

²⁵ ПСРЛ. Т. 13. С. 200–201.

²⁶ ПСРЛ. Т. 19.

²⁷ Национальный съезд мари. Казань, 1918. С. 32.

²⁸ *Sanukov Ksenofont*. Stalinist Terror in the Mari Republic: the Attack on 'Finno-Ugrian Bourgeois Nationalism' / *The Slavonic and East European Review*. Volume 74. № 4. October 1996. P. 658–682.

²⁹ Пробуждение финно-угорского Севера. Опыт Марий Эл. Т. 1. Национальные движения Марий Эл. М., 1996. С. 21–22.

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CHURCH AND SCHOOL: MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES AND ASSIMILATION POLICY IN THE MIDDLE VOLGA REGION IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The 19th century Russian empire represented a complex entity comprised of groups of people different by ethnos, language and religion. Among the crucial questions on the empire's agenda and in public discourse was the question of Russianness, the assimilation of ethnic non-Russians or at least their acculturation and making them loyal to the empire.

One of the most wide-spread ideas was that to become a Russian one had to convert to Orthodoxy first. Being an Orthodox was taken for granted when speaking about ethnic Russians, whereas in regards to huge non-Russian population in the multiethnic peripheries, conversion to Orthodoxy meant assimilation with Russians in terms of religion and, later, language and culture.

The Middle Volga region, which is in the focus of my research, is viewed as a multiethnic and religiously heterogeneous entity. The population of the region was comprised of various ethnic groups-Tatars, Chuvash (Turkic language group), Mari, Udmurt, Mordvins (Finno-Ugric language group), coming from either Islamic or animistic background.

The issue of Russification is also a tricky one, because it is connected with even the trickier notions of assimilation, acculturation, *rapprochement* and in the 19th century rhetoric the authors often used them interchangeably. However, many actors did speak about the assimilation before 1905, the question is, to what extent. In views of many, non-Russians would always remain inferior to the Great Russian nation and should be grateful to them for the spread of the Russian language and Orthodox religion which they would undoubtedly accept. The evaluation of the phenomenon is complicated because of the subsequent process of *korenizatsiya*, launched in 1920–1930, which was the institutionalization and territorial definition of ethnicity.

The assimilation or acculturation policy was to be conducted on several levels: through Church, school, marriages and the empire was trying to regulate all the three layers. In spite of the fact that the clergy was actively involved in missionary and teaching activities, the church found itself under pressure from both the Ministry of Education and zemstvo organizations, who stood against the missionary and educational activities of the Brotherhoods, as a result of which it was very difficult to open a new parish or missionary school¹. During the Great Reforms of 1860–70s, according to the order of January 18, 1862 the responsibility for public primary education was assigned to the Ministry of Education².

Since the Minister of Education Tolstoy conducted the policy of secular education, the parish schools, with strong religious component, lost their significance. As a result, the seminaries became less popular than the *zemstvo* schools and many of them closed down. The other factor that contributed to the difficulties in parish schools was the hard financial situation of the teachers from the clergy. When in the years 1866-1880 Tolstoy simultaneously served as the minister of education and over-procurator of the Holy Synod, religious education experienced a sharp decline, as Tolstoy's plans lay in the direction of a totally secular

school system. The government, however, was not going to abandon the idea of religious education altogether³.

Consequently, when in 1880 Pobedonostsev became the head of the Holy Synod, he turned his attention to the promotion of religious and moral upbringing of the peasants, improvement of the financial situation of village clergy, raising the level of their pedagogical and general education and also increasing the network of parish schools⁴.

In his report for 1884, Pobedonostsev spoke about the statute on parish schools signed on June 13, 1884 by Alexander II. He argued that the popular elementary education must be linked to the Russian Orthodox Church. He laid a special emphasis on the fact that the popular school “should be based on firm principles of the Orthodox faith, whose guardian and interpreter can only be the Orthodox clergy” and “should correspond to the religious feelings and desires of the *narod* itself.”⁵

An important role had to be given to the clergy, who had to “encourage a conscious religious feeling.”⁶ Pobedonostsev wanted to turn the Russian Orthodox Church into the leading force in the matter of improvement of religious education of the people. Thus the parish school, as its representative, was viewed as a center of spreading the Orthodox faith. On the 20th of May, 1883 the Minister Education introduced a decree on “Providing assistance to Orthodox clergy in opening and support of parish schools”⁷. The main role in the organization of educational process now belonged to the clergy. Church authorities became independent of the Ministry of Education in matters of organization of teaching process in parish schools.

