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## Making Muslim Women Political : Imagining the Wartime Woman in the Russian Muslim Women's Journal *Suyumbika*

DANIELLE ROSS

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### Résumés

Français English

Résumé : Cet article s'intéresse au journal féminin *Suyumbika*, publié à Kazan, afin de suivre la transformation de l'opinion des réformateurs musulmans sur la femme musulmane moderne. Bien que la majeure partie de la littérature scientifique analysant les réformes religieuses, culturelles et éducatives des communautés musulmanes de Russie ait considéré que l'évolution du rôle des femmes dans la société a été un processus de plusieurs décennies, cet article soutient au contraire que la brève période de la Grande Guerre est fondamentale et essentielle dans ce processus de transformation dans la région Volga-Oural. Les articles de presse, les fictions historiques et les appels au service communautaire, produits par des écrivains masculins comme féminins, ont promu l'image d'une femme politiquement et socialement active, qui participe à la guerre tout en étant une musulmane vertueuse. De cette façon, la Grande Guerre a servi de transition entre les périodes impériale et soviétique. Cet article est basé, entre autres, sur des sources primaires publiées dans *Suyumbika* entre 1914 et 1917 ainsi que sur des livres en langue tatare de la période pré-1917.

Abstract This article uses the Kazan-based Muslim Women's journal *Suyumbika* to follow the transformation of Muslim reformers' views on the modern Muslim woman. While much of the scholarly literature on religious, cultural, and education reform in Russia's Muslim communities has viewed the change in women's roles to be a decades-long process, this article argues that in the brief period of the Great War, the ideal vision of the Volga-Ural Muslim woman underwent more profound changes than it had in the previous decades. Through news articles, historical fiction, and calls to community service, the male and female writers promoted an image of a politically and socially-active woman, who would do her part for the war while being a virtuous Muslim. In this way, the Great War served as a period of transition between women's cultures of the imperial and Soviet periods. This article is based, among others, on primary sources published in *Suyumbika* between 1914 and 1917 as well as Tatar-language books of the pre-1917 period.

### Texte intégral

## Introduction

- In April 1915, student-journalist Khairuddin Bolghanbai reported for the Muslim newspaper *Qazaq* on a recent literary-cultural evening held by the Orenburg [Muslim] Student Aid Society to collect money to aid wounded soldiers. The cultural evening brought together amateur performers from the city's Tatar, Bashkir, and Kazakh ethnic communities, and they performed to a sold-out house. In addition to the usual audience of urban youth, the event attracted people from the surrounding villages and even "elderly women with scarves on their heads and old men in winter hats, people the likes of which had never been seen in the Orenburg theater" (Bolghanbai, 2009 : 61). One of the highlights of the evening was a singing performance by two women :

After Argyñ, the Qazaq women Gainizhamal Dulatova and Zhangyl Qaiyrbaeva came out on stage and sang "Oh, My Poor Country" and "Kanderghazi." They received loud applause. The audience listened to the songs with particular attention and afterwards shouted "bis !" [encore]. These two women both appeared on stage in Kazakh skirts sewn tightly about the waist and flared at the hem. These women, though they had never appeared in front of a large audience before, performed with great exuberance.

At previous literary and cultural evenings, Muslim women have never come out on stage and performed such lengthy songs. For this reason, on this occasion, our ladies carried the evening (Bolghanbai, 2009 : 62).

