports were growing in importance among Tatars, or at least among the commercial and intellectual elite with the time and money for these pursuits.⁴³

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, the Party's leading propagandists and social engineers devoted great attention to sports as a way of promoting military preparedness. In May 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee endowed the newly formed Vsevobuch (Central Agency for Universal Military Training) with authority over all sports organizations in the country, in part to provide the Red Army with physically fit soldiers. The universal control exerted by Vsevobuch over physical education gave the Red Army the space to establish youth military training programs.⁴⁴ In the wake of the Civil War, with a less immediate need for soldiers, supervision over all sports-related initiatives shifted to the Supreme Council of Physical Culture, formed in 1923. Led by Commissar of Health N. A. Semashko, the council emphasized civilian aspects of physical culture, indicative of a new political and social climate that prioritized a healthy population as a whole. In the words of one historian of Soviet sport, the emerging concept of *fizkul'tura* sought to "increase labor productivity, prepare workers for defense, and inculcate habits of collectivism, good hygiene, and discipline."⁴⁵ In spite of this civilian turn, the military remained closely associated with the sports movement, given the strong representation of the Red Army, the secret police's sports organization Dinamo, and Osoaviakhim (Union of Societies of Assistance to Defense and Aviation-Chemical Construction

⁴³ Gabdrafiikova, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' gorodskikh tatar*, 259-63.

⁴⁴ Susan Grant, "The Politics and Organization of Physical Culture in the USSR during the 1920s," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 89, no. 3 (2011): 495-96.

⁴⁵ Barbara Keys, "Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture in the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 417.

of the USSR) on the Supreme Council of Physical Culture.⁴⁶ This link between military preparedness and physical culture persisted for the duration of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

On September 2, 1923, the Tatar Republic Sovnarkom, following the lead of Moscow, created its own Supreme Council of Physical Culture, replacing earlier, failed attempts at uniting a variety of local clubs and organizations related to sports and physical education.⁴⁸ It comprised representatives from each government commissariat, as well as the Kazan City Soviet and the Party and Komsomol obkoms.⁴⁹ One of the most pressing issues facing the TASSR Supreme Council concerned the promotion of *fizkul'tura* among Tatars. In 1922, Sokolov, the interim military commander of the Tatar Republic, wrote to K. G. Mukhtarov, at the time the head of the TASSR Sovnarkom, to discuss the state of sports in relation to predraft physical training. Sokolov lamented that the Volga famine of 1921-23 had greatly inhibited the military's work. As he expounded, forcing a "starved and atrophied" individual to begin physical training, with its great strain on the entire body, "first of all is not rational, and second could alienate people from physical education, thus hindering our efforts to improve their health in the future." Sokolov fretted over declining interest in both sports and military service among Tatars. As of February 1922, Kazan had no sports infrastructure in Tatar districts of the city. Sokolov insisted this

⁴⁶ Grant, "The Politics and Organization of Physical Culture," 499.

⁴⁷ Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 33.

⁴⁸ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 292, l. 9. In 1925, jurisdiction of the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture was transferred to the local Central Executive Committee. See: "Postanovlenie Tsentral'nogo Komiteta i Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov TSSR o peredache Vysshego Soveta fizicheskoi kul'tury iz vedeniia SNK v vedenie TsIK TSSR," in D. I. Ibragimov and R. T. Burganov, eds., *Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Respublike Tatarstan (1920-2000 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kazan: Glavnoe arkhivnoe upravlenie pri Kabinete Ministrov RT, 2012), 18.

⁴⁹ "Postanovlenie Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov TSSR ob uchrezhdenii Vysshego Soveta fizicheskoi kul'tury TSSR," in *Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta*, 16-17.

oversight be remedied immediately. He hoped that staffing the new sports facilities with Tatar instructors would appeal to Tatar youth to engage in more physical activity.⁵⁰

During a 1925 conference, A. Mukhamed'iarov, the head of the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture, proposed opening courses to train Tatar athletic instructors and publishing additional physical culture literature in Tatar.⁵¹ G. B. Bogautdinov, a leading figure on the TASSR Central Executive Committee, likewise advocated increased attention to physical education among Tatars. As he explained, "This problem is very important because, in attracting young people to athletic organizations, we can revolutionize daily life, which is still fairly stagnant, and thus extract young workers from the influence of clergy and all reactionary elements of both cities and villages." Paying greater attention to Tatars "would help to penetrate into the heart of the working masses and create a healthy generation."⁵² Yet Tatars remained underserved and underinvolved in the sports movement. How could the supreme council break through to them?

Notably, Moscow's Supreme Council of Physical Culture also took up the issue of physical culture among the national minorities of the RSFSR. In the interest of the "revitalization and development of physical culture in national regions," Moscow decided to host a conference on physical culture in Kazan, a logical choice given the city's geographic centrality and role in mediating the rollout of nationality policies for the Soviet Union as a whole. In October 1927, delegates gathered representing the Votiak (Udmurt), Kalmyk, Mari, Chuvash, and Komi oblasts; the Tatar, Kyrgyz, Crimean, Kazakh, and Bashkir republics; and other national groups without their own territories. At the conference, delegates were instructed to consider how their

⁵⁰ NART, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 292, ll. 5-5ob.

⁵¹ NART, f. R-2613, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 15-15ob.

⁵² Bogautdinov, "Fizkul'tura v natsraionakh," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, October 12, 1927, 2.

local festivals and holidays might be used to meet *fizkul'tura* objectives.⁵³ They decided to open in Kazan a physical culture school that would train national minorities and to publish a *fizkul'tura* journal in Tatar that would target Muslims throughout the RSFSR.⁵⁴ The conference also passed a resolution to incorporate national festivals such as Sabantui into the physical culture movement by including modern athletic competitions in their programs.⁵⁵

On the heels of this noteworthy decision, by early 1928 the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture assumed complete control over Sabantui.⁵⁶ The council sought to blend key *fizkul'tura* components, namely sports, military preparedness, and personal health, into the festival's program without losing its traditional national components. In this regard, the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture began the difficult task of creating culture that was "national in form and socialist in content." This takeover built upon several years of Sovietization stretching back to 1921, when Sabantui was first promoted as a "people's sports festival."⁵⁷ In 1923, more modern gymnastics and track-and-field events were brought into the Sabantui program alongside the traditional folk games.⁵⁸ At the insistence of the TASSR High Soviet of Physical Culture, which at the time likely continued to cooperate with Tatar charitable societies to organize Sabantui, the 1926 festival included footraces of various lengths, long jump,

⁵³ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1154, ll. 1-2.

⁵⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 273, l. 174. In 1931, a National Technical School for Physical Culture opened in Kazan. Prominent local athlete S. N. Gladkov was chosen to head the school, which specialized in track and field, gymnastics, boxing, and skiing. I have not seen any evidence that this journal was actually published.

⁵⁵ O. Fedotova, "Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Tatarstane v 1920-1930 gg," *Gasyrlar avazy-Ekko vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2012), accessed February 11, 2015, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2012_3_4/12/01/&searched=1; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 273, l. 174.

⁵⁶ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1150, l. 52.

⁵⁷ Sharafutdinov, *Istoricheskie korni*, 222.

⁵⁸ "Saban-Tui," *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, June 27, 1923, 2.

high jump, shot-put, and discus.⁵⁹ One Tatar commentator had already advocated for slyly introducing physical culture to the masses via Sabantui, concluding that new forms of sports and entertainment would allow the event to retain its traditional character while promoting the “physical, cultural, and political development of the population.”⁶⁰

Beginning in 1928, the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture devoted exclusive attention to preparing for the “grand national event” of Sabantui. The council maintained that Sabantui represented the best opportunity to promote physical culture among Tatars, who attended the celebration en masse to watch and participate in the sporting events. Unfortunately, though, archival records provide no details about the number of people in attendance. The council conveyed its interest in supporting Sabantuis in villages and rural towns, too, so that the victors of each would have an opportunity to travel from the countryside to take part in the championship competitions in Kazan. The Supreme Council even appealed to the TASSR Central Executive Committee for increased funding during the 1928-29 budget year to expand the size of the Sabantui *maidan*, illuminate it at night, and repair many of the structures in Arkadiia Garden that had become dilapidated over the years.⁶¹

In early 1928, the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture approved a program for Sabantui that integrated new activities and performances with traditional events. A testament to the political tone of the day, the council articulated its objectives of developing a “carefully selected and class-oriented program of entertainment and mass action in order to improve the life of workers and quickly ensure the victory of the cultural revolution.” The program sought to imbue the national traditions of Sabantui with ideological content endorsed by the Soviet regime,

⁵⁹ NART, f. R-2613, op. 1, d. 1, l. 60.

⁶⁰ Dadzhal, “Chto takoe Saban-Tui?,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 4, 1926, 3.

⁶¹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1307, l. 7.

enlisting sports administrators to “observe and study all features of Tatar sports and games in order to develop Soviet physical culture in the TASSR based on existing ethnographic, racial, and national particularities.” Moreover, incorporating both Tatars and Russians into competitions would allow the two nationalities to “mutually enrich each other in the realm of sports and games.”⁶² The program called for the Sabantui *maidan* to be covered with decorations, posters, and banners heralding revolutionary slogans and other political messages. Sabantui would begin with a speech from a representative of the supreme council discussing the importance of the celebration, followed by an announcement of the day’s program in both Tatar and Russian. Next would come a parade of athletes, ideally consisting primarily of Tatars. The first events would then begin, including a triathlon, Tatar wrestling, folk dancing, and a thousand-meter race.

A special Sabantui organizing committee within the Supreme Council of Physical Culture ensured the proper ideological content of the program and sought a balance between spectator sports in which elite athletes competed and mass games that could involve as many people as possible. The TASSR Supreme Council actually approved more than fifty-five athletic competitions and activities for the Sabantui program, including various kinds of horse races and wrestling styles (Tatar, American, Russian, Swiss, and “Gypsy”). Indicative of the shift toward modern, European sports, many track and field events were included: footraces, shot put, high jump, long jump, pole vault, and more. Aquatic events included swimming, diving, sailing, and rowing competitions, as well as demonstrations on how to rescue drowning swimmers and revive those who had lost consciousness.⁶³

⁶² NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1150, l. 52.

⁶³ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1150, ll. 52-60.

The Supreme Council of Physical Culture overtly emphasized physical fitness as a manifestation of military preparedness at Sabantui. At the prompting of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the TASSR Party Obkom in 1928, the council began to cooperate with the local branch of Osoaviakhim to expand the “militarization” of the Sabantui program, undoubtedly in part a response to the war scare with Great Britain during the previous year.⁶⁴ Osoaviakhim, an amalgamation of various volunteer societies, was formed in Moscow in January 1927 with the intent of helping to prepare reserves for military service. The organization placed particular emphasis on sports, including shooting and horse riding, both of which were familiar to Sabantui participants. Membership in Osoaviakhim, which by 1930 had expanded to more than five million people throughout the Soviet Union, became a prestigious accomplishment and an indicator of one’s physical aptitude.⁶⁵ It thus served as a logical partner for the militarization of Sabantui. During Sabantui, the local Osoaviakhim branch organized shooting competitions, held open lectures and discussions, and distributed literature. It concentrated its few Tatar-speaking propagandists at Sabantui in order to maximize its coverage among Tatar guests.⁶⁶

The new Sabantui program adopted by the Supreme Council of Physical Culture contained details on how to militarize the event. Cavalrymen, such as those of the Tatar-Bashkir Military School, were to perform and demonstrate practical skills, such as how to clean wounds.⁶⁷ Many approved activities had distinct military overtones: archery, firearms shooting, and footraces while wearing gas masks. According to organizers, each day of the Sabantui

⁶⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 572, l. 114.

⁶⁵ Susan Grant, *Physical Culture and Sport in Soviet Society: Propaganda, Acculturation, and Transformation in the 1920s and 1930s* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 179-80.

⁶⁶ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1307, ll. 72-76; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 714, l. 38.