Beginning with the year 1891, the Russian Orthodox Church got another means of religious influence on the masses of people. On the 4th of May Alexander III signed the “Rules on the schools of literacy” suggested by the Holy Synod. Such schools were organized throughout the country under the control of church authorities and the priests kept all the responsibility for the organization of the teaching process. Although theoretical basis and the teaching supplies were quite poor, they made a certain contribution to the development of religious upbringing of the population as the schools were mostly attended by grown-ups. An important part was given to the missionary work. In May 1865 the Synod established the Russian Orthodox missionary society, first and foremost for the spread of Christianity and Orthodox culture among Russian pagans, popularization of missionary ideas in the society, and conversion of Muslims to Orthodoxy⁸.

In the second half of the 19th century the teaching concepts of the missionary activities became subject to reformation. Having analyzed the strong sides and drawbacks of the foreign religious education, Pobedonostsev came to conclusion that the main condition for the missionary success was the existence of a Christian teacher, who believes in the ideals of the church, is patient and modest⁹. Among the most important tasks of religious education he saw:

1. Exercise in obedience and submission to God’s will.
2. Uncovering peculiar traits in the Russian character.
3. Getting to appreciate the spirit of the people, which is expressed in the life, art, history¹⁰.

It is clear enough that the above-mentioned points underline the *a priori* superiority of the Russians over the other imperial subjects that had to undergo a certain cultural rapprochement towards the “core nation,” that was seen as an agent of civilizing mission. By teaching the submission to the God’s will one could ensure the loyalty of the population to the tsar. Taking into consideration the tense pre-revolutionary situation in the country one sees that such a program was quite timely.

The main trends of religious education, suggested by Pobedonostsev, were aimed at the unification of people’s masses and the state, the essence of which was in the establishment

of the power of the state on nothing but the unification of spiritual self-consciousness between the people and the state, on the peoples' faith, which was to become the responsibility of the Russian Orthodox Church, that was to dominate over school. In this connection Pobedonostsev said that "school, since it is for the people, must reflect in itself the soul and faith of the people, only then will the people love it... school must be closely tied to the church. It must be penetrated by the church in the best, spiritual sense of the word"¹¹.

The major contribution into the organization of religious education was made by a professor of Kazan Ecclesiastic academy Il'minskii together with the future editor-in-chief of "Vyatskie Gubernskie Novosti" Zolotnitskii. Il'minskii thought that in the regions of the empire with a high percent of *inorodtsy* population, the education must be missionary in its nature, as in case of growing of Pan-Islamism the government will face the problem of apostasies of "baptized *inorodtsy*" either into Islam or into paganism. He gave warnings of two possible threats-Islamic proselytism on the one hand, that had made its target not only Tatars but also Bashkir, Cheremis, Chuvash, Votyak peoples; on the other hand- the growth of different religious sects, which could also influence the religious worldview of the non-Russians. Taking into consideration the ethnic and linguistic peculiarities of the people of the Middle Volga region, the remoteness from the state centre, non-stable situation in the region, it is possible to conclude that the education had to:

1. Aim at missionary activities.
2. Fight against apostasy of baptized non-Russians into Mohammedanism.
3. Take into consideration large masses of the pagan population of the region, for they constituted the weakest group, most likely to fall under Muslim assimilation project.
4. Resist the decrease of morality, spirituality, refusal to live according to God's laws among the people of the region, as it was threatening the state interests of Russia.

In 1864 Il'minskii turned to Shestakov for the permission to open a private school for the Kriashen children with the appointment of Timofeev (priest of the church at the Kazan Kriashen school) as its director¹². The school was successfully opened, with the teaching of Catechism in Tatar on the basis of Russian alphabet, God's Law, prayers, history of the church with the later introduction of basic Arithmetic, Reading first in Tatar, then in Russian, Geography, Drawing. Special attention was paid to the Church songs both in Tatar and Church Slavonic. The school was inspected by Il'minskii and a scholar on missionary polemics and a teacher of the Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy E.A. Malov¹³. Started for the Kriashen, the satellite schools for other indigenous peoples were soon launched throughout the region.

The main aim of the system was to resist the spread and dominance of Islam on the territory of the Russian empire¹⁴. The system was ratified by the rules "about the measures to the education of the Russian *inorodtsy*", issued on the 26th of March 1870. The rules presupposed the appearance of schools for the Orthodox *inorodtsy* and for Muslim Tatars. The Orthodox indigenous population was subdivided into a) poorly-Russified, for whom the teaching had to be conducted in indigenous languages with the usage of books published in these languages; b) living together with the Russian population, who were to have common schools with the instruction in Russian with possible native departments financed by the *inorodtsy*; c) quite Russified, with Russian primary schools. The Muslim Tatars were to be taught by the same rules as non-or poorly-Russified *inorodtsy* with the possibility to invite a mullah for teaching the law of their faith¹⁵.