- In the years before the Great War, very few Muslim women appeared on stage. Those who did had faced harsh criticism (Makmutova, 2012 : 245-269). Even the Jadid reformers, who advocated for women's education and better treatment for women in marriage and the family, and included in their ranks a small number of actresses, girls' school teachers, and female writers, focused primarily on improving the conditions women faced in the home as wives and mothers. But, by 1915, the Muslim press had begun to promote new roles for Muslim women in Russia's Volga-Ural region and Siberia. Newspapers and journals called upon Muslim women to support their soldiers and the empire by taking on new kinds of work, educating themselves and their neighbors on international affairs, and undertaking charity work such as the concert described above. In doing so, reformist writers sought to normalize activities that had been considered inappropriate for women before the war, and to construct a vision of women as possessing agency in imperial and international politics. This was a departure from the more household and education-oriented Jadid discourses on Muslim women's rights that had preceded the war, and it foreshadowed developments in the revolutionary and early Soviet periods, when the new Bolshevik government and its allies and opponents within Soviet Muslim communities would view Muslim women as potential participants in the construction of a new society. (Northrop, 2004 ; Kamp, 2006).
- Historians now recognize the Great War's role in transforming views on women's roles in many parts of the world. The war has received the greatest attention in studies of European and American women's history, where the roles of wife and mother were re-configured to normalize women's wartime activities as workers, breadwinners, and patriotic supporters of the war effort (Grayzel, 1999). A similar pattern emerges in studies of Russia's women, who became factory workers or medical staff, led volunteer charity efforts on the home front, and spoke up for the rights of soldiers and their families (McDermid, 1998, Afoniia, 2014). In the Muslim world as well, the hardships caused by the war led women to become advocates for wellbeing of their families (Kamp, 2006 : 54).
- By contrast, in the study of women's history in Volga-Ural Muslim society, Russian and western historians have emphasized the Russian revolutionary period (1917-1921) as the key moment of the transformation of discourses on Muslim women's rights and roles. During this period, Russian subjects across the empire gathered to discuss the futures of their ethno-confessional communities and the empire as a whole. This sense of new possibility extended also to educated Muslim women, who met in a series of congresses to discuss what rights women should enjoy in a post-imperial Russia (Kamp, 2015). Some of these women went on to take part in the founding of schools, national theaters, and other cultural institutions in the new Soviet Union (Makmutova, 2012 : 268-274). They did so against a backdrop of fierce debates across the USSR over how women would live in the new Soviet society (Kamp, 2006 ; Northrop, 2004 ; McDermid, 1998).
- In comparison with the revolutions of February and October, the Great War receives little attention in relation to either changes in Volga-Ural Muslim women's lives or the discussions of gender roles in Volga-Ural Muslim society. Makmutova describes the various new activities Muslim women took up during the war. However, she also stresses the continuities from the pre-war period, including Muslim women's ongoing dependence on men to take leadership of the women's movement and the long-term shift from a religious society to a secular one, exemplified by the growing role of gymnasium-educated women in the Muslim women's movement (Makmutova, 2012 : 52-56). Gabdräfikova, in her analysis of the effects of the war on Tatar culture, notes that the departure of Volga-Ural Muslim men to the front forced women to take on new duties and professions, and that those women were, thus, closer to emancipation than Muslim women in other parts of the empire by 1917 (Gabdräfikova, 2014 : 70-71). Makmutova and Gabdräfikova draw their data primarily from wartime periodicals. Neither, however, makes a clear distinction between the discourse on gender roles and the actual changes in women's lived experience during the war. The same can be said of a recent study on Muslim philanthropic work during the war by Norihiro Naganawa, which highlights the war as moment of change in Muslim women's activities, but intermixes actual instances of women's activism with calls to action and debates in the press over women's roles (Naganawa, 2016 : 63, 74-76). Also, Makmutova, Gabdräfikova and Naganawa position the drive to mobilize women during the war as a continuation of pre-war efforts on the part of Jadid reformers to educate and liberate women ; opposition to women's education, work, and public activism came from outside of Jadid circles rather than from within.
- However, a comparison of Jadid publications from before and during the war reveals significant transformations in the way that Jadid reformers themselves envisioned women's role in society. Before the war, Jadid writers focused on women's education and greater rights as means of strengthening the Muslim family. The roles they proposed for educated women were limited to that of homemaker and educator. With the start of the war, however, while they still presented women as wives and mothers, they widened the range of women's activities and responsibilities. With the departure of husbands to the front, it was no longer adequate for a woman to keep her house in order and raise her children. Reformers called upon her to take over her husband's work, donate her free time to support the war effort, and become conscious of the political consequences of her activities. These trends were present in the wartime articles of *Suyumbika*, the only Muslim women's journal published in Russia during the Great War. The journal served an incubator in which male and female reformers crafted and promoted new images of the politically-active Muslim woman. Calls in 1917 for women to march, vote, and support the revolution built upon a home-front mobilization of women that had begun in July, 1914. Wartime efforts to inform and mobilize women also served as training for the some of the Muslim men and women who went on to take part in the construction of early Soviet culture.

