



Russification and Educational Policies in the Middle Volga Region (1860-1914)

Oxana Zemtsova

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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Department of History and Civilization

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation investigates the Russification policy of the late-imperial Russian state, as it related to educational policy in the Middle Volga region. It seeks to understand how the tsarist authorities sought to define ‘Russianness’ and how they sought to craft relations with ‘pagan’ minorities and Muslims in a region where the Slavic-Orthodox, the Turkic-Islamic and the Finno-‘pagan’ worlds interacted. It asks how far the educational projects of the Orthodox missions and the secular authorities brought about ‘Russification’.

The analysis of the changes in imperial policy in the period between the 1860s to 1914 allows for the conclusion that the methods, instruments and aims of Russification policy continually changed and that policy was applied quite differently vis-à-vis the Muslim and pagan, or in most cases only superficially Orthodox, population of the region.

When dealing with the educational project for the non-Muslim population in the region, also known as the project of N.II’minskii, the dissertation aims to understand how the russifying and missionary components related to each other. Furthermore, it studies the alternative educational projects aiming at Russification of the non-Russian population of the region that the II’minskii system had to compete with.

A considerable amount of the dissertation is devoted the discussion of the Muslim reform movement and emergence of Jadidism. By analyzing and comparing the curricula of old-method madrasahs and the new-methods ones, the dissertation demonstrates the evolution that the Middle Volga Muslims underwent under the influence of both inner reforms and the actions of the authorities.

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INTRODUCTION

The dissertation investigates the Russification policy of the late-imperial Russian state, as it related to educational policy in the Middle Volga region. It seeks to understand how the tsarist authorities attempted to define ‘Russianness’ and how they sought to craft relations with ‘pagan’ minorities and Muslims in a region where the Slavic-Orthodox, the Turkic-Islamic and the Finno-‘pagan’ worlds interacted. It asks how far the educational projects of the Orthodox missions and the secular authorities brought about ‘Russification’. I use the term ‘Russification’ to describe the policy of introduction of the Russian language in the classroom, press, church (in the case of non-Muslims) and other fields of the public sphere. I analyze the reforms in the sphere of education in order to see whether Russification can be regarded as a form of cultural assimilation, which led to communities giving up their culture and language in favor of the Russian one, or to acculturation, i.e. the acceptance of the Russian language and culture along with the native ones.

Russification, assimilation, acculturation

During the Soviet era the Russian empire was presented as a ‘prison-house of peoples’ – a term that Lenin had used – and the general assumption was that repression alone held the empire together. Russification policies and missionary education were thus presented in an entirely negative light.¹ N. Ablov described Nikolai Il’minskii, the ideologist of missionary education among the Middle Volga Orthodox and pagan non-Russians, as a reactionary.² Il’minskii’s contribution to the process of education received a negative assessment precisely

¹V. G. Chernukha, *Vnutrenniaia politika tsarizma s serediny 80kh godov 19 do nachala 20 veka* [Inner Policy of the Tsarism from the Middle of 1880s-Beginning of the Twentieth Century] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1975), M.S. Korzun, *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov’ na sluzhbe ekspluatatorskikh klassov, x vek-1917* [Russian Orthodox Church at the Service of Exploitative Classes. Tenth century-1917] (Minsk: Belarus’, 1984), Iu. F. Kozlov, *Soiuz korony i kresta* [The Union of Crown and Cross] (Saransk: Mordovskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel’stvo, 1985), P.A. Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontse 19 stoletia (politicheskaia reaktsiia 80 kh-nachala 90kh godov)* [Russian Autocracy at the End of the Nineteenth Century (Political Reaction of the 1880s - Beginning of the 1890s)] (Moscow:Mysl’,1970).

²N.N. Ablov, *N.I. Il’minskii i ego russifikatorskaia pedagogicheskaia sistema* [N.I. Il’minskii and his Pedagogic Russification System] (Moscow:n.p., 1936).

because of its religious component.³ In 1948, A. Grigoriev analysed Christianization as part of the colonial policy of the tsarist government and considered it to be one of the means of Russification of Tatars and other non-Russian peoples living on the territory of the Soviet Tatar republic.⁴ The history of pre-revolutionary schools was partially described in A. Efirov's book which, though misrepresenting the educational reforms of the tsarist government, is valuable from the point of view of the statistical reports presented in it and the general overview of educational programs in the region.⁵ In general, despite the heavily ideological character of Soviet works, they are often useful for their factual information, statistical data and the numerous archival sources they contain.

At the beginning of the 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and monopoly of the Communist party, the opportunity came to overcome stereotypes and ideological *clichés* in the treatment of ecclesiastical issues. Many positions had to be reassessed and historians began to adopt new methodological perspectives.

Among both Russian and non-Russian scholars the post-Communist period has seen a surge of interest in the history of the Russian empire. Despite many differences of interpretation all scholars seek to understand how the empire survived for so long given the heterogeneity of its people, the vastness of its territory, and the seemingly weak and disordered character of government. Scholars generally agree that the 'nationality policy' of the tsarist government was inconsistent, uneven, and uncoordinated. According to Richard Pipes, 'at no point in history did tsarist Russia formulate a consistent policy towards its minorities'.⁶ He is seconded by John Keep who points out not only that 'Russian society generally never developed an elaborate, well-articulated 'imperial ethos', but also that 'the

³ "Agrarnyi vopros i krestianskoe dvizhenie 50-70kh godov 19 veka" [Agrarian Question and the Peasant Movement of 1850-70s] in *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19 veka* (Moscow; Leningrad, 1936).

⁴ A.N. Grigoriev, "Khristianizatsiia nerusskikh narodnostei kak odin iz metodov natsional'no-kolonial'noi politiki tsarizma v Tatarii (s poloviny XVI v. po fevral' 1917)" [Christianization of Non-Russian Peoples as One of the Methods of National-Colonial Tsarist Policy in Tatarstan (from Mid-sixteenth Century to February of 1917)], in *Materialy po istorii Tatarii* (Kazan: n.p., 1948):226-85.

⁵ A.F. Efirov, *Nerusskie shkoly Povolzh'ia, Priural'ia i Sibiri. Istoricheskie ocherki* [Non-Russian Schools of the Volga and Ural Regions and Siberia. Historical Studies] (Moscow: n.p., 1948).

⁶ R. Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism 1917-1923*, rev.edn. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 6.

regime had no consistent policy or machinery for dealing with the nationalities problem, whose very existence was barely recognized'.⁷

Andreas Kappeler believes that Russia, starting from the eighteenth century, borrowed European concepts of segregation of borderland minorities. He maintains that the Russian empire 'was undeniably an Empire in the European mould, but the imperialism that built and sustained it was highly ambiguous and all its own.'⁸ In fact, the Russian frontier experience was different due to the long-existing openness of cultural and religious borders between Russian Orthodox and non-Christian peoples.⁹ Kappeler mentions several paradoxes that lay at the heart of Russian colonization and contributed to the apparent lack of structure or inner logic to the empire. The first of these was geographical in the sense that the borders between 'metropole' and 'colony' were quite porous, there being no sea between them, with colonization unfolding over land. Secondly, most of colonists were peasants who were just as backward as the indigenous peoples of the areas they colonised and not all of them were Russians. To crown it all, most Russians peasants were enserfed whereas non-Russians usually were not, while cases when non-Russian noblemen got high positions in the government were not uncommon.

Alexander Etkind questions the russifying potential of Russian 'colonizers', the majority of whom were peasants and were just as illiterate as the non-Russians. In his latest book on internal colonization, he bases his argument on V. Kliuchevskii's definition of the Russian empire as 'the country that colonizes itself.'¹⁰ In the nineteenth century, Etkind argues, Russia was both a colonial empire and a colonized territory.

⁷ J.L.H. Keep, 'Imperial Russia: Alexander II to the Revolution', in R.Auty and D. Obolensky (eds.), *An introduction to Russian History. Companion to Russian Studies*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 197, 200.

⁸ W. Sunderland, "Empire without Imperialism?" *Ab Imperio*, no 2 (2003): 102.

⁹ A. Kappeler, "Iuzhnyi i vostochnyi frontir Rossii v 16-18 vekakh" [Southern and Eastern Frontier in Russia in the Sixteenth - Eighteenth Centuries] *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2003): 62.

¹⁰ Vasilii Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii* [A Course in Russian History](Moscow, 1956) quoted in A. Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 2.

In contemporary historiography there is no unanimity as to the definition of Russification, the variety of its applications and its effect on the empire-building and nation-building processes. In an attempt to understand this confusing term, Edward Thaden suggested differentiating between three types of Russification. The first type, spontaneous Russification, took place without active involvement of the authorities as a natural outcome of cultural contacts and intermarriages beginning in the sixteenth and continuing well into the early twentieth century. It is easier to differentiate spontaneous Russification from other types if one looks at the two Russian verbs denoting the Russifying process: *obruset'* (to become Russian) and *obrusit'* (to make Russian). The first verb is intransitive and refers to a natural process, which occurred when a non-Russian got married into a Russian family or when a non-Russian peasant came to a Russian city and became russified. Such spontaneous Russification was a 'natural' outcome of circumstances and not a result of a specific policy.

Russification of the second type - *obrusit'*, to make Russian – was administrative and was used by Thaden to refer to the policy of centralization and rationalization which began in the second half of the eighteenth century and continued to the reign of Alexander II. Finally, the third type is cultural Russification, which had a forced character and presupposed the imposition of the Russian language and Orthodoxy. Cultural Russification, according to Thaden, began under Alexander II and continued in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹¹ At the beginning of the reign of Alexander II (1855), all three types of Russification were at work - spontaneous, administrative and cultural, the last two gradually acquiring a more and more forced character, which since the time of Great Reforms in its various forms embraced the whole territory of empire, while the non-Russians themselves were often referred to just as 'subjects to be russified'.¹² The drawback of Thaden's definition is that it cannot be uniformly applied to all the regions of the empire. Moreover, this classification does not reflect the balance between the voluntary and enforced elements of Russification which could be rarely present in their absolute forms.

¹¹ Edward C. Thaden, "Russification in Tsarist Russia," in *Interpreting History: Collective Essays on Russia's Relations with Europe* (New York: Boulder, 1990), 211-220.

¹² See the work of Darius Staliunas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification of Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007).

Geoffrey Hosking sees Russification as an attempt to raise the sense of Russianness among all the subjects of the tsar: 'by inculcating in each of them the language, religion, culture, history and political traditions of Russia, leaving their own languages and native traditions to occupy a subsidiary niche, as ethnographic remnants rather than active social forces.'¹³

In Raymond Pearson's view the term 'Russification' is not even entirely correct, since Russians lacked both the ambition and the ability to assimilate non-Russians. He proposes using the term 'Russianisation' instead, which would mean the policy of domination of the Russian language, culture and institutions.¹⁴ In his interpretation, cultural Russification was a phenomenon of the European part of Russia, since in parts of Russian Asia, incorporated in the nineteenth century, the supremacy of Russians and the Russian culture was uncontested. The term Russianisation could indeed better describe tsarist policy in relation to at least some ethnic groups given the growing conviction of historians that the empire lacked both the ambition and up-to-date resources for ethnic assimilation of its minorities.

In order to understand the ambiguous meaning of the word 'Russification', Alexei Miller suggests we look at various connotations of the word. Indeed, we have to speak not of 'Russification', but of 'Russifications', since the policy largely depended on how Russianness itself was defined and that it had different meanings for different national groups.¹⁵ Apart from this, it was important to see how far the imperial authorities were ready and willing to go with the policy of Russification and to what extent the ethnic groups in various regions were willing to accept it.

The term 'Russification' becomes still more ambiguous since many other terms, such as assimilation, acculturation, rapprochement, merging, *sblizhenie*, are often packed into it. The

¹³ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 376.

¹⁴ R. Pearson, R. "Privileges, Rights and Russification", in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia.*, eds. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 89-90.

¹⁵ Alexei Miller, "Russifikatsiia, klassifitsirovat' i poniat" [Russification, to Classify and Understand], *Ab Imperio* (2002): 133-148.

notions that are probably the most difficult to distinguish are assimilation and acculturation. These often overlap and also need to be clearly defined as the above-mentioned term 'Russification'. In Benjamin Nathans' definition, assimilation is '...a process, culminating in the disappearance of a given group as a recognizably distinct element within a larger society. By contrast, acculturation signifies a form of adaptation to the surrounding society that alters rather than erases the criteria of difference, especially in the realm of culture and identity. Integration is the counterpart of acculturation in the social realm - whether institutional (e.g. schooling), geographic (patterns of residential settlement), or economic (occupational profile).'¹⁶ Miller, too, underlines the difference between assimilation and acculturation, stating that the latter means 'internalization of new cultural models borrowed in the course of contacts with another community' while the former should be regarded as 'a process of appropriation, of inclusion in a new community, adoption of a new world-view, new traditions and emotional attachments.'¹⁷ He stresses that successful assimilation inevitably leads to a change of identity while acculturation does not.¹⁸

We see that Nathans speaks about ethnic assimilation when the adaptation of one ethnic group to the other effaces the distinctive ethnic traits of the former. This definition is rather narrow and rarely do we come across the examples of such assimilation leading to substitution of identity and not simply to borrowing of some characteristics of a given group. Nathan's understanding of acculturation in its turn, allows for alterations of the ethnic identity, which for Miller is already assimilation. Taking only these two points of view we see that it is quite as difficult for a scholar to assign a label to the description of the imperial policy in a specific region as it is to evaluate its success.