⁶⁷ Sharafutdinov, *Istoricheskie korni*, 224.

program should include some military activity “so that people can familiarize themselves with national defense and with our Red Army.” The military presentations were to vary so as to ensure maximum interest and even included mass dramatizations of revolutionary events by Red Army soldiers. The grand finale on the last day of Sabantui was to merge national, military, and athletic performances.⁶⁸ As Semenov explained, combining sports and military preparedness “facilitates not only fun and healthy leisure, but also develops in our youth the necessary physical characteristics for fighting: strength and flexibility, and the ability to overcome both real and artificial obstacles.”⁶⁹

These new ideological components transformed the spirit of Sabantui. The 1928 festival, for example, coincided with the eighth anniversary of the Tatar Republic and included events such as running, jumping, throwing, swimming, bicycling, and more. A mass march celebrated the victories of *fizkul'tura*.⁷⁰ One observer, M. Berezin, described the atmosphere on the Sabantui *maidan*, still in Arkadiia Garden, as “exuberant, joyful, and cheerful, yet unpretentious, where anyone who wanted could show off his strength, agility, and resourcefulness.” From the grandstand, thousands of spectators cheered on wrestlers, fighting in “skullcaps and sandals.” Berezin noted that some of the “newer” events included running with gas masks and rifle shooting. He acknowledged that “Sabantui was undoubtedly changing,” with the introduction that year of activities with “more of an ‘athletic’ character, and certainly a more healthy slant.”⁷¹

A third component of the new Kazan Sabantui concerned health and hygiene, concepts intimately related with both physical fitness and military preparedness. Health and hygiene in

⁶⁸ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1150, ll. 52-60.

⁶⁹ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 5.

⁷⁰ “Fizkul'turniki na Saban-Tue,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 5, 1928, 3.

⁷¹ M. Berezin, “Na maidane,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 27, 1928, 3.

Kazan, and especially among Tatars, produced much anxiety among local Party-state officials. Visitors to Kazan constantly bemoaned the dismal sanitary conditions of the city, which had long been known for its squalor.⁷² In the early 1920s, Kazan was overrun with epidemics of tuberculosis, measles, scarlet fever, cholera, typhus, dysentery, and smallpox. The Volga famine of 1921-23 only exacerbated matters, as thousands of sick and malnourished refugees passed through Kazan, which was completely unprepared for responding to such a humanitarian disaster.⁷³ In 1926, V. N. Semenov, a professor and specialist on urban planning from Moscow, visited Kazan to offer his opinion on the state of the city. He asserted that, in regard to the growth of epidemics, diseases, and death rates in the city, Kazan could easily rank as one of the worst places to live not just in the USSR, but in the entire world. Semenov blamed cramped living spaces, a consequence of minimal housing construction in the city, for exacerbating these problems.⁷⁴ Orphanages, student dormitories, apartment buildings, and factories suffered from overcrowding and lacked sufficient light, air, and circulation, all of which made conditions ripe for diseases such as tuberculosis. The report blamed rampant epidemics on the “complete contamination of Kazan and its general slovenliness and lack of cultured habits.”⁷⁵

The poor hygienic state of the city disproportionately affected Tatars. In 1926 and 1928, physician M. I. Oifebakh released two reports on tuberculosis among Tatar patients. In 1925, the

⁷² V. Emdin, “Kazanskaia pyl’,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 6, 1925.

⁷³ “Na zasedanii Gorispolkoma,” *Izvestiia TsIK TASSR*, December 9, 1921, 2. As the evacuation process backlogged at the beginning of the famine, many of the sick remained in Kazan, and this caught city authorities completely unprepared. Poor living and bathing conditions surrounding the train station, where many refugees camped, became centers of disease. The morality rate among refugee children in particular skyrocketed, reaching upwards of thirty-five percent. Hospitals overflowed with the sick and could not provide clean sheets or clothes, nor did they have the necessary cleaning supplies to disinfect their equipment. A few years later, when refugees returned to the Tatar Republic from Siberia, Turkestan, Ukraine, and other corners of the Soviet Union, they brought back their diseases with them. Many remained in processing in Kazan for over a month, without sufficient food or shelter. The refugees had no change of clothes and were often covered in parasites that continued to spread fever among them.

⁷⁴ “Moskovskie professora o Kazani,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, July 2, 1926, 2.

⁷⁵ Povolzhanin, “Kazan’, gorod griaznyi.”

death rate from tuberculosis for Tatars in Kazan was thirty-three per ten thousand people, more than twice the rate in Moscow. By 1927, while the mortality rate had decreased among Russians in Kazan, it had actually grown among Tatars, up to forty per ten thousand people. In investigating the causes behind the high rate, Oifebakh determined that a quarter of cases could be ascribed to unsanitary living conditions, as many Tatars were living in cellars or cramped quarters of dilapidated buildings. Oifebakh noted that allowing the sick to sleep on makeshift beds on the floor contaminated living spaces, but Tatars rejected advice that they segregate their sick into separate sleeping quarters as disrupting “family traditions.” Oifebakh criticized the unvaried diet of Tatars, which severely lacked vegetables and disease-fighting vitamins. As he described, the tradition of donating to mullahs and relatives the clothes, prayer mat, and other belongings of the deceased only further spread disease. Oifebakh even had difficulty convincing Tatars to visit tuberculosis clinics, since most Tatars preferred to put their faith in natural healing.⁷⁶ Moreover, few clinics employed Tatar-speaking doctors, and poor Tatars could rarely speak Russian.⁷⁷ Affirmative action programs for doctors had not yet caught up with demand.

Not surprisingly, then, many of the Tatar-language propaganda posters of the late 1920s and early 1930s—at least those that have survived to the present day in Kazan archives and libraries—conveyed messages about health and hygiene. Some sought to explain causes of and treatments for tuberculosis, encouraging Tatars to visit clinics for free vaccinations. Others promoted special events, such as an exhibition on social hygiene in the Tatar district planned by the Kazan City Commissariat for Health, with a Tatar-speaking doctor on hand to discuss disease prevention and treatment. Another made the connection between health, hygiene, sport, and

⁷⁶ “Tuberkulez sredi tatar,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, July 28, 1926, 3; and M. Oifebakh, “Smernost’ ot tuberkuleza sredi tatarskogo naseleniia Kazani,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, April 22, 1928, 3.

⁷⁷ “Tak ne goditsia,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, October 1, 1924, 3.

military preparedness even more explicit. Entitled “A Healthy Recruit Strengthens the Defense of the USSR,” the poster featured a fit, muscular Tatar male with several athletic awards to his name engaged in a number of activities befitting a potential Red Army soldier: shaving his beard and getting a haircut; washing his hands before meals; going to the bathhouse to bathe; cleaning and disinfecting his clothes; visiting the doctor for regular checkups; receiving all necessary vaccinations; and attending lectures and reading various Tatar-language publications regarding sanitation. The poster promised that the Red Army was waiting for such recruits, at the peak of mental and physical fitness, personified by the Tatar male depicted in military uniform.

Anxieties regarding the health and hygiene of Tatars led to calls for a “cleansing” of Sabantui to promote “every healthy cultural innovation in order to make the celebration more modern and appropriate.”⁷⁸ Starting at least with the 1927 Sabantui, the TASSR Commissariat of Health organized exhibitions and lectures on health, with special sections focusing on anatomy, physiology, motherhood, and venereal diseases.⁷⁹ After 1929, the sale of alcohol was forbidden at Sabantui in an effort to curb drunkenness and mark the festival as a sober, healthy celebration of physical fitness. Additionally, the Supreme Council of Physical Culture excluded some traditional games because of their supposedly unhygienic elements. Moreover, Sabantui had previously proceeded without any medical supervision, with those who were injured receiving no medical care. As a result, doctors and medical staff were recruited to be on hand in case of emergencies.⁸⁰ Ultimately, health and hygiene complemented the larger program of physical culture promoted at Sabantui.

⁷⁸ “Saban-Tui—prazdnik bedniakov, prazdnik sovetskoï obshchestvennosti,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 18, 1928.

⁷⁹ *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 9, 1927.

⁸⁰ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 17-18.

Sabantui and National Culture

In addition to promoting *fizkul'tura*, Sabantui remained an important space for performing national culture. Young women often came to the Kazan Sabantui in handmade, national dresses, their hair braided and decorated with silver coins, a traditional accouterment of Tatar apparel.⁸¹ Intermissions between rounds of wrestling competitions featured Tatars singing, dancing, and performing musical instruments in the middle of the *maidan*.⁸² At one Sabantui, Tatar girls performed national dances with rakes held high over their heads, a clear moment of national forms of culture imbued with socialist content, given the emphasis on high agricultural yields associated with the move toward collectivization.⁸³ While the veneer of Sabantui remained unmistakably Tatar, all nationalities could use Sabantui to showcase their membership in the Soviet family of nations. Dance and music performances featured Tatar, Russian, Chuvash, Mari, Georgian, and Ukrainian troupes.⁸⁴ These cultural events, interspersed among sporting competitions, underscored Sabantui's role as a space not only for athleticism, but also for cultural creativity and expression. The festival served, in Semenov's formulation, as a "natural bridge across which all physical education and cultural workers must pass, not only to become closer to the masses, but so that their work may be brought to life through such proximity."⁸⁵

In designing the new Sabantui in the late 1920s, organizers decided to keep games that had long been part of the Sabantui program in a nod to the national heritage of the festival. For example, in one game, a blindfolded participant marched ten steps away from a pot lying on the

⁸¹ M., "Saban-Tui," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 25, 1927.

⁸² Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 14.

⁸³ B. Zorin, "Prazdnik bol'shevistskogo urozhaiia—prazdnik zazhitocnoi zhizni," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, October 4, 1933, 4.

⁸⁴ Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki*, 50.

⁸⁵ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 29.

ground. He then turned around and tried to return and smash the pot with a stick. In another, called “Indian boxing,” two contestants straddled a log suspended off the ground and attempted to knock off each other with straw-filled bags. Popular footraces included a sack race and a sprint in which participants balanced an egg on a spoon held with only their mouths. One of the most exciting events consisted of climbing a pole that stood at least fifteen meters in the air. Without any harness, participants would shimmy up the pole, which became skinnier the higher it went, in pursuit of a prize attached to the top, such as a tubeteika, shirt, or embroidered towel.⁸⁶ These games can still be observed at Sabantui celebrations today.

Not all prerevolutionary games made the cut for the new program, however, given that some had apparently been engineered to humiliate the poor. In one such game, participants stuck their faces in bowls of sour milk, trying to fish out a few kopecks using only their mouths. It lost favor in the Soviet era not only because of its antagonism toward members of the lower classes who would degrade themselves for a handful of kopecks, but also due to unhygienic elements of sharing contaminated milk. The game did return to Sabantui in the post-Soviet era, as seen by Putin’s participation in 2000. In another, loaves of bread were suspended high off the ground; if anyone jumped and caught part of a loaf in his mouth, he won five kopecks. Poor people lined up to participate in the event, eager to win the prizes, while the bourgeois elite looked on and laughed. Such a spectacle did have a place in the Soviet Sabantui.⁸⁷

In contrast, new Sabantui activities were invented in the Soviet era to combine the fun feel of mass games with specific athletic and military objectives. For example, in “chock blocks,” similar to suicide drills with a throwing component, participants ran increasingly further

⁸⁶ Semenov, *Natsional’nye narodnye prazdniki*, 29, 46-51.

⁸⁷ Ibragim Zainullin, “Obnovlennyi prazdnik,” *Krasnaia Tatarsiia*, June 2, 1936, 4.

distances and brought back blocks at the end of each span to a box at the starting line. To gain an edge against others, competitors could throw the blocks into the box from a distance. Prominent Sabantui organizer Ibragim Zainullin first introduced this game in 1924 in an effort to reward both speed and throwing accuracy. The parallels with grenade throwing were not accidental.⁸⁸

The evolution of *koresh*, the traditional Tatar form of wrestling, also illustrates the blending of *fizkul'tura* and national elements at Sabantui. Historically, *koresh* was the main event at Sabantui. Tatars, however, rarely competed in *koresh* outside of their preparations for Sabantui. Desperate to capitalize on popular interest in *koresh* among Tatars, athletic organizations in Kazan began marketing their facilities toward Tatar wrestlers, promising more frequent, personalized, and efficient training. Sports officials hoped Tatars would then crosstrain in the similar Greco-Roman style of wrestling, a more prevalent event in international competitions. These experts anticipated that promoting wrestling would have other trickle-down effects, too, such as increasing the popularity of weightlifting, as wrestlers would use the sport to improve their overall strength and effectiveness on the mat. Moreover, Soviet *fizkul'tura* organizers believed that the best athletes would one day make the best soldiers. The Supreme Council of Physical Culture maintained that *koresh* “improves physical strength and willpower, necessary traits for soldiers and commanders of the Red Army.”⁸⁹

Semenov and Zainullin began to consolidate and standardize *koresh* rules in 1929. Wrestlers over eighteen years of age were broken up into three weight categories. During matches, they could wear athletic shoes, clean socks, or *ichigi*, traditional Tatar leather boots. Wrestlers competed shirtless, using a long towel wrapped and knotted around the waist to lift,

⁸⁸ Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki*, 47.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

throw to the ground, and pin opponents. The competitors fought on a circular mat ten meters in diameter. Generally, a time limit was placed on matches, with victory achieved either by accumulating points from various holds and moves or a clean pin. This shift toward standardized *koresh* rules helped modernize Tatar forms of athletic competition. Semenov and Zainullin's regulations brought the sport into close alignment with Greco-Roman wrestling. In the early 1930s, the All-Union Supreme Council introduced the GTO (*Gotov k trudu i oborone*, Ready for Labor and Defense) system, which established norms in a range of athletic and military activities in order to revive interest in physical fitness, prepare potential army recruits, and reestablish labor and defense as key priorities among ordinary Soviet citizens.⁹⁰ Semenov and Zainullin successfully petitioned Moscow to incorporate *koresh* and other Sabantui competitions into GTO. In 1939, Kazan hosted the first *koresh* championship for the entire Tatar Republic; this served as a major victory over those who had previously denigrated *koresh* as "backward and uncultured."⁹¹ Through careful framing, even traditional Sabantui competitions could advance Soviet objectives.