## *Suyumbika* and its Audience

- Founded in Kazan in 1913, the monthly journal *Suyumbika* was the second Muslim women's journal published in the Russian empire. The first women's journal, '*Alem-i Nisvan*, had been founded in Crimea in 1906 by Shafiga Gasprinskaia, daughter of well-known reformer, publicist, and founder of new phonetic method education (*usul-e Jadid*) Isma'il Gasprinskii (1851-1914). However, '*Alem-i Nisvan* closed in 1910, making *Suyumbika* the only Muslim women's journal published in Russia during the war (Bennigsen and

Quelquejey, 1964 : 142). Occupying this position, the journal published contributions from Muslims across the empire, but it was targeted primarily at a Volga-Ural Muslim audience and its staff had strong links with both the Jadid and Tatar nationalist movements. The name of the journal was inspired by emerging Tatar national historical narratives : *Suyumbika* was of the widow of Kazan Khan Safagari, and was often portrayed in early twentieth-century Tatar literature as the heroic, but doomed last queen Kazan at the time of the Russian conquest in 1552. *Suyumbika's* main editor, Yaqub Khalili (1877-1938), was born in Izh-Bubi village in Viakta Province and graduated from Izh-Bubi Madrasa, one of the most prominent and politically-radical madrasas in the Volga region. Before founding the journal, he had published textbooks for young children (Rāmi and Dautov, 2001). Khalili was assisted by his wife, Asma, who worked as *Suyumbika's* secretary in the first year of its publication (Makhmutova, 2006 : 45). *Suyumbika* was published through Umid and Magarif publishing houses, the latter of which published most of the writings of popular Tatar poet Gabdulla Tukai (Rāmi and Dautov, 2001). Its regular contributors also wrote for the Tatar literary journal *Ang*, the youth satirical journal, *Yalt-yolt*, and the Kazan newspaper *Yoldyz*. These contributors fell into three categories : 1) men aged 20 to 35, who had graduated from the Volga Basin's Jadid madrasas, 2) women in their teens and twenties, educated in the girls' schools that had been founded in the early 1900s, and 3) women in their thirties, forties, and fifties who were home-educated or self-educated and had become involved in teaching, textbook writing, and Islamic law (Makhmutova, 2006 :44-47).

8 At the height of its popularity, *Suyumbika* was issued once a month with a print-run of 1,300 copies, making it the second largest of the Tatar journals published in Kazan (Makhmutova, 2006 : 45). Its target audience included teachers, clergy, shopkeepers and merchant families, school children, students, and literate members of society, whom it encouraged to take the lead in promoting women's rights to Muslim society. Like other Volga-Ural Muslim periodicals, *Suyumbika* was designed for pedagogical purposes as well as enjoyment and dissemination of information. Its articles were meant to instruct readers and provide didactic material for village teachers and reformist clergy to instruct their pupils and laypeople.

## The Jadid Discourse on Women before 1914

9 Russian and Tatar-language studies of the Muslim women's movement in the Volga-Ural region have focused primarily on the evolution of women's education from the late 1800s to 1917. Their often hagiographic narratives highlight educational and cultural "firsts" : the first girls' schools, the first women to graduate from Russian gymnasia (Biktimirova, 2011 ; Makmutova, 2012). These examples of individual middle and upper class women breaking gender barriers is equated with progress toward the achievement of equal status for men and women. Biktimirova and Makmutova interpret Jadid literary works lamenting the plight of women or promoting female education as unambiguously progressive and feminist texts (Makmutova, 2012 : 14-15 ; Biktimirova, 25, 27, 32).

10 Jadid views on women have received fleeting attention in English-language studies of the Volga-Ural Jadids (Rorlich 1986 ; Tuna, 2015). They have been addressed in greater detail in Adeb Khalid and Marianne Kamp's books on cultural reform in Central Asia, where both authors use the writings of Volga-Ural writers such as Rizaeddin Fakhreddinov, Gabdulla Bubi, and Fakhr al-banat Sulaimaniya to characterize the Jadids' core views on women's education, marriage, and family life. In contrast to Makmutova and Biktimirova, both Khalid and Kamp note the limits of the Jadids' definition of women's liberation. Khalid argues that the basic unit of the future modern society promoted by the Jadids was the nuclear family (Khalid, 1998 : 226). Their efforts to "save" Muslim women focused upon the strengthening of the family unit through the elimination of practices "harmful" to the physical health, intellectual development, and economic wellbeing of its members. By opposing child marriage, forced marriage, polygyny, opium consumption, veiling, confinement to the home, and by promoting basic education for both men and women, the Jadids aimed to create families capable of bearing and raising healthy, productive members of the nation (Khalid, 1998 : 225-226). Kamp, in her analysis of the writings of Fakhreddinov and Sulaimaniya, emphasizes their focus on improving relations and conditions within the family. Marriages were to be entered by the free will of both spouses and to be based on affection and mutual respect. However, marriage remained the ideal, if not the only, path for women, and once a woman had become a wife and mother, she became subordinate to her husband (Kamp, 2006 : 40).