The notions of assimilation and acculturation, as the Slavophile Ivan Aksakov complained, were often used without explaining what they meant.¹⁹ This is confirmed by John Klier's study of the Jewish case (which may nonetheless be applied to general

¹⁶ B. Nathans, *Beyond the Pale. The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2002), 11.

¹⁷ Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 48.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁹ I. Aksakov, *Sochineniia I.S. Aksakova* [Works of I.S. Aksakov] (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A.S. Suvorina, 1891-1903), 498.

discourses on Russia), which demonstrates that notions like *sliianie* (fusion or merging) and *sblizhenie* (drawing near or rapprochement), were quite often used interchangeably, and were applied in a very flexible way, not always meaning bringing together people of different ethnoses, but even those of different social strata:

[...] like the language or group affiliation, the use of ‘merging’ and ‘rapprochement’ was not limited to the Jewish case or even to ethnic difference as such. Reformers who desired a softening of social stratification among Russian also spoke of ‘rapprochement’ among the various estates or between the intelligentsia and the masses.²⁰

Contemporaries had difficulty agreeing on the use of some of these terms. At the end of the 1880s Il'minskii wrote to the then Minister of Education, I.D. Delianov:

What is the essence of *sblizhenie*? Does it only mean that two different peoples should live peacefully with one another and have trade and social relations? Or is its aim to get the subject people to learn the everyday life and the sum of knowledge and especially the language as the receptacle and solid foundation of the above-mentioned traits of the ruling people? If one contents oneself with the first rather restricted option, this is not difficult and life itself and social, estate and trade relations are more effective in this matter than schooling. We can observe such *sblizhenie* between Russians and Muslims in Orenburg and Ufa regions where there are many Tatar officials and landowners.²¹

According to Il'minskii, *sblizhenie* in the second meaning was much more difficult, for it was deeper and slower. He stressed the fact that education, culture and national self-consciousness were crucial in this respect. Inner adaptation to another nationality, even if it was superior politically, should be made only voluntarily, with due respect and awareness of one's own nationality (Il'minskii used the word *narodnost'*) as being lower than the newly-accepted one.

Both understanding Russification as the action of more educated, more civilized Russian actors towards less civilized passive non-Russian recipients, or presenting the policy as an

²⁰ John Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish question, 1855-1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 66-83.

²¹ NART, f.968, op.1, d.53, l. 19.

aggressive measure aimed at suppressing the culture of smaller ethnic groups, could result in oversimplification. But how can one describe the aims behind the ‘nationality policy’ of the Russian empire? What did the authorities want to do in practice when they spoke of Russification of non-Russian ethnic groups? And how should we read the claims of officials who wrote about ‘inevitable Russification’, ‘complete *obrusenie*’, merging of non-Russians with the Russian nation, etc.? Judging by the sources, one understands, this was not an easy task for the imperial officials either. Russification could be understood quite differently by an official in St. Petersburg and in the provinces, by a priest and by a teacher, or by a representative of one or another ethnic group. Finally, we should note that the historiography of Russification has concentrated on the middle decades of the nineteenth century, whereas Russification policy continued until 1917 although its character after 1905 becomes more complicated.

Modernization of the Russian empire in the nineteenth century, a popular topic in Russian history, brought with itself changes in administrative practices which would help in the management of Russia’s borderlands. At the same time, the ‘requirements for demonstration of loyalty’ became higher. Thus, it was no longer enough to be listed as Orthodox, one was expected to be practicing Orthodoxy. In certain cases, with Muslims, for example, it was necessary to speak Russian and to register births, marriages and deaths in Russian. In other words, the subjects were expected to become more visible to the state, and to demonstrate their loyalty with greater ‘expressiveness.’

The complex nature of the problem explains the appearance of quite a large range of literature evaluating Russification and focusing on the question of how the late Russian empire conducted its ‘nationality policy’ vis-à-vis its borderland subjects.²² The most ‘popular’ territory in this respect is probably the western part of the Russian empire.

²² Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hagen, Anatolii Remnev (eds.), *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007). M. Dolbilov, *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* [Western Borderlands of the Russian Empire] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2007); *idem*, *Russkii kraj, chuzhaia vera: etnokonfessional'naiia politika imperii v Litve i Belorussii pri Aleksandre II* [Russian Land, Foreign Faith: Ethnoconfessional Policy of the Empire in Litva and Belorussia under Alexander II] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010); Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). Adeb Khalid, “Russian History and the Debate over

The western provinces territory, where several ethnic groups (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians) were the target of the often aggressive Russian language introduction, is the best example of linguistic Russification. Darius Staliunas, analysing the Northwestern region [*Severo-zapadnyi krai*] of the Russian empire, seeks to determine whether the Russian authorities wanted to Russify the inhabitants of these provinces.²³ His study is restricted to the Lithuanian and Polish cases, leaving aside Belarusians and Ukrainians who, especially after the 1863 uprising were treated as a component part of the Russian nation and were not permitted any separate national expression. Staliunas examines the moment ‘when a person changed his national identity, according to Russian civil servants’ and questions the intentions of the authorities to culturally assimilate ethnic groups of the region when introducing certain discriminatory measures.²⁴ Although the title, “Making Russians”, seems to be quite telling, the contents of the book prove that the policies of the Russian administrators were aimed at ‘depolonizing’ the Lithuanian population of the Western borderlands rather than assimilating them into Russians.

Another historian of the Western provinces of Russia, Mikhail Dolbilov, makes an important contribution to the discussion on mechanisms of management and regulation of the multi-confessional population of the empire in his book. In fact, not only does he analyze the specific relationship between the imperial Russian center and non-Russian borderland and sometimes non-Christian Other, but he is also interested in how the idea of confessional

Orientalism”, Nathaniel Knight, “On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeb Khalid”, and Maria Todorova, “Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeb Khalid,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2000 1 (4): 691-99, 701-15, 717-27; Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000); Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003); *idem*, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism; Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008); D. Staliunas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam; NY: Rodopi, 2007); Charles Robert Steindwedel, “Invisible Threads of Empire: State, Religion, and Ethnicity in Tsarist Bashkiria, 1773-1917,” (PhD Diss., Columbia University, 1999); P. Werth, “The Institutionalization of Confessional Difference: ‘Foreign Confessions’ in Imperial Russia, 1810-1857”, *Defining Self: Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia, Seventeenth to Nineteenth centuries*, M. Branch, ed. (Helsinki: Finnish literature society, 2009).

²³ Darius Staliunas “Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwest Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5.2 (2004) 273-289.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 275.

Otherness (*ochuzhachivanie*) was constructed.²⁵ An illuminating concept of the Russian empire as ‘confessional state’ was suggested by Robert Crews and confirmed in Dolbilov’s work. Such a state not only tolerates, but supports the confessional diversity of its subjects using religious institutions as controlling bodies ensuring the loyalty of the subjects to the state. Religious policy, therefore, is viewed not only as ideology, but as an instrument of control, a bureaucratic category.

Robert Crews argues that the tsarist state was committed to ruling through religious practices and institutions, not only those of the Orthodox Church, and his book shows ‘...how Russia became a Muslim power – and how the government made Islam a pillar of imperial society, transforming Muslims into active participants in the daily operation of the autocracy and the local construction and the maintenance of the empire.’²⁶ The newly-recognized ‘House of Islam’ was, nevertheless, not particularly comfortable for Russia’s Muslim subjects. Rather contrary to Crews’s emphasis on the success of tsarist confessional politics, the recent study by Christian Noack argues that ‘Muslims found themselves reduced to second class citizens, not because they were Turkic peoples, but because they professed Islam.’²⁷

Russification in the Middle Volga

The territorial administrative division of the Middle Volga region was not unlike that of many other Russian provinces. Territorial segregation did not exist for the inhabitants of the Middle Volga region (except for the city of Kazan where Tatars were allowed to settle only in some parts), in comparison to the situation of the Jews or Poles in the Western provinces.

²⁵ Mikhail Dolbilov, *Russkii krai*.

²⁶ Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3.

²⁷ Christian Noack, “State Policy and its Impact on the Formation of a Muslim Identity in the Volga-Urals” in *Islam and Politics in Russia and Central Asia: Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries*, eds. S.Dudoignon and K.Hisao (New York: Kegan Paul, 2001): 3-26.

Starting from the 1850s, with an unstable situation on the borderlands and the Crimean War, the loyalty of Middle Volga Muslims to the empire was no longer taken for granted. The authorities became even more suspicious in the 1860s when uprisings inside the empire were followed by the appearance of the Polish, Jewish and, later, Muslim questions. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed new annexations of Muslim lands (the North Caucasus became part of Russia in 1864 at the end of the Caucasian War; Western Armenia and Southern Georgia with Muslim inhabitants were annexed during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78; Central Asia was brought under Russian rule in 1885).²⁸ Not all Muslims accepted Russian rule and various forms of resistance included revolts and emigration to Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Although the above-mentioned regions were regarded as colonies and ruled as such, the situation in the borderlands made the authorities more suspicious of their ‘own’ Muslims – the ones that lived in the Middle Volga region and had made up part of the Russian population for almost four hundred years. Tatars as mediators between the center and eastern peripheries turned into Tatars as threat.

When the famous turkologist Vasilii Radlov introduced his project for using Russian language in Tatar schools he intended it as a means of control over the Muslim population allowing the Russian authorities to monitor and understand what was going inside the community, in the mosque and madrasah. But Radlov’s project also included the policy of Muslim integration into the imperial whole, which was supposed to be more effective than previously practised administrative integration. The imposition of Russian was to make bureaucracy more cost-efficient and signaled a conscious drive for Russification itself, which grew more pronounced after the mid-nineteenth century.²⁹ In response, Muslims often saw in this policy not only the desire to strengthen control over the borderland population but also a move to subdue the ethnic culture.

Although the ideas of Pan-Turkism would appear later (in 1877-78), and Pan-Islamism later still, already at the time of the Crimean War many Russian Tatars were watching closely what was going on in the Ottoman Porte. The greatest fear of the authorities was probably

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Miller, *The Romanov Empire*, 57.

that the Tatar elites would attempt to unite not only the Turkic ethnic groups of the Middle Volga and Kama region, but also the Muslims of Crimea, Caucasus and Central Asia into a national whole on the basis of Islam and a common language.

As for the smaller ethnic groups of the region (Mari, Chuvash, Votiak, Mordva), there was little doubt about the aim of successful merging of non-Russian peoples with the Russians in the long run. Il'minskii's letter to Pobedonostsev conveys the attitude of both local and central authorities:

I believe that such small isolated nationalities cannot exist on their own and will finally merge with the Russian people following the historical course of life itself. *Inorodtsy* [people of a different origin, non-Russians] that marry Russians become undoubtedly akin to them.³⁰

It is important to underline that, in the case of Muslim Tatars, the authorities interfered little in the religious life of the communities, which is why this issue is almost absent from the discussion. At the same time, Russification policy towards non-Muslims, namely the Turkic group of Chuvash and the Finno-Ugric Mari, Mordva and Votiak was also closely connected with the missionary project of Christianization.

Missionary Activities in the Middle Volga

A researcher in Russian imperial history can hardly ignore the religious issues that were central to the reasoning of the nineteenth century central and local authorities. The history of the Orthodox missions and questions of ethnopolitical and ethnocultural processes in the Middle Volga region occupy a prominent place in Western and Eastern historiography. The early works of Paul Werth, the most authoritative Western scholar dealing with the issues of interaction of state authorities and Orthodox missionaries in the Volga-Kama region, are

³⁰ *Pis'ma N.I. Il'minskogo k ober-prokuroru Sviateishego Sinoda K.P. Pobedonostsevu* [Letters of N.I. Il'minskii to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod K.P. Pobedonostsev] (Kazan: Pravoslavnyi sobesednik, 1895), 399.

based on state-church missionary policy and the most prominent events from the religious life of two groups - the Mari and the Kriashen (baptized Tatars).³¹

Werth examines the strategies that were motivated by the state's attempts to use Russian Orthodoxy as a means to integrate the region's Muslim and pagan-animist people into the empire. He argues that the discourse of the imperial authorities concerning the population of Russia saw a conceptual shift from confessional categories towards ethnic ones. Consequently, he explores the tensions that developed between the existing idea of tolerance towards the non-Orthodox subjects of the empire and the increasing desire for assimilation.

