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## The Unofficial Anthem of the Tatar People "Tugan Tel" as Political Discourse

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### ABSTRACT

The study of the anthem in forging national identity is a contemporary view, which allows us to consider the anthem as a historical source, which reflects both the historical memory and the national identity of the people. The song "Tugan tel", which was first performed in 1909, is passed on by Tatars from generation to generation as a folk tradition, as the symbol of national unity, thanks to which is perceived by the people as an anthem. This song brings together Tatars scattered around the world, helping each of them to feel a sense of ownership of the national origins, language and culture. In Soviet times, when national schools were closed, at various events of the Tatar public "Tugan tel" sang chorus as a protest against the national policy of the center. This song, which talks about the huge role and importance of the Tatar language in the preservation of national culture, has become particularly relevant and acute in connection with the socio-political events that took place in the second half of 2017 in the Republic of Tatarstan on the teaching of the Tatar language in schools. Since art is inextricably connected with a context of historical, social, political, and moral conditions, approaching these issues will be the subject of our discourse. We are also trying to answer the question of how historical memory, national identity, politics and music are related.

**Keywords:** National anthem, Musical nationalism, Political discourse.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As a social phenomenon, "music has turned into a political ideology since the middle of the XIX century thanks to the fact that it was instrumental in bringing national features to the fore, as well as presenting itself as a representative of a particular nation anywhere asserting national principle", wrote Theodor Adorno (1976). The notion of musical nationalism began to denote the use of musical ideas or motifs that are identified with a particular country, region, or ethnicity. In the Oxford Dictionary of Music one can find the following definition: "Nationalism in music is a movement that began in the 19th century, with an emphasis on folkloric elements in music, such as folk songs, folk dances, folk rhythms or themes for operas and symphonic poems reflecting people's life or history ..." (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music, 2018).

The issue of nationalism was extensively studied in the works of such western academics as B. Anderson, T. Adorno, E. Gellner, R. Taruskin, M. Frolova-Walker, etc. National studies on the issues of nation and nationalism are rather scarce due to the relative closeness of the domestic humanitarian conception, which is of ideological pattern. The most interesting and useful Soviet and Russian works include these of G.D. Gachev, V.M. Mezhev, V.A. Tishkov and K.S. Sharov.

T. Zoteyeva (2013) researched the Russian national anthem as a genre of political discourse. D. Muftakhutdinova (2015) wrote about the historical memory of the Tatar people in the works of Tatar musical culture, R. Khurmatullina, G. Batyrshin, L. Safiullina, & J. Blinova (2017) studied the historical and political contexts of the formation of the musical culture of the Tatars.

However, the national anthem of the Tatars has not been studied in the context of historical, political, musical nationalism.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The methodological basis of the study is an interdisciplinary approach, involving a multidimensional synthesis of philosophical, sociological, anthropological and cultural studies of practice. Historical reconstructions and historical and sociological illustrations, introduced for clarity of presentation and reasoning.

The purpose of our research is the analysis of the Tatar anthem "Tugan tel" as a musical symbol of the Tatar people, contributing to the formation of nationalism, national identity, as well as consideration of its historical and political contexts. Therefore, the relevance of this research is determined by social, historical, political and cultural factors.

The aim of the work is to study the historical and political contexts of the process of formation of cultural symbols of the Tatar people, contributing to the development of national identity. We will also try to answer how the unofficial anthem of Tatars and modern national policy of Russia are connected? What is the relationship between music and nationalism? What role does music play in constructing a national identity?

## **RESULTS**

In our study, we will adhere to the definition of nationalism given by E. Gellner: "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist, but it needs pre-existing distinctive features ..." (1964, p. 69). Thereby, in our understanding, nationalism is a complex and multidimensional complex of social experiences, thoughts, ideas and actions aimed at constructing and maintaining an aggregate of national identity.

According to Gajaz Iskhaki, "... the most important basis for the formation of the people as a cultural nation is its national music" (cited in Akhunov, 2018). Wundt (2018) argues that "... the national anthems most accurately reflect the nature of the nation".

The paradox of Tatar hymnography is that along with the official, national anthem, there are also unofficial ones. All of them, one way or another, shape a national identity, evoking patriotism, nationalism and solidarity.

The significance of the unofficial anthem of the Tatars titled "Tugan tel" (Mother Tongue) as a means of shaping public mentality capable of linking together in a holistic perception space, time and human solidarity, has a long common memory. Considering the "Tugan tel" as an anthem, we proceed from the definition of the Explanatory Dictionary by S.I. Ozhegov (1999) "... a song adopted as a symbol of state or social unity".