11 Kamp and Khalid both focus on the writings of a particular generation of Jadid reformers. Born in the 1860s or the early 1870s, the Fakhreddinov, Sulaimaniyya, and Bubi were educated in the madrasas or, in Sulaimaniyya's case, by a father who taught in a madrasa. They were well-versed in Arabic language and Islamic law. One might argue that their emphasis on family, marriage, and the authority of men over women was a result of their working within the limits of Islamic scripture and law. However, younger socialist-leaning writers of the early 1900s, some of whom attended the newly-established Jadid madrasas, exhibited a similarly limited view of women's roles and prerogatives in a modern Muslim society. In the Galiagar Kamal's 1907 play "The Unfortunate Youth," Gaiasha, a seventeen-year-old gymnasium student converses with the twenty-year-old student Akhmat about women's education. Akhmat's answer to her remarks is derisive : "In your opinion, if there is to be true equality, then women should trade at the bazaar while men stay home to cook and look after the children ?". Gaiasha clarifies that she only thinks that women have a right to an education (Kamal, 1978 : 28-29). While one might read this exchange as Kamal's endorsement of women's education, it can also be read as a means of setting the audience at ease : women's education would not overturn the existing balance of power and assignment of responsibilities between the genders. Similar ambiguity women's agency and independence is evident in Fatikh Amir Khan's novel, *Khayat*. The novel follows the romantic adventures of a young, educated Muslim girl seeking a husband. In the end, she prepares to marry her ideal partner, a handsome, wealthy, reformist merchant. However, she is not the one to find him. Rather, her parents listen to their daughter's concerns, surprise her with a man perfectly suited to her, and arrange her marriage (Amir Khan, 1911). As in "The Unfortunate Youth," in *Khayat*, providing education and greater freedom to women is portrayed as re-enforcing marriage and domestic life, rather than encouraging women to take on new, non-traditional roles.

## Mobilizing Muslim Women

12 The outbreak of the war placed new demands on women and challenged the Jadids' vision of educated mothers and housewives. The departure of men to the front forced some women into the roles of soldiers' wives, mothers, and daughters. At the same time, wartime propaganda promoted patriotism as the duty of all Russian subjects. This new propaganda campaign was carried out in the Muslim community through texts such as "State of War," a ballad written by a Kazan Muslim woman, Bibi-khadima Sharifaddin-qzi and published through Millat Press. "State of War" was modeled on the soldier's ballad (*soldat bayete*), a literary form traditionally produced by Muslim men serving in the Russian army (Ross, 2014 : 91-92). However, Sharifaddin-qzi used this form to describe the war's impact on women and families :

One of them [the soldiers] cries "Mama !"

Another cries, "My child !"

Their wives cry even more.

"I've been left all alone !" they say.

It is said that one must honor Friday,

Everyone eats the food from the stove

When the news came at five o'clock.

Who will eat that food now ? (Sharifaddin-qzi, 1914 : 4)

13 The tone of the ballad quickly turns from shock and despair to resignation :

Whatever state a woman may be in,

There is no use in crying. [ . . . ]

The women ask

When their soldiers will return.

No matter where those poor men are, they say :

"It will be good if I do return."

Some [of the men] are without hope,

They say, "Make me some food."

Their wives pack their shirts and trousers." (Sharifaddin-qzi, 1914 : 5-6)

14 By the end of the poem, resignation has turned to resolve :

"I will give my wealth as *zakat*

And my soul in sacrifice for my merciful one, the emperor (Sharifaddin-qzi, 1914 : 14).

15 "State of War" was one of the first in a series of Tatar-language propaganda pamphlets that Millat Press released in the course of the war. All of these pamphlets called upon Muslims to endure hardship and remain steadfast in their support of the Russian Emperor. However, while most of these pamphlets addressed men's experiences in the trenches or as prisoners of war, "State of War" focused on women coming to terms with the war and embracing new roles as soldiers' wives and loyal subjects, and it depicted these processes part of women's contribution to the war effort. While Millat Press published patriotic propaganda, the Temporary Muslim Committee for Aid to Soldiers and their Families published Tatar-language brochures outlining the stipends and food allotments owed to the wives and minor children of mobilized soldiers and how those allotments could be obtained (*Sugyshqa alyngan gaskarlarga*, 1915).