Although Geraci claims that "Il'minskii was adamantly opposed to both pedagogical theory and school standardization, and even denied that he created a standardized system" (the statement being doubtful, since Il'minskii taught Pedagogy in Kazan Teachers' Seminary)¹⁶, it is possible to sum up the suggested principles of Orthodox education as follows:

1. The core of the Orthodox education must lie in the missionary education.
2. All the educational policy must be of gradual character, as any extremes will have negative outcomes.
3. It is necessary to train not only teachers for parish and missionary schools but also priests who would work in the district with unfavorable moral situation.

Backing up his approach he claims that throughout the Russian history the Russian population, gradually moving to the East, was always the carrier of Orthodoxy to other peoples¹⁷. One of the important axes of his theory was religious-missionary upbringing of the Russian population itself. For Il'minskii, the only way the empire would survive under if the Russian people remain faithful to their Orthodox religion. But having visited Russian peasants in the remote villages he came to a conclusion that the main part of them has quite vague idea of Christian dogmas and was not so zealous in keeping their faith, as Muslims or Old Believers.

The other conclusion he made was that the Russian people is eager to adopt not only various daily practices, but also rituals. Thus, what he observed in the Kazan district was that the Russian peasant turned to pagans for help in case of somebody's illness or bad harvest so that they would pray to the idols and make sacrifices¹⁸. Thus, although it was presupposed that living close to the Russian population, non-Russians would gradually pick up the peculiarities of their lifestyle, and become more convinced in their acceptance of Orthodoxy, what could be observed is the process of reciprocal assimilation, which of course was more pronounced on the Russian side. The phenomenon was determined by the syncretic basis of Russian Orthodoxy; although not practicing ritual sacrifices themselves, the Russian peasants could not serve as role models, since in extreme cases they could turn to pagans, and not to the church.

Il'minskii's system was going to put an end to such collisions in the religious worldview of the local population, since the final aim of the system was the Russification (*obrusenie*) of the *inorodsy*, their complete blending (in faith and language) with the Russians¹⁹, who also had to be fortified in their belief.

As the main objects of missionary work were the non-Russians of the region, Il'minskii introduced the method in which primary stress was made on usage of the local languages in the missionary work. Thus, it was a crucial task to train the *inorodsy* priests and missionaries, as sermons in native languages allowed them to make greater impact on the local population²⁰.

The ideology of the system manifested itself in the famous triade: "*inorodsy* books, *inorodsy* liturgy, *inorodsy* parish with the priest at its head"²¹.

Speaking of Muslim educational strategies, Il'minskii particularly stressed that they had specific rules of using the Quran and other religious books. So when visiting a church a missionary teacher should explain the meaning of every icon, the meaning of each religious symbol. He should explain that together with the icons of the Savior, Virgin Mary and the saints, to the church comes their Holy blessing²². It is the church that gives the people the feeling of fear and love towards God; it is there that the study of prayers and the Symbol of Faith has the greatest psychological effect.

The missionary trends were in the same streamline with the classics of pedagogy-Ushinskii supported the idea of *narodnost'* in education "...we have no right in the education and upbringing to separate the people from its history, in which the faith was a consolidating component of the Slavic soul. That is why national and general upbringing may be only religious"²³.

The proposed system, however, had its opponents. The archbishop of Buinsk district in Simbirsk province Baratunskii criticized Il'minskii's views on the education of non-Russians.

Baratunskii claimed that it was necessary to educate non-Russians not in the native language but in Russian. He stressed that *the inorodsy* languages did not have adequate words to express basic Christian notions, thus the meaning sometimes got distorted and misinterpreted. Thus, a sacred text translated into Tatar appeared to be something in between Orthodoxy and Islam.

Besides, he expressed an idea that the introduction of the indigenous languages into the church and school practice could lead to the development of national self-consciousness of the non-Russian peoples which could be quite dangerous in the multiethnic empire²⁴. His supporters agreed that the non-Russian languages could be used as “auxiliary tools” to ensure the understanding of what is being taught, and only after the students had learnt Russian. They claimed that the use of the *inorodsy* languages “implied that these languages were more important instructionally than Russian”²⁵. In the debates Baratunskii spoke of “civil Russification” and stated that “the assimilation of a language assimilates the nationality as well”²⁶. In his turn, Il’miskii, putting the accent on the hypothesis that the spread of Islam might become the main obstacle to Christianization and Russification of all eastern subjects of the empire, addressed his opponents:

If because we are afraid of a certain people, we refuse to use the non-Russian languages in the non-Russian schools and the church for the solid and complete, conscious acceptance of Orthodox faith, all the *inorodsy* will turn into a single tribe (*plemya*) in terms of both the language and the faith-Tatar and Mahomeddan. If, on the contrary, we allow for the use of non-Russian languages, then we would-at most-support various small peoples not inclined to the Tatar way of life (*tatarstvo*), and connected with the Russians by means of faith. Make your choice²⁷!

