

# Questions of Nationality and Educational Reform in Russian Turkestan

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## Introduction

After the conquest of Turkestan region, Russians established the Turkestan Governor-Generalship in 1867. The first Governor-General was Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman (1867-1882). General von Kaufman started to extend and develop Russian culture in Turkestan. From the first days of his Governor-General, he called Turkestani Muslims to obey the Russian Empire. He thought that education is important for bringing up Turkestani youth, who would be able to work for the Russian Empire. He made an effort to work on educational reform. First, the Russian authorities opened elementary schools for Russian children. Later, they opened new schools, which both Russian and Turkestani Muslim pupils can learn. These schools were called “Russo-native schools”.

However, Islam was deeply rooted in Turkestan. There were maktab and madrasahs as the traditional educational system. Through the ages maktab had played the role of elementary school. Reading and writing of Arabic and basic doctrines of Islam were taught in these schools. In addition, memorization of poetry written in Persian was also performed here. Madrasahs had played the role of high school and Islamic learning had been taught there in more detail. Since Islam had been deeply rooted in Turkestan, parents were afraid of Russification of their children and they hesitated to send their children to Russo-native Schools. Instead Muslim intellectuals (hereafter referred to as “Jadid intellectuals”) planned to introduce modern educational system for Muslim children. Under the Russian rule Jadid Intellectuals opened “New-method Schools” which could enlighten Muslim people and develop their societies. Before long, frictions began to occur between Russians and Turkestani Muslims. It can be said that misunderstanding of each other was one of the main reasons.

In this paper two topics are to be discussed: 1) The nationality question around the term of “Sarts” debated by Russians and Jadid intellectuals, and 2) comparison between Russo-native schools and New-method schools.

## 1. The view of Russians about Turkestani Muslims and efforts of educational reform

As it was mentioned above, the Russian authorities tried to extend and develop Russian culture in Turkestan. As a result, various problems appeared during the integration of Russians and

Turkestan Muslims. The most notable issue was the using of the term “Sart”. In order to understand how Russians saw the Muslim society under the Russian rule, following Russian sources were examined: 1) N.P.Ostroumov,<sup>1</sup> *Sarts* (Tashkent, 1896), 2) V.P.Nalivkin,<sup>2</sup> *The past and present of the local people* (Tashkent, 1913).

When we consider the Russian view of Muslim society, first of all we need to analyse the term “Sart”. They called the majority of Turkestan Muslims “Sart”.

Who was called “Sart” and why such a name was given? Ostroumov and Nalivkin gave various definitions about the term “Sart”. A summary of their definitions can be shown as follows.

The Muslims, who lived in the urban and rural areas of the Sir-Darya, Samarkand and Fergana provinces, were called “Sart”. Dividing the people into “Kyrgiz” (nomads) and “Sart” (sedentary population) after the Russian conquest of Turkestan in 1867 was the main reason for the public use of the term “Sart”. Tajik and Turkic (current Uzbek) peoples were called “Sart”.

However, the local people called themselves by the name of their hometown. For example, “Tashkanlik”(from Tashkent) or “*Qoqanlik*”(from Qoqand).<sup>3</sup>

Ostroumov divided the “Sart” into three classes: 1) Representatives of Islam and Sharia (Islamic conservatives: kazi, mufti, imam, sufi, ishan, mudarris, mulla), 2) Merchants, 3) Artisans and farmers. Among them those who were responsible for education were mulla and mudarris. According to Ostroumov, there were no well educated people among the representatives of Islam and Sharia. Before the Russian conquest, European education was not known there.<sup>4</sup>

As it can be seen, Ostroumov pointed out that modern education did not exist in Turkestan. Nalivkin also pointed out facts similar to this. According to him, in the spiritual and moral literature of Islam there were found many sayings and discourses about the necessity of knowledge. For example, next discourses were found in the “Durr-ul’-Adjib”.