16 The mobilization, the pro-war propaganda, and the new responsibilities thrust upon women pushed *Suyumbika's* writers to embrace a new view of women as active participants in the war effort. One female contributor, writing in August 1914, argued that, in times of war, Turko-Tatar women of past centuries had taken over the running of their household and family property when their men went away to fight ; they even went so far as to assume traditionally male work, such as guarding the family herds and moving them between seasonal pastures<sup>1</sup>. She contrasted this with the attitude of modern Tatars, who accused women of being infidels and degenerates if they dared to sell goods at the shops and bazaars<sup>2</sup>. The article presented the war as an opportunity for women to simultaneously demonstrate their love of their Russian homeland and win greater rights and autonomy for themselves. The author reminded readers of the disastrous Russo-Japanese War, when many Muslim men had served and perished, and Muslim women had remained in a state of "rightlessness" and "ignorance." By implication, the fate of the new war hinged upon Muslim women taking an active role on the home front and claiming the rights that their society had denied them. The author urged Muslim women to follow the course of their nomadic ancestors and their Russian neighbors. Wives of deployed shopkeepers and clerks were told to take on their husband's jobs. Rural women were to take their husbands' places in the fields<sup>3</sup>. If working women were greeted with accusations of being "infidels" and "sinners," they were told to answer back with "You are a bigot ! A curse upon you !"<sup>4</sup>.

17 Another female writer, Bibijamal Tirshiqawiyya, encouraged urban women to begin charitable societies to aid families left without breadwinners as well as the inevitable widows and orphans that the war would produce. Tirshiqawiyya, too, made a direct connection between home-front activities and female empowerment, noting that, although many Muslim

men lacked job skills, Muslim women were often even more ignorant and incapable of supporting themselves and their children. Urban women could use their wealth and education to aid their less fortunate sisters, who were, after all, the "wives of Russia's heroes"<sup>5</sup>.

18 Yet another article informed readers that Kazan Muslims had begun to open hospitals for wounded soldiers. The anonymous author pointed out that these hospitals provided an opportunity for girls and women to support their men and the Russian war effort. A Kazan Muslim woman named Gaisha Khussainova had already organized a meeting at her house to advise women on how they could become involved. Other opportunities for women to aid in the war included caring for orphaned children and supporting local government organizations and community charitable societies. The author reminded women that war was being fought for the "peace" and "honor" of the Russian homeland and it could only be won if Muslim men and women worked together<sup>6</sup>. Another anonymous article published a few months later urged Muslim women to aid their nation's wounded soldiers by collecting clothes, blankets, and bandages, volunteering at hospitals across the city, and providing homecare for the severely injured and permanently disabled<sup>7</sup>.

19 Women's mobilization extended to wardrobe choices. An article published in October of 1914 raised the issue of how fashion, modernity, and international politics intertwined. The male author identified female preoccupation with changing fashion as aspect of modernity, noting how recent technological advancements such as the automobile and the airplane had given rise to new styles of clothing<sup>8</sup>. He also noted, however, that the citizens could undermine the policies of their own governments through their clothing choices. He raised the example of the Russo-Japanese war. Though Russia had fought the Japanese on the battlefield, on the home front, civilians had happily purchased Japanese-inspired clothing, furniture, and home-decorating items, because, at the time, such items had been in fashion in Western Europe<sup>9</sup>. The start of the Great War had cut off Russia's trade contacts with Paris, Europe's capital of women's fashion, and Germany and Austria were now rising to take its place, printing fashion journals and marketing new clothing styles. The author encouraged women to avoid these new "enemy" clothes and embrace a simpler style, which would allow them remain faithful to their empire and save money that could be put to use to aid the war effort<sup>10</sup>.

20 In the first months of the war, both male and female activists called upon Muslim women to take an active role in supporting the imperial war effort. This call differed from previous efforts at mobilizing and modernizing Muslim women in that it encouraged women to cross socially-accepted and religiously-prescribed gender boundaries, and to enter spaces that even the most radical reformers had previously declared closed to them. Also, the new campaign raised the stakes of women's participation in community life. If, before the war, the future of the Muslim community had hinged upon educating women, now the fate of the empire would be determined, in part, by women's deeds and actions.

21 In crafting the image of the active, politically-astute wartime woman, Jadid writers stretched the definitions of Muslim motherhood and wifehood. Men had been called from their usual duty of supporting and protecting their families to fulfill a different, even more masculine role : the armed defense of their homeland. This crisis necessitated the entry of women into male spaces (bazaar stalls, shops, and, to some degree, politics) and women's assumption of male responsibilities as workers, breadwinners, and protectors of the weak until the men returned<sup>11</sup>.

