

**THE PREOCCUPATIONS OF `ABDALRAUF FITRAT,
BUKHARAN NONCONFORMIST**

(An Analysis and List of His Writings)

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Preface

During the 1920s and 1930s, The New York Public Library (NYPL) and the Library of Congress (LC) of the U.S.A. acquired for their collections at least 10 books and pamphlets written by the subject of this analysis, 'Abdalrauf Abdurahimoghli Fitrat (1886-1938) and published between 1923 and 1927, inclusively. (see Nationalities of the Soviet East. Publications and Writing Systems (1971). Long held in uncatalogued files, nevertheless, these publications and hundreds of others from those years in the local languages remained accessible to students, emigrants and scholars. The NYPL made works available beginning from the decades of their acquisition – a time contemporaneous with Professor Fitrat's most productive period. Fortunately for scholarship, this occurred before Central Asia's Communist Party ideologists in Tashkent all but silenced Professor Fitrat and his colleagues and then brought about his execution and that of others as "enemies of the people."

The NYPL in 1996, at the initiative of the Chief of its Slavic and Baltic Division, Dr. Edward Kasinec, moved to preserve these valuable and very fragile rare books and to produce a temporary paper catalogue compiled for users by Nermin Eren.

In 1999, under grants from The New York State Library, Conservation/Preservation Program, Albany, New York, and from the Center for Research Libraries, Slavic and East European Microfilming Project, Chicago, Illinois, a newer undertaking to bring these materials under bibliographic control has been managed by Robert H. Davis, Jr., a librarian in the NYPL's

Slavic and Baltic Division. It has proceeded with the compilation of cataloging information especially in order to insert records of the Central Asian and related publications from the 1920s and 1930s into the major U.S. bibliographic utilities, OCLC and RLIN. This step meant to make the presence of these materials known via its online catalogue for the benefit of scholars and students worldwide. Users may reach the appropriate catalogue for bibliographic citations (cataloging records) through the Internet via NYPL's public access catalog CATNYP by dialing URL <http://catnyp.nypl.org>

The author of the present analysis, the compiler of the attached list of writings, especially thanks Shaahmad Mutalaw, Dr. Diloram Nishanov and family, Munevver Olgun, Dr. Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh and Ibrahim Yuksel for making important contributions to enrichment of this list of `Abdalrauf Fitrat's many writings and publications.

The compiler of this Bibliography also especially acknowledges the good advice given earlier by Professor William L. Hanaway regarding certain Tajik entries. Generous counsel and friendly guidance of citizens of Türkiye and emigrants from Bukhara, from Crimea, Kazan, Turkistan and from Ufa, in the earliest stages of this research several decades ago, in Türkiye and Germany, greatly educated the author of this article about `Abdalrauf Fitrat and his writings. Some of those good people include Dr. Halûk Avanoglu, Dr. Saadat Ishaqi Chaghatay, Dr. Tahir Chaghatay, Mlle. Gaspirali, Mr. Veli Kayyum-Khan,

Professor Ahmad Jan Ibrahim Okay, Dr. A. Oktay and Mme. Saida Hanim Oktay, Mr. Ahmad Naim Nusratullahbek (Oktem), Mr. Nadir Ricaloglu, and Professor Ahmet Zeki Velidi (Togan). Professor Robert Austerlitz, Dr. Baymirza Hayit, Professor Timur Kocaoglu, Professor Hisao Komatsu, Mr. Ibrahim Pourhadi, and others, at different times and in various collections, graciously helped the compiler locate some of the important, scarce writings listed in the Bibliography, below.

In the following essay, numbers inserted after textual citations of specific works refer to the sequence recorded in the Bibliography of `Abdalrauf Fitrat's writings.

I. THE PREOCCUPATIONS OF `ABDALRAUF FITRAT, BUKHARAN NONCONFORMIST

A. The Preparation

The scant historical record reveals little out of the ordinary that might have disaffected `Abdalrauf Abdurahim-oghli (H.1304/A.D.1886-1938), during his young years in a middle-class Central Asian family. Starting in the last decade and a half of the nineteenth century, he grew up as a native-speaker in Tajik-speaking Bukhara. He lost touch with one parent in early childhood. His father, Abdurahimbay, a devout Muslim and literate, widely-traveled merchant, left the city and the family for Marghilan and ultimately, Qashqar, in East Turkistan.