The Missing Festival

In the first half of the 1930s, Party-state authorities in the Tatar Republic utilized Sabantui to promote industrialization and collectivization and celebrate the achievements of the five-year plans, indicative of the flexible nature of the festival in the Soviet era. On the sidelines of the *maidan*, collective farms showcased their yields and banners bearing Bolshevik slogans about agricultural production were hoisted high into the air.⁹² In 1933, Kazan residents celebrated Sabantui twice, in conjunction with the First and Second All-Tatar Congresses of

⁹⁰ Grant, *Physical Culture and Sport in Soviet Society*, 38.

⁹¹ Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki*, 27-29, 37-43.

⁹² NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 1307, l. 8.

Collective Farmers and Shock Workers in May and October. Beginning that year, Sabantui moved to Gorky Park of Culture and Leisure, far from the Tatar districts, but more accessible by tram from the city center, and a favorite place of Kazan residents to stroll in the prerevolutionary era. Banners at the *maidan* read, “The Tatar Republic will become the republic with the highest yields!” and “Agronomics leads to productivity!” One commentator described the festive mood of the event:

As a celebration of the unity of workers and the harvest of the Tatar Republic, Sabantui is unfolding in all its beauty and diversity. This year’s beautiful mass celebration is permeated with genuine joy and happiness, as well as strong political content. It provides the workers of Tatarstan, both proletariat and collective farmers, with new energy to continue fighting for even higher achievements and to establish the Tatar Republic as the best in all fields of socialist construction. This is the great organizing power and importance of the holiday.⁹³

Coinciding with the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Tatar Republic, the 1935 Sabantui served as an opportunity to showcase a broad range of cultural, national, and athletic accomplishments. From June 20-24, all industrial enterprises of the city held celebratory meetings featuring speeches such as “Fifteen Years of Triumphant Leninist-Stalinist National Policies.” On June 25, a parade of athletes filed across Kazan’s central square and toward the newly constructed Dinamo Stadium for the All-Tatar Athletic Competition, which featured track and field events and a soccer match between Kazan and Leningrad teams. The celebration continued into June 26, when Sabantui officially opened in Gorky Park.⁹⁴ Members of the TASSR Central Executive Committee triumphantly entered the *maidan* in a motorcade and

⁹³ B. Zorin, “Prazdnik bol’shevistskogo urozhaiia–prazdnik zazhitochnoi zhizni.” The second Sabantui, held in October, prompted much pageantry. The streets of Kazan overflowed with columns of people marching toward Gorky Park. Music could be heard on practically every street corner from accordions, guitars, balalaikas, and even a Komsomol brass band. Shock workers and peasants carried colorful banners declaring their successes. Delegates to the Congress of Collective Farmers and Shock Workers had a place of honor; as they approached the *maidan*, they were met with shouts and a gun salute.

⁹⁴ “Ob utverzhdenii plana prazdnovaniia XV godovshchiny,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 16, 1935, 3; and “U fizkul’turnikov,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 25, 1935, 6.

watched farmers, workers, students, and soldiers wrestle. Between rounds, accordionists accompanied the dances of girls swirling around in red sarafans and kerchiefs. Children of workers from Vakhitov Factory performed a ballet. Military planes circled overhead, releasing into the sky parachutists that floated down to the *maidan*. Those unable to participate in the festivities could tune into a live radio broadcast from the *maidan*.⁹⁵ In total, between fifty and sixty thousand people attended this Sabantui, including dignitaries from other national republics who wanted to see firsthand the Tatar Republic's solution to the "national in form, socialist in content" puzzle. The leadership of these republics hoped that, having observed how Sabantui brought Soviet nationalities policies to life, their representatives would return home and implement something similar with their own indigenous traditions.⁹⁶

Surprisingly, in spite of the great success of the 1935 Sabantui, the holiday was not celebrated again in Kazan until 1940. Instead, the TASSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture (after 1936, the Committee for Physical Culture and Sport) organized a variety of other annual athletic competitions. Archival sources do not offer a clear explanation for this shift, though the change can be contextualized within Moscow's changing views toward sports and international competition. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, Moscow had eschewed all "bourgeois" international sports organizations, especially the International Olympic Committee.⁹⁷ Yet the Bolsheviks liked the idea of a multisport festival that could test physical preparedness. So, in 1928, Moscow hosted the Soviet Union's first Spartakiad, in honor of the tenth anniversary of

⁹⁵ V. Spiridonova, "Saban-Tui," *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 28, 1935; V. S., "Vchera na Saban-tue: Pobediteli," *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 29, 1935.

⁹⁶ Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki*, 9.

⁹⁷ Keys, "Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture," 417; James Riordan, "The Sports Policy of the Soviet Union, 1917-1941," in *Sport and International Politics: The Impact of Fascism and Communism on Sports*, Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan, eds. (London: Spon Press, 1998), 67-69.

the Soviet sports movement. Planners framed the event as a “Workers’ Olympics” in opposition to the bourgeois Olympic Games held the same year in Amsterdam.⁹⁸ The name Spartakiad recalled both the rebellious slave Spartacus and the Spartacist uprising among workers in Germany in 1919. In addition to twenty-one athletic competitions, the Spartakiad featured military events, folk dances, and noncompetitive, mass athletic displays.⁹⁹

In 1934, the Supreme Council of Physical Culture in Moscow unexpectedly changed its views on international athletic competition. That year marked the entrance of the Soviet Union back into the international sports world as Soviet athletes traveled to Czechoslovakia for their first international competitions. The regime hoped, of course, that these head-to-head matches would help in the business of comparing countries and their political systems. The new mantra of “Catch up with and overtake bourgeois records in sports!” quickly replaced the Party’s prior disdain for international competitions and record-breaking, the athletic boogeyman for most of the 1920s. In 1934, a new category of elite athlete, the “distinguished master of sport,” was established to recognize the “Stakhanovites” of sports.¹⁰⁰ As historian Robert Edelman maintained, “Better workers and fitter soldiers were the desired products of sports activity, while high-performance athletes were to play the same role as Stakhanovite labor heroes. As models for emulation, they were supposed to inspire their comrades.”¹⁰¹ Under the direction of the Supreme Council, Soviet physical culture altered course in prioritizing championships, professionalization, and compliance with international standards.

⁹⁸ Notably, a number of commentators also compared Sabantui to the ancient Greek Olympics for their shared emphasis on a broad spectrum of “classic” athletic competitions, such as wrestling, running, horse racing, and jumping. See: Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 11; and K. Shigaev, “Na tatarskoi ‘Olimpiade’: ‘Saban-Tui’,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 20, 1924, 3.

⁹⁹ Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 37-38.

¹⁰⁰ Keys, “Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture,” 420.

¹⁰¹ Edelman, *Serious Fun*, 26.

Almost simultaneously, the RSFSR Supreme Council of Physical Culture chose Kazan to host a special Volga-region Spartakiad in 1934, which preempted all Sabantui plans for that summer. Teams arrived from Stalingrad, Gorky, Balakhna, Saratov, the Volga German Republic, and the Chuvash Republic. Organizers hoped that the Volga Spartakiad, the first major athletic event to be hosted in Kazan, would help the nationalities of the Volga region, including Tatars, overcome lingering “backwardness” by promoting physical fitness and military preparedness, objectives very similar to those expressed during Sabantui festivals of the previous decade and a half. As before, local athletic administrators continued to fret about the health of Tatar youth and their susceptibility to the influence of conservative clergy who opposed sports, even the wrestling, running, and horse-racing competitions of Sabantui. This so-called “army of mullahs,” according to sports authorities, represented “darkness, ignorance, hypocrisy, and vileness, choking everything that is beautiful and joyful from the young workers.” Authorities promised the Volga Spartakiad would serve an “important and integral role in educating young people in the regions and republics inhabited by previously backward and oppressed nationalities.”¹⁰² It would be hard not to interpret this shift as a direct attack on the traditionalism of Sabantui, indicative of the ongoing debate over its relevance in the Soviet era.

¹⁰² “Spartakiada gotovnosti k trudu i oborone,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, August 16, 1934, 1. The Volga Spartakiad featured a range of events for both men and women, including track and field; rowing, sailing, swimming, and diving competitions; and a soccer tournament. Two teams represented the Tatar Republic in the 1934 Volga Spartakiada, but neither performed well, to the great disappointment of both local fans and the press. The supposedly top TASSR team came in dead last in the sailing and rowing competitions, in spite of Kazan’s location on the Volga River, one of the major waterways of the Soviet Union, and having a large lake in the middle of the city. Blame was also laid on the lack of a local sports culture outside of Kazan, which meant the Tatar Republic with fewer experienced athletes to draw from in creating their teams. See: “Pochemu proigrala Tatariia,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, August 21, 1934, 4; and “Iz dokladnoi zapiski Soveta fizicheskoi kul’tury v Tatarskii obkom VLKSM o sostoianii fizkul’turnogo dvizheniia v Tatarii,” in *Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi klu’tury i sporta*, 62-64.

For the next several years, Kazan hosted various summer and winter spartakiads, olympiads, and athletic competitions at the expense of the usual Sabantui celebrations.¹⁰³ In the “national in form, socialist in content” equation, the socialist component trumped the national. All-union initiatives outweighed local events such as Sabantui. Yet these replacement spartakiads largely mirrored the Soviet programming and ideology for Sabantui. As with the Tatar festival, carnivalesque atmospheres on the sidelines of the spartakiads helped to drive up attendance at sporting events. In the evenings, spectators relaxed in Arkadiia Garden, a traditional site of the Kazan *maidan*, and enjoyed fireworks shows.¹⁰⁴ Local drama clubs staged Tatar- and Russian-language plays.¹⁰⁵ The feel of these events likely differed little from the Sabantui celebrations Kazan residents had become accustomed to attending.

Although Sabantui did not take place in Kazan during the second half of the 1930s, small towns and villages throughout the Tatar Republic continued to celebrate the festival with close supervision and participation from Kazan authorities.¹⁰⁶ In 1936, the Kazan Sabantui committee dispatched ten airplanes, filled with factory workers, communal farmers, students, and circus performers, to various regions of the Tatar Republic to facilitate Sabantui celebrations and promote physical culture.¹⁰⁷ Tatar cultural celebrities, including the writers Karim Tinchurin,

¹⁰³ “Nakanune vsetatarskoi olimpiady,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 23, 1936, 4; and “Postanovlenie Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov TASSR No. 1542 o provedenii v g. Kazani spartakiady sem’i natsional’nykh respublik,” in *Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul’tury i sporta*, 71-72; and “Spartakiada deviaty respublik,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, March 9, 1939, 4. Teams from the Tatar Republic consistently performed poorly in these competitions, with blame often heaped on the leaders of the physical culture movement for poorly preparing their athletes, particularly in military competitions such as grenade throwing.

¹⁰⁴ “Spartakiada gotovnosti k trudu i oborone,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, August 16, 1934, 1.

¹⁰⁵ “Nakanune vsetatarskoi olimpiady,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 23, 1936, 4.

¹⁰⁶ V., “Pered vesennim Saban-tuem,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, May 23, 1936, 4; and “Pust’ gromche zvuchat pesni bor’by i pobed na kolonkakh Saban-tuiakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 2, 1935, 3.

¹⁰⁷ “Iz Kazani na Saban-Tui,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 4, 1936, 4; and “Vchera v tiuliachakh,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 4, 1936, 4.