22 *Suyumbika's* authors repeatedly used historical examples to legitimize the new roles that they urged women to assume. They printed biographies of Shajr ad-Dur (Sultana of Egypt) and *Suyumbika* (the last queen of Kazan), who took over political leadership of their respective states after the death of their husbands<sup>12</sup>. Another article related how Fatima, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, had worked side-by-side with her husband<sup>13</sup>. According to the authors, these Muslim women of the past had set precedents that made Russian Muslim women's participation in wartime trade, farming, and charitable work not only acceptable, but appropriate for a Muslim and Turkic society.

## A Woman at War : A Daughter of the Quraysh

23 Among those promoting a new wartime vision of Muslim women was female educator Fakhri al-banat Sulaimaniyya (b. 1857). Educated by her father in the same fields that he taught the male students in his madrasa, Sulaimaniyya was well-versed in the Quran, hadith, and fiqh (Rami and Dautov, 2001 : 272). She used her knowledge to write tracts on girls' education, family life, and the social harm wrought by alcohol. She educated young girls in Nizhni Novgorod and, starting in 1915, served as the secretary for *Suyumbika* (Makhmutova, 2006 : 43, 45). As discussed above, while she had advocated female education before the war, she had also argued that Islam dictated that women should be married and should defer to their husbands.

24 In 1915, Sulaimaniyya began to publish a novella called *A Daughter of the Quraysh*. Appearing in serialized form from late 1915 to summer of 1917, it related the events of the First Fitna, a civil war in the early Islamic community that began after the assassination of Caliph 'Uthman. The events of the novella are viewed through the eyes of Asma, a beautiful, clever, brave young woman, whose family connections draw her into one of the most tragic conflicts in the history of Islam.

25 Though *A Daughter of the Quraysh* was set in the distant past, the theme of war permeated the work. War had torn Asma's family apart. When she was two years old, her father was captured during the conquest of Egypt. Left alone with a young child, her mother, Maryam, married Yazid, a member of the powerful 'Umayyad clan and kinsman of Caliph 'Uthman. Yazid wishes to marry Asma to another 'Umayyad, Marwan, but Maryam consents to the marriage only on the condition that the family first make a journey to Medina. Maryam, however, has other plans, and intends to use the journey not only to save her daughter from the marriage, but to deliver a message of vital importance to the 'Umayyads' rival, 'Ali ibn abu Talib<sup>14</sup>. This alignment of relatives places Asma at the center of a new war about to break out between the 'Umayyad clan and other factions in Arab Muslim society.

26 Maryam never makes it to Medina. She becomes ill less than a day's journey from her goal. Asma cares for her day and night, but when it became clear that Maryam will not recover, she confides in Asma about the message she carried for 'Ali. Asma first asks Marwan to send his servant to Medina to bring 'Ali. When neither Marwan nor the servant return, Asma dons men's clothing, mounts her horse and rides to Medina herself in the middle of the night. She passes herself off as a man and is taken under the wing of Muhammad, son of the late caliph Abu Bakr, who guides her through the politics of the caliphate as they try to reach 'Ali<sup>15</sup>.

27 Female characters in Tatar Jadid novels were rarely granted much independence. Often, they were portrayed as either helpless victims of a benighted, patriarchal order, or helpmates to male characters trying to change society. The concerns of these female characters revolved around marriage, primary education, and family life. *A Daughter of the Quraysh* begins in this vein, but as soon as Asma dons male clothing, the focus shifts. Her mission to 'Ali is not simply about avoiding an unwanted marriage, but averting a crisis in the Islamic community. In Medina, Asma becomes fully cognizant of scale of the conflict in which she and her family are involved<sup>16</sup>.

28 Despite its historical premise, *A Daughter of the Quraysh* repeatedly raises themes of immediate relevance to women living day-to-day on Russia's home front. The theme of duty runs through the work. Duty to family motivates Asma to put herself at risk by pretending to be man. Later in the novel, after Asma's mother has died, she must choose between marrying the kind and honest Muhammad son of Abu Bakr or accompanying her stepfather to take up residence in Caliph 'Uthman's household. Despite disliking her stepfather, she chooses the latter course, out of consideration of her obligation to him and in hopes of serving as a positive influence on her troublesome 'Umayyad suitor, Marwan, who is rapidly emerging as an influential leader of the caliphate. Asma was not alone in seeing herself as serving a larger purpose. There is also Na'ila, the wife of Caliph 'Uthman, who disputes Marwan's political advice and tries to convince him to change his ways. She believes the caliphate to be teetering on the brink of civil war, and repeatedly warns Marwan that he may come to bear personal responsibility for its destruction<sup>17</sup>.

