

Preface

The global Muslim reformist movement had identified multiple social and political issues which were of relevance also for the western part of Central Asia, when in the early 20th century the movement gained momentum in Turkestan. Intellectuals who subscribed to the overall goals of reformism in particular engaged in fields such as publishing, education and public affairs. ‘Abdurra’uf Fitrat (1886–1938), one of the most prominent Central Asian intellectuals of the 1910s to 1930s and a leading figure of modernism, for over two decades fought against, initially, what he perceived as narrow-minded conservative dogmatism and practice of the local ‘ulama and later, the intolerant dogmatism of the newly consolidating Soviet regime.

‘Abdurra’uf Fitrat’s engagement with social and civic activism and his striving for a new conceptualisation of liberty and a democratic state, which could bring in social freedom, is closely related to his political activism.

‘Abdurra’uf Fitrat received a traditional Islamic education in Bukhara. His ideological, social and political views bore Islamist overtones until he went to Istanbul in 1910. During four intensive years (1910–1914) spent in Istanbul, Fitrat formulated a clearer and well-considered Islamic perspective. These years proved to be formative for his worldview.

A famous Jadid thinker, writer, journalist and scholar, ‘Abdurra’uf Fitrat and his literary works have been the subject of numerous publications. This is also true of his works written and published during his stay in Istanbul. These writings and particularly, *Munazara* which was published in Persian in 1911, became a manifesto of Central Asian Jadidism. Many researchers testify to the essay’s significant influence on Jadidism in Turkestan¹. But recent findings have shown that once we tap into previously unused sources, there is still much more to

1 Erşahin, Seyfettin. Buhara’da Cedidcilik-Eğitim Reformu. Münazara ve Hind Seyyahının Kısası, Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı 2000; Dalimov, Uluğbek. Fıtrat ve “Münazara”. *Türkiye Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Yıl: 12, Sayı: 1, Nisan 2008, pp. 69–74; Erşahin, Seyfettin. Buhara’da Cedidcilik-Eğitim Islahatı Tartışmaları ve Abdurrauf Fitrat (XX. Yüzyıl Başları). *Dini Araştırmalar*, Ocak-Nisan 1999, Cilt: 1, Sayı: 3, pp. 213–255; Erşahin, Seyfettin. Fıtrat’ın Türkistan için II. Meşrutiyet Mahrecli Tecdid Teklifi Üzerine. *Bilgi*. Sayı: 47, Güz 2008, pp. 21–44; Komatsu, Hisao. Bukhara and Istanbul: A Consideration about the Background of the Munāzara. In Stephane A. Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao (eds). *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)*. London, New York, and Bahrain: Kegan Paul, 2001, pp. 167–180; Vladimirova, Ninel’. Novellisticheskoe tvorchestvo Fitrata. *Zvezda Vostoka*, 2, 2011, pp. 133–138; Khudoyor, Ibrohim. Fitrat Bukhoriyning ‘Munozara’ asari strukturaviy tahlili. *Sino*, 37–38–39–40, 2011, pp. 43–85.

learn about Jadidism in Central Asia and ‘Abdurra’uf Fitrat’s multifaceted role in it.

Newly discovered articles by ‘Abdurra’uf Fitrat, which were published in the Istanbul magazine *Hikmet* from December 1910 till May 1911² – that is, even before the issue of his famous book *Munazara*³ –, seem very instructive when it comes to understanding components of his early convictions and worldview. Apparently, these publications established an ideological framework which Fitrat adhered to, at least till the October revolution of 1917. Some features of his ideas expressed in these articles recurred in Fitrat’s works up until the mid-1920s. All his works published during that period, starting from the *Munazara* (1911) and ending with *Hind Ihtilalchilari* (Indian Insurrectionists) (1923), are expanded and more detailed versions of his early articles.

This research attempts to locate the sources which influenced the political, social, and ideological stance of Fitrat, thus also putting in perspective some overall intellectual trends in Turkestan, especially in Bukhara in the early 1910s. Based on Fitrat’s early publications we aim to find out what intellectual milieu it was that shaped his worldview in the early 1910s, a worldview that could be designated as a first attempt at “freedom and sovereignty through Islam”. A thorough review of these publications also brings greater clarity to the issue of Fitrat’s ethnical identity, which sheds light on how he related to the worldwide community of Muslims and how he positioned himself towards political unity of the Muslim World.

By scrutinizing Fitrat’s intellectual legacy of 1910 – 1915, I hope to highlight some of the origins of Jadidism in Turkestan and place of Turkestani Jadidism in the context of worldwide Muslim reformism at the turn of the 20th century.

² ‘Abdurra’uf. Hasbihal ba-hamvatanan. *Hikmet*, 33, 01.12.1910, p. 6–7; Bukharali ‘Abdurra’uf. Hasbihal ba-hamvatanan-i Bukhararayi. *Hikmet*, 36, 22.12.1910, p. 1–2; Mijmar. Nala’-i jansuz-i yak Bukharayi. *Hikmet*, 42, 02.02.1911, p. 7; Bukharali ‘Abdurra’uf. Bukhara. Khan-i muhtaram-i navjahi. *Hikmet*, 43, 06.02.1911, p. 7; Bukharali ‘Abdurra’uf. ‘Ajaba Bukhara chira kharab ast. *Hikmet*, 50, 30.03.1911, p. 8; 51, 08.04.1911, p. 7–8; Bukharali ‘Abdurra’uf. Khadang-i zahrugin ba-ittihad-i Islam. *Hikmet*, 57, 18.05.1911, p. 6–7.

³ Bukharayi, Fitrat. *Munazara-i mudarris-i bukhariyi ba-yak nafar-i farangi dar Hindustan dar bara-i makatib-i jadida. “Haqiqat natija-i tasadum-i afkar ast”*. İstanbul: Matbaa-i İslamiya-i Hikmet, 1327.