The boy's mother, Mustaf Bibi, called affectionately Bibijan, saw him through the standard Muslim primary school (maktab) curriculum of the region. He enrolled for further training in one of Bukhara's 200 religious seminaries – the Mir-i Arab madrasah. It stood nearly at the top of the list of upper seminaries at that time and enjoyed support from one of the largest madrasah endowments.¹ Yet, only a few years later, `Abdalrauf, basing himself upon personal experience, included the Mir-i Arab madrasah in a scathing generalization about the ineffectiveness characterizing all Bukharan seminaries. He must have received his own excellent education mainly at home. Mustaf Bibi, a

¹ Abd-ur-Rauf, *Razskazy indijskago puteshestvennika (Bukhara, kak ona est')*. Trans. from Persian by A. N. Kondrat'ev. Samarkand: Izdanie Makhmud-Khodzha Begbudi, 1913, pp. 19-22, 24-25.

gentle-natured, highly literate woman, made a poetry and book lover of her son at an early age by reading with him the main poets of Western Asia and the Middle East, especially Bedil, Fuzuli, Nawa'i, and the like.²

In his brief autobiography, composed in 1929, Professor Fitrat relates: "I was born in 1884 (sic) in Bukhara, where I was subject to one of the darkest religious centers and darkest systems of administration [that existed]....After primary school (maktab), I entered a religious seminary (madrassah) and took lessons, said prayers [and] was a fanatic Muslim. In Bukhara, I even opposed the early beginnings of the movement of Reformists (Jadids)."³

Consequently, as a pupil, he missed the direct experience of a more modern pedagogy through Muslim Reformist (usul-i jadid) schooling. It had reached Bukhara late, and faltered in the Amirate of Bukhara owing to stern official and conservative religious opposition to allowing those innovative private schools to compete with the parochial system's exclusion from the curriculum of science, arithmetic, geography, and the like,

² Hämidullā Baltabayew, "Namā'lum Fitrat," *Yashlik* no. 4 (1990), p. 34; Sabir Mirwāliw, *Ozbek ādiblāri (ikhchām ādābiy portretlār)*. Tashkent: Ozbekistan Respublikasi Fānlār Ākāde'miyāsi "FĀN" Nāshriyati, 1993, p. 18; Nāim Kārimaw, Erik Kārimaw, Sherāli Turdiw, compilers, *Chin sewish. She'rlār, drāmālār, māqālālār*. Tashkent: Ghāfur Ghulam namidāgi Ādābiyat wā Sān'āt Nāshriyati, 1996, pp. 4, 245-46; Sewārā Kāramātilākhajāwā, "Qālbingā māngu muhlāngān...Ābdurāuf Fitrat hāqidā khatirālār," *Tāfakkur*, no. 2 (1996), pp. 67-68.

³ Fitrat, "Yapishmāgān gājāklār. Ortaq Baybulātawgā achiq khāt," *Ozil Ozbekistan* nos. 15-16 (Sept. 15-16, 1929). Reprinted by Nāim Kārimaw, Erik Kārimaw and Sherāli Turdiw, comps., in *Chin sewish*. Tashkent: Ghāfur Ghulam namidāgi Ādābiyat wā Sān'āt Nāshriyati, 1996, p. 245.

and its emphasis upon religion, memorization and convention. Though he did not benefit personally from primary schooling under the Reformist methodology, he soon associated with the senior Reformists, and later became their stellar protégé.

As a result of these limitations, an inquiry into what made this extraordinary Central Asian intellectual, social activist and professional academician into the nonconformist that he became from early adulthood onward has to look elsewhere. In documented history, 'Abdalrauf Fitrat first appears on the public scene around 1910, at the age of 24, with a mind already formed but an outlook still constrained by the relatively closed life in the capital of the Amirate. For rising generations, he appeared at an opportune moment in the developing educational affairs of the country.

When the leaders of the Reformist movement in Bukhara sought to strengthen their teaching of renewal among the generation of young Central Asians, as well as among the broader population, these Jadids initiated several actions. Above all, they organized and supported the establishment of New (phonetic) Method (*usul-i jadid*) schools, published newspapers in the vernacular, encouraged new-style original drama and theater, and, specifically for their pupils, wrote textbooks mainly in the Turki language – publications meant to replace the old, obscure manuscript texts by famous mystic poets. Those writers composed so much of that literature in Persian, works long