29 In the early caliphate as Sulaimaniyya imagined it, both men and women play an active role in political and social life ; both answer for the future of Islam. *A Daughter of the Quraysh* was distaff re-telling of Islamic history, but it was also uniquely suited to the message that *Suyumbika* communicated about the war : women played a central role in the shaping the politics of their society, even if they did not bear arms. Their contributions on the home front were as vital to determining the course of historical events as were their husbands' actions on the battlefield.

30 *A Daughter of the Quraysh* also wrestled with the problem of differentiating between the true and false friends of Islam. In the story, these two poles were represented by Asma's two suitors, Muhammad and Marwan. Each purported to act in the best interest of the faith, but while Muhammad worries about what the conflict between the 'Umayyads and their opponents might do the caliphate, Marwan uses his influence over the caliph to accrue power to himself and his kin. Far from an ancient dilemma, the question of who spoke for Islam was an immediate and thorny issue by 1916, as the Germans used their alliance with the Ottoman Empire to present themselves to British, French, and Russian colonial Muslims as defenders of Islam.

31 *Suyumbika* addressed this issue directly in 1916 in an article titled "Germany's Two-sided Approach to Islam." The author argued that, while the Turks and the Germans portrayed themselves as friends of Islam, they did so only in order to spark civil unrest in the Entente colonies. Their treatment of their own colonies, such as Zanzibar, revealed a very different situation. There, far from raising the status of Islam or offering Muslims independence, German administrators merely took the place of their British predecessors<sup>18</sup>. As Marwan's support for Caliph 'Uthman served only to increase the 'Umayyads' power over other Muslims, German and Turkish support for colonized Muslims was nothing more campaign to dupe pious Muslims into advancing German colonial ambitions. In this way, Sulaimaniyya's historical fiction re-enforced the messages conveyed in *Suyumbika's* current events articles. It also re-enforced the point that Muslim women should be aware of the political situation unfolding around them.

32 By the latter chapters of *A Daughter of the Quraysh*, Asma refuses to marry either Muhammad or Marwan, despite being pressured by all around her to choose a husband. Her promise to her late mother and the fate of the caliphate remain her main priorities. In this way, Asma starkly contrasts with the supportive, but submissive housewife of Sulaimaniyya's 1913 writings as well as with the marriages that served as happy endings to a number of pre-war Jadid novels.

## Imagining Women as Revolutionary

33 From August 1914 to January 1917, the writers of *Suyumbika* called on women to become aware of the events unfolding outside of their homes and take on roles in the professional and public spheres to support the Russian war effort. To normalize the idea of Muslim women as active in public and mixed-gender spaces, *Suyumbika's* writers presented a range of real and fictional women from the Turkic and Islamic past who had done the same, and argued that such action was a laudable practice with a long historical pedigree. Moreover, the journal advocated for political literacy as an aspect of women's transformation from homemakers into politically-conscious citizens. These messages were retained after February 1917, but the political context within which women were told to apply them changed.

34 The February Revolution was announced in the March 15 issue of *Suyumbika* and the journal's writers positioned *Suyumbika* as a press organ for educating women on Russia's rapidly changing political situation<sup>19</sup>. In the wake of February, the contributors to *Suyumbika* focused on the upcoming election to the Constituent Assembly. The Provisional Government's granting of universal suffrage altered the political landscape of Volga-Ural Muslim communities by conferring upon men and women the same political rights. If the journal had previously appealed to women as a back-up workforce and support network during men's wartime absence, it now courted women as potential voters.

35 For *Suyumbika's* writers, the idea of Russia's Muslim women gaining the vote was both intoxicating and slightly frightening. During the war, *Suyumbika's* authors had looked to women's movements Western Europe for inspiration, but in 1917, the tables had turned and Russia's women had outstripped their sisters in Britain and France<sup>20</sup>. Thus, they were now a model for other women around the world. The position of the empire's Muslim women was fraught with even greater significance, for it represented the first time that Muslim women had possessed voting rights. However, taking the lead also created anxiety.

36 Male and female reformers agreed with the principle that all women should vote<sup>21</sup>. However, they worried that many Muslim women, especially those in rural areas, would not fully comprehend their new role. The female social activism that *Suyumbika* had previously encouraged in support of the war was now turned to preparing women for the upcoming election. One male writer suggested that imams' wives and female school teachers should take it upon themselves to educate women on their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a post-imperial Russia<sup>22</sup>. In early March, the Muslim women of Moscow convened a general meeting, which coincided with a gathering of Russia's Society for Equal Rights for Women. The manifest of the latter gathering was translated from Russian into Tatar and published in *Suyumbika*. It included a call for the appointment of female commissars of justice, foreign affairs, commerce, labor, and education, and the opening to women of occupations such as lawyer, notary, and factory inspector<sup>23</sup>. Another male writer issued a call to Muslim women to mobilize in the service of the new post-imperial state :

Women and girls ! Read ! Convene demonstrations ! Go to meetings ! Go out among men ! Attend lectures ! Create your own organizations ! Learn to do work for your society !