Kavi Nadzhmi, Gumer Tulumbaiskii, and Salikh Battal, were also in tow, in part to draw larger crowds, but also to observe Sabantui and offer their feedback on how to develop the event further. Tinchurin, for example, argued that the barrier between spectators and the *maidan* should be torn down with the help of more mass games and activities.¹⁰⁸ In addition to athletic events, rural Sabantuis celebrated the achievements of collective farm shock workers, many of whom were invited for a ride on an airplane. The power of seeing, let alone flying in, an airplane for the first time should not be underestimated in establishing Sabantui as an amalgamation of both old traditions and new innovations. What was once a rural celebration that made its way to Kazan was reorganized and sent back to villages as “a renovated, authentic people’s holiday (*nardonyi prazdnik*), full of deep ideological saturation in national colors.”¹⁰⁹ As described in previous chapters, given the renewed emphasis on “authentic” folk traditions as the basis for national culture after 1935, Sabantui’s return to its rural roots should not be surprising.

After its brief absence, Sabantui returned to Kazan with a vengeance in 1940, taking place not just once, but twice that summer. While sources do not offer a specific reason for Sabantui’s revival, the long-standing tradition of combining the event with important dates in the revolutionary calendar likely proved hard to ignore. On June 25, 1940, the first Sabantui was held in conjunction with celebrations marking the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the TASSR. During that Sabantui, a massive parade of ten thousand athletes snaked through downtown Kazan. Passing by the main grandstand on Freedom Square, they sang loud songs extolling the strength of the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰ The return of the festival was so well received that organizers arranged for an encore Sabantui on July 2, the All-Union Day of Physical Culture.

¹⁰⁸ Sharafutdinov, *Istoricheskie korni*, 228. See also: *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 2, 1936.

¹⁰⁹ M. Bubennov, “Saban-tui v Buinske,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 9, 1936, 3.

¹¹⁰ “Parad sily i krasoty,” *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 25, 1940, 2.

The threat of war with Germany undoubtedly contributed to this decision, given the close relationship between Sabantui and its support of military preparedness. In fact, for the duration of the Great Patriotic War, Kazan Sabantui repeatedly coincided with the Day of Physical Culture.¹¹¹ The parades organized on those days reiterated the relationship between Sabantui and fitness, the muscular bodies of local athletes testifying to the strength of the Soviet Union.¹¹²

Conclusion

During the 1920s and 1930s, Party-state authorities in the Tatar Republic, particularly the Supreme Council for Physical Culture, embraced Sabantui as a tradition ripe for reformulation within Stalin's call to create culture that was "national in form and socialist in content." Sabantui attained new relevance in the Soviet era through its celebration of key *fizkul'tura* tenets such as athletic competition, military preparedness, and health and hygiene. Sabantui built upon existing, prerevolutionary athletic traditions among Tatars, albeit flawed from the perspective of Soviet physical culture authorities. By gradually merging prerevolutionary Sabantui events with European sports and GTO standards, organizers transformed Sabantui into an essential training ground for Soviet athletes and soldiers, regardless of nationality. According to Semenov, this reorganization sought nothing less than the "remaking of human material, which still clings to many of the troubles of daily life, reminiscent of the past."¹¹³

Notably, the *fizkul'tura* movement did achieve some successes in the Tatar Republic. One of the TASSR teams took first place in the 1939 Volga Spartakiad. By then, two new, modern stadiums had opened in Kazan, along with dozens of gymnastics and sports halls. As of 1940,

¹¹¹ Semenov, *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki*, 23.

¹¹² Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades*, 30-36.

¹¹³ Semenov, *Saban-Tui*, 23.

12,000 people in Kazan had met GTO standards.¹¹⁴ The Tatar Republic boasted 27 sports societies, 615 factory and kolkhoz sports collectives, and 35,000 registered athletes.¹¹⁵ At least 13 athletes from Kazan sports clubs set new Soviet records in various athletic competitions from 1936 to 1940.¹¹⁶ The careers of prominent Soviet athletes, including the weightlifting champions N. Zherebtsov and I. Sergeev, as well as the wrestler N. Moriashichev, began and flourished in Kazan's sport halls and on the Sabantui *maidan*.¹¹⁷ Still, critics insisted that physical culture in the Tatar Republic needed to improve in order to become "a real school of preparing youth for combat."¹¹⁸ As one commentator insisted, "Athletic societies and organizations should serve as military reserves of the Red Army, capable of preparing Soviet patriots to defend the boundaries of our socialist homeland."¹¹⁹ On the eve of the Great Patriotic War, doubts remained about the extent to which youth, particularly Tatars, in the TASSR had achieved the appropriate level of military preparedness, which may explain in part the revival of Sabantui in Kazan and a renewed emphasis on its relationship with *fizkul'tura*.

In considering the significance of Sabantui within Kazan's cultural landscape, the festival served as an indispensable space for disseminating important messages imbued with socialist values. With Tatars perpetually underrepresented in physical education clubs and sports activities, and in the face of ongoing health and hygiene crises, the TASSR Supreme Council for

¹¹⁴ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 4, d. 226, ll. 154; and St. Egorov, "Letnemu sportu—shirokii razmakh," *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 1, 1940, 3.

¹¹⁵ "Prazdnik sovetskikh fizkul'turnikov," *Krasnaia Tataria*, July 21, 1940, 1.

¹¹⁶ "Spisok sportsmenov TASSR, ustanovivshikh rekordy po raznym vidam sporta v 1935-40 gg.," in *Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta*, 73-74.

¹¹⁷ Fedotova, "Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Tatarstane."

¹¹⁸ "Prazdnik sovetskikh fizkul'turnikov," *Krasnaia Tataria*, July 21, 1940, 1.

¹¹⁹ St. Egorov, "Letnemu sportu—shirokii razmakh," *Krasnaia Tataria*, June 1, 1940, 3.

Physical Culture looked to the Kazan Sabantui as vital venue to propagate *fizkul'tura* among all citizens, but especially Tatars. A bevy of institutions, such as Osoaviakhim and the Commissariat of Health, organized exhibitions, lectures, and film showings, distributed literature, and hosted lectures and debates, often with Tatar-language speakers, to promote health, hygiene, and physical fitness. As one commentator observed, these spaces helped to “promote the idea of new forms of daily life.”¹²⁰ Given its roots, it is not surprising that Sabantui propaganda focused on agricultural issues as well after the introduction of collectivization.

Ultimately, the Sabantui *maidan* in Kazan functioned as a creative space for reimagining national traditions in light of major priorities of the Soviet regime. The synthesis of old Tatar traditions with new athletic forms and ideological programming suggests what Stalin might have intended culture that was “national in form and socialist in content” to look like. Sabantui retained its Tatar folk veneer, even as its ideological content expanded to include all Soviet citizens. Tatars, Russians, and other nationalities could wear their various national costumes to Sabantui, but when they stripped down to wrestle on the *maidan*, their bodies proclaimed the same message: physical fitness created strong, healthy citizens, ready for labor and defense in service of the Soviet Union.

¹²⁰ “Saban-Tui–prazdnik bedniakov, prazdnik sovetskoi obshchestvennosti,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 18, 1928.

CONCLUSION

Soviet nationalities policies cultivated extraordinary opportunities for Tatars. As described in this dissertation, the Party-state looked to Kazan to model the foundations for a new kind of urban multiculturalism in which the discriminatory policies used by the imperial regime against non-Russian and non-Orthodox subjects would be replaced by an inclusive spirit of equality modeled by Russians and Tatars living and working alongside one another in socialist unity. Ambitious plans such as *korenizatsiia* and the Realization of the Tatar Language promised a future in which the tasks of labor, education, politics, and everyday life could seamlessly ebb and flow between the two state languages, indicative of an egalitarian Soviet culture. The use of Tatar in conjunction with Russian in official, even if limited, capacities signaled a fundamentally different relationship between Tatars and the state compared to the prerevolutionary era. During the 1920s and early 1930s, Tatar students, workers, and bureaucrats deployed their heritage to achieve noteworthy careers and social mobility. From the earliest days of the Soviet regime, Tatars joined in the process of working out the implications of nationalities policies in the TASSR. They filled key roles in the Tatar Republic, such as eight of eleven commissar positions in 1935. That same year, Tatars made up 69 of 192 factory directors and 13 of 44 deputy directors in Kazan. Almost 20 percent of doctors in Kazan were Tatars.¹ Between 1926 and 1936, the number of Tatars serving in Kazan's central Party-state apparatus increased from 19 to 39 percent. In a word, *korenizatsiia* worked in the Tatar Republic.²

¹ NART, f. R-732, op. 1, d. 2685, l. 1.

² TsGA IPD RT, f. 26, op. 1, d. 202, ll. 159-63.

In the first part of this dissertation, I argued that public spaces in Kazan mediated how Tatars and Russians experienced, articulated, and responded to Soviet nationalities policies. As demonstrated in chapter 1, primary and secondary schools served as an ideological battleground for Party-state administrators hoping to wrest control of Tatars' education from Muslim clerics by offering native-language instruction. By the 1930s, Kazan schools also began promoting Russian-language education for Tatars, a practical move by a modernizing state, yet one pursued somewhat reluctantly by Moscow, given its hesitancy to introduce policies that smacked of Russification. While Tatars increasingly understood the value of learning Russian, the language was never intended to supplant minority languages. As shown in chapter 2, Russian language fluency also served as a crucial factor in determining the paths open to Tatar university students, particularly those taking advantage of *vydvizhenie*, the promotion campaign that sought to create a homegrown intelligentsia from proletarian ranks. Focusing on Kazan State University and the Pedagogical Institute, as well as their workers' faculties, I explored how nationalities policies shaped Kazan institutions of higher education as sites of integration and conflict. Chapter 3 analyzes the introduction of *korenizatsiia* in Kazan's factories. Although Tatars often used their nationality to their advantage in hiring and promotion decisions, factories also served as Russifying spaces. By the late 1930s, as Russian language and culture assumed a dominant position throughout Soviet society, any enthusiasm for the widespread application of the Tatar language in industrial enterprises withered away, even among Tatars themselves.

Soviet nationalities policies, then, did not open up all spaces for Tatar advancement in equal measure. Some spaces were more accommodating to Tatars than others: the Pedagogical Institute, for example, or factories with greater Tatar representation among workers and managers, such as Vakhitov Factory. Elsewhere, Great Russian chauvinism, institutional

discrimination, and even insufficient knowledge of Russian served as limiting factors to Tatars' upward momentum. Consequently, Tatars had much greater representation among "cultural" professions—namely journalists, teachers, authors, and folklore specialists—than in technical and medical fields, in part because Russian language skills served as the price of admission into those latter arenas. As I have argued, by the late 1930s, a new generation of Tatar schoolchildren, university students, and workers had realized the benefits of speaking Russian as one tool for navigating life in Kazan. They understood that mastering Russian served as their best chance for further career and social mobility, and even more so outside of the Tatar Republic.³

Do these trends suggest that Tatars had a right to fear the slow encroachment of Russification throughout the 1920s and 1930s? Many Tatars warned of this outcome, including G. G. Ibragimov (1887-1938), an educator, scholar, and writer who offered a blistering assessment of the state of Tatar culture in his 1927 essay *Tatar mädäniiate nindi iül belän barachak?* (Which Path Will Tatar Culture Take?). Ibragimov's words carried weight among Tatars: he was highly lauded for the many popular novels and short stories he penned both before and after the October Revolution. After joining the Bolshevik Party in 1918, Ibragimov taught in Kazan VUZy and served as editor-in-chief of the pedagogical journal *Mägarif* (Education) and literary journal *Bezneng iül* (Our Path). Ibragimov authored textbooks on Tatar philology and linguistics and coordinated the translation of Lenin's collected works into Tatar. From 1925-27, Ibragimov directed the Academic Center of the TASSR Narkompros, overseeing initiatives for introducing Tatar-language instruction in local schools and universities.⁴

³ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2417, ll. 16-20.

⁴ For more on Ibragimov, see M. Kh. Ibragimov, ed., *Galimdzhan Ibragimov: Dokumenty i fakty: Galimdzhan Ibragimov glazami molodykh* (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2012). For his speeches at the First Turkology Congress, see *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi tiurkologicheskii s'ezd, 26 fevralia-5 marta 1926 g.: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011).

