

Criticism of the Imperial Policy of Acculturation of "Foreigners" in The Works of Russian Authors (Kulturtragers) in the Second Half of the Xix Century

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Abstract

The common place in the eastern policy of European powers was the problem of the acculturation of colonized peoples in the XIX century. Their colonial expansion in the East has become purposeful and planned in the early modern period. The new empires¹, as they turned to direct colonial administration, became acutely aware of the growing need for educated natives who could serve in the colonial administration, as well as work in the emerging complexly mechanized enterprises. The most important task was to instill in the natives a sense of indissoluble unity with the mother country, involvement in the creation of a great empire. However, despite some successes, the Europeanization of the Eastern peoples in Russia in the XIX century caused considerable concerns among Russian cultural authors (kulturtragers), since it, along with the benefits of Western civilization, brought a lot of negative aspects to the life of foreigners that destroyed the foundations of their spiritual, socio-cultural system. The aim of this study is to determine the nature of assessments of the imperial cultural policy towards foreigners, given in the works of Russian authors (kulturtragers). Based on the analysis of the works of N. M. Yadrintsev, G. N. Potanin, S. S. Shashkov, N. P. Ostroumov (and others), the authors came to the conclusion that their critical attitude to the goals and methods of state –owned acculturation leads to a decrease in the effectiveness of kulturtrager efforts.

Keywords: imperial acculturation policy, foreigners, kulturtrager community, Russian Empire, the second half of the XIX century.

1. Introduction

The problems of acculturation of foreigners, which grew stronger with the expansion of the Russian Empire, were considered in the XIX century through the prism of educational policy. In scientific literature and journalism, a purely applied aspect of kulturtrager activity completely prevailed. In the official research of a number of Orientalist scholars (I. N. Bere-

¹ Russian Empire (from 1721), Second British Empire (from 1783), Second French Colonial Empire (conditionally from 1814), etc.

zin, V. D. Smirnov, N. A. Dingelstedt, A. E. Krymsky, etc.) any possibility of positive self-development of the Eastern peoples, outside the framework of the imposed ethno-confessional assimilation, was denied. The progressive developments in their lives that took place in the XIX and early XX centuries (the development of industrial entrepreneurship, printing, the spread of secular scientific knowledge, etc.) were perceived only as a consequence of the beneficial influence of Western culture. Moreover, it was alleged that the desire to master the achievements of Europe among the conquered peoples arose only after crushing defeats, the loss of state independence.

At the same time, the question of the low efficiency of acculturation of foreigners in comparison with similar processes in the British and French colonies was constantly discussed. The reasons for the failure were not seen in terms of harmful objectives (Russification and Christianization), violent methods, and poor organization, but in terms of the specific shortcomings of the implemented cultural policy: formalism of its official promoters, perverse didactics of Russian-native schools (Gafarov, 2019) etc. In the works of missionary writers, there were clear fears about the national cultural development of non-Russian peoples of Russia, which is fraught with the erosion of the spiritual and cultural foundations of the empire, the growth of national consciousness and the liberation movement (Gafarov et al., 2017; Baki, 2022; Barocio, Valdivia, & Vargas-Rodriguez, 2021).

2. Methods

G. Spencer, F. Tennis, E. Durkheim, M. Weber and others, the founders of the theory of social modernization, first of all, focused on the characteristics of the formation of a Western - type society - the countries of Western Europe and the USA, with their inherent cult of rationalism, individual freedom, liberal democracy, etc. Thus, the prevailing ideas about "reference" modernization, in fact, denied the possibility of modernization of "backward" colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East, which do not meet the criteria of the Western world. Similar views are also widely expressed in historical, Islamic, ethnographic and other studies.