Those which serve for the order of a country are the knowledge of scientists, the justice of *Sultan*, the generosity of rich men and the praying of poor men”, “We must respect the people to whom God gave the light of knowledge. They are the decoration of the Earth, as the stars are the decoration of the sky”, “The dream of a scientist is better than the praying of ignorant”.<sup>5</sup>

As described above, Islam appreciated knowledge and scientists highly in theory, but in practice Turkestan Muslims were not active in learning. Saying that knowledge is important,

they actually did not focus on learning.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Nalivkin pointed out that Russians called Turkestan Muslims “half-wild Asians”. According to him, each visit of Governor-General to Turkestan was painful for Turkestan Muslims. However, the Russian authorities had ignored the pain of people, saying that “it was necessary for us to leave some impression on half-wild Asians”.<sup>7</sup>

As described above, we can say that Russians considered Turkestan Muslims were uneducated and ignorant. Furthermore, according to Bendrikov, in terms of education, even though people in Central Asia taught their sons forcibly, and the number of maktab (elementary schools) was large, the number of people who could write and read was very small.<sup>8</sup>

As noted above, after conquering Turkestan, Russians tried to extend and develop Russian culture and language among the native people. Russians considered Turkestan Muslims uneducated and ignorant. According to Nalivkin and Ostroumov, the majority of Turkestan Muslims did not receive enough education. (Nalivkin 1913, Ostroumov 1896). Russians regarded that Turkestan Muslims even as “half-wild Asians”, because of their lack of education. As it can be seen, the term “Sart” implicated such meanings as uneducated, ignorant, and “half-wild Asian”.

## **2. The view of Jadid intellectuals about the term “Sart” and educational reform movement**

This part examines how Jadid intellectuals were thinking about the term “Sart”. The leading intellectuals of that period opposed the use of the term “Sart”. They also argued that the word “Sart” is wrong. For that purpose, Makhmukhoja Behbudiy (1874-1919) and Baqo Khoja wrote articles about the term “Sart” in magazines such as the “Ayina” and “Shura”. The founder of the Jadid movement Ismail Gasprinskiy (1851-1914) also wrote an article about the term “Sart” in the newspaper “Tarjuman”. Bahrombek Davlatshoev, who was the interpreter of the Russian language to the amir of Bukhara, also wrote an article titled “Debates about the term Sart” in the “Ayina”.<sup>9</sup> Behbudiy wrote an article named “The term Sart is unknown” in the “Shura”. As a summary of these discussions, Behbudiy wrote a number of articles named “The term Sart is unknown” in the “Ayina”.<sup>10</sup> We analyse his articles in order to reveal the Jadid intellectuals view about the term “Sart”.

In this series, Behbudiy claimed that the term “Sart” started to be used in recent years, and he described as follows:

The term “Sart” has been used only in the northern part of Turkestan and the people of the south and the west did not use it. The word “Sart” was not used in Bukhara. Nobody from the old people of Turkestan knows the word “Sart”. Turkestan Muslims felt embarrassed when they were called “Sart”.

As it can be seen from this statement, the term “Sart” had not been used before the Russian conquest Turkestan.

In addition, regarding the reason for which Turkic peoples of Bukhara, Arabians and Tajik people were called “Sart”, Behbudiy described as follows:

If we think about the reason for which Turkic peoples of Bukhara, Arabians and Tajik people are called “Sart”, we can find out following answers:

1. In the “Shayboniy nama”, “Bobur nama” and some books of Abulgazikhan, some of Turkestani people had been called “Sart”.
2. In the unknown age, some travellers from Europe called the people of cities, Persians and merchants as “Sart”.
3. In the unknown age, there was a tribe which came from China or Cuman-Kipchak to Turkestan. They started to live in Turkestan. Later it was swallowed up by other tribes and they came to be called by another name.

These are evidences that show the reason why Muslims of Russian Turkestan and Bukhara are called “Sart”.

Moreover, in this article, Behbudiy claimed that instead of calling the people of the region “Sart”, it is better to call them Uzbeks, Tajiks, Arabians, Turks, Russians, and Jews of Turkestan. If you need the specific name, then you can call “Turekstani people”, “Muslims of Turkestan”, he claims.

As it can be seen from the mentioned above, Turkestani intellectuals were against being called “Sart”. Jadid intellectuals tried to explain the real meaning of the term “Sart” to Turkestani Muslims through writing and publishing a number of articles.