In *Which Path Will Tatar Culture Take?* Ibragimov characterized the decision of the TASSR Party-state to introduce a Latin script for Tatar as a step toward Russification. Ibragimov explained that, like Lenin and Stalin, he considered native language the essential component of national culture. In his various Narkompros roles, Ibragimov had labored to keep the Tatar literary language free of words and phrases borrowed from Russian. In the essay, Ibragimov described the threat he saw in Yangalif, the Latin script, which purported to propel Tatars toward an international proletarian culture. He predicted that Russian culture, given its dominance among the Soviet Union's political and cultural elite, would stand in for international culture. He feared that this scenario would only hasten the Russification of Tatars. As an alternative, Ibragimov turned to the work of Lenin and Stalin on the nationalities question. He noted that both leaders had long emphasized the rights of nationalities to use their native languages in education and governance and praised the Bolsheviks for transforming the social, economic, and political lives of Tatars. Ibragimov quoted Stalin at length, embracing his formula that Tatar culture be "national in form and socialist in content." He called for more use of Tatar at all educational levels, and chiefly in VUZy, which would train the next generation of Tatar leaders to serve in industry, the Party-state apparatus, and the intelligentsia. Only the Tatar language, Ibragimov concluded, could help create a new socialist Tatar culture on behalf of the working class. Such "Tatarization" was the best chance of slowing down Russification.⁵

The publication of this essay set off a firestorm in the Tatar Republic, as indicated by a deluge of articles in local papers and debates within the local Party apparatus challenging the publication's accuracy and implications. Ibragimov offended many Tatars working within the

⁵ G. Ibragimov, *Tatar mēdēniiate nindi iul belēn barashak?* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1927). The essay has been reprinted in modern Tatar in Galimdzhan Ibragimov, *Millät, tel, ädäbiat* (Kazan: Magarif, 2007), 207-38. See also TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 290, ll. 139-47; and Azade-Ayse Rorlich, "Which Way will Tatar Culture Go? A Controversial Essay by Galimdzhan Ibragimov," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 25, no. 3-4 (1974): 363-71.

Party-state apparatus by comparing them to prerevolutionary *mirzas*, the Tatar bureaucrats who assisted tsarist officials in carrying out their assimilationist agendas. Modern-day *mirzas*, Ibragimov held, could barely speak or read Tatar, sent their children to Russian schools, and had largely Russified themselves at the expense of losing their own unique heritage. To Ibragimov, they had traded their native language and culture for political and social advancement. In response, these figures pilloried Ibragimov, condemning him for siding with bourgeois-nationalist elements and ignoring the necessity of adapting Tatar national culture to advance proletarian ideals. The TASSR Obkom likewise censured Ibragimov for putting the interests of the nation above those of the working class, thus inverting Stalin's formula and allowing the "national" form to take precedence over "socialist" content.⁶ The Party subsequently stripped Ibragimov of his positions, and he left Kazan for Yalta in exile. In 1938, the NKVD arrested Ibragimov and returned him to Kazan, where he died in a NKVD hospital that same year.⁷

With the benefit of hindsight, it might be easy to conclude that Ibragimov was right and that, following the October Revolution, Tatar culture slowly began to drift toward Russification. By the late 1930s, Soviet culture as a whole had taken on a distinctly Russian hue, a product of Moscow's revitalization of Russian language and culture. The Friendship of the Peoples campaign, launched in 1935, presented Russians as the "first among equals" in Soviet society, the exemplars that all other nationalities should strive to emulate. As historian David Brandenberger argued, "If before, workers had been referred to as Soviet society's vanguard *class*, now the Russian people were assuming the mantle of its vanguard *nation*."⁸ The need for

⁶ TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 267, ll. 86-89; and TsGA IPD RT, f. 15, op. 2, d. 272, ll. 118-19.

⁷ TsGA IPD RT, f. 30, op. 3, d. 1260, ll. 2-59.

⁸ David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 44. See too Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 432-61.

mass social mobilization, particularly in preparation for war, and the Party-state's ongoing search for legitimacy precipitated the ideological shift from proletarian internationalism to something much more akin to a Soviet national identity based on Russian language, culture, and people.

As an example of the new policy, Moscow rehabilitated prerevolutionary Russian cultural figures as emblematic of Russia's contributions to world culture. The inclusion of the Russian poet A. S. Pushkin (1799-1837) in the pantheon of Soviet literature testified to this change. The government convened an All-Union Pushkin Committee to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the poet's death in 1937. Throughout the Soviet Union, schools incorporated Pushkin's literature into their curriculum, theaters staged his plays, and design competitions were organized to create statues of Pushkin's likeness. The celebration ended previous avant-garde criticism of Pushkin as an emblem of cultural conservatism.⁹ In the TASSR, one hundred thousand volumes of Pushkin's poetry were published in Tatar in 1937 alone. Tatar workers called him Pushkin-babai, a term of endearment reserved for grandfathers or respected elders. Many other classics of Russian literature began to appear in Tatar translation as well.¹⁰

In addition, the introduction in 1938 of mandatory Russian-language instruction in minority schools sought to use Russian as a tool for making non-Russian peoples "Soviet," a trend that continued in full force after the Great Patriotic War.¹¹ In 1939, the Party mandated that the Tatar language abandon its short-lived Latin alphabet in favor of a Cyrillic one. Its advocates,

⁹ Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades*, 113-15; David Brandenberger, "'The People's Poet': Russocentric Populism during the USSR's Official 1937 Pushkin Commemoration," *Russian History* 26, no. 1 (1999): 65-73; Stephanie Sandler, *Commemorating Pushkin: Russia's Myth of a National Poet* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); and Anastasia Felcher, "Public Festivities and the Making of a National Poet: A Case Study of Alexander Pushkin's Biography in 1899 and 1937," *European Review of History* 19, no. 5 (2012): 767-88.

¹⁰ Gumer Galeev, "Pushkin i tatarskaia literatura," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, February 10, 1937, 3.

¹¹ Peter A. Blitstein, "Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938-1953," in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, eds., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 153-74.

both Russian and Tatar, explained that the Cyrillic alphabet would ease Tatars' study of Russian. They attested to Russian's significance as the language of the proletarian revolution and some of the world's greatest thinkers, writers, and scientists—most notably, of course, Lenin and Stalin.¹² Aware of the potential for minorities to fear Russification, the deputy head of the TASSR Narkompros explained how knowing Russian would actually be of service to Tatars in the long run: “We do not want to put workers of various nationalities of our Soviet country in a worse position than Russians in terms of using the treasure trove of Russian language and literature. Therefore we must ensure that graduates of national schools, especially in the Tatar Republic, where Russians and Tatars live side by side, have mastered Russian.”¹³ Campaigns promoting the language described knowing Russian as a “matter of great political importance” that would “foster a connection with the great culture of the Russian people, quicken the growth of national cadres, and widen the path to higher education for national youth.”¹⁴

As I demonstrated in the second half of this dissertation, Tatar culture persisted and evolved throughout the 1920s and 1930s despite the diminished vitality of the Tatar language.¹⁵ Undoubtedly, the Bolshevik regime upended many traditional ways of life, principally those associated with Islam, depicting them as obsolete and unsustainable in the modern society under construction. Beyond all the havoc wreaked by frequent purges of the Tatar political elite,

¹² N. Vagapov, “Russkii alfavit dlia tatarskoi pis'mennosti,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, June 22, 1938, 4.

¹³ NART, f. R-3682, op. 1, d. 2206, l. 5.

¹⁴ A. Mikhailov, “O prepodavanii russkogo iazyka v nerusksikh shkolakh,” *Krasnaia Tatariia*, July 27, 1939, 3.

¹⁵ Unlike other historians, I do not see this era as marking the collapse of Tatar culture as a result of Russification. See, for example: A. M. Valiev, “Stanovlenie i razvitie gosudarstvennosti tatarskogo naroda v 1920-1930-e gg.,” *Nauchnyi Tatarstan* 3 (2010): 42-50; A. G. Galliamova, “Sovetskii period v istorii tatar i Tatarstana,” *Nauchnyi Tatarstan* 2 (2009): 122-31; and I. Tagirov, “O natsional'noi gosudarstvennosti tatarskogo naroda,” *Gasyrlar Avazy—Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2009), accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2009_2/01/01/. Western scholars have advanced the same view: Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (London: Pall Mall, 1967); Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union*; Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*; and Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*.

intelligentsia, and religious figures, Stalin's "national in form and socialist in content" formula opened up new spaces for Tatar culture to accommodate the realities of the Soviet era. As other historians have argued, all key elements of Soviet life, especially in the cultural sphere, had a certain level of flexibility in which various stakeholders found room to maneuver.¹⁶ A range of figures in the Tatar Republic—Russian and Tatar alike—worked within this ambiguity to reshape Tatar culture to fit Soviet norms.¹⁷

For example, in chapter 4, I explore how Tatar playwrights and librettists, drawing on a rich prerevolutionary theatrical tradition, presented their national traditions, culture, and language on the stage in a way that reflected new political and social realities. In the 1930s, a younger generation of artists introduced a folklore-infused theatrical repertoire that focused on an idyllic Tatar past as a way of blending socialist realism with an "authentic" representation of their culture. Chapter 5 investigates the Palace of Culture, the most ambitious project for injecting Kazan's physical structure with architectural forms that denoted the heritage of Tatars and their development in the Soviet era. The palace, designed to sit on the boundary between the Tatar and Russian districts of the city and testify to the newfound unity between the two nationalities, never got off the ground. Bureaucratic and political roadblocks underscored the complicated position of Kazan as an Eastern capital within the RSFSR. Still, other architects continued to contemplate the idea of Tatar architecture in the "national in form and socialist in content" paradigm, as seen most clearly in the Tatar Republic pavilion at Moscow's All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV). Chapter 6 charts the transformation of the Tatar national

¹⁶ Thomas Lahusen, "Socialist Realism in Search of Its Shores: Some Historical Remarks on the 'Historically Open Aesthetic System of the Truthful Representation of Life'," in Lahusen and E. A. Dobrenko, eds., *Socialist Realism without Shores* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 5-26; and Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. The point is also made in DeHaan, *Stalinist City Planning*, 165-68.

¹⁷ Malte Rolf, "A Hall of Mirrors: Sovietizing Culture under Stalinism," *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (2009): 601-30.

festival Sabantui in the Soviet era. TASSR authorities used the festival as an opportunity to promote sports, physical fitness, health, and military preparedness, a synthesis of old and new Tatar traditions that appealed to Tatar and Russian audiences alike.

The expressions of national culture I describe in this dissertation helped to recast Kazan as a new kind of city, a Tatar capital whose public spaces reflected its diverse population. Soviet nationalities policies sought to draw diverse ethnolinguistic groups into a single political entity. The mantra of nurturing culture that was “national in form and socialist in content” therefore required, in part, tearing down the linguistic boundaries that separated national cultures from each other. Notably, by the end of the 1930s, Russians did not have to speak Tatar in order to access, consume, or participate in Soviet Tatar culture. For instance, they could attend Tatar plays at the Tatar State Academic Theater, whose programs often included a summary of the plot in Russian. After 1940, the Russian Bolshoi Theater began staging Tatar plays in Russian translation with greater frequency, too. In the architectural sphere, Russian professionals in Kazan were encouraged to support the creation of Tatar architecture, given the deficit of trained Tatar architects. While a number of Russian architects confessed their insufficient involvement in this process, some rose to the challenge: S. P. Speranskii worked closely with I. G. Gainutdinov, the first Tatar architect, even though financial and material deficits limited the widespread implementation of their projects in Kazan. As seen in the public discussion of plans for the Kazan Palace of Culture, Russians and Tatars alike expressed their opinion on each design’s ability to render something that seemed authentically Tatar. Finally, Russians attended and competed in Sabantui alongside their Tatar friends and neighbors. N. A. Semenov, one of the most vocal advocates for transforming the event into a Soviet *fizkul’tura* festival, was himself Russian. While Tatars undoubtedly drove much of the work on developing their culture,

eliminating linguistic barriers in part made the culture more collaborative and creative—and ultimately, more socialist. It also suggested the possibility of decoupling national culture from language, which laid the foundation, ever so gingerly, for the many Tatars in Kazan today who speak only Russian yet still closely identify with the practices and spaces of their native culture.