Acculturation was given a purely civilizational character - the introduction of backward peoples to high European culture, despite obvious objectives of the imperial cultural policy. N.I. Ilminsky, one of the prominent advocates of the "enlightenment" of foreigners, acknowledged only in a private letter that the educational strategy in this case is entirely focused on training loyal natives who do not disdain working in the colonial administration (Letters of N. I. Ilminsky to Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev, the Chief Prosecutor). Despite the fact that the concept of acculturation was introduced into scientific use only in the late XIX-early XX centuries², the political implication of this phenomenon was clear from the beginning - the assimilation of peoples of a subordinate culture by the dominant one. In any sense, acculturation by the adherents of colonialism was seen as an important step towards the complete assimilation of the subordinate population. It is typically that acculturation was identified with assimilation in the scientific literature until the 1950s³.

Thus, acculturation in the historical context under consideration (directed cultural

2 The term acculturation at the end of the XIX century was widely used in the works of American anthropologists (F. Boas, W. Holmes, W. McGee, R. Lowy), as well as the work (1910) of W. Krikenberg, the German ethnologist, to denote the cultural changes of American Indians ...

3 Only after the collapse of the colonial system in the second half of the XX century, the scientific perception of *acculturation* expands to understanding the mutual influence and interaction of cultures [4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9].

changes) is largely the result of imperial policy. At the same time, despite the stated objectives, possible assimilation and the corresponding problem of the identity of colonized peoples, one cannot but recognize that acculturation has become an important factor in the modernization of the way of life of Russian foreigners, their integration into the world system of political, economic and cultural relations (Gafarov & Gafarov, 2020). The study of acculturation processes raises, first of all, the problem of goals, methods of their implementation and the reaction of "civilized" peoples to the purposeful exogenous destruction of their traditional way of life (Gafarov, 2015; Tuhvatullin, 2015; Nabiyeu & Gafarov, 2015).

3. Results and Discussion

Despite the diversity of social and political views, the Russian kulturtrager community united broad strata of the Russian intellectuals, from N. I. Ilminsky, the missionary to N. M. Yadrintsev, the democrat, who were sincerely interested in European enlightenment of the national remoter areas. Aware of the responsibility of Russia's cultural mission, they also understood the extremely low level of its spontaneous carriers and state-owned guides. Immigrants to the East are a people "busy with materialistic calculations, bears little resemblance to an enlightened" (Krymskiy, 1899). By drawing attention to the negative manifestations of colonization, they sought to draw the attention of the general Russian public to the problems of cultural development and, somewhere, to the problems of the very existence of the Eastern peoples.

The "costs" of moving East were feared even by outspoken apologists of Russian colonialism. In 1887, N. I. Ilminsky wrote anxiously to K. P. Pobedonostsev: "In general, our colonization, which has increased especially in recent years, is not going well. It's like a huge stream that's been pulled off the dam and it's unstoppable, flooding and destroying" (Letters of N. I. Ilminsky to Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev, the Chief Prosecutor). A. N. Krasnov, the professor (1894) gave a "remarkable" assessment of Russian colonization: "The farmer of Europe, and especially our South Russian peasant and master, having ruined, robbed, and devastated their land, are themselves abhorred by the abomination they have created in nature and in human relations. And then whole crowds of peasants run unconsciously, like a herd, to look for new lands, a new field for destruction and fleecing, and the master goes abroad to spend the wealth stolen from nature and people far from the crime he has committed" (Krasnov, 1894).

N. M. Yadrintsev (1882) explains: "This is where (to the East – An. G., Al.G.) thieves, robbers, robbers and criminals fled" (Yadrintsev, 1882)⁴. The struggle for colonization could not but make "this population rough and backward. How weak the cultural and intellectual resources of the Russian population among foreigners still are is evident from many testimonies of travelers and scientists" (Yadrintsev, 1882; Yadrintsev, 1891). Regarding the news that G. Isenbaev, the Kazakh, donated 1000 rubles to the military treasury of the Ural Cossacks for the organization of a school, I. I. Zheleznov writes: "However, we have not heard that an Ural Cossack or any other Russian, by himself, brought money as a gift for the establishment of a Tatar "madrasah" (Zheleznov, 1860).