For the Tatar culture, the end of the nineteenth - the beginning of the twentieth century was a period of an extraordinary cultural revival and national self-consciousness. In an attempt to trample the awakening self-consciousness of the Tatars, the government introduced a number of repressive measures. It prohibited the circulation of the Koran printed in Russia, subjected all publications in the Tatar language to strict censorship, limited the participation of Tatars in local self-government bodies – district councils, forbade the children of Tatars who broke away from Orthodoxy to be admitted to mekteb (schools) and madrasah (schools at the mosques), as well as imposed educational censure for the Muslim clergy, the main requirement of which was the knowledge of the Russian language. Muslim confessional schools were transferred under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Education, although they were not financed by the state (Historical and contemporary significance of the Christian missionary, 1894).

However, no matter how hard the retrogrades tried, they could do nothing against the song-writing people of the whole nation, for it was impossible to impose censure on songs and poetry. It was at that time that among the Tatars of various walks of life songs of an anthem character were widely composed and distributed. They expressed compassion for the formidable destiny of the oppressed, hatred of the oppressors, and a call for national liberation combat. Those songs were immediately picked up by listeners, passed by word of mouth, that is to say, by grape-vine technique. Along with literature, the press and books of historical content, it was the folk and art song that gave the impression of unity and spiritual uplift of people belonging to different social classes, but united by a single historical memory and national self-identification.

Such songs as: "Berensche Sada" ("First Call"), "Ikenche Sada" ("Second Call"), "Muslim Marseillaise", "Shekertlar Zhyry" (Song of the Shakirds) on the verses of G. Tukay shakirds (madrasah students) sang at rallies and demonstrations during the first Russian revolution.

Two versions of "Varshavyanka", three editions of "Marseillaise", "Kyu atlagyz, iptashlar" (Comrades, keep up boldly), "Tərmədən" ("From prison"), "Səz korban buldygyz" (You became sacrificed) were known from the published sources, etc. The second edition of the "Tatar Marseillaise", which was published in the collection of "Tatar Folk Art. Historical and Lyrical Songs" in 1988 is also of interest. Compared to the "Russian Marseillaise," the "Tatar Marseillaise" by its implication contained the information of not only class hatred of the high and mighties, but was also an appeal to the combat for freedom and independence of the Tatar people.

Ничә йоз буе без –татарлар,	The Tatars have been living for hundred years
Зур золымнар күреп яшәдек.	Enduring great misfortunes.
Күрмәде гөмеребез якты таңнар,	We haven't seen light dawns in our life

Мәңге мәзлүм булып агладык.	We have lived forever offended
Татадык без бинихая жәфалар,	Enduring humiliation and deprivation
Хурланып, рәнжешеп агладык.	We cried outraged and cursing
Китсеннәр бездән бу жафлар,	Let the torment leave us,
Яшәсен хәр Ватан, хәр Ватан	Long live, free Motherland!

For the Tatars, this was the time of creating "national artifacts" possessing "deep emotional legitimacy", "... the creation of these artifacts .... was a spontaneous distillation of complex "mixing" of discrete historical forces, but as soon as they appeared, they immediately became "modular", suitable to be transferred to a plethora of social territories acquiring the ability to associate itself and be associated with a wide variety of very different political and ideological constellations" (Anderson, 1991).

Among many patriotic songs of hymnal pattern which were created during that period, the true musical symbol of the Tatars was the song "Tugan tel", the melody of which was formerly the basis of the folk bait (epic and lyric-epic genre of Tatar and Bashkir poetry) "Salim Babai" ("Old Man Salim"), and the verses were written by the Tatar poet Gabdulla Tukai in 1909.

Despite the traditional vision that an anthem should be a solemn musical and poetic work of a patriotic pattern, the unofficial anthem of the Tatars is a song of a deeply lyrical, one might even say an intimate character, as compared to the anthems of totalitarian states, most of which are characterized by a square rhythmic structure, abstract heroics, gigantism. Is it by chance that the song of the Tatars was not about the native region (motherland, land, fatherland), but a song about the native language?