Where individuals worked, studied, and relaxed determined the extent to which Russians interacted with Tatars, just as it also influenced the likelihood of Tatars to accommodate and assimilate into Kazan's Russian-dominant society. At no point, however, did the ideology at the heart of Soviet nationalities policies require Tatars to mask or abandon their nationality.¹⁸ In fact, from the beginning of the Soviet era, Tatars could not remain indifferent to nationalities policies, which affected their ability to read the newspaper, study in a particular school or university, understand tasks at work, file petitions, protest grievances, and much more. For most of the period under consideration, nationality was a valuable source of social capital for gaining access to higher education, employment, and promotion. Constant attention to issues related to nationality, in addition to its inclusion as a line item on the internal Soviet passports issued in 1932, reinforced Soviet citizens' understanding of nationality as a primordial and inherited trait. While the Bolsheviks initially contended that nationality would wither away as a single international socialist culture developed, their policies actually caused it to become deeply

¹⁸ Ideology, therefore, seems to be a primary factor differentiating the Soviet case from the work of historians of east-central Europe who have studied national indifference and ambiguity in order to parse the limits of national categories as conceptual frameworks. See: Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93-119; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); James Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); and Theodora Dragostinova, "Speaking National: Nationalizing the Greeks of Bulgaria," *Slavic Review* 67, no. 1 (2008): 154-81.

entrenched in the Soviet psyche.¹⁹ Even after Russians assumed the starring role in Stalin's Friendship of the Peoples initiative, Tatars had no reason to hide their nationality, even if they did have to master the Russian language in order to become fully Soviet.²⁰ Moreover, Tatars could not have "denationalized" themselves, as a number of factors would have undermined their efforts to pass as Russian: physical characteristics such as darker skin color; wearing articles of clothing such as a tubeteika or *ichigi*, traditional Tatar boots; speaking Russian poorly or with a Tatar accent; or having a Tatar name. Nationality remained a powerful identity marker for decades to come.

In 1927, following the publication of Ibragimov's *Which Path Will Tatar Culture Take?* TASSR Party Secretary M. M. Khataevich wrote that the Tatar Republic faced an important question: "Should the development of Tatar national culture be directed to the west, that is to Moscow and the international proletariat of the USSR . . . or to the east, to pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism?" Khataevich concluded, of course, that Tatar culture should be oriented toward the proletarian culture of the USSR. He censured Ibragimov for failing to grasp this point.²¹ Still, Tatars in Kazan have repeatedly found themselves at a similar junction, balancing east and west, tradition and modernity, accommodation and assimilation, empire and independence. Soviet nationalities policies, and specifically the idea of producing a culture that was "national in form and socialist in content," provided Tatars with the means to forge a new path drawing on all of those competing forces. Urban space helped to mediate nationalities policies, drawing lines about when and where Tatars in the city found it advantageous to promote their national particularities

¹⁹ Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 449-51.

²⁰ Smith, *Language and Power*, 158.

²¹ M. M. Khataevich, "Po povodu sporov o putiakh razvitiia natsional'noi kul'tury," *Krasnaia Tatariia*, May 24, 1927, 3.

or adopt the social and linguistic habits of the Russian majority. Tatars who began switching between Tatar and Russian languages were not doing so as *mirzas* bent on assimilation, per Ibragimov's accusation, but rather as Soviet citizens adapting to changing realities by appealing to the *lingua sovieticus* for a variety of personal, practical, and political purposes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Holdings

Muzei istorii KGASU: Museum of History of Kazan State Architectural and Construction University (Kazan, Russia)
Fond I. G. Gainutdinova

Natsional'nyi arkhiv Respubliki Tatarstan (NART): National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan, Russia)
Fond R-128: *Sovet narodnykh komissarov Tatarskoi ASSR*
Fond R-326: *Kazanskii gorodskoi sovet narodnykh deputatov*
Fond R-417: *Tatarskii komitet gosudarstvennykh sooruzhenii pri TSNKh*
Fond R-732: *Tsentral'nyi ispolnitel'nyi komitet Soveta rabochikh, krest'ianskikh i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov TASSR*
Fond R-741: *Kazanskii ordena Trudovogo Krasnogo Znameni khimicheskii kombinat im. Mullanur Vakhitova*
Fond R-746: *Tatarskii filial Soiuza sovetskikh arkhitektorov SSSR*
Fond R-992: *Kazanskii gorodskoi otdel narodnogo obrazovaniia ispolnitel'nogo komiteta Kazanskogo gorodskogo soveta rabochikh i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov*
Fond R-1015: *Kazanskaia birzha truda*
Fond R-1062: *Gosudarstvennyi zavod No. 40 imeni V. I. Lenina*
Fond R-1150: *Predstavitel'stvo TASSR pri Prezidiume VTsIKa*
Fond R-1337: *Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. V. I. Ul'ianov-Lenina*
Fond R-1487: *Gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut/Vostochno-pedagogicheskii institut*
Fond R-1583: *Glavnoe arkhitekturno-planirovochnoe upravlenie ispolnitel'nogo komiteta Kazanskogo gorodskogo Soveta narodnykh deputatov*
Fond R-1803: *Otdel kommunal'nogo khoziastva ispolnitel'nogo komiteta Kazanskogo gorodskogo soveta deputatov trudiashchikhsia*
Fond R-2613: *Arskii raionnyi komitet po delam fizkul'tury i sporta*
Fond R-2823: *Rabfak pri Kazanskom gosudarstvennom pedagogicheskom universitete*
Fond R-2858: *Kazanskii institut inzhenerov kommunal'nogo stroitel'stva im. M. Gor'kogo*
Fond R-3682: *Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniia Tatarskoi ASSR*
Fond R-4034: *Tatarskii Respublikanskii komitet*
Fond R-4088: *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi akademicheskii teatr im. G. Kamala*
Fond R-6078: *Gorodskaia planovaia komissii ispolkoma Kazanskogo gorodskogo soveta narodnykh deputatov*
Fond R-6663: *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi teatr opera i baleta*
Fond R-7239: *Upravlenie po delam iskusstv pri Sovete ministrov TASSR*

Natsional'nyi muzei Respubliki Tatarstan: Archive of the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan, Russia)
Fond P. M. Dul'skogo

Nauchnaia biblioteka im. N. I. Lobachevskogo, Otdel rukopisei i redkikh knig: Lobachevsky
Library Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books (Kazan, Russia)

New York Public Library

Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskoi dokumentatsii Respubliki Tatarstan
(TsGA IPD RT): Central State Archive of Historical-Political Documentation of the
Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan, Russia)

Fond 15: *Tatarskii Oblastnoi komitet*

Fond 26: *Kazanskii gorodskoi komitet KPSS TASSR*

Fond 167: *Partiinyi komitet nauchno-proizvodstvennogo ob''edinenii im. V. I. Lenina*

Fond 178: *Partiinyi komitet khimicheskogo kombinata im. M. N. Vaxitova*

Fond 441: *Pervichnaia partiinaia organizatsiia Tatarskogo akademicheskogo teatra im.*
G. Kamala

Fond 624: *Partiinyi komitet Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. Lenina*

Fond 1146: *Partiinyi komitet Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo intituta*

Newspapers

Ezhenedel'nik

Izvestiia TsIK TASSR

Krasnaia Tataria

Kyzyl Tatarstan

Pravda

Vakhitovets/Vakhitovchy

Znamia revoliutsii

Journals

Arkhitektura SSSR

Novoe delo

Sovremennaia arkhitektura

Vestnik prosveshcheniia

Yangalif

Published Primary Literature

10 let sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva v Tatarstane. Kazan: Tatglavlit, 1930.

Amirkhanov, R. U., ed. *Istoriia Kazani v dokumentakh i materialakh XX vek*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Magarif, 2004.

Belialov, U. B., and A. M. Zaliarov, eds. *Geroi sotsialisticheskogo truda Tatarii (1938-1978 gg.) (Dokumental'nye ocherki)*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1980.

—, eds. *Geroi truda Tatarii: 1920-1938 gg. (Dokumental'nye ocherki)*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1974.

Bunyan, James, and H. H. Fisher, eds. *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1934.

Dul'skii, P. M. ed. *Piat' let Tiurko-tatarskogo rabocheho fakul'teta*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1929.

Dul'skii, P. M., and V. P. Popov, eds. *Konkurs proektov Doma kul'tury v Kazani*. Kazan: Trudy Kazanskogo institute inzhenerov kommunal'nogo stroitel'stva im. M. Gor'kogo, 1935.

Ermolaev, Vadim. *Vysshie uchebnye zavedeniia g. Kazani pri svete statisticheskikh tsifr*. Kazan: Glavlit, 1926.

Gainutdinov, I. G. "K voprosy ob arkhitekture pamiatnikov drevnego Bolgara." *Trudy Kazanskogo instituta inzhenerov kommunal'nogo stroitel'stva im. M. Gor'kogo* 2 (1935): 117-20.

Garipova, Z. G. "Korenizatsiia iavliaetsia luchshim priblizheniem apparatov k massam." *Gasyrlar avazy—Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1 (2009). Accessed March 6, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2009_1/09/15/&ssearched=1.

—, ed. *Osushchestvlenie politiki korenizatsii v Tatarstane v dokumentakh (1920-1930-e gg.)*. Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani Akademii nauk Respubliki Tatarstan, 2009.

Ginzburg, Eugenia. *Journey into the Whirlwind*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967.

Gizzatullin, I. G., and D. R. Sharafutdinov, eds. *Izbrannye trudy*. Kazan: Gasyr, 1998.

Ibragimov, D. I., and R. T. Burganov, eds. *Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Respublike Tatarstan (1920-2000 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*. Kazan: Glavnoe arkhivnoe upravlenie pri Kabinete Ministrov RT, 2012.

Ibragimov, G. G., and N. I. Vorob'ev, eds. *Materialy po izucheniiu Tatarstana*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1925.

- Ibragimov, G. G. *Millät, tel, ädäbiat*. Kazan: Magarif, 2007.
- . *Tatar mädëniiate nindi iul belën barashak?* (Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1927).
- Iskandarov, M. M., and A. Iu. Mikhailov. “Dvorets kul’tury—glavnyi nerealizovannyi proekt general’nogo plana ‘Bol’shoi Kazani’ (1930-e gg.).” *Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i iuridicheskie nauki, kul’turologiia i iskusstvovedenie: Voprosy teorii i praktiki* 16, no. 2 (2012): 72-77.
- Kandilov, V. P., ed. *Respublika Tatarstan 1920-2000 gg.: Statisticheskii sbornik*. Kazan: Gosudarstvennyi komitet Respubliki Tatarstan po statistike, 2001.
- Lenin, V. I. *Sochineniia*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1926-27.
- Na putiakh k vysshei shkole: 10 let raboty, 1919-1929*. Kazan: Rabochii fakul’tet KGU im. V. I. Lenina, 1929.
- Na putiakh k vysshei shkole. Vosem’ let raboty, 1919-1927*. Kazan: Rabochii fakul’tet KGU im. V. I. Lenina, 1927.
- Pervyi vsesoiuznyi tiurkologicheskii s’ezd, 26 fevralia-5 marta 1926 g.: Stenograficheskii otchet*. Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011.
- Poliakov, Iu. A. ed. *Vsesoiuznaia perepis’ naseleniia 1939 goda: Osnovnye itogi*. Moscow: Nauka, 1992.
- Sed’moi vypusk s prilozheniem uslovii postupleniia na Rabfaki*. Kazan: Izdanie Rabfaka KGU im. V. I. Lenina, 1926.
- Sharafutdinov, D. R., and B. F. Sultanbekov, eds. *Neizvestnyi Sultan-Galiev: Rassekrechennye dokumenty i materialy*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 2002.
- Sultanbekov, B. F., ed. *Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev: Stat’i, vystupleniia, dokumenty*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1992.
- , ed. *Tainy natsional’noi politiki TsK RKP: Chetvertoe soveshchanie TsK RKP s otvetstvennymi rabotnikami natsional’nykh respublik i oblastei v g. Moskve 9-12 iyunia 1923 g.: Stenograficheskii otchet*. Moscow: Insan, 1992.
- Sultanov, F. M., ed. *Iazykovaia politika v Respublike Tatarstan: Dokumenty i materialy: 20-30-e gg.* Kazan: Magarif, 1998.
- Tinchurin, Karim. *Alar öchäü ide*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1935.
- . *Karim Tinchurin: Dramalar, komediialär, khikäialär*. Kazan: Tatarstan kitap năshriiaty, 2007.
- Zaitseva, A. I., and P. A. Iakimov, eds. *20 let Tatarskoi ASSR (1920-1940)*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1940.