The Russian colonization to the East was accompanied by mass intoxication of aborigines and the spread of numerous diseases. S. S. Shashkov, N. M. Yadrintsev (Yadrintsev, 1882; Shashkov, 1898) and others presented horrific pictures of degradation and extinction of

4 393914 criminals were exiled to Siberia from 1823 to 1877.

the indigenous peoples of the Urals and Siberia in their works. According to O. S. Lebedeva, a recognized orientalist and expert on the Kazan region, Tatars seduced to Christianity are more likely to engage in drunkenness and gambling than Muslims (Lebedeff, 1899). M. Sultanov, the Orenburg Mufti, also noted the decline in morals among Muslims in his circular (Collection of circulars and other guiding orders for the district of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly of 1836-1903). He is echoed by N. P. Ostroumov (Ostroumov, 1901), V. P. Nalivkin (Nalyvkin & Nalyvkina, 1886): "piety is shaken".

The Turkestan Governor-General, in a memorandum (1908) to the Minister of War, acknowledged: "We should not forget that we have also introduced a lot of negative aspects of European culture among the Central Asian peoples" (Galuzo, 1935). Similar comments are made in relation to Siberia (Yadrintsev, 1882; Yadrintsev, 1891; Shashkov, 1898). Experts see the reason for the mass extinction of Siberian foreigners in the deterioration of the situation of local peoples, which occurred as a result of conquest and subsequent colonization (Yadrintsev, 1891). The same opinion is expressed in relation to the Caucasian War, which "drove out and destroyed the mountaineers, completely destroyed their culture" (Lichkov, 1904). According to A. Tsalikov, "official kulturtragers completely ignored the welfare ("cultural and economic needs") of mountaineers, not even fulfilling their direct official duties" (Tsalikov, 1909).

Thus, according to N. M. Yadrintsev, the movement to the East "destroys the former ties and relations, everywhere there is a movement and discharge of forces, which is accompanied by decomposition and catastrophes" (Yadrintsev, 1882).

Along with the looting and impoverishment of the colonial remoter areas, the problem of the attitude of the colonial authorities and ordinary migrants to the local indigenous peoples was no less acute for Russian kulturtrager communities. Thus, "the Caucasian administration placed the mountaineers in the position of pariahs, looked at them as an inferior conquered race, as "bald-headed Tatars", "Asians", ...with whom any treatment was permissible" (Tsalikov, 1909). Y. V. Abramov wrote, "The aboriginal was not a human, but a "creature" of some sort, with which there is absolutely no reason to stand on ceremony"; as a result, "the view was confirmed that the aboriginals are outside the law and any lynching against them is possible" (Abramov, 1884).

Not the best situation has developed in the Kazakh steppes. As P. I. Pashino wrote - the local populations for the Orenburg administration – the "kyrgyzatan", narrow eyed, "steppe trash", etc. One of the experienced "advisers" strongly recommended to take a Cossack whip for communication with the aboriginals, "and then, they say that "my fists ill get tired of walking on wide cheekbones, and whips are much like all this steppe riffraff is afraid of " (Pashino, 1868)⁵. P. I. Nebolsin agrees with him (Nebolsin, 1860). It is obvious that imperial psychology penetrated all layers of Great Russian society, becoming an organic part of the mentality, giving rise to stable stereotypes of national perception (Mirolyubov, 1894). M. A. Mashanov, Y. D. Koblov, P. V. Znamensky, N. I. Zolotnitsky and others (Ilminsky's followers) also complain about the Great Russian neglect of foreigners.

V. I. Lamansky wrote - "In a significant part of our educated or semi-educated society, the most wild and rude opinions and expressions about foreigners are often heard". "This is not at all Christian, and it is also a great error, a great prejudice. This is decidedly our misfor-

5 "Did you get the whip? He asked, seating me into the cart. No? Well, congratulations! Blame yourself, go back without hands ". See: P.I. Pashino, Turkestan region in 1866 ... [28, p. 3].

tune! It is time, long ago, to understand that the beginning of diversity only adds to and fertilizes the beginning of unity: "each particular nationality of life and word," as Sreznevsky noted, "can be compared to a special musical tone: each is necessary, each is original, although it merges with the other" (Lamansky, 1896). "Generally speaking, many of the shortcomings of our education, our administration, our entire poluprisede and sleepy provincial life are due to the domination in the province and in the capital society by indifference, neglect and ignorance, often very disdainful of foreigners, among whom Russian educated people sometimes live for decades without learning any of these languages and without familiarizing themselves with the local population..." (Lamansky, 1). To solve the foreigner's question, S. G. Rybakov, the ethnographer, emphasized that it is necessary to study the life of foreigners, as the British and French do in their colonies (Rybakov, 1897).

