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***TATAR HISTORY AND CIVILISATION***,. By Shahla Manzoor Baba\* . Published by: IRCICA, Istanbul. Year of Publishing: 2010. Subject Area: History. Book Type: Reference Book. Total Number of Pages: 695. Price: \$150 ISBN: 978-92-9063-227-6

This book is an outcome of a jointly coordinated project by Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Istanbul, Turkey and Sh. Mardjani Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia. The original editor of the text in Russian for this book is Dr. Damir Ishaqov while as Dr. Ilnur I. Nadirov has translated it into English. The editor of the English version is Assistant Professor Sadiq Unay of IRCICA. Apart from this, numerous experts have contributed to the completion of this book and the book itself names 35 professional contributors, who have contributed their original articles to this precious effort.

The book comprises of three main sections besides a preface by Dr.Halit Eren and an introduction by Damir Ishaqov at the beginning and conclusion by Rafael Khakimov along with some photographs and an index at the end. The first section of the book deals with Tatar history and comprises of 10 chapters, the second section discusses about social structure and economic development in Tatar society and includes 6 chapters. The third and final section confers about the Tatar culture and contains 10 chapters. All these sections conclude with some photographs related to the content of chapters of that particular section. All the three sections of the book, on the whole, focus on the development of Islamic civilisation among Tatars of Russian Tatarstan.

The first section of the book, as mentioned earlier, deals with history, starting from the pre-Islamic times. This part discusses about the Turks of the Eurasian steppes and their Khanates. It highlights the main aspects of Islam's penetration into the region and emergence of first Muslim state of northern Eurasia, Volga Bulgharia. This section also discusses about the Djocid nation and its Islamisation and Golden Horde period. Apart from these, the chapters in this section also deal with Turko-Tatar states of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Colonization and Influence of the colonial policy on

Russian Empire Tatars, Jadidism and Religious Reformation. This section also discusses about the journey of the Tatar nation from ethno-cultural to a political one and Islam in the soviet and post-Soviet Tatarstan. The section ends with 25 photographs related to first chapter, 22 photographs related to second chapter, 33 photographs related to third chapter and 20 photographs related to fourth chapter.

The second section of the book brings to light, the social structure and the economic development in Tatar society. Its chapters confer the traditional Tatar economy, processes of modernization and formation of new economic relations. Its chapters also analyze the economic and social development of the Tatarstan during soviet period. The section also deals with family traditions, customs, ceremonies, traditional festivals, rites, public life and home life of Tatars. This part also discusses about the formation of Tatar Muslim community, its institutions and functioning. Also, the political and legal conditions of Tatar Muslim community under Russian Empire are dealt with in this section. The section ends with 2 photographs related to third chapter and a single photograph related to chapter five.

The third and final section of the book is related to the study of culture among Tatars. This section deals with the history of the Tatar language, scripts, calligraphy, shamails etc. it also illuminates the written heritage and documentation culture of the Tatars in the form of manuscripts. This section also deals with the spread of Sufism in Volga region and its influence on Tatar literature. Apart from these, the section also discusses about the folklore, education, scientific knowledge, National Academy of Sciences and the role of Tatar intelligentsia in defending national Identity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chapters in this section also illuminate the Art, Architecture, crafts, music, theatre, national mass media and development of Tatar Journalism. The section concludes with 4 photographs related to chapter first, 3 photographs related to chapter three, 46 photographs related to chapter seven, 36 photographs related to chapter eight.

The conclusion and the Index, at the end of these three sections, are divided by a photograph section, in which 9 photographs portray costumes, 1 photograph is related to Nizhnekamsk City and 3 photographs are related to Kazan City. In the presentation of its contents, the book possesses some special features in terms of the use of references, primary sources, archival material, and mainstream literature and by also utilizing a rich resource of visual material. It is a comprehensive encyclopedic collection by which the reader can come across the rare sources used by the authors. This work focuses on the key social, political, economic and cultural-artistic aspects of the Tatar history through the contribution of specialized contributors.

The use of simple and coherent language in the book appropriately benefits the objectives of the contributors. By this clarity of the conception, the book becomes more useful for the attention of the researchers, academics and historians worldwide. This reference book provides the readers with detailed information on the history, culture, social structure, economic development, political development, customs and traditions of Tatar society. The chapters in each section are mainly developed on a systematic pattern. Such rationality and compactness makes the book especially interesting for the readers.

Although the book does have some typing errors and there are some instances where the same words are used with different spellings the in same article, yet it can be neglected because the objective of

the book is specific. Another thing to note about this book is its price. It retails for about \$150.00 without any discount. Thus, its price puts this book out of the reach of the ordinary buyer. Libraries and serious researchers are its main audience. Yet, it is justifiable because of the richness of its contents and the use of rare sources which otherwise are already out of the sight of ordinary readers.

On the whole, the book is a highly commendable work of dedication. The exceptional importance of this collection stems from the fact that it represents a pioneering initiative and reference work in the English language which will provide detailed information about the origin and historical evolutions of Russian Tatar society. It is indeed; very useful for those who are new to the study of the region and its people. There is no doubt that this book will be the primary source of reference for future studies on the history and transformation of the Tatar state and society. It can serve a good reference book for the educational institutions. For bringing out this illuminating work, both the contributors and the publishers deserve special appreciation.

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