As is known, after the conquest of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible, the Tatars were evicted outside the city limits. The Tatars were allowed to live only in the territory of the Old - Tatar settlement. The Tatars were forbidden to appear in the territory of the Kremlin under penalty of death. Therefore, the lost territory of the state is perceived in the collective memory of the Tatars as a cultural trauma. The Tatars as the main marker of national identity, community and exclusiveness, highlight the language as the main means of preserving their identity and uniqueness in the conditions of the centuries-long anti-Tatar policy of the Russian state. According S. Wertheim: "... language in particular is seen as a metonymic representative of the nation and the barometer of the health of the nation, where the impurity and decline of the Tatar language are seen as representative of the impurity and decline of the Tatar nation as a whole" (2003, p.352).

The song, in which the author addresses the native language from the first person point of view, sounds like a prayer, the sacred meaning of which lies in the great gratitude of a person to the native language presented to him by fate. The brilliant poet seemed to foresee those terrible transformations and losses to which the Tatar language had been subjected throughout its history. Gabdulla Tukai wrote "Tugan Tel" with Arabic script, as Tatars had done for many centuries. With the transition to the Latin alphabet in 1927, the alphabet lost seven letters, and the written speech, sonority and depth. It was in 1939 when a new reform had gone through - there was a transition to the Cyrillic alphabet which resulted in the Tatar language losing its continuity and the nexus of generations. Access to the richest historical potential of the language had been blocked for future generations. This situation is expressed by B. Anderson as, "The fate of the Turkic-speaking peoples in the zones incorporated into today's Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and the USSR is especially exemplary. A family of spoken languages, once everywhere assemblable, thus comprehensible, within an Arabic orthography, has lost that unity as a result of conscious manipulations. To heighten Turkish-Turkey's national consciousness at the expense of any wider Islamic identification, Atatürk imposed compulsory romanization. The Soviet authorities followed suit, first with an anti-Islamic, anti-Persian compulsory romanization, then in Stalin's 1930's, with a Russifying compulsory Cyrillization" (1991, p.45).

The song "Tugan tel", which was first performed in 1909, is passed on by the Tatars from one generation to another as a folk tradition, as the very symbol of national unity, thanks to which the people perceive it as an anthem. This song unites the Tatars scattered all over the world, helping each one of them to feel commonality with folk sources, language and culture.

During the Soviet era, when the national schools were closed, "Tugan tel" was sung in chorus as a protest against the national policy of the center at various gatherings of the Tatar community.

This song became especially topical in connection with the socio-political events of the second half of 2017 in the Republic of Tatarstan pertaining to teaching of the Tatar language in schools. At a meeting of the Council on Interethnic Relations in July 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced about an inadmissibility to reduce the hours of teaching the Russian language in the national republics. He emphasized that "making a person learn a language that is not native for him is also unacceptable, as well as reducing the level and time of teaching Russian" (The website of the President of Russia. 1 May, 2018. <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/5510914>). Students started putting written requests refusing to study the Tatar language, which has the status of the second state language in the republic. It was reported that teachers of the Tatar language either became redundant or offered other vacancies in the Kazan schools.

We turn now to the statistics:

There are 235 schools in Kazan, 29 of which are Russian-Tatar oriented schools; only 12 schools are Tatar schools. There are 33 FM stations in Kazan, of which only 4 are in Tatar language. In 2002, 5.34 million people had a good command of the Tatar language, whereas in 2010 - 4, 28 million people. During these 8 years, the number of native speakers has decreased by 1 million people ... (The website "Idel.Realities" 1 May, 2018. <https://www.idelreal.org>).

In this context, "Tugan tel", as a text of culture, which gradually disappears, acquires a new meaning and a new interpretation.

## **CONCLUSION**

We analyzed the Tatar anthem "Tugan tel" as a musical symbol of the Tatar people, contributing to the formation of nationalism, national identity. The basic laws of integration of music and nationalism are established. Music is at the same time a direct instrument of nationalism, a means of inventing non-existent national features and an instrument of the Genesis of the nationalities themselves.

We found out that the Tatars singled out the language as the main marker of national identity, community and exclusiveness. The unofficial anthem of the Tatars "Tugan tel" reflects the historical memory of the people, forms a national identity. This song unites the Tatars scattered all over the world, helping each one of them to feel commonality with folk sources, language and culture. During the Soviet era, when the national schools were closed, "Tugan tel" was sung in chorus as a protest against the national policy of the center at various gatherings of the Tatar community.

This song became especially topical in connection with the socio-political events of the second half of 2017 in the Republic of Tatarstan pertaining to teaching of the Tatar language in schools. This event led to a split in Russian society. The struggle of the non-Russian peoples of Russia for the preservation of their language, culture and identity continues.

"Tugan tel" for the Tatars is a national artifact that is able to unite people in time and space and form the highest national feelings, including human solidarity.

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