"Unfortunately, previous history left many bitter memories - N.M. Yadrintsev sums up, - so many unnecessary atrocities were committed, and the later exploitation of foreigners and their abundance so disproved all friendly and fraternal feelings, that there is a gap and total mistrust between the Russian and foreign populations" (Yadrintsev, 1891)⁶. Although he calls Siberia "our United States", the comparison with Australia and America is far from in favor of Siberia (Yadrintsev, 1882). At the same time, A. E. Krymskiy admits, "Europeans usually scoff when it comes to the civilizing significance of Russia; they always have a question ready: "Can a whip or a rod be the bearers of civilization?". "The phrase 'Russification is another form of Asiaticism', or 'it is not rude for Russia with its wild methods to be a harbinger of peaceful culture'" is widely used (Krymskiy, 1899) and so on.

4. Summary

Despite the liberal interspersions, the cultural policy aimed at integrating foreigners into the all-Russian socio-cultural space was considered, as before, mainly in line with the usual Christianization and Russification. As N. M. Yadrintsev emotionally expressed himself on this occasion: "Russify, and then we will look at you as an object subject to equal care with others! Be baptized, and then we will show you mercy!" (Yadrintsev, 1891). Barthold V. V. wrote about the contradictions of acculturation: "the success of the Russian school and of Russian culture in general was hindered by the fear that they might impart too much information to the natives in their language and thereby contribute to the consolidation of local literature and local cultural characteristics, to the detriment of Russification (Bartold, 1927).

"May my compatriots forgive me," N. P. Ostroumov stated, "the vast majority of us are bad kulturtragers who are not only not prepared for their service in a foreign and non-religious region, but also do not seek to go beyond the narrow framework of officials" (Ostroumov, 1910).

The acculturation processes in this context were a by-product of imperial politics, stemming not from, but rather from, its ambitions. "Unfortunately," N. M. Yadrintsev wrote, "such personalities (as Banzarov and Valikhanov-An. G., Al. G.) only accidentally made their way out of the foreign environment" (Yadrintsev, 1882). Similar conclusions are also made by G. N. Potanin, L. Plotnikov (Potanin, 1896; Plotnikov, 1860) and others. (The disparate scale of the spread of European education among the population of British India and Russia indicates a well-known rejection of the official acculturation policy by foreigners.) The atti-

⁶ As a result, the native population was not only unable to get closer to the Russian community, "moreover, it is in antagonism with the Russian population" [17, p. 29].

tude of Muslims to acculturation was most clearly expressed by S. Maksudi: "We want to join Russian culture gradually, naturally, without losing our national characteristics" (Maksudov, 1910).

5. Conclusions

By criticizing the state policy of acculturation of foreigners, the domestic kulturtragers (Orientalists, publicists, educators and missionaries) sought above all to create public opinion in favour of expanding and improving kulturtrager activities. Sincerely convinced of Russia's civilizing mission in the East, they tried, as far as possible, to convey the idea that it is not by force of arms that Russia can unite, but by the socio-cultural rapprochement of peoples, the power of education and science. Violence and xenophobic expressions can only sow distrust in Russian cultural initiatives. However, it is obvious that civilizationism, which initially did not include the tasks of developing and flourishing national cultures, was understood by kulturtragers as part of the implantation of spiritual, religious and ethno-cultural values prevailing in the empire, and left its mark on the entire further development of the Muslim community of Russia (Almazova, 2015).

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