After the heated discussions in the educational council of the non-Russian districts the indigenous language was recognized as the primary tool of teaching *the inorodsy* language with the dominating role of Russian as the basic language of the church and school since the immediate strategy was to reach assimilation of the non-Russians by means of Orthodoxy and later familiarization with the Russian language. The idea of using the Russian language as the means of Russification found itself in the creation of Russian-Tatar schools aimed at Muslim Tatars; Russian language classes became obligatory in *mektebs* and *madrasahs*, so that any child getting Islamic education was also taught the Russian language.

The unfortunate truth about the system is that it served only as a way of ratification of imperial policy of Russification of non-Russian peoples, leaving behind the aim of reaching more or less universal literacy of the peasants in secular terms. Having chosen the religious education in indigenous languages, providing schools with necessary biblical literature and bringing up the generations of talented missionaries and teachers, the system became the embodiment of the imperial ideology in relation to the population of its eastern provinces.

Примечания

¹ RGIA, f.733, op. 170, d. 210, ll. 215–216.

² Thomas C. Sorenson. «Pobedonostsev Parish Schools: A Bastion Against Secularism», in *Religious and Secular Forces in Late Tsarist Russia: essays in honour of Donald W. Treadgold*, ed. Charles E. Timberlake (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 186.

³ Sorenson. «Pobedonostsev Parish Schools», 189.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁵ K. Pobedonostsev quoted in Sorenson, «Pobedonostsev Parish Schools», 188.

⁶ RGIA, f. 1263, op. 1, d. 4229, l. 73–74.

⁷ RGIA, f. 733, op. 171, d. 632, l.4.

⁸ S. Runkevich. *Russkaya pravoslavnaya tserkov’, istoriya khristianskoj tserkvi v 19 veke* (Russian Orthodox church, history of Christian church in the 19th century) (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1908), 138.

- ⁹ Pobedonostsev K.P. *Novaya shkola (New school)* (Moscow: Sinoidal'naya tipografiya, 1898), 81.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Pobedonostsev K.P. *Uchenie i uchitel'. Pedagogicheskie zametki (Schooling and teachers. Pedagogical notes)* (Moscow: n.p., 1900), 29.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid., 14.
- ¹⁴ Znamenskii, Na pamyat' o N.I. Il'minskom: k 25-letiju Bratstva sv. Guriya (To the memory of N.I. Il'minskii: For the 25th anniversary of St. Guriy brotherhood) (Kazan: Tipografiya N.A. Il'yashenko, 1892), 331.
- ¹⁵ Efirov, *Nerusskie shkolu Povolzh'ya, Priural'ya i Sibiri. Istoricheskie ocherki (Non-Russian schools of Povolzh'e, Priural'e and Siberia. Historical studies)* (Moscow: n.p., 1948), 12–13.
- ¹⁶ Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 131.
- ¹⁷ Znamenskii, Na pamyat', 300–320.
- ¹⁸ Znamenskii, Na pamyat', 28.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 26.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ N.I. Il'minskii quoted in Tajmasov, *Pravoslavnaya tserkov' i khristianskoe prosveschenie narodov Srednego Povolzh'ya vo vtoroj polovine 19-nachale 20 veka (Orthodox Church and Christian enlightenment of the Middle Volga peoples in the second half of the 19th-beginning of the 20th century)* (Cheboksary: Chuvashskij universitet, 2004), 225.
- ²² Ocherk prosvetitel'skoj deyatelnosti N.I. Il'minskogo (Studies of teaching activities of N.I. Il'minskii) (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo uchilischnogo soveta pri Svyatejshe Sinode, 1904).
- ²³ K.D. Ushinskii quoted in L.A. Efimov, *Shkolu Chuvashskogo kraja v 19–20 vekah (Schools of Chuvash kraj in the 19th-20th centuries)* (Moscow: MGOPU, 2003), 42.
- ²⁴ A. Baratunskij. «Zapiska o vvedenii russkogo yazuka i russkoj gramotnosti v tatarskih uchilischah.» (A note on the introduction of the Russian language and Russian literacy in Tatar vocational schools) in *Sbornik dokumentov i statej po voprosu obrazovaniya inorodsev* (Simbirsk: n.p., 1884), 619.
- ²⁵ Geraci. *Window on the East*, 123.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 138.
- ²⁷ Quoted from Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaya tserkov'*, 228.