Selected Secondary Literature

- Abashev, V. V. *Perm' kak tekst: Perm' v istorii russkoi kul'tury i literatury XX veka*. Perm': Izdatel'stvo Permskogo universiteta, 2000.
- Abliazov, K. *Sistema narodnogo prosveshcheniia v derevne Tatarstana v 1920-e gg.* Kazan: Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. V. I. Ul'ianova-Lenina, 2004.
- Adams, Laura L. "Modernity, Postcolonialism, and Theatrical Form in Uzbekistan." *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 333-354.
- Amalieva, G. G. "Lichnye dela studentov Kazanskogo universiteta (1917-1925 gg.) kak istoricheskii istochnik." Candidate diss. Kazan State University, 2006.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Arslanov, Gali. *Tatarskoe rezhisserskoe iskusstvo: 1906-1941*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1992.
- Arslanov, M. G. "Tatarskii teatr v 1941-1945 gg." *Gasyrlar avazy - Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal*, 3/4 (2010). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2010_3_4/01/04/&searched=1.
- . "'Tukai' A. Faizi v postanovke rezhissera Sh. Sarymsakova." *Vestnik Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta kul'tury i iskusstv* 1 (2013): 51-54.
- Attwood, Lynne. *Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.
- Bagautdinov, F. N., and I. I. Ilialova. *Kogda na stsene pogas svet . . .* Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2012.
- Balashov, E. M. *Shkola v rossiiskom obshchestve, 1917-1927: Stanovlenie "novogo cheloveka"*. St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003.
- Bassin, Mark, Christopher Ely, and Melissa K. Stockdale, eds. *Space, Place and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.
- Bater, James H. *The Soviet City: Ideal and Reality*. London: Edward Arnold, 1980.
- Bater, James H., and R. A. French, eds. *Studies in Russian Historical Geography*. London: Academic Press, 1983.
- Beissinger, Mark R. "Soviet Empire as 'Family Resemblance'." *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 294-303.

- Bennigsen, Alexandre, and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejourné. *Islam in the Soviet Union*. London: Pall Mall, 1967.
- Bennigsen, Alexandre, and S. Enders Wimbush. *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Blagov, Iu. A. *KEMST i teatral'naia zhizn' Kazani 1920-x gg.* Kazan: Tatpoligraf, 2005.
- Blitstein, Peter A. "Cultural Diversity and the Interwar Conjecture: Soviet Nationality Policy in Its Comparative Context." *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 273-93.
- . "Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938-1953." In *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, 253-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Bohn, Thomas M. "Soviet History as a History of Urbanization." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 2 (2015): 451-58.
- Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Brubaker, Rogers, and Frederick Cooper. "Beyond 'Identity'." *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000): 1-47.
- Brumfield, W. C., and Blair A. Ruble. *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993.
- Brumfield, William C., ed. *Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Bryant, Chad. *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Buckler, Julie A. *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityshape*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Bukharin, V. V., ed. *K 100-letiiu Kazanskogo zhirovogo kombinata imeni Vakhitova*. Moscow: Pishchepromizdat, 1957.
- Burbank, Jane, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev, eds. *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Bureeva, E. V. "Dekada tatarskoi literatury i iskusstva v Moskve 24 maia - 4 iunია 1957 goda: Podgotovka, itogi i znachenie." *Vestnik Cheliabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 216, no. 1 (2011): 97-101.

- Bushnell, John, Ben Eklof, and L. G. Zakharova, eds. *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Castillo, Greg. "Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (1995): 715-46.
- . "Soviet Orientalism: Socialist Realism and Built Tradition." *TDSR* 8, no. 2 (1997): 33-47.
- Chebotareva, V. G. *Natsional'naia politika Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 1925-1938 gg.* Moscow: Moskovskii dom natsional'nostei, 2008.
- Clark, Charles E. *Uprooting Otherness: The Literacy Campaign in NEP-Era Russia*. Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2000.
- Clark, Katerina. *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- . *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- . *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Conquest, Robert. *The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities*. London: Macmillan, 1960.
- Cooke, Catherine. *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of Art, Architecture and the City*. London: Academy Editions, 1995.
- Crews, Robert D. *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Dale Pesmen, *Russia and Soul: An Exploration* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).
- David-Fox, Michael, and György Péteri, eds. *Academia in Upheaval: Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2000.
- David-Fox, Michael. *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918-1929*. Cornell, NY: Ithaca University Press, 1997.
- DeHaan, Heather D. *Stalinist City Planning: Professionals, Performance, and Power*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).
- Dobrenko, Evgeny, and Eric Naiman, eds. *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003.
- Dobrenko, Evgeny. *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

- Donina, Larisa. "Tatarskii natsional'nyi kostium v teatre." *Gasyrlar avazy - Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2012). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2012_3_4/09/10/&searched=1.
- . "Tatarskii traditsionnyi kostium v balete F. Iarullina 'Shurale'." *Gasyrlar avazy - Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2013). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2013_3_4/08/07/&searched=1.
- Dul'skii, P. M. *Arkhitektura Kazani: Stolitsy Tatarskoi Respubliki za 25 let*. Kazan: Izdanie Upravleniia gorodskogo arkhitekora, 1945.
- Edelman, Robert. *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the USSR*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Edgar, Adrienne Lynn. *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Efimova, A. *Pamiatnik voimam, pavshim pri vziatii Kazani v 1552 godu*. Kazan: Gosudarstvennyi muzei TASSR, 1954.
- Ermolaev, I. P. *Istoriia Kazanskogo universiteta, 1804-2004*. Kazan: Izd. Kazanskogo universiteta, 2004).
- Evtuhov, Catherine. *Portrait of a Russian Province: Nizhnii Novgorod in the Nineteenth Century*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.
- Ewing, E. Thomas. *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Practice, and Power in Soviet Schools of the 1930s*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002.
- Faizullin, Asaf. "'Struny dushi' roda Faizi." *Gasyrlar avazy - Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1/2 (2011). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2011_1_2/10/10/&searched=1.
- Faller, Helen M. *Nation, Language, Islam: Tatarstan's Sovereignty Movement*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011.
- Fedotova, A. Iu., and N. A. Fedorova. *Pomoshch' golodaiushchemu naseleniiu TASSR sovetskimi i inostrannymi organizatsiiami v 1921-1923 gg*. Kazan: IITs UDP RT, 2013.
- Fedotova, O. "Iz istorii razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta v Tatarstane v 1920-1930 gg." *Gasyrlar avazy-Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2012). Accessed February 11, 2015.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2012_3_4/12/01/&searched=1.

- Fedulenko, V. V. *Zarozhdenie i rastsvet teatr v Kazani*. San Francisco: S&K, 1970.
- Filtzer, Donald. *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization: The Formation of Modern Soviet Production Relations, 1928-1941*. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1986.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Richard Stites, eds. *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Russian Society and Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia." *Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 4 (1993): 745-70.
- , ed. *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977.
- . *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union: 1921-1934*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- . *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- . *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- . *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Frank, Allen J. *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2001.
- Frolov, G. V. *Khram-pamiatnik ubiennym voenam pri vziatii Kazani v 1552 g.* Kazan: Kazanskii arkhiepiskop, 2005.
- Gabdrifikova, L. R. *Povsednevnaia zhizn' gorodskikh tatar: V usloviakh burzhuaizatsii preobrazovaniia vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX veka*. Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani, 2013.
- Gafarov, I. A. *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarno-pedagogicheskii universitet*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Idel-Press, 2006.
- Galeev, N. R. ed. *Staro-tatarskaia sloboda—ot proshlogo k budushchemu*. Kazan: Institut istorii Akademii nauk Respubliki Tatarstan, 2001.
- Galliamova, A. G. *Istoriia Tatarstana: Modernizatsiia po-sovetski*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Magarif, 2010.
- . "Narod protiv: Modernizatsiia i etnicheskoe razvitie Tatarstana v XX veke." *Idel'* 4 (2010): 44-48.

- . “Sovetskii period v istorii tatar i Tatarstana.” *Nauchnyi Tatarstan* 2 (2009): 122-31.
- Garipova, Z. G. *Kazan’: Obshchestvo, politika, kul’tura (1917-1941)*. Kazan: Magarif, 2004.
- . “Korenizatsiia iavliaetsia luchshim priblizheniem apparatov k massam.” *Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental’nyi zhurnal* 1 (2009). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2009_1/09/15/&searched=1.
- . “Osnovnye tendentsii v nauchnykh issledovaniiax v TASSR (1917-1941).” *Nauchnyi Tatarstan* 2 (2011): 161-74.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Geraci, Robert P. *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Gil’manov, Z. I., A. M. Zaliarov, M. K. Mukhariyev, and K. A. Nazipova, eds. *Istoriia Kazani*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1991.
- Goldberg, Madina V. “Russian Empire–Tatar Theater: The Politics of Culture in Late Imperial Kazan.” PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2009.
- Goldman, Wendy. *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin’s Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- . *Women, the State, and Social Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Graney, Katherine E. *Of Khans and Kremlins: Tatarstan and the Future of Ethno-Federalism in Russia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009.
- Grant, Susan. “The Politics and Organization of Physical Culture in the USSR during the 1920s.” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 89, no. 3 (2011): 495-96.
- Grant, Susan. *Physical Culture and Sport in Soviet Society: Propaganda, Acculturation, and Transformation in the 1920s and 1930s*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Grenoble, Lenore A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003.
- Guadagnolo, Gary, and Trey Guinn. “The ABCs of Tatar: Multilingual Accommodation and Soviet Language Politics.” *Russian Journal of Communication* 6, no. 2 (2014): 127-42.
- Guadagnolo, Gary. “‘Who am I?’: Revolutionary Narratives and the Production of the Minority Self in the Early Soviet Era.” *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 2, no. 1 (2013): 69-93.

- Halfin, Igal, ed. *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities*. London: Frank Cass, 2002.
- . *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University*. Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 2009.
- Hamm, Michael F. *Kiev: A Portrait*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Hilton, Alison. "Humanizing Utopia: Paradoxes of Soviet Folk Art." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 3 (2002): 459-71.
- Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Hoffmann, David L. *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929-1941*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- . "Was there a 'Great Retreat' from Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (2004): 651-74.
- Hoisington, Sona Stephan. "'Ever Higher': The Evolution of the Project for the Palace of Soviets." *Slavic Review* 62, no. 1 (2003): 41-68.
- Holmes, Larry. *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Hroch, Miroslav. *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Hudson, Jr., Hugh D. *Blueprints and Blood: The Stalinization of Soviet Architecture, 1917-1937*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Iarmakeev, E. I. "Galimdzhan Nigmati: Zhizn', otdannaia nauke." *Filologiya i kul'tura* 28, no. 2 (2012): 314-17.
- İğmen, Ali. *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012.
- Il'iukhov, A. A. *Zhizn' v epokhu peremen: Material'noe polozenie gorodskikh zhitelei v gody revoliutsii i grazhdanskoi voiny (1917-1921 gg.)*. Moscow: Rosspen, 2007.
- Iunusova, Guzel'. "Pervaia tatarskaia opera (k 80-letiiu so dnia postanovki opery 'Saniia')." *Ekho vekov - Gasyrlar Avazy: Nauchno-Dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1 (2005). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2005_1/07/07_1/&sarched=1.

- . “Salikh Saidashev i teatr.” *Gasyrlar avazy - Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2006). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2006_2/001/01_4/.
- Ivanov, A. A. *Politicheskie repressii v Tatarskoi ASSR skvoz' prizmu podlinnykh dokumentov i vospominanii*. Kazan: Redaktsiia Kniga Pamiati, 2011.
- Iz istorii rabfaka Kazanskogo universiteta*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 1976.
- Judson, Pieter M. *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Kaganov, Grigory. *Images of Space: St. Petersburg in the Visual and Verbal Arts*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Kamp, Marianne. *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.
- Kefeli, Agnès Nilüfer. *Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia: Conversion, Apostasy, and Literacy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.
- Keller, Shoshana. *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001.
- Kelly, Catriona. “Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Chronicles of the Quotidian in Russia and the Soviet Union.” *Kritika* 3, no. 4 (2002): 631-51.
- Keys, Barbara. “Soviet Sport and Transnational Mass Culture in the 1930s.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 413-34.
- Khairullina, A. I. “Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskaiia i obshchestvenno-politicheskaiia kharakteristika studenchestva Vostochno-pedagogicheskogo instituta g. Kazani v 1920-e gody.” Candidate diss. Tatar State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University, 2011.
- Khakov, V. Kh. *Tatar adabi tele tarikhy*. Kazan: Kazan universitety nashriaty, 1993.
- Khalid, Adeeb. “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective.” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 231-51.
- . *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Hasidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Khan-Magomedov, S. O. *Arkitektura sovetskogo avangarda: Problemy formoobrazovaniia. Mastera i techeniia* (Moscow: Stroiizdat, 1996),
- . *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s*. New York: Rizzoli, 1987.