Werth's later works deal with the decree on freedom of conscience of 1905 and new problems in regulation of the confessional status of subjects in the empire. He demonstrates that, in spite of the fact that freedom of conscience was proclaimed, it was still next to impossible to exercise the right to choose a confession on a personal basis. Paul Werth proves that although after the Manifesto of 1905 the authorities made certain concessions for religious groups rather than Orthodox, it still remained deeply involved in confessional matters and the Manifesto, with all the good intentions it contained, did not automatically make Russia a secular state.³² It became more and more difficult for local actors to meet the demands that the center put forward.

While paying much attention to the missionary activities, Werth stresses that the scope of these missions was limited by contradictions in state policy between religious tolerance and support for a privileged state religion, as well as a shortage of financial resources and a lack of qualified clergy. He argues that after mid-century these activities were shaped by a series

³¹ Paul W. Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001); idem, *Changing Conceptions of Difference, Assimilation, and Faith in the Volga-Kama Region, 1740-1870 in Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, eds. Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen and Anatolyi Remnev (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press: 2007): 169-196.

³² Paul Werth, "Arbitry svobodnoi sovesti: konfessional'naia identifikatsiia i smena very v Rossii (1905-1917)" [Arbiters of Free Conscience: Confessional Identification and Change of Faith in Russia (1905-1917)], in *Pravoslavie, Inoverie, Inoslavie* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012): 42-62.

of related conceptual transitions - notions of state were shifting from a traditional multiethnic composite model to that of a nation state as modern colonial empire. Werth implies that Christianization and Russification, starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, were part of assimilation policy.

Robert Geraci, in his turn, focuses on the formation of Russian identity and analyzes competing strategies to assert control over the diverse peoples of the Middle Volga region. The local actors in Geraci's presentation do not seem particularly successful since the assimilating enterprise could have had considerable downsides. Indeed, the opponents of Nikolai Il'minskii's missionary system often argued that

Inorodtsy transformed into 'Russians' might emerge even superior to the original model,' for '...the attempts to assimilate minorities ran the risk of defining Russianness in terms that even the Russians could not fulfill or of elevating *inorodtsy* above the Russian population itself.'³³

In fact, Geraci draws our attention to the fact that, while the whole system of religious education and church sermons in non-Russian languages was being constructed, ethnic Russians were not given the Bible or the liturgy in the vernacular language and had to put up with Church Slavonic, incomprehensible to most of them. Paradoxically, at the same time as the network of non-Russian schools was being developed, literacy among the Russian people themselves was extremely low and educational opportunities remained scarce. Geraci demonstrates that, although the institutions and missionaries themselves were actively involved in the 'civilizing' project, they expressed uncertainties in Russia's own national and imperial identity, thus rendering the assimilation of 'others' potentially problematic. Examining ambiguities of nationality (not nationalism) and assimilation in the late imperial period, Geraci analyzes various ethnic groups of the region and the way Russian attitudes towards them varied according to how well each of them was believed to have assimilated.

³³ Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 347.

The same line is followed by Wayne Dowler, who deals with controversies in education in the region under discussion, which he explains by the presence of Islam, which had its own missionary agenda, the school reform movement and the ethnic, religious and language diversity of the population.³⁴ Dowler analyzes various educational institutions both for Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the region. Oddly, when it comes to institutions for Tatars, Dowler at times confounds the Kazan Teacher Training Seminary (established for baptized Tatars) and the Teacher Training College for Muslim Tatars.

Analyzing the educational policy for the Muslim population of the Russian empire, Dowler draws parallels with the policy of Britain and France among their Indian and African Muslim subjects respectively.³⁵ Although discussion on Russian Orientalism is a subject of separate area of research, I cannot but mention the illuminating work of Dominic Lieven in which he compares the policies of the Russian and British empires.³⁶

Contributing to the discussion on missionary education, Mustafa Tuna and Isabelle Kreindler³⁷ agree that the system of non-Russian education, suggested by N.I. Il'minskii was not a success from the point of view of Russification since it did lead to a rise in ethnic consciousness and ethnic culture. Kreindler argues that Il'minskii's idea of using the vernacular languages is reflected in the 'indigenization policy' of 1920s. She believes this is a true manifestation of Il'minskii's victory over the ideas of Russian nationalists who were against the idea of raising the vernaculars to the level of literary languages.³⁸

³⁴ W. Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities* (London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000). For the discussion on Orientalism see also Nathaniel Knight. "Grigoriev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?", *Slavic Review* 59, no.1 (2000):74-100; idem. "On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid" *Kritika* 1, no.4 (2000):701-715; Adeeb Khalid A. "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism," *Ibidem*: 691-699; Maria Todorova. "Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid," *Ibidem*: 717-727.

³⁷ Isabelle T. Kreindler "Il'minskii's System and its Impact on Three Turkic Peoples: The Kriashens, Chuvash and Kazaks," in *Studia Slavica Finlandensia "Prerevolutionary Kazan: Missionary Education and Study of the Volga native Peoples" Tomus XXII* (Helsinki: n.p., 2005); Mustafa Ozgur Tuna "Gaspirali vs. Il'minskii: Two Identity Projects for the Muslims of the Russian Empire", *Nationalities papers* 30, no.2 (2002): 265-289.

³⁸ Isabelle Teitz Kreindler, *Educational Policies toward the Eastern Nationalities in Tsarist Russia: A*

A French researcher, Eva Toulouze, contends that Il'minskii had no intention to raise the general intellectual or cultural level of non-Russian students beyond Orthodoxy.³⁹ She believes that the school was not destined to be a means of social promotion. Indeed, as we will see in the chapters of the thesis, providing a general education was not the aim of these schools.

Jadidism and Muslim nationalism

Contemporary historiography of the Middle Volga region is clearly dominated by works devoted to the Muslim subjects of the empire. Following the study of Alexander Benningsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey on the history of the Muslim national movement in tsarist times and during the civil war, many more works on the subject have appeared.⁴⁰

Benningsen's point was that the majority of the Muslim peoples of the Russian empire and the USSR resisted first Russification and then Sovietization. He 'predicted' that the Muslim nationalities would become a destabilizing factor for the Soviet state. After the collapse of the USSR, however, it became clear that a much greater threat had come from the Baltic nationalities, than from Muslims.⁴¹

Study of Il'minskii's System (New York: Columbia University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1969), "A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy," *Slavic Review* 36, no. 1 (March 1977): 86–100.

³⁹ Eva Toulouze, "Mission et école dans la région de la Volga au XIX siècle: L'oeuvre de Nikolaj Il'minskij", *Etudes finno-ougriennes* 36 (2004):6-46.

⁴⁰A. Benningsen and Ch. Lemerrier-Quellejey, *La presse et les mouvements nationaux chez les Musulmans de Russie avant 1920* (Paris and the Hague:Mouton, 1964) ; idem, *Les mouvements nationaux chez les Musulmans de Russie : Le « Sultagallievisme » au Tatarstan* (Paris : Mouton &Co, 1960). For the other works see, for example, Ayse Azade-Rorlich, "One or More Tatar Nations?", in Edward Allworth ed. *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Ugoslavia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994):61-79;L.A. Iamaeva, *Musul'manskii liberalism v nachale 20 veka kak obschestvenno-politicheskoe dvizhenie* [Muslim Liberalism at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century as a Socially Political Movement] (Ufa:Gilem,2002); S.M. Iskhakov, *Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia i musulmane Rossiiskoi imperii* [The First Russian Revolution and Muslims of the Russian Empire](Moscow: Sotsial'no-politicheskaia Mysl', 2007); Norihiro Naganawa, "Molding the Muslim Community through the Tsarist Administration: Mahalla under the Jurisdiction of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly after 1905," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 23 (2006), 105-111.

⁴¹ See, for example, Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2002)

Kemal Karpat's presentation of Russia's Eastern provinces as likely targets for the spread of Pan-Islamism explains the particular anxiety of the empire concerning the Tatar population and religious and educational activities of its respective elites. It shows that considerable change was taking place among the Muslim population. At the same time, his study helps to explain the possible causes for the numerous apostasies of the non-Muslim population into Islam.⁴² In fact, as a number of works have shown, in contrast to Christianization, there appeared to be considerable Islamisation of the indigenous population of the region (describing the processes from the 1860s until 1917 during which numerous Udmurt, Mari, and Chuvash communities formally became Muslims).⁴³

When analyzing the reaction of the Middle Volga Muslims to the policies introduced by the center, the topics that deserve greatest attention are the appearance of reforms in the Muslim *milieu* and the subsequent emergence of *jadidism* which, born as a movement within an educational framework, later called for social changes and Muslim mobilization. Several works deal with the dichotomy of *jadid-qadimist* schools in the Middle Volga region.⁴⁴ For instance, Stephan Dudoignon sees the *qadims* as a conservative part of the Muslim *umma*, which tried to preserve the unity of the Muslim community at a time of dramatic changes.⁴⁵ A Japanese researcher Norohiro Naganawa compares the Muslim educational institutions in Kazan, Ufa and Orenburg provinces and demonstrates how the Ural-Volga Muslims were involved in the national project of universal primary education. He also examines different strategies that Muslim intellectuals and villages employed in relations with the state

⁴² K. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴³ For a discussion of this process see: P.Eruslanov, "Magometanskaia propaganda sredi cheremis ufijskoi gubernii (iz lichnykh nabliudenii)" [Muslim Propaganda among the Cheremis of Ufa Province (Personal Observations)] *Pravoslavnyi blagovestnik*, no. 8,9,16,18,19,21,22 (1895); Allen J.Frank "Varieties of Islamization in Inner Asia: The Case of Baraba Tatars,1740-1917", in *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 41, no.2-3 (Avril-septembre 2000): 245-262; D. Usmanova, *Musul'manskoe sektanstvo v Rossiiskoi imperii* [Muslim Sects in the Russian empire] (Kazan: Academia Nauk RT, 2009).

⁴⁴ Stephan A. Dudoignon, "Qu'est-ce que la 'Qadimiya'?" Elements pour une sociologie du traditionalisme musulman, en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane (au tournant des 19 et 20 siecles), in Stephan A. Dudoignon et al., eds., *L'Islam de Russie-Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l'Oural depuis le 18e siecle* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997), 207-225, Michael Kemper, "Entre Boulhara et la Moyenne-Volga: And án-Nasir al-Qursawi (1776-1812) en conflit avec les oulemas traditionalistes" in *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 37, no.1-2 (1996):41-51.

⁴⁵ Dudoignon, "Qu'est-ce que la 'Qadimiya'".

institutions in general and zemstvos in particular.⁴⁶ Criticizing the somewhat stereotypical view of conservative Muslim resistance to zemstvo schools, Naganawa gives new insights into the ‘unique cooperative relationships between the local self-government and the Muslims.’⁴⁷

Adeeb Khalid’s study discusses the reform movement among the Russian Muslims in Central Asia, examining the ideas of *jadids* about reforms in the sphere of religion, language and school.⁴⁸ As far as *qadims* are concerned Adeeb Khalid argues that, in spite of the view, largely imposed by soviet historiography, that presents them as passive and ‘fanatical’, the sources demonstrate that the conservative members of the *ulama* did react to the changes. Khalid suggests that, instead of being called “reactionaries”, they should be identified as proponents of a different kind of reform.⁴⁹ Analyzing the activities of *jadids*, Khalid's argues that their contribution to the development of nationhood among the peoples of the Central Asia was invaluable. He claims that the *jadid* pre-revolutionary discourses made a greater contribution to the development of Uzbek, Tajik and Kirghiz nationhoods than Soviet decrees.⁵⁰

Allen Frank and Michael Kemper have demonstrated that the Muslims of the Volga-Urals developed a distinct regional Islamic identity.⁵¹ At the center of the discussion in Frank’s work on the identity of the Volga Tatars is the way Tatar and Bashkir *ulama* conceived of their history. He argues that the Muslims of the Volga basin should be regarded as a single religious community originating in the tenth century when the population of city of Bulghar

⁴⁶Norohiro Naganawa, “Molding the Muslim Community through the Tsarist Administration: *Mahalla* under the Jurisdiction of Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly after 1905,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 23 (2006): 101–123, “Maktab or School?": 66.

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Adeeb Khalid, “Review of DeWeese, Frank and Dudoignon, et al.,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3,4 (2002):728-38, esp. 737.

⁵⁰ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim*, 183-87.