### **3. Comparison between Russo-native schools and New-method schools**

In this part we make a comparison between Russo-native schools and New-method schools. The first Governor-General of Russian Turkestan, Kaufman, thought that education was important for bringing up the youth who would be able to work for Russian Turkestan. That is why he worked on educational reform from the first days of his Governor-General post. Russians knew that old maktabas were not able to correspond to the demand of that time. Therefore, they wanted to reform maktabas by introducing Russian language classes. However, Turkestani Muslims were opposing this reform. As a result Russians had to open the Russo-native school, different from maktabas.<sup>11</sup>

In 1884 N.O.Rozenbakh(1884-88), who had just become the Governor-General of Turkestan, established a secret committee with the purpose of spreading Russian language

among the local people, and discussed how to strengthen the intellectual life of Turkestan Muslims. Consequently, they planned to open Russo-native schools. The first Russo-native school was opened in 1884 in the home of Saidgani Saidazimbay in Tashkent. Following that, a number of Russo-native schools were opened one after another in other parts of Turkestan. The number of Russo-native schools amounted to 89 in 1911 according to Barthold<sup>12</sup> (1869-1930).

In such schools, pupils were separated into two groups. The first was Russian class and the second was Muslim class. Rozenbakh was afraid that Turkestan Muslims could be well educated. Therefore, he ordered that they should be taught writing and reading in Russian and provided only the minimum of education.<sup>13</sup> In Russian class all lessons were taught in Russian language, but in Muslim class the writing and reading of Arabic alphabet and some basic introduction to Islam were taught by local mullas.<sup>14</sup> Textbooks which were translated from Russian into Turkic (Uzbek) language were used in the classroom. For example, a textbook written by Lykoshin, "The history of Russia" (1906), was used.<sup>15</sup> Textbooks in Russian language, such as "Native word", "Children's world", "The first Russian textbook for reading", "World in stories for Children", had been used, but these textbooks were very difficult for Muslim pupils.<sup>16</sup>

However, Turkestan Muslims were afraid of the Russification of their children and, therefore, hesitated to send their children to Russo-native Schools. Instead of these schools Jadid intellectuals planned to introduce modern educational system for Muslim children. Under the Russian rule Jadid intellectuals opened "New-method Schools" which could enlighten Muslim people and develop their societies. It was I. Gasprinskiy who opened the first New-method School in Bakhchisarai in the Crimea in 1884. He visited Turkestan in order to open New-method Schools in Bukhara and other cities in Turkestan. The first New-method School in Turkestan was opened in Kokand in 1898 by Salokhiddin Majidi and in Samarkand by Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy.

A Japanese researcher, Hisao Komatsu, described the New-method schools as follows:

These schools were modern elementary schools which had subjects such as reading and writing in accordance with phonological system, basic knowledge of Islam and introduction of various basic subjects, such as mathematics, science, history, geography and Russian language, using textbooks in native language and using the classroom.<sup>17</sup>

More than 10 new-method schools were opened in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, the Fergana valley in the early of 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Khajji Muin(1883-1942), new-method schools were opened from 1901 in Kokand and from 1903 in Samarkand. According to A.Mukhammadjanov (1978), in 1900 a new-method school was opened near Bukhara by

Mulla Jurabay. And in the same year a new-method school was opened in Tashkent.

With the opening of new-method schools, the problem of textbooks appeared. After Gasprinskiy's textbook "Teacher of children", a number of textbooks were published. For example, Saidrasul Khoja published a textbook "First teacher" in 1900. Behbudiy wrote a textbook "First writer" in 1901 but it was published in 1907. In 1912 Abdulla Avlaniy (1878-1934) wrote textbooks such as "First teacher", "Second teacher" and "Turkic language of Gulistan or morals".

There were respective reasons for opening these two types of schools. The reason for opening Russo-native schools was to extend and develop Russian language in Turkestan. And the reason for opening new-method schools was to enlighten Turkestan Muslims.

Why did Jadid intellectuals start to educate Turkestan Muslims? Behbudiy had a big plan about this. He wanted Turkestan Muslims to be unified. For this purpose he tried to realize Turkestan Autonomy. For realizing the autonomy the educational reform was necessary. He wrote "The plan" in the journal "Ayina" with this purpose.<sup>18</sup> Finally, after the Russian Revolution in 1917, in the 4<sup>th</sup> congress of Turkestan Muslims which was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1917 in Kokand, the Turkestan Autonomy was declared. However, the Turkestan Autonomy was overthrown on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1918 by the Soviet forces.