- Khusnullin, Kh. Kh. "Stanovlenie i razvitie zhilishchnogo stroitel'stva v Tatarstane v 1920-1959 gg." Candidate diss., Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, 2004.
- King, Jeremy. *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Kinos'ian, N. S. "O tvorcheskome metode arkhitekta I. G. Gainutdinova." *Kazanskaia nauka* 4 (2010): 4-9.
- Kirillova, Z. N. *Tatar telen daulat tele bularak gamalga kuiu (20-30nchy ellar)*. Kazan: Master-Lain, 2000.
- Kliuchevich, A. S. *Istoriia Kazanskogo zhirovogo kombinata imeni Mulla-Nur Vakhitova (1855-1945)*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1950.
- Koenker, Diane. "Men against Women on the Shop Floor in Early Soviet Russia: Gender and Class in the Soviet Workplace." *American Historical Review* 100, 5 (1995): 1438-64.
- . *Republic of Labor: Russian Printers and Soviet Socialism, 1918-1930*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Kondrat'ev, I. *Lenin v Kazani*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962.
- Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- . "'One Hand Clapping': Russian Workers and 1917." *Labor History* 32, 4 (1991): 604-20.
- Kreindler, Isabelle. "A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy." *Slavic Review* 26, no. 1 (March 1977): 86-100.
- Kruti, I. *Russkii teatr v Kazani*. Kazan: Iskusstvo, 1958.
- Kupriianov, V. N. *Iubileinaia kniga Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo arkhitekturno-stroitel'nogo universiteta*. Kazan: Akvarel', 2005.
- Kurbatov, Kh. R. *Tatar adabi teleneng alfavit ham orfografiia tarikhy*. Kazan: Tatarstan kitap nashriiaty, 1999.
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki. *Stalin's Industrial Revolution: Politics and Workers, 1928-1932*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Kuznetsova, V. A., and V. A. Iakovlev. *Khalima Mukhutdinova Kurbangalieva*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo Universiteta, 2002.
- Lahusen, Thomas, and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds. *Socialist Realism without Shores*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

- Lebina, N. B. *Obyvatel' i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoi zhizni gorozhan v gody NEPa i khrushchevskogo desiatiletiia*. St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003.
- . *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii. 1920-1930-e gody*. St. Petersburg: Izdatel'sko-torgovyi dom "Letnii sad", 1999.
- Lee, David Currie. *The People's Universities of the USSR*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.
- Litvin, A. L. "Repressirovannaia nauka." *Gasyrlar avazy—Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (1998). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/1998_3_4/06/06_1/.
- . *Zapret na zhizn'*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1993.
- Makhmutov, Kh. K., ed. *Traditsii i novatorstvo v tvorchestve Karima Tinchurina*. Kazan: Akademiia nauk SSR, 1990.
- Mally, Lynn. "Autonomous Theater and the Origins of Socialist Realism: The 1932 Olympiad of Autonomous Art." *Russian Review* 52, no. 2 (1993): 198-212.
- . *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- . *Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Malysheva, S. Iu. *Prazdnyi den', dosuzhii vecher: Kul'tura dosuga rossiiskogo provintsial'nogo goroda vtoroi poloviny XIX-nachala XX veka*. Moscow: Academia, 2011.
- Malysheva, S. Iu. *Sovetskaia prazdnichnaia kul'tura v provintsii: Prostranstvo, simvol, istoricheskie mify (1917-1927)*. Kazan: Ruten, 2005.
- Malysheva, S. Iu., and A. A. Sal'nikova. "Sovetskaia Kazan': Vremia stanovleniia (1920-1930-e gg.)." *Gasyrlar avazy—Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2005). Accessed March 9, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2005_2/01/01_92/.
- Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- McReynolds, Louise. *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 2003.
- Meerovich, M. G. *Kak vlast' narod k trudu priuchala: Zhilishche v SSSR: Sredstvo upravleniia liud'mi, 1917-1941 gg.* Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2005.

- . *Kvadratnye metry, opredeliaiushchie soznanie: Gosudarstvennaia zhilishchnaia politika v SSSR, 1921-1941 gg.* Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2005.
- Meir, Natan. *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859-1914.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- Michaels, Paula. *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Central Asia.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003.
- Miller, Frank J. *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era.* Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990.
- Minnullin, Dzhaudat. *Sakhidzhamal Gizzatullina-Volzhskaia.* Kazan: Zhien, 2012.
- Minnullin, I. R. "Delo 'nelegal'nogo medrese' v Kazani. 1927-28 gg." *Gasyrlar avazy—Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 3/4 (2002). Accessed May 5, 2015.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2002_3_4/03/03_6/&searched=1.
- . *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo i vlast' v Tatarstane, 1920-1930-e gg.* Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Instituta istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, 2006.
- . *Musul'manskoe dukhovenstvo Tatarstana v usloviakh politicheskikh repressii 1920-1930-kh gg.* Nizhnii Novgorod: ID Medina, 2007.
- Mukhamadeev, A. R. *Shariatskaia komissiiia pri narodnom komissariate iustitsii TASSR.* Kazan: Izdatel'stvo DUM RT, 2009.
- Mukhametzianov, A. A., and I. R. Minnullin. *Transformatsiia institutov musul'manskoi obshchiny Tatarstana (1920-1930-e gody).* Nizhnii Novgorod: ID Medina, 2008.
- Northrop, Douglas. *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Orlov, I. B. *Sovetskaia povsednevnost': Istoricheskie i sotsiologicheskie aspekty stanovleniia.* Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola ekonomiki, 2010.
- Ostroumov, V. P. *Kazan': Ocherki po istorii goroda i ego arkhitekturi.* Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo universiteta, 1978.
- Paperny, Vladimir. *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Petrone, Karen. *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Petrov, Petre, and Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, eds. *The Vernaculars of Communism: Language, Ideology, and Power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.* London: Routledge, 2014.

- Pipes, Richard. *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954.
- Raleigh, Donald J. *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Reiman, Michael. *The Birth of Stalinism: The USSR on the Eve of the "Second Revolution"*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Robin, Régine. *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- Rolf, Malte. "A Hall of Mirrors: Sovietizing Culture under Stalinism." *Slavic Review* 68, no. 3 (2009): 601-30.
- . *Soviet Mass Festivals, 1917-1991*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013.
- Romaniello, Matthew P. *The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia, 1552-1671*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012.
- Rorlich, Azade-Ayse. *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986.
- . "Which Way will Tatar Culture Go? A Controversial Essay by Galimdzhan Ibragimov." *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 25, no. 3-4 (1974): 363-71.
- Rosenberg, William G., and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, eds. *Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Roslof, Edward E. *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Sahadeo, Jeff. *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Salikhov, Radik. *Tatarskaia burzhuaziia Kazani i natsional'nye reformy vtoroi poloviny XIX–nachala XX v.* Kazan: Master Lain, 2001.
- Salikhova, L. I. "Organizatsiia Tatarskogo gosudarstvennogo opernogo teatra i pervye gody ego deiatel'nosti." *Filologiya i kul'tura* 27, no. 1 (2012): 171-77.
- Samuelson, Lennart. *Tankograd: The Formation of a Soviet Company Town: Cheliabinsk, 1900s-1950s*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Sarkin, V. G., N. A. Subaev, F. S. Khabibullina, and F. S. Filimonov, eds. *Partiinaia organizatsiia Tatarii v tsifrakh i dokumentakh, 1917-1977 gg.* Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1978.

- Schimmelpennick van der Oye, David. *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Schlogel, Karl. *Moscow*. London: Reaktion, 2005.
- Semenov, N. *Natsional'nye narodnye prazdniki v Tatarii i ikh fizkul'turnoe znachenie*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1945.
- Semenov, N. *Saban-Tui*. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1929.
- Senelick, Laurence, and Sergei Ostrovsky. *The Soviet Theater: A Documentary History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Sharafutdinov, D. R. *Istoricheskie korni i razvitie traditsionnoi kul'tury tatarskogo naroda*. Kazan: Gasyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov, 2004.
- . “O proiskhozhdenii traditsionnogo prazdnika tatarskogo naroda sabantui.” *Gazyrlar avazy–Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 1/2 (2002). Accessed February 11, 2015. http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2002_1_2/08/05/&searched=1.
- . *Sabantui: Obraz zhizni naroda*. Kazan: Ekho vekov, 1997.
- . *Sabantui: Prazdnik truda*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1987.
- Shearer, David R. *Industry, State, and Society in Stalin's Russia, 1926-1934*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Siegelbaum, Lewis H., and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Siegelbaum, Lewis. *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Sinitsin, O. V., ed. *Istoricheskoe kraevedenie v Tatarstane*. Kazan, Kazanskii pedagogicheskii universitet: 2004.
- Slezkine, Yuri. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- . “The Soviet Union as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism.” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 414-52.
- Smith, Jeremy, ed. *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture*. Helsinki: SHS, 1999.
- . *Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

- . *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-24*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Smith, Mark B. *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.
- Smith, Michael G. *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917-1953*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998.
- Smith, Susannah Lockwood. "From Peasants to Professionals: The Socialist-Realist Transformation of a Russian Folk Choir." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 3 (2002): 393-425.
- Snyder, Timothy. *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Stepanov, A. F. *Rasstrel po limitu: Iz istorii politicheskikh repressii v TASSR v gody 'ezhovshchiny'*. Kazan: Novoe Znanie, 1999.
- Stites, Richard. *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Stronski, Paul. *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*. Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.
- Sultanbekov, B. F., and R. G. Khakimzianov. *Politicheskie repressii v Tatarstane: Zakony, ispolniteli, reabilitatsiia zhertv*. Kazan: Legrand, 2002.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor, and Terry Martin, eds. *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics." *Russian Review* 53, 2 (April 1994): 165-82.
- , ed. *The Cambridge History of Russia*. Vol. 3, *The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- . *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- Sverdlova, L. M. *Na perekrestke torgovykh putei*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1991.
- Sylvester, Roshanna P. *Tales of Old Odessa: Crime and Civility in a City of Thieves*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005.
- Tagirov, I. R. "O natsional'noi gosudarstvennosti tatarskogo naroda." *Gasyrlar Avazy-Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2009). Accessed March 15, 2016. http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2009_2/01/01/.

- . *Ocherki istorii Tatarstana i tatarskogo naroda, XX veka*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1999.
- Tagirova, N. P. "Istoriko-pedagogicheskii aspekti fizicheskoi kul'tury i sporta zhenshchin Tatarii." Candidate diss., Kama Polytechnic Institute, 2000.
- Tillett, Lowell. *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.
- Tolstoy, V. I. Bibikova, and C. Cooke, eds. *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918-1933*. New York: Vendome Press, 1990.
- Tuna, Mustafa Özgür. "Gaspıralı v. İl'minskii: Two Identity Projects for the Muslims of the Russian Empire." *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 2 (2002): 265-89.
- Udovički-Selb, Danilo. "Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin's Revolution from Above, 1928-1938." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68, no. 4 (2009): 467-95.
- Urazmanova, R. K. *Sovremennye obriady tatarskogo naroda (Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie)*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1984.
- Usmanov, Mirkasym ed. *Tatarskii gosudarstvennyi akademicheskii teatr imeni Galiasgara Kamal. Sto let*. Kazan: Zaman, 2009.
- Usmanova, Diliara. *Musul'manskaia fraktsiia i problemy "svobody sovesti" v Gosudarsvennoi Dume Rossii, 1906-1917*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Master Lain, 1999.
- Utekhin, I. *Ocherki kommunal'nogo byta*. Moscow: O.G.I., 2001.
- Valeeva, D. K., ed. *Iskusstvo Tatarstana: Puti stanovleniia*. Kazan: Institut iazyka, literatury i istorii im. G. Ibragimova, 1985.
- Valiev, A. M. "Stanovlenie i razvitie gosudarstvennosti tatarskogo naroda v 1920-1930-e gg." *Nauchnyi Tatarstan* 3 (2010): 42-50.
- Viola, Lynne. "Bab'i Bunty and Peasant Women's Protest during Collectivization." *Russian Review* 45, 1 (1986): 23-42.
- . *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Vishlenkova, E. A., S. Iu. Malysheva, and A. A. Sal'nikova. *Kul'tura povsednevnosti provintsial'nogo goroda: Kazan' i kazantsy v XIX-XX vekax*. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2008.
- . *Terra Universitatis: Dva veka universitetskoi kul'tury v Kazani*. Kazan: Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2005.

- von Geldern, James. *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Weeks, Theodore R. *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996.
- Werth, Paul. *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- . *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Wood, Elizabeth A. *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia*. Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Zagidullin, I. K. *Tatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*. Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2014.
- Zahra, Tara. "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis." *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93-119.
- . *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Zainutdinova, Dinara. "Prozaik, poet, dramaturg, publitsist (K 105-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Adelia Kutuia)." *Gazyrlar avazy - Ekho vekov: Nauchno-dokumental'nyi zhurnal* 2 (2008). Accessed March 5, 2016.
http://www.archive.gov.tatarstan.ru/magazine/go/anonymous/main/?path=mg:/numbers/2008_2/07/03/&ssearched=1.
- Zakiev, M. Z. *Kazanskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institute*. Kazan: KGPI, 1974.
- Zenkovsky, Serge. *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.