⁵¹ Allen F. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and ‘Bulgar’ Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998),178-187, Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789-1889. Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998).

converted to Islam.⁵² Supporting this view, Frank claims that, although from the eighteenth century onwards, the Bulgharist approach to Muslim identity was questioned, the *ulama* of the region barely differentiated Tatars and Bashkirs in ethnic or linguistic terms. A Tatar scholar Damir Iskhakov argues against this point of view, supporting the idea that the Middle Volga Muslims have an ethnic consciousness based on memories of the golden Horde, being Turkic-speaking Tatars.⁵³ These are undoubtedly the main issues relevant to an understanding of the way Tatar nationalism developed.

Ayse Ayzade-Rorlich, in her book on Volga Tatars, carefully analyzes the history of Tatars and convincingly illustrates the significance of their past for modern issues.⁵⁴ The central subject of the book is the evolution of the identity of Tatars as the first non-Christian and non-Slavic people incorporated into the Russian state. In her more recent article, Ayzade-Rorlich continues to raise the question of national identity and claims that not all the ethnic groups who are descendants of the Golden Horde, but only the Crimean and Middle Volga Tatars, can be qualified as nations,

[...]not only because they enjoyed the reality of autonomous statehood in the past, but also because the legacy of the past legitimized their claims to extraterritorial cultural autonomy, territorial autonomy, and eventually to a brief episode of political independence in the aftermath of the 1917 revolutions.⁵⁵

But while nobody seems to question the Volga Muslim peculiarity, scholars still do not agree about the outcomes of Muslim adaptation to non-Islamic rule.⁵⁶ Mustafa Tuna believes, for

⁵² Allen F. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*.

⁵³ Damir Iskhakov, *L'Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l'Oural, depuis le XVIIIe siècle*, ed. S. A. Dudoignon, D. Is'haqov & R. Mohammadshin (Paris : Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997): 73-88.

⁵⁴ Ayse Azade-Rorlich, *The Volga Tartars: A Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1986).

⁵⁵ Ayse Azade-Rorlich, "One or More Tatar Nations?", in Edward Allworth ed. *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Ugoslavia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994): 62.

⁵⁶ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); Ahmet Kanlidere, *Reform within Islam. The Tajdid and Jadid Movement among the Kazan Tatars (1809-1917). Conciliation or Conflict?* (Istanbul: Eren, 1997); Adeeb Khalid, "What Jadidism Was and What It Wasn't: The Historiographical Adventures of a Term", in *Central Eurasian Studies Review* 5, no.2 (Summer 2006):3-7; Mustafa Ozgur Tuna "Imperial Russia's Muslims: Inroads of Modernity" (PhD. Diss) Princeton University, 2009; *idem*, "Madrasa Reform as a Secularising Process: A View from the Late Russian Empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 3 (2011):540-570.

instance, that although both the Russian state and Muslim intellectuals tried to push Muslims towards modernity, the two sides failed in this matter. He ascribes this failure to the reformers' detachment from the broader Muslim population and to the fact that the Russian state suppressed their activities.⁵⁷

Contribution to Knowledge

In my thesis, I deal with the implementation of Russification policy in the Middle Volga region which was differently applied towards Muslims and non-Muslims. I will analyze the reforms in the sphere of education in order to see whether Russification can be regarded as a form of cultural assimilation process, which made communities give up their culture and language in favor of that of Russia, or acculturation process, the acceptance of the Russian language and culture along with the native ones. Whenever I quote central or local officials' ideas on Russification and translate the Russian word *assimiliatsiia* as 'assimilation', it should be understood in this cultural, not ethnic meaning.

When dealing with the non-Muslims of the region, I focus on missionary education which became the main means of churching (*votserkovlenie*) of the Orthodox non-Russians. Building my argument on the works of Dowler, Geraci and Werth, I analyze the development of the network of schools for the non-Muslim population of the region. My research, however, embraces a longer time period and demonstrates the transformations in the project of Russification through education from the 1860s until the First World War. Since one of my aims is to analyze the linguistic aspect of the national policy in the sphere of education, I take a close look at changes in the curricula of the relevant educational institutions in conformity with changes in educational policies.

While the reforms were bringing changes into the life of the population of the whole Russian empire, Muslim subjects experienced changes both from outside and within their

⁵⁷ Tuna, "Imperial Russia's".

communities. Among all the non-Russians of the Middle Volga, Muslim Tatars were the only ethnic group who put forward their own nation-building project. Growing Muslim nationalism merits a separate discussion, and this is why a considerable amount of my thesis is devoted to a discussion of the Muslim reform movement and the emergence of Jadidism. Both the madrasah and school education systems of the Middle Volga Muslim Tatars underwent significant modifications. I seek to analyse both the reforms in the Russian-Tatar institutions initiated by the authorities and inner reforms in madrasahs that at times welcomed and at others blocked the introduction of the Russian language and culture into the classroom.

Russian language schools for Tatars and Russian language classes at madrasahs, introduced by the Ministry of Public Education (*Ministerstvo narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, MNP for short) is a somewhat marginalized subject in the historiography. In my thesis, I argue that these schools, and especially Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College (*Kazanskaia tatarskaia uchitel'skaia shkola*) which formed part of the Russification project for Muslim Tatars, also contributed considerably to the rise of Tatar nationalism.

Published and Archival Sources

Among the printed sources there are numerous books and articles already published during the period of research. They present a significant empirical and theoretical background for the research of the missionary activities in the Middle Volga region. First of all, there are the works of N. Il'minskii, ideologist and the main actor in the project of missionary education for non-Russians.⁵⁸ The works of N. Bobrovnikov, I. Iznoskov and M. Mashanov, who actively participated in the implementation of educational projects among non-Russians, give us an insight into the writers' reflections on the policies regarding missionary education,

⁵⁸ N. I. Il'minskii, *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia kreshchenotatarskaia shkola: materialy dlia istorii khristianskogo prosveshcheniia kreshchenykh tatar* [Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars: Materials for the History of Christian Education of Baptized Tatars] (Kazan: n.p., 1887); idem, *O perevode pravoslavnykh khristianskikh knig na inorodcheskie iazyki* [On Translation of Orthodox Christian Books into the Inorodtsy Languages] (Kazan: n.p., 1875); idem, *O sisteme prosveshcheniia inorodtsev i o Kazanskoi tsentral'noi kreshchenotatarskoi shkole* [On the System of Inorodtsy Education and on Kazan Central Kriashen School] (Kazan: n.p., 1913).

ethnoconfessional processes in the region, concerns about apostasies into Islam and paganism.⁵⁹

A. Mozharovskii's book summarizing the history of Orthodox missionary activities in the Middle Volga region before the period of Great reforms is an excellent, if not quite objective description of the situation.⁶⁰ Works by A. Blagoveschenskii and P. Znamenskii reflect the history of parish schools in the Kazan diocese, where the authors analyzed the church institutions and suggested possible ways to improve their work.⁶¹ A number of works devoted to missionary activities among the non-Russian population of the region were written by the 'people-in', priests, archpriests and bishops. It is also not surprising that in the 1870s, before the Russian-Turkish war, more books appeared voicing the clergy's concern about the increasing number of conversions and 'returns' to Islam and demands for strengthening the laws against apostasy from Orthodoxy.⁶²

An important focus of ethnographical research is the study of the culture of the peoples of the Middle Volga region in the nineteenth century.⁶³ The daily life of non-Russians reflecting their religious traditions, culture and customs, is given its due account. Ethnographical research done by S. Chicherina is an important contribution to the post- 1905 discussion on

⁵⁹ N. A. Bobrovnikov, *Inorodcheskoe naselenie Kazanskoï gubernii* [*Inorodtsy* Population of the Kazan Province] (Kazan: n.p., 1899); I.A. Iznoskov, *Dvadsatipiatiletie bratstva sv. Gurii* [The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of St. Gurii Brotherhood] (Kazan: n.p., 1892); idem, *Missionerskaia deiatel'nost' sel'skogo dukhovenstva Kazanskoï eparkhii* [Missionary Activity of the Village Clergy of the Kazan Diocese] (Kazan: n.p., 1892); M.A. Mashanov, *Religiozno-nravstvennoe sostoianie kreshchenykh tatar Kazanskoï gubernii Mamadyshskogo uezda* [Religious-Moral State of Kriashen in the Mamadysh District of Kazan Province] (Kazan: n.p., 1875).

⁶⁰ A.F. Mozharovskii, *Izlozhenie khoda missionerskogo dela po prosveshcheniiu kazanskikh inorodtsev s 1551 po 1867* [Report on the Process of Missionary Activities on Enlightenment of Kazan *Inorodtsy* from 1551 to 1867] (Moscow: n.p., 1880).

⁶¹ A. Blagoveschenskii, *Istoriia Kazanskoï dukhovnoi seminarii s vosemiu nizshimi uchilishchami* [History of Kazan Ecclesiastic Seminary with Eight Low-level Vocational Schools] (Kazan: n.p., 1881); P.V. Znamenskii, *Istoriia Kazanskoï dukhovnoi akademii* [History of Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy] (Kazan: n.p., 1892).

⁶² See: N. Il'in, *Proiskhozhdenie i kharakter Islama* [Emergence and the Character of Islam] (Kazan: n.p., 1876); E.K. Voronets, *Otpadenie inorodtsev-khristian v mukhammedanstvo* [Apostasy of Christian *Inorodtsy* into Mohammedanism] (Orel: n.p., 1876).

⁶³ See: P.I. Mel'nikov, *Ocherki mordvy* [Studies of Mordva] (Moscow: n.p., 1867); G.E. Vereshchagin, *Votiaki Sarapul'skogo uezda* [Votiaks of the Sarapul District] (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1889); V. Rogozin, *Cheremisy. Istorikoetnograficheskii ocherk* [The Cheremis. Historic and Ethnographical Studies] (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1881); V.A. Sboev, *Chuvashi v bytovom, istoricheskom i religioznom otnoshenii. Ikh proiskhozhdenie, iazyk, obriady, poveriia, predaniia* [Chuvash in Domestic, Historic and Religious Contexts. Their Origin, Language, Customs, Popular Beliefs and Legends] (Moscow: n.p., 1865).

the efficiency of the system of Il'minskii.⁶⁴ In order to understand the complex inter-confessional relations and missionary work in this period I have consulted the works of S. Bagin, Ia. Koblov and other missionaries.⁶⁵

The most important of the press sources of the period is “*Tserkovnye vedomosti*” (1888-1908), the official weekly of the Holy Synod, subscription to which was obligatory for every parish church. The issues of the journal contain resolutions of the Holy Synod, brochures with the texts of sermons, and announcements.

Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Obrazovaniia (The Journal of the Ministry of Popular Education) (1834-1917) was an official journal publishing articles on the enlightenment in Russia. The contents of the journal are composed of circulars, Ministry regulations and reports. I have also found the journal “*Missioner*” (Missionary) useful, which was a journal of the Orthodox missionary society, a part of which was devoted to an ‘anti-Muslim mission’. Another significant source is “*Pravoslavnyi sobesednik*” (1855-1917), a journal of Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy. Each issue of the journal contained materials on biblical and church history and various theological subjects. The peculiarity of the journal is that it contains numerous publications devoted to Islam and Buddhism. Finally, I have used the issues of the newspaper “*Kazanskii telegraf*” (1893-1917), containing domestic and foreign political and economic news, articles from the “Muslim world” and articles about the situation in the region.

⁶⁴ S.V. Chicherina, *U privolzhskikh inorodtsev. Putevye zametki* [The Volga Inorodtsy. Travel Notes] (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1905); idem, *O privolzhskikh inorodtsakh i sovremennom znachenii sistemy N.I. Il'minskogo* [About the Volga Inorodtsy and the Contemporary Meaning of the Il'minskii's System] (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1906).

⁶⁵ S. Bagin, *Ob otpadenii v magometanstvo kreshchenykh inorodtsev Kazanskoi eparkhii i o prichinakh etogo pechal'nogo iavleniia* [On Apostasy into Islam among the Baptized Inorodtsy of the Kazan Diocese and on the Reasons of this Sad Event] (Kazan: Tsentral'naia tipografiia, 1910); S.V. Eshevskii, *Missionerstvo v Rossii* [Missionary Work in Russia] (Moscow: n.p., 1900); V.N. Eslivanov, *Trudnosti i nuzhdy Kazanskoi inorodcheskoi missii* [Difficulties and Needs of the Mission among the Inorodtsy of Kazan] (Kazan: Tsentral'naia tipografiia, 1915); Ia.D. Koblov, *Konfessional'nye shkoly kazanskikh tatar* [Confessional Schools of Kazan Tatars] (Kazan: n.p., 1916).

In my research I have also used sources located in the Russian archives in the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan. The funds of the State Archives of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, or GARF, for short) in Moscow contain police reports, detailing cases of massive apostasies, as well as reports on the state of the Orthodox Church in the empire. The Special Department (*Osobyi otdel*) fund contains files on the Muslim movement including materials about various unions and organizations. A rich collection of documents is stored in Russian State Historical Archives (*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii arkhiv*, RGIA) in St. Petersburg. The funds contain the private files of some of the main actors of my research, such as Il'minskii, Pobedonostsev and Tolstoi, including letters and instructions. The files of the Holy Synod (funds 796 and 797, covering the years 1704-1917) contain letters of the Ober-Procurator in the years 1868-1914, reports about dioceses and parishes and parish schools. The files of Fund 802 of the School Committee (*Uchebnyi komitet*) of the Holy Synod have been quite valuable, for they contain school programs and school reports (for the years 1872-1917). Finally, the files of Fund 821, that of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo vnytrennikh del*, MVD) cover confessional matters concerning non-Orthodox subjects of the Russian empire in the years 1841-1917.

Sources providing a clearer picture of the situation on the ground are kept in the National Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan (*Natsional'nyi arkhiv Respubliki Tatarstan*, NART) in Kazan. Among the sources I studied in these archives are the files of the fund of the Kazan Provincial Administration (*Kazanskoe gubernskoe pravlenie*, years 1798-1917) enclosing documents on appointing mullahs, building mosques, apostasies and conversions to Orthodoxy, and conversions to other religions. The files of Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy (Fund Ten, *Kazanskaia Dukhovnaia akademiia*, 1842-1920) are filled with reports on missionary activities of the academy, teaching programs, reports on schools in the region, documents on teaching Tatar, Arabic, Mongolian and other languages.

Many documents concerning educational matters among the non-Russians of the region are contained in Fund 92 of the Curator of Kazan Educational District (1802-1918). Starting from 1888, the district covered educational institutions of Astrakhan, Kazan, Viatka,

Simbirsk, Samara and Saratov provinces. The files of the fund include the circulars of the curator, minutes of school committees and yearly reports. The documents concerning the level of education among the Tatar and the Bashkir population as well as letters about the obligatory introduction of the Russian language in the madrasah are especially useful for discussion on the issue of Russification.

The funds of Kazan Teacher Training Seminary (*Kazanskaia uchitel'skaia seminariia*, 1872-1919) and Kazan School for Baptized Tatars (*Kazanskaia Tsentral'naia Kreshchenotatarskaia shkola*, 1870-1918) as well as the personal file of N.I. Il'minskii (1855-1891) contain Il'minskii's correspondence with missionaries and teachers of the Middle Volga region concerning the opening and functioning of missionary schools. Here we can also find documents about cases of conversion of non-Russians to Orthodoxy and letters from missionaries recounting the difficulties they were experiencing when working with non-Russians. Finally, the files of Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College (*Kazanskaia tatarskaia uchitel'skaia shkola*, 1893-1918, Fund 142) allow us to understand how this college, the institution organized exclusively for Muslims, trained teachers for Russian-Tatar schools of the region as well as teachers of Russian for madrasahs and mektebs. Much like for other educational institutions, the files contain yearly reports, teaching timetables and correspondence on school matters. The documents concerning teachers and graduates of the college are among the most useful files for the analysis of the role of the college in the lives of the Middle Volga Muslims.

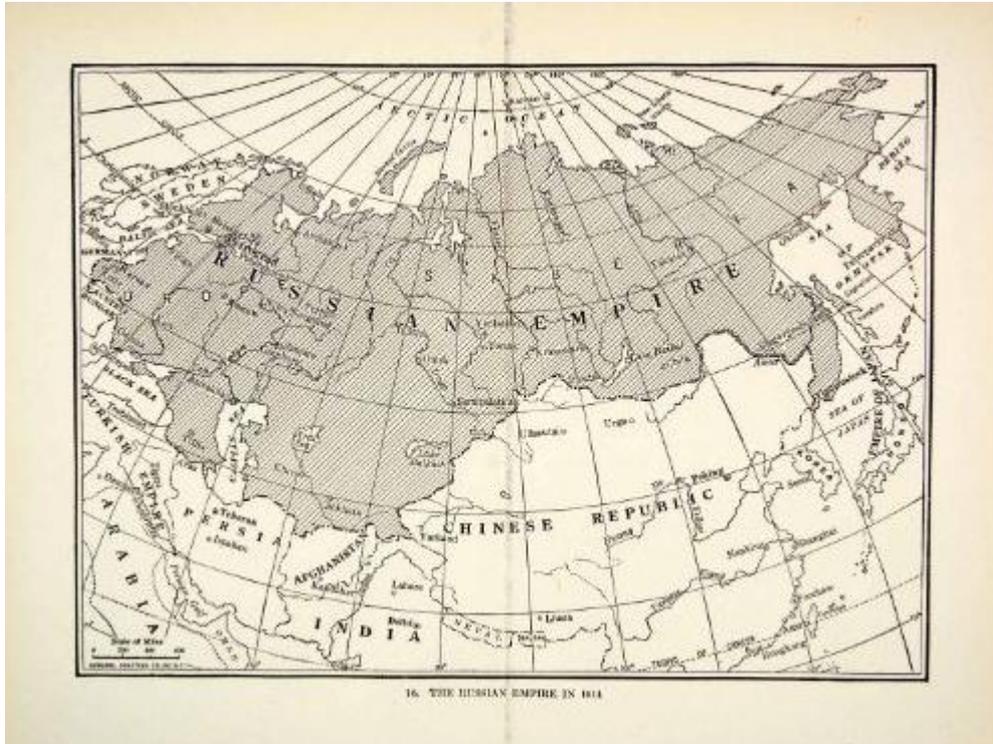
The files of the State Archives of the Ul'ianov Oblast' (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Ul'ianovskoi oblasti, GAUO*), include information on non-Russian schools and parishes in Simbirsk province. I have consulted the files of Fund 134 of the Simbirsk Ecclesiastical Consistory (*Simbirskaia dukhovnaia konsistoriia*, 1780 - 1917) containing reports about missionary work and missionary education in the province. The civil and legal court files (Fund 108, *Prokuror okruzhnogo suda*, 1870-1918 and Fund 117, *Simbirskaia palata grazhdanskogo i ugolovnogo suda*, 1854-1870) contain the files on apostasy cases.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter I give an overview of the Middle Volga region and its inhabitants. In this chapter I also discuss the activities of the Orthodox missionaries in this region before the 1860s. In Chapter 2, I deal with the implementation of Il'minskii's system vis-à-vis the non-Muslim people of the region. Radlov's project of Muslim education, as well as reforms inside the Muslim *madrasah* system, are the subjects of Chapter 3. Chapter 4 is devoted to the changes in non-Muslim non-Russian education in the region after 1905. Finally, Chapter 5 deals with the issues of continuing reforms in Muslim education in the region.

CHAPTER ONE. MIDDLE VOLGA NON-RUSSIANS AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA BEFORE 1860S.

Figure 1: The Russian Empire in the Nineteenth Century



1.1. The Region and Its Population

In various statistical sources of the nineteenth - early twentieth centuries we come across different territorial divisions of the region which is called the Middle Volga (*Srednee Povolzh'e*). For example, one of the reference-books of the mid-nineteenth century stated that the region was composed of Kazan, Viatka, Simbirsk, and Ufa provinces, which administratively submitted to the jurisdiction of the Kazan School District, the Diocese of Kazan, and the Orenburh Muftiate (for Muslims).⁶⁶ At the same time, “Historical Statistical Review of the Russian industry” (*Istoriko-statisticheskoe obozrenie promyshlennosti Rossii*) in 1883 defined the borders of region by including in it only Kazan, Penza and Simbirsk

⁶⁶ *Voенно-statisticheskoe obozrenie Rossiiskoi imperii. Kazanskaia guberniia* [Military and Statistical Overview of the Russian Empire. Kazan Province](Saint Petersburg:Tipografiiia Departamenta General'nogo Shtaba , 1850), 3.

provinces.⁶⁷ The Central Statistical Committee (*Tsentral'nyi statisticheskii komitet*) gave still different data with Simbirsk, Kazan, Penza and Nizhnii Novgorod provinces in the territory of the region.⁶⁸

The Volga region is geographically divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower Volga regions. However, there is still no general agreement on the definition of the borders of these three. V.P. Semenov, for example, defined the Middle and Lower Volga as the whole of the territories of Kazan, Simbirsk, Samara, Saratov, and Astrakhan provinces.⁶⁹ He limited the borders of the Middle Volga as from the mouth of the Vetluga river in the Koz'modemiansk district of the Kazan province to the Samara river (close to the city of Samara).

F. Gelvald, in his multivolume work "*Zemlia i ee narody*", in the volume devoted to Russia, included Simbirsk, Saratov, Penza, Kazan and Nizhnii Novgorod provinces in the Middle Volga region.⁷⁰ In still another multivolume work "*Zhivopisnaia Rossiia*", the Middle Volga region is represented as including the Kazan, Simbirsk, Saratov and Penza provinces.⁷¹

⁶⁷ In P.S. Kabytov, "K voprosu ob opredelenii granits Povolzhskogo regiona." [To the Problem of Definition of the Boundaries of the Volga Region], in *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Srednem Povolzhie i Priuralie* (Kuibyshev: Kuibyshevskii Gosudarstvennyi Pedagogicheskii Institut, 1977), 98.

⁶⁸ In P. I. Savel'ev, *Puti agrarnogo kapitalizma v Rossii. 19 vek (po materialam Povolzh'ia)* [The Ways of Agrarian Capitalism in Russia. Nineteenth Century. Based on the Volga Region Materials.] (Samara; Samarskii Universitet, 1994), 7.

⁶⁹ *Rossia. Polnoe geograficheskoe opisanie nashego Otechestva. Nastol'naia i dorozhnaia kniga dlia russkikh liudei 6* [Russia. The Complete Geographical Description of our Fatherland. Table and Travel Book for the Russian People], ed. V.P. Semenov (Saint Peersburg: n.p, 1901), 1.

⁷⁰ F. Genval'd, *Zemlia i ee narody 3* [The Earth and its Peoples] (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia P.P. Soikina, 1897), 653.

⁷¹ *Zhivopisnaia Rossiia. Otechestvo nashe v ego zemel'nom, istoricheskom, plemennom, ekonomicheskom i bytovom znachenii 8* [Picturesque Russia. Our Fatherland in its Geographical, Historical, Ethnic, Economic and Everyday Value], ed. V.P. Semenov. (Saint Petersburg: n.p, 1901), 263.

Figure 2: Provinces of the European Part of the Russian Empire, ca. 1850. (Roman figure VI stands for the Middle Volga region)⁷²



⁷² I have borrowed this map from David Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762-1907* (Harlow, England: Longman, Pearson Publishing, 2001), xviii.

Figure 3: Volga Region



My research focuses on those provinces of the Middle Volga region that were more densely populated by non-Russian peoples, that is Kazan and Simbirsk provinces. Andreas Kappeler in his study of the Middle Volga non-Russians called them ‘Russia’s first nationalities’⁷³ The non-Russian population of the region consisted of various ethnic groups – Tatars and Chuvash (Turkic language group), Mari, Udmurt and Mordva (Finno-Ugric language group). In addition, and even more important for the nineteenth century discourse, the region was a virtual crossroads of religions and beliefs, for Orthodox, Muslims, Old Believers, pagans, and in smaller numbers Jews, Catholics and Lutherans also lived there. As we can see from the table below, Kazan province in the mid-nineteenth century was an illustrative example of ethnoconfessional diversity among non-Russians.

⁷³ Andreas Kappeler, *Russlands erste Nationalitäten: Das Zarenreich und die Völker der Mittleren Wolga vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert* (Köln: Böhlau, 1982).

Table 1: Non-Russian Population of the Middle Volga Region in 1870 (the number of non-Russian villages for each corresponding ethnic group is given in brackets)⁷⁴

	Mordva	Baptized Tatars	Muslim Tatars	Baptized Votiak	Pagan Votiak	Baptized Mari	Pagan Mari	Baptized Chuvash	Pagan Chuvash	Muslim Chuvash
Kazan province	8547 (16)	30185 (172)	385088, including 871 apostates from baptized Tatars (664)	5038 (26)	3224 (16)	177062 (461)	2847 (25)	199414 (458)	3342 (28)	97 (1)
Simbirsk province	148406 (157)	1617 (20)	92560 (93)	-	-	-	-	96332 (303)	129 (2)	-

In 1868, the population of the Kazan province was 1.7 million people, 42 per cent of whom were Russian-speaking, while over 50 per cent spoke Turkic languages (Chuvash and Tatar) and about eight per cent belonged to the Finno-Ugric group (Mordva, Mari, Votiak). As for the confessional composition, there were 72 per cent Orthodox, 27 per cent Muslims and less than one per cent pagans.⁷⁵ As analysed by Geraci, the figures had changed little by the end of the nineteenth century, with 39 per cent Russians, 32 per cent Tatar, 22 per cent Chuvash and five per cent Cheremis.⁷⁶ In religious terms, 68 per cent the population was Orthodox, 31 per cent Muslim and less than one per cent pagan.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *Spiski inorodcheskikh selenii Kazanskogo uchebnogo okruga* [The Lists of Non-Russian Villages in the Kazan Educational District] (Saint Petersburg; Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akamedii Nauk, 1870), 4, 94,106,174,222.

⁷⁵ A.F. Rittikh, *Materialy dlia etnografii Rossii: Kazanskaia guberniia* [Materials for the Ethnography of Russia: Kazan Province] (Kazan; Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1870), 88.

⁷⁶ Geraci, *Window on the East*, 32.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

In Simbirsk province, in 1860 92.5 per cent were Orthodox, 7.3 per cent Muslims and 0.2 per cent members of other confessional groups.⁷⁸ Forty years later, according to the data of the 1897 census, 68 per cent were Russians, 12.4 per cent Mordva, 10.5 per cent Chuvash and 8.8 per cent Tatars. In 1898, there were 1407317 Orthodox, 144440 Muslims, 31384 Old Believers and 441 pagans.⁷⁹

At the end of the nineteenth – beginning of the twentieth century Kazan was not only the administrative centre of the region, it was also the centre of an educational district that had six provinces under its jurisdiction: Astrakhan, Kazan, Samara, Saratov, Simbirsk, Viatka.⁸⁰ Moreover, it was the centre of Kazan diocese which was considered to be one of the largest and most powerful in the infrastructure of the Russian Orthodox Church. The process of conversion of animists and Muslims into Orthodoxy had been underway since Kazan was taken under Russian control and many animists and some Muslims converted, but baptism barely changed their convictions and religious worldview.⁸¹ Many non-Russians were either converted by force, and therefore refused to accept what they perceived as an alien faith, or got baptized for purely pragmatic reasons - to escape conscription, to get tax concessions or money. Although according to imperial legislation, a person once baptized or converted from another religion to Orthodoxy, could not change his confessional status, apostasies were common, reaching their peak in 1866, as we will see later in this chapter.

It should be noted that the authorities often referred to the non-Russian population collectively, without making ethnic distinctions, calling them *inorodtsy*. The notion *inorodtsy* (of different origin) gradually replaced the previously used *inovertsy* (of different faith) in the first part of the nineteenth century. This explanation, however, cannot be absolute, for the term was often used as a synonym for ‘non-Russians’, regardless of their religious affiliation.

⁷⁸ *Raspredelenie naseleniia imperii po glavnym veroispovedaniiam*[Division of the Population of the Empire According to the Main Confessions] (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1901), 5-9.

⁷⁹ “*Simbirskaia guberniia*”, in N.A. Troinitskii, *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi imperii 1897g. Raspredelenie naseleniia po rodnomu iazyku i uezdnam 50 gubernii Evropeiskoi Rossii* 39 (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia Pol'za, 1904).

⁸⁰ *Encyclopedia* by Brockhaus and Efron, (Saint Petersburg, 1890-1907), s.v. “Uchebnye okruga.”

⁸¹ D.M. Makarov, *Samoderzhavie i khristianizatsiia narodov Srednego Povolzh'ia vo vtoroi polovine 16-18 vekakh* [Autocracy and Christianization of the Peoples of the Middle Volga in the Second Half of the Sixteenth - Eighteenth Centuries](Cheboksary: Chuvashskii universitet, 2000), 176-212.

In Slocum's definition, this notion originally defined the empire's most different 'others' but later it came to be used in order to differentiate Eastern Slavs from all other inhabitants of the empire.⁸² From the 1860s, the term seems to have been used to signify both ethnic groups that were different from Russians but amenable to assimilation, and ethnic groups that were considered to be very different from Russians and were to be administered in a particularistic fashion.⁸³ Here it is important to note Kappeler's observation that it was not the difference of religion, but the difference of way of life and race that became the criteria of segregation in the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ The appearance of the term *inorodtsy*, which ousted *inovertsy*, is clear proof of this.

Vladimir Bobrovnikov, discussing the question of the appearance and usage of the notion *inorodtsy*, understands '*inorodtsy*' as 'not yet Russians, and already not foreigners, but Russian subjects, although having a different faith, coming from a different tribe and considered quite 'barbaric', whom the empire itself was going to civilize and raise in the spirit of civic-mindedness.'⁸⁵ Bobrovnikov convincingly describes how the term *inorodtsy* spread by claiming that this term was used first and foremost regarding the population of the eastern borderlands and came to embrace more and more ethnic groups as the border was moved further east. As a consequence, ex-borderlands became absorbed into the 'Russian' lands and perceived as metropolitan, although the 'non-Russianness' of the inhabitants of these lands was never effaced. During the period of Great Reforms the notion '*inorodets*' replaced that of native, or indigenous person, and came to define the territorial belonging of a non-Russian and to symbolize the humane attitude of the imperial centre to its peripheral ethnic groups in its aspiration for *sliianie*, rapprochement as opposed to the eradication of colonial populations by respective Western metropolies.⁸⁶ Bobrovnikov views '*inorodtsy*' as an artificial construction which was created in the process of interaction between the imperial

⁸² John W. Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of Aliens in Imperial Russia," *Russian Review* 57, 2 (1998):176.

⁸³ Paul W. Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 139.

⁸⁴ Andreas Kappeler, "Iuzhnyi i vostochnyi frontir Rossii v 16-18 vekakh" [Southern and Eastern Frontier in Russia in the Sixteenth – Eighteenth Centuries], *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2003) : 61.

⁸⁵ Vladimir Bobrovnikov, "Chto vyshlo iz proektov sozdaniia v Rossii 'inorodtsev'? (Otvét Johnu Slocumu iz musulmanskikh okrain imperii)" [What Came out of the Project of Creation of Russian *Inorodtsy* ? (A Reply to John Slocum from Muslim Borderlands)], *Forthcoming*: 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 4-5.

centre and local communities in the borderlands from the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁸⁷

The process of historical migration increased contacts among Turkic, Finno-Ugric and Russian peoples.⁸⁸ By the middle of the nineteenth century, Russians dominated the indigenous population in all the provinces of the Middle Volga. Boris Mironov, analysing agricultural migrations in the Russian empire, concludes that the region was one of the most important targets of Russian migrants. In fact, in the period from 1782 to 1858, 968,000 thousand people moved to the Volga and Ural regions, followed by 358 thousand from 1870 to 1896 and 80 thousand migrants from 1897 to 1915.⁸⁹ Kazan was the only non-Russian city of the region at the time of its conquest by Ivan IV. All the other cities and towns developed as Russian cities where the Russian, and mostly Orthodox, population dominated.

Votiak, Cheremis (Mari), and Mordva people were collectively called ‘the Finnish tribe’ [*Finskoe plemia*] and were considered to be the most numerous people in the empire after Russians.⁹⁰ While they represented the majority of the population in the Finland, Estonia (*Estliandia*) and Lithuanian provinces, in all the others, they were “more or less mixed with the Russian population.” In a two-volume collection “Peoples of Russia” (*Narody Rossii*) only the Mordva were considered to lead a way of life similar to that of the Russian peasants. The translation of the ethnic name ‘Cheremis’ (meaning simply ‘a man’ in Mari) was somehow taken from Tatar, where the meaning of the word is ‘improper’. If highland Mari, living on the right bank of the Volga were described as more or less russified like the Mordva, their lowland counterparts ‘had nothing to do either with Russians or highland Mari.’⁹¹ This was determined by the geography of their settlement for they mostly lived in the forests with no Russians around. The Votiak received the least flattering comments for, it was said, their intellectual development was much lower than that of the Cheremis or Chuvash: ‘Their monotonous life, lack of physical development, their shyness, united with

⁸⁷ Bobrovnikov, *Chto vyshlo*, 15.

⁸⁸ E.V. Vladykin, *Religiozno-mifologicheskaiia kartina mira udmurtov* [Religious-Mythological Picture of Udmurt’s Worldview] (Izhevsk: n.p., 1994), 60.

⁸⁹ B.N. Mironov, *Sotsial’naia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (18-nachalo 20 veka): Genezis lichnosti, demokraticeskoi semii, grazhdanskogo obschestva i pravovogo gosudarstva* [Social History of Imperial Russia (Eighteenth - Beginning of the Twentieth Century): Genesis of Personality, Democratic Family, Civil Society and Legal State] (St. Petersburg: Dm.Bulanin, 1999), 20-25.

⁹⁰ *Narody Rossii 2* [Peoples of Russia] (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia Pol’za, 1878).

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 161.

stubbornness and slyness demonstrate the lowest level of development which even baptism could not change.⁹² Still, it was noted, the Votiak were at least capable of borrowing from other people, e.g. living together with the Cheremis they borrowed their way of building houses among other smaller things. The miserable state of their development was attributed to their being neglected and left on their own for centuries. It was admitted that the Tatars had the highest literacy level among the peoples of the Middle Volga, and the spread of Islam came together with the spread of literacy, for ‘the peak of a Tatar’s intellectual development is the complete study of the Qur’an in Arabic, higher than that there is, and can be nothing, due to their devotion to Islam.’⁹³

In the present chapter we will see to what extent the activities of the Russian lay and church authorities changed the life of the Middle Volga non-Russians before the 1860s. I will give an overview of the missionary activities in the Middle Volga region, with a particular emphasis on the schooling of non-Russians. I will explain the reasons for the ineffectiveness of missionary work and indicate the ways that were chosen in order to deal with this situation. As we will see, missionary activities served the ends of integration of the non-Russian population of the region into the Orthodox community at times by means of exhortation and rewards, at others by means of force and coercion.

⁹² Ibid, 141.

⁹³ *Narody Rossii 3-4*[Peoples of Russia] (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia Pol’za, 1878), 252.

1.2. The Russians Go In

Missionary work in the region began as soon as Kazan became part of the Russian empire. The conquest of the territory in 1552 was followed by mass baptism of the indigenous population and the first attempts to establish control over their religiosity. An analysis of missionary activities among non-Russians before the 1860s demonstrates a rather unsuccessful attempt to create a stable structure for relevant institutions. The aims and methods of activity remained quite unstable and depended on the ambitions and plans of Kazan archbishops, who changed quite often.

Little is known about the schooling of priests in the Middle Volga region until the reforms of Peter I. Schools existed, but had no official character; they were church schools, open to the children of all ranks and estates. The teaching program was predetermined by the Moscow Council of 1667 and consisted of reading the Psalter, church singing and writing.⁹⁴ Later, according to the decree of Peter I about the creation of basic Slavo-Latin schools, mathematics and geometry were inserted into the curriculum of schools for priests, an uncompromising introduction, since ‘and those who are against it shall not become priests or deacons and shall not be married.’⁹⁵

The remaining Muslims of the region once again became subject to baptism. Selim Deringil, comparing the processes of conversion in the Russian and Ottoman Empire, argues that it was only from the time of Peter I that conversion of non-Christians, especially Muslims, became a state policy gradually acquiring ‘something of a crusading character’ as it expanded into Muslim areas.⁹⁶ In fact, as early as 1713, Peter I gave the Muslim nobility of the region six months to convert to Orthodoxy or lose their titles. Some of them converted but most preferred the other option.⁹⁷ The next step was to push the peasants to convert.

⁹⁴ A. Mozharovskii, *Istoriia Kazanskoi*, 13.

⁹⁵ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov* 4, no. 2308 [Full Collection of Laws].

⁹⁶ Selim Deringil, “There Is No Compulsion in Religion”: On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no.3 (July 2000): 552.

⁹⁷ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 31.

In the 1720s, the status of the Middle Volga non-Russians was transformed from tribute-payers (*iasachnye liudi*) to that of state peasants, making them equal to the Russian peasants. At this point the desire to baptize non-Russians began to serve not only spiritual but also bureaucratic ends, so as to tighten their subordination to the authorities not only by means of status but also by means of parish-belonging, which involved keeping their births, deaths and marriages in parish registers. Peter I insisted that it was necessary to advance the baptism of the Cheremis (collective name for both Mari and Chuvash) and offered temporary tax relief and exemptions from conscription to the newly-baptized.⁹⁸ However, these taxes were still imposed on the remaining Muslim and pagan communities and in the end the financial burden made some of them convert.

Missionary education remained an important pillar in the promotion of Orthodoxy in indigenous communities. In 1734 Bishop Illarion decided to provide a steadier basis for the Christian education of the *inorodtsy*

[...]so that parents and children, and all the mass of non-Russian population, through the school should become acquainted on the one hand, with truly Christian law, and on the other with general human notions and by these means become more and more inclined to Russification (*obrusenie*).⁹⁹

Thus, he sent a proposal to the Holy Synod, concerning the necessity of establishing four non-Russian schools for baptized and unbaptized children.¹⁰⁰ According to his project, the non-baptized children were to be taught to read the primer and to write in Russian. Besides these subjects the program for the baptized was supposed to include the Book of Hours, the psalms, and the catechism. On 26 February 1735, the Holy Synod granted the permission for establishment of such schools with 30 students in each for children aged between seven and 15 years old. However, the number of both students and teachers at schools remained low and up to the nineteenth century the schooling system enjoyed little success.

⁹⁸ P.V. Denisov, *Religioznye verovaniia Chuvash: istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki* [Religious Beliefs of the Chuvash: Historical and Ethnographic Essays](Cheboksary: Chuvashskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1959), 184-85.

⁹⁹ M. Vasilev, *Rasprostranenie khristianstva v Kazanskom krae (Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk)* [Spread of Christianity in Kazan Territory. A Short Historical Overview] (Kazan; Tipografiia Kazanskogo Universiteta, 2004), 10.

¹⁰⁰ Mozharovskii, *Istoriia Kazanskoi*, 48.

Changes in missionary work towards more coercive methods came with the establishment of a Special Committee for the Newly Baptized in Sviazhsk for the dioceses of Kazan and Nizhnii Novgorod in 1731, which was replaced in 1740 by the Bureau for the Newly Baptized at Bogoroditskii monastery in Sviazhsk. The Bureau was supposed to supervise the religious and everyday life of the baptized *inorodtsy*, protecting them from both the abuse of power by Russian officials and from their former religious community. Both the head of the Bureau Dmitrii Sechenov and especially Archbishop Luca (Kanashevich) of Kazan were infamous for making non-Russians get baptized often by use of direct force, cruelly separating families (taking children from non-baptized parents and baptizing them, proclaiming non-Christian marriages illegal and thus separating husbands and wives). This, however, was not the policy of the Synod but the ‘interpretation’ of the local authorities. In this respect I support Werth’s idea that in spite of the fact that forced conversions clearly took place in the region, the policy conducted by the Synod was mainly one of monetary awards and more so of restrictions, which made life of non-Russians still more difficult and pushed them into baptism, as we will see in the following paragraphs.¹⁰¹

The measure introduced officially, in the Synodal decree of 1740, was the policy of resettlement, according to which the newly-baptized had to be separated from their Muslim communities in order to prevent apostasy. However, the policy was not successful; there were cases where newly-baptized former Muslims, coming to the villages of Old-baptized Tatars, inclined the latter to turn back to Islam. Such heterogeneous communities in fact became hotbeds of apostasy later in the nineteenth century.

One more measure, which did not force the non-Orthodox to get baptized directly, but impeded them from exercising their religious duties, was destruction of mosques and, later, sacred groves and pagan cemeteries. This clearly coercive practice began in 1742, when fires in Kazan practically destroyed the entire city as well as the Tatar quarter. The local authorities quickly accused the Tatars of arson and Kanashevich launched a campaign of destruction of Muslim places of worship. It took only two years to destroy 418 out of 536 mosques in Kazan (on the pretext that mosques located near Orthodox churches or near the

¹⁰¹ Paul W. Werth, “Coercion and Conversion: Violence and the Mass Baptism of the Volga Peoples, 1740-55”, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 3 (Summer 2003):543-569.

settlements of the newly-baptized were to be destroyed).¹⁰² At precisely the same time some sacred groves of the Mari were cut or burnt down causing indignation and resentment among the peasants. This did not, and could not, contribute to strengthening non-Russians in the Orthodox faith and making them trust priests and ministers.

Statistically, however, it seemed that ends justified means, or at least for the time being. Sechenov proudly reported, already in 1741, that

[...]in Kazan and Nizhnii Novgorod provinces the heterodox mix of various peoples, in whole villages and districts, by hundreds, both males and females, all down to the last person have been enlightened by holy baptism.¹⁰³

We should bear in mind, however, that many people got baptized to obtain money, clothes, tax concessions or exemption from conscription or to avoid punishment for minor crimes. Financial incentives worked much better than exhortations and remained a strong motivation for baptism. Since at the very beginning the monetary awards were paid in cash, whole families came to be baptized, sometimes even more than once, creating a number of ‘dead souls’ in the registers and making the real number of the people baptized less credible. The other point is that, due to shortage of money and the considerable number of non-Russians coming for baptism, the Bureau soon got into debt. In spite of the fact that the Bureau received money from the Synod, it was insufficient to reward all the baptized, who in the end were lucky if they received a third, or a half at most, of the sum they were supposed to get. Data provided by Nikolskii suggested that only six per cent of the due sum was paid out to the newly-baptized.¹⁰⁴ In spite of the demands of the Synod to cut costs on rewards and try to convert non-Russians by means of admonitions and concessions alone, it was practically impossible and missionaries and priests coming to non-Russian villages without money risked being beaten by angry villagers.

¹⁰² ODD, vol. 22, 1742, no. 1168, col.813 quoted in Werth, “Coercion and Conversion”: 557.

¹⁰³ Quoted in A.F. Mozharovskii, *Izlozhenie khoda missionerskogo dela po prosveshcheniiu kazanskikh inorodtsev s 1552 po 1867 goda* (Moscow: Imperatorskoe obschestvo istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh, 1880), 67. I have used the translation of Paul Werth in Werth, “Coercion and Conversion”: 551.

¹⁰⁴ Nikol'skii, *Khristianstvo sredi chuvash srednego Povolzh'ia v XVII-XVIII vekakh: Istoricheskii ocherk* [Christianization among the Chuvash of the Middle Volga Region: Historical Notes] (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo universiteta, 1912), 95.

In the period this Bureau functioned the number of non-Russians accepting Orthodoxy was quite high: in the years 1741-1755 335789 people were baptized, among them 178130 Chuvash, 58729 Mari, 40668 Mordva, 36505 Votyak, and 10732 Tatar.¹⁰⁵ As one can see, Tatars remained the ethnic group most reluctant to accept the baptism and most sensitive to outside pressure, as was evident in the uprising of Batyrsha (1755), which was a reaction to coercive measures used by the Kazan archbishop Luca Kanashevich. The Batyrsha uprising had religious grounds and was directed precisely against forced Christianization. It did not last long, but under its pressure the authorities made several concessions to Muslim Tatars – some taxes were abolished, Muslim Tatars were no longer subject to resettlement, the conscription rules were softened and Luka Kanashevich was transferred to another position.

In 1764, under the reign of Catherine II, the Bureau was closed and transferred to civil authorities. All Orthodox missionary activity was suspended for some time. Catherine allowed the construction of mosques in Muslim villages and cities and in every mosque Muslims prayed for the rulers of Russia just as they had done since the time of Elizabeth. Against the background of the Catherinian policy of religious toleration, new mechanisms of regulation of Muslims were introduced. These included the lifting of restrictions against Tatars who wanted to join the Russian merchant estate (1776), the establishment of the Tatar *ratusha* (a body that would unite Tatar merchant and entrepreneurial classes and increase economic growth among the Tatar population) (1781), giving permission to the Tatars to join the military service and possibly giving them officers' rank (1783), the extension of noble status to descendants of Tatar princes (1784) and, finally, establishing a muftiate in Ufa (officially a Muslim Spiritual Assembly), in 1788.¹⁰⁶

The study by Robert Crews demonstrates that from the eighteenth century Russia was engaging its Muslims in building the empire.¹⁰⁷ The mufti, as the head of the Assembly and

¹⁰⁵ F.G. Islaev, "Religioznaia politika Rossiiskogo gosudarstva i ee realizatsiia v Volgo-Ural'skom regione: 18 v" [Religious Policy of the Russian State and its Realization in the Volga-Ural Region in the Eighteenth Century] (Doctor diss.) (Kazan, 2005): 22.

¹⁰⁶ R. Khairutdinov, "The Tatar Ratusha of Kazan: National Self-Administration in Autocratic Russia, 1781-1855", in *Islam and Politics in Russia and Central Asia: Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries*, eds. S. Dudoignon and K. Hisao (New York: Kegan Paul, 2001): 29.

¹⁰⁷ Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, 2-3.

the main official religious authority, when passing a *fatwa* that had something to do with Russian laws and regulations, accommodated these latter to the laws of the *sharia* thus making them sound not as something imposed by the Russian authorities but as religious duties of a Muslim. In other words, the mufti could use Muslim law in order to regulate the life of Muslim subjects and make them live in conformity with Russian law.

Baron Osip Igel'strom, a Protestant from a Baltic German family, elaborating on the duties and functions of the Assembly, proposed in 1789 that the highest official Muslim body should deal with cases concerning the religious life of the community such as circumcision, marriage, divorce and mosque services.¹⁰⁸ The Assembly was also entrusted with the supervision of Muslim schools and examination of knowledge of the rules and rites of the Muslim faith of all those who wanted to become mullahs. Prospective mullahs had to get a certificate from the local police chief and documents testifying to the approval of their community before coming for the examination. Thus, the reliability and moral qualities of a mullah were important prerequisites besides good knowledge of the Qur'an.

The mufti was to be appointed by the tsar and the Assembly functioned similarly to Holy Synod.¹⁰⁹ Establishment of the muftiate provided a certain structure of Muslim religious institutions and hierarchy, which did not exist before, similar to the Orthodox one. This image, however, had its limitations, for although references to Muslim clergy (*dukhovenstvo*) did appear, the officials sometimes felt uncomfortable using the word 'clergy' when applied to non-Christian religious servitors. The hierarchy introduced with the establishment of the Assembly was an artificial construct in the religious group where 'the clerical class...did not constitute a particular caste, and only learning served as the basis of distinction between various levels of that estate.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 53-54.

¹⁰⁹ Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey, "Les missions Orthodoxes en pays musulmans de moyenne - et basse Volga, 1552-1865" *Cahiers du monde russe e sovietique*, no. 8 (1967): 394-395.

¹¹⁰ I.P. Petrushevskii, ed., *Kolonialnaia politika rossiiskogo tsarisma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60 gg 19 v* (Moscow, 1937), 369, quoted in Paul W. Werth "Soslovie and the 'Foreign' Clergies in Imperial Russia: Estate Rights or Service Rights?" *Cahiers du monde russe* 51, no. 2-3 (2010): 419-440.

Still, cooperation of the Assembly with the government contributed to the image of Muslims as loyal subjects, at least for the time being. This was a perfect example of administrative integration of non-Orthodox subjects into the Russian imperial structure. Ideally, the Muslim Spiritual Assembly was to act as a body that would detach Muslim communities of Russia ‘*de jure*’ from the spiritual authority of the Ottoman sultan-caliph.’¹¹¹ The idea that the Russian empire could become for its numerous Muslim subjects a ‘House of Islam’, a place where they could carry out their religious duties, was supported by the first Orenburg mufti Mukhamedzhan Husainov at the end of the eighteenth century.

However, not all the mullahs were under control of the assembly and those who were not presented a problem and concern for the mufti. Doubt as to the legitimacy of the Orenburg Assembly was one of the central topics in what Michael Kemper has called ‘Islamic discourse.’¹¹² In the view of some representatives of the Middle Volga *ulama*, the introduction of the Assembly was a ‘*bida*’, an illegitimate innovation violating the norms of the Qu’ran, and the same argument was later used against European education of Muslims - a novelty introduced not by the imperial centre but by representatives of the Muslim *ulama*. Many of the mullahs and teachers of Islamic law were educated in the madrasahs of Bukhara and Medina and thus enjoyed much respect and had numerous students. For instance, religious leaders like Utyz Imiani and Vaisov were clearly against the Assembly and instigated their numerous followers to oppose the imperial introduction.¹¹³

The missionary work among the non-Muslim population at the beginning of the nineteenth century was marked by an important advance – the publication and circulation of religious literature began to develop. As early as 22 January 1803, the Holy Synod, in accordance with the will of the tsar, sent a decree to the fourteen bishops in whose dioceses

¹¹¹ Stephane A. Dudoignon “Status, Strategies and Discourses of a Muslim ‘Clergy’ under a Christian Law: Polemics about Collection of the Zakat in Late Imperial Russia”, in *Islam and Politics in Russia and Central Asia: Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries*, eds. S.Dudoignon and K.Hisao (New York: Kegan Paul, 2001): 49.

¹¹² M. Kemper. *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Bashkirien, 1789-1889. Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), 50-61, 66-70, 290-299, quoted in Vladimir Bobrovnikov, “Islam in the Russian Empire” in *The Cambridge History of Russia* Vol. II Imperial Russia, 1689-1917, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge University Press,)210.

¹¹³ See more about the religious leaders in Chapter 3.

non-Russians lived to engage themselves with translation of prayers into non-Russian languages. The books appeared in 1804, but ‘the translators, familiar it appears, only with separate words from the *inorodtsy* languages, but quite ignorant of their grammatical constructions, were only capable of putting a non-Russian word next to the corresponding Russian one. The translation appeared awkward, and at times even funny.’¹¹⁴

New translations were produced after the opening on 20 January 1818 of the Department of Russian Biblical society (founded in 1813), a Christian non-denominational organization for the translation and distribution of the books of the Old and New Testament of the Bible on the territory of the Russian Empire. This organization was a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, founded in Great Britain in 1804. The religious motive behind the idea of the creation of such a society was the belief of its founders that the Holy Scripture is the basis of Christianity, that the Bible, and the Word of God, has a special impact on those who read it or listen to it. Thus, it could help to consolidate the confessional diversity of Christianity and could become the common basis for a universal Christian mission. The first ‘Rules of the Society’ aimed at ‘promotion of greater usage of the Bible in Russia’ and to this end the Society intended ‘to provide the people of Russia with the Bible...in different languages and at moderate prices, and for the poorest without payment...provide the Muslim and pagan peoples, in their respective languages’ with the Bible.¹¹⁵ In fact, translations of the Bible into the languages of Middle Volga people were distributed among the parishes of the region. But the translations were far from perfect for they lacked a number of letters corresponding to the phonetics of the indigenous languages.¹¹⁶ This problem would only be solved thirty years later.

An interesting project on ‘Establishment of the institutions for the eastern languages in Kazan educational district’ [*O zavedenii dlia vostochnykh iazykov uchilishch v Kazanskom*

¹¹⁴ K. Prokop’ev, *Perevody Khristianskikh knig na inorodcheskie iazyki v pervoi polovine 19 veka (istoricheskii ocherk)* [Translations of Christian Books into the *inorodtsy* Language in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century] (Kazan: Izdatel’stvo Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1904), 6.

¹¹⁵ B. A Tikhomirov, *Nachalo istorii russkogo perevoda Biblii i Rossiiskoe bibleiskoe obschestvo* [The Beginning of History of the Russian Translations of the Bible and the Russian Biblical Society] (Moscow: RBO, 2006).

¹¹⁶ Prokop’ev, *Perevody*, 13.

uchebnom okruge] appeared in 1806 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹¹⁷ In correspondence between the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ia. Budberg (1806-1807) and the Minister of Education P. Zavadovskii (1802-1810) the key subject was the creation of an ‘institution for eastern languages’ in Kazan. The stimulus for the project was the lack of translators for eastern languages in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘especially ethnic Russians speaking these languages, and the lack of a suitable educational institution.’¹¹⁸ It is particularly interesting to look into Budberg’s project on the ‘Asian matters’. He suggested that in addition to Tatar, the teaching of Turkish and Arabic be introduced in Kazan, Chinese and Manchurian in Irkutsk (besides existing Japanese classes) and Armenian and Georgian in Tiflis (besides existing Persian classes). This project was designed to widen the structure of eastern studies in educational districts.

The project specified that, in Kazan

[...]the students should be taken from the families of non-commissioned officers or bailiffs, and if such be not found, they should be taken from the orphanages for the children of the military. The children should be ethnic Russians or, baptized Tatars at most, so that before starting their studies they already had knowledge of calligraphy, arithmetic and Russian grammar and were prepared to learn history, geography and other subjects.¹¹⁹

Teaching these eastern languages was to contribute to the training of qualified functionaries who would serve the interests of both the internal and foreign policy of the expanding Russian empire in the east. When the graduates finished their studies, they were supposed to stay at least another year in Kazan University in order to improve their knowledge of the eastern languages. The graduates would further obtain state positions as translators at the Tsargrad committee, Levante consulate, or governorships in Astrakhan, Ekaterinoslavl, Orenburg, Caucasus, Georgia, or Siberia. The project, however, was never implemented.

¹¹⁷ RGIA, f. 733, op.39, l.45.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, l.1

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 2-4

Yet, the idea of creating an Institute for Eastern Languages remained in the mind of M. Magnitskii, the trustee of Kazan educational district (1819-1826).¹²⁰ In his report dated 16 June 1825, Magnitskii wrote:

Our empire... has borders with the eastern peoples and so has constant trade and diplomatic relations with them. Yet, there is not a single institution that could train translators for various types of service. There is such an acute lack of teachers, that we sometimes invite a teacher from Paris, which costs us a lot, and make him a professor of the same language they should be coming here to study, for we have many native (*prirodnikh*) teachers of the eastern languages, especially in Kazan and Astrakhan.¹²¹

Another attempt was made by the eastern studies specialists in Kazan, upon the approval of the then-trustee of the Kazan educational district M. Musin-Pushkin, who sent a project of 'The Asian institute at Kazan Imperial University' to the Ministry of Education in June 1843.¹²² The main aims of the Institute were stated as 'the spread and exchange of knowledge about Asia and the East and training of functionaries as translators, dragomans and police officers for different institutions.'¹²³ The institute was also supposed to teach Asian non-Russians who lived on the territory of the Russian empire. The Asian institute was to have eight departments: Persian and Arabic, Turkish and Tatar, Mongolian and Kalmyk, Chinese, Manchurian, Tibetan, Sanskrit and Armenian languages. The project was never affirmed but some of the ideas were realized in the Department of Eastern Languages of Kazan University.

¹²⁰ RGIA, f. 733, op. 40, d.159

¹²¹ Ibid, l. 1 ob.

¹²² NART, f.92, op. 1., d. 5170.

¹²³ Ibid, l. 23ob.-25ob.

1.3.Missionary Difficulties

On 13 March 1826, the Kazan provincial authorities issued a resolution that allowed 44 Orthodox Tatars of the Azeevo and Romashkino villages of the Kazan district to convert to Islam. This resolution was unusual since conversions to Orthodoxy were irreversible. Apostasy was a crime, at least until 1905, when Nicholas II issued a Manifesto promising, among other civil freedoms, freedom of conscience. In 1826, upon inspection, it was discovered that the aforementioned Tatars were only allegedly Orthodox, as the data about their supposed baptism could not be found anywhere in the church registers. This episode, which, under different circumstances, could have passed unnoticed, gave many baptized Tatars a reason to believe that the authorities recognized their right to 'return to Islam' and triggered massive apostasies from Orthodoxy in the Middle-Volga region of the Russian empire.

In fact, following the resolution mentioned above, 3,274 inhabitants of 139 villages of Kazan and Orenburg dioceses claimed their right to convert to Islam in 1827.¹²⁴ The apostates, as soon as the petitions were sent, refused to attend church or even talk to Orthodox priests.¹²⁵ They usually shaved their heads, immediately adopted Tatar names, and did not react when addressed by their erstwhile Christian names.

The Church lacked effective methods to convince the apostates to return to Orthodoxy, for exhortations had no effect. The authorities and the police had to intervene to reestablish order in the region. Orthodox missionaries would usually come to villages accompanied by policemen, who would make the apostates gather in front of the church in the presence of an interpreter because very few of the missionaries at that time spoke indigenous languages (Tatar, Mari or Chuvash). The missionaries announced that the petitions of the apostates were detestable, since the requests were against the will of God, and so there was no way they could be satisfied. Those who persisted in their desire to become Muslims were arrested; sometimes they also had their property confiscated and were exiled from their villages. Many

¹²⁴RGIA, f.797, op.3, d.12644, l. 159.

¹²⁵NART, f.4, op. 59, d.6, ll.1-1ob.

Tatars had already changed their minds about apostasy by 1828, although the missionaries themselves understood that their ‘return’ to Orthodoxy was only formal. As a missionary I. Svetlovidov remarked, ‘even if they [...] started performing the outward duties of the Orthodox religion, they would still remain Muslims at heart’.¹²⁶

The first apostasy movement on the territory of Simbirsk province also took place in 1827 involving the baptized Tatars from Urazovka village in Karsun district and sixteen Tatars from the village of Novye Ishli in Buinsk district. From 1827 to 1855 the local officials in the Simbirsk specific bureau (*Simbirskaia udel’naia kontora*) and the chamber of the criminal court (*palata ugolovnogo suda*) studied the case of Buinsk Tatars who were supposed to be sent to distant monasteries for ‘non-denial (*neotrechenie*) of the Muslim law’.¹²⁷ In the 28 years that the legal process lasted the accused died and their descendants were resettled to the villages of Mikhailovka and Mariino in Samara province.¹²⁸

Cases of apostasy to paganism constituted another wave that shook the non-Russian community of the Middle-Volga region in the 1820s. One of the most well-known gatherings, which came to be known as the ‘all-Mari prayers’, took place on 20 November 1827 near Varangushi village in the Tsarevokokshaiskii district.¹²⁹ This gathering saw almost five thousand baptized and pagan Mari from the Viatka, Kazan and Ufa provinces come together in a sacred grove for the traditional pagan prayer and sacrifice.

Before this time, missionary activity had remained relatively passive and was aimed at Orthodox Russians and baptized non-Russians, sustaining, rather than spreading,

¹²⁶ Quoted in Mozharovskii, *Izlozhenie*, 121.

¹²⁷ GAUO, f. 322, op.3, d. 8, l. 114; ibidem, f. 318, op. 1, d. 269, ll. 33, 42, 47-48.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ A.G. Ivanov, “Vsemariiskoe iazycheskoe molenie 1827 goda i deistviia vlastei” [All-Mari Pagan Prayer of 1827 and the Actions of the Authorities], *Mariiskii arkheograficheskii vestnik*, 8 (1998): 50, for a similar case of an ‘All-Mari prayer’ in the village of Kiuprius’- Solia of the Viatka province in 1828 see Nikanor (Kamenskii), “Cheremisy i iazycheskie verovaniia ikh” [The Cheremis and their Pagan Beliefs], in *Ostatki iazycheskikh obriadov i religioznykh verovanii u Chuvash* (Kazan: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1910), 7-26.

Christianity.¹³⁰ It was in the 1830s, after Filaret Amfiteatrov became the new archbishop of Kazan and Simbirsk (1828-1836), that anti-pagan missions finally received official status.¹³¹ Missionary work at that time involved travelling from village to village, helping the local clergy to strengthen the baptized in the Orthodox faith, making them renounce their pagan beliefs, and proposing baptism to the unconverted.

Previous mistakes and excesses were taken into consideration in the 1840s as outlined in the 'Instruction to Missionaries' by Filaret, metropolitan of Moscow. Besides underlining the importance of exhortations and teaching non-Russians prayers and the basics of the Orthodox faith, Filaret stressed that a missionary should not give any rewards to the newly-baptized except a cross, should not separate couples married before baptism and should not demand any money for the church.¹³² A missionary should be patient and teach non-Russians according to their age and mental abilities. That said, he should learn about their religion, customs, language and always keep in mind that prospective parishioners were mostly pagans and their mental level was that of children.¹³³

Together with the missionary message those who performed admonitions were to transmit the following message of loyalty to the emperor and the empire:

All the people living in our Russian colonies (sic!) are considered Russian subjects but those who are not enlightened by Holy Baptism are unaware yet that they are under Russian protection and that the peace that they are enjoying is the benefaction of Russia and you [a missionary] should remind them about it at every opportunity. Show them the advantages of our government in comparison to others, its unselfish care about its subjects...¹³⁴

The missionaries thus now became carriers of the Russian civilizing mission *vis-à-vis* non-Russian subjects of the empire in which Orthodoxy played a crucial role. Another important message, of a rather political character, can be read as addressed first and foremost

¹³⁰ Vasilev. *Rasprostranenie khristianstva*, 8.

¹³¹ RGIA, f. 796, op. 116, d. 172.

¹³² Filaret, *Instruktsiia missioneram* [Instruction for Missionaries] (Pekin:Tipografiia Uspenskogo monastyria pri russkoi dukhovnoi missii, 1905), 10-13.

¹³³ Ibid, 4.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 11.

to the Muslim subjects of the empire, confirming once again the principle of religious toleration in Russia. It is hard to say if Filaret was indeed thinking about Muslims, who were not the primary target of the mission anyway. Still, the chances were good that those living in mixed villages with a pagan population, would at least listen to what a missionary said. The message the missionaries needed to transmit became still more important in view of the anti-Russian activities conducted by imam Shamil among the Muslims of Daghestan and Chechenia (1834-1859). In addition, Ottoman emissaries coming to the Caucasus were encouraging the migration of Muslims from the Russian empire ruled by ‘infidels’ to the state protected by the Ottoman sultan, a Sunni Muslim.¹³⁵ Given the unstable situation between the two empires it was essential to remind Muslims that Russia remained for them the House of Islam and their greater protector was Nicholas I, the Russian emperor, and not Ottoman Sultan Abdulmecid I who claimed to be the defender of Muslims all around the world.

Missionary trips to pagan villages were considered successful if the parishioners signed written statements renouncing paganism, yet even the missionaries themselves had scant belief in the sincerity of such statements. As the priests’ reports showed, as soon as the missionaries left, non-Russians returned to their animistic practices, remaining Orthodox only on paper. A famous Chuvash teacher, Ivan Iakovlev, in his memoirs