Tatar women and girls ! It is a new time and a renewed Russia awaits your service. In this renewed Russia, in order to lay the foundations for a bright future, the men will need your help !<sup>24</sup>

37 With calls such as this, revolutionary-era reformers overturned many aspects of the pre-war views on the ideal modern Muslim woman. If, before the war, the new Muslim woman was to use her modern education to create a healthy, progressive home and guide her husband toward virtue, by 1917, she was to take up the banner of revolution herself and labor side-by-side with men in the public sphere. The starkness of this change, however, was muted by the fact that over the course of the war, Muslim writers, such as those who contributed to *Suyumbika*, had created a new model of the socially-active, politically-informed, yet devout Muslim woman.

## Conclusion

38 Through pre-war reformers called for women's education and better treatment of wives and daughters, they did not envision women as political or economic actors on the international political stage. The war led Jadid writers to revise their views. With women facing the mobilization of their husbands and with propaganda calling upon all citizens, regardless of gender, to support the war, reformers' pre-war vision of the modern Muslim woman no longer corresponded with their society's realities. Rather than either remaining stable throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century or shifting suddenly in 1917, Jadid views on women's roles and rights evolved and adapted over time. During the war years, they went through a period of particularly rapid change. In this way, the Great War served as an intermediate stage between the Jadid discourses of the early 1900s and those of the revolutionary period.

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## Notes

- 1 Golgizar, "Sugsh ham turko-tatar khatnarnar," *Suyumbika*, 20 (1914): 13.
- 2 Ibid., 13-14.
- 3 Most Volga-Ural Muslims were peasants and women had worked in the fields beside their husbands before the war (Makhmutova, 2006: 9). However, the exhortation in the article was meant to signify the wife taking over her husband's duties while he was away.
- 4 Golgizar, "Sugsh ham," : 15.
- 5 Bibijamal Tiryshqaviyya, "Sugsh va Tatar khatnarnar, *Suyumbika*, 20 (1914): 16-17.
- 6 "Sugsh monasabate ila," *Suyumbika*, 23 (1914): 16.
- 7 "Vaqt iardem teli," *Suyumbika*, 24 (1914): 18.
- 8 Bashirov, "Sugsh ham moda," *Suyumbika*, 24 (1914): 8.
- 9 Ibid., 9.
- 10 Ibid., 10-12.
- 11 One sphere not heavily discussed in *Suyumbika* was the factory. Though there was much manufacturing in the Volga-Ural region, Tatar women made up only 2.6% of the industrial workforce (just over 600 workers) in the 1913-1918 period (Rumiantsev, 1989: 106-107).
- 12 Rizaeddin bin Fakhreddin, [Untitled], *Suyumbika*, 24 (1914): 1-5; Sh. A., "Mashhur khatnarnardan, tarikh kismi: Suyumbike," *Suyumbika*, 2 (1916): 20-21.
- 13 I. Halili, "Khazrat Fatimaning kaharmanligi," *Suyumbika*, 24(1914): 5-7.
- 14 F. B. Suleimaniyya, "Quraish qza," *Suyumbika*, 4 (1915): 66-67.
- 15 F. B. Suleimaniyya, "Quraish qza," *Suyumbika*, 5 (1916): 88.
- 16 Ibid., 88-90.
- 17 F. B. Suleimaniyya, "Quraish qza," *Suyumbika*, 12 (1916): 207.
- 18 "Germanianning Islama ike iakh qarashi," *Suyumbika*, 2 (1916): 32.
- 19 G. Battal, "Buiuk revoliutsia," *Suyumbika*, 9 (1917): 129-135.
- 20 "Musulman khatnarnarni tavishlari," *Suyumbika*, 9 (1917): 143; G. Battal, "Langargan Rusiyada," *Suyumbika*, 10 (1917): 149.
- 21 I. Halili, "Khatnarnarni khazerge vazifalari," *Suyumbika*, 9 (1917): 136-137.
- 22 Ibid., 138.
- 23 "Khatnarnarga tigez khokuk," *Suyumbika*, 9 (1917): 143-144.
- 24 G. Battal, "Langargan Rusiyada," 150.

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## Auteur

Danièle Ross  
Utah State University (Logan, UT, USA)

## Droits d'auteur



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