## **Conclusion**

After the conquest of Turkestan region, several problems appeared in the integration of Russians and Turkestan Muslims. Russians were ignoring deep-rooted Islamic traditions and called Turkestan Muslims "half-wild Asian".<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it is a fact that the majority of Turkestan Muslims were called "Sart". Russians also tried to extend Russian culture to this region. The Russian authorities opened a number of Russo-native schools. But these schools were not successful because Muslim children didn't attend to these schools.

Turkestan Muslim intellectuals were against being called "Sart". They tried to enlighten Muslims by writing articles about the real meaning of the term "Sart". The representative of Jadid intellectuals, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, tried to realize the Turkestan autonomy in Russian Turkestan. It was most necessary to educate the Muslim youth and enlighten the people for this purpose. Therefore, he started the "Jadid movement" and educated Turkestan Muslims. He opened new-method schools and tried to educate Muslim children. He focused on educational reform, because he thought that only education could provide development and freedom to the Turkestan Muslims. However, The Russian Empire opposed the "Jadid movement". Russian authorities started to arrest Jadid intellectuals and closed new-method schools one after another. This was happening because Russian authorities were afraid of enlightenment and anti-governmental movement of Turkestan Muslims.

The Jadid movement lasted about 30 years and Jadid intellectuals contributed to the

enlightening Turkestan Muslims. The Jadid movement became the basis of Turkestan Muslim's unifying as a nation, expanding of social wisdom of Turkestan Muslim, and changing of worldview of the people. Jadid intellectuals published a variety of articles about social problems, and tried to resolve peacefully these social problems. They made efforts in order to develop as a nation.

## Notes

- 1 Nikolai Petrovich Ostroumov [1846-1930] was worked as a teacher and eastern scientist in Turkestan. He learned Turkic languages from Ilminskiy in seminary of Kazan. He was appointed as a National school inspector of Turkestan region in 1877. He served as a chief editor of "Turkestan province newspaper". [Cyclopedia of Central Eurasia], p.100.
- 2 Vladimir Petrovich Nalivkin [1852-1918] was worked as ethnographer and plotician in Turkestan. He was born in the aristocracy family of Kaluga. He graduated from the first Military academy of Peterburg. He began teaching the language of Central Asia in Russo-native school in Tashkent from 1884. He was working as a national school inspector of Turkestan region in 1890-1895.
- 3 Ostroumov N.P., 1896, Sarty.,Tashkent, p. 3.
- 4 Ibid., p. 65.
- 5 Nalivkin V.P., 2011, *Tuzemtsi ran'she i teper'*. Moskva, p. 24-25.
- 6 Ibid., p. 24.
- 7 Ibid., p. 95.
- 8 Bendrikov, K.E., 1960, *Ocherki po istorii narodnogo obrazovaniya v Turkestane*. Moskva, p. 44.
- 9 Bahrombek Davlatshoh, 1914, "Sart masalasi", *Ayina*, No.17.
- 10 Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, 1913, "Sart so'zi majhuldir", *Ayina*, No.22,23,24,25,26.
- 11 Khikmatullaev J., 2014, "The Jadid movement in Turkestan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – Focusing on Behbudiy's idea of educational reform –" *Language, Area and Cultural Studies*, No.20, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, p. 385.
- 12 Bartol'd V.V., 1963, "Shkoly", *Akademik V.V. Bartol'd, Sochineniya*, tom 2-1, Moskva, p. 308.
- 13 Ostroumov N.P., 1913, "Musul'manskie maktaby i russko-tuzemniya shkoly v Turkestanskom krae", *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnoga prosveshcheniya*. Sankt Peterburg, p. 144.
- 14 TsGARUZ f.I-1, op.31, d.540, 49ob.
- 15 Rizaev, Sh., 1997, *Jadid dramasi*. Toshkent, p. 39.
- 16 Mukhammadzhanov, A., 1978, *Shkola i pedagogicheskaya mysl' Uzbekskogo naroda XIX- nachala XX v*, Tashkent, p. 45.
- 17 Komatsu H., 1996, *Revolutionary Central Asia: A Prtrait of Abdurauf Fitrat*. University of Tokyo Press, p. 57.
- 18 Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, 1913, "Layha", *Ayina*, No.9,10,11.
- 19 Nalivkin V.P. 2011. *Tuzemtsi ran'she i teper'*. Moskva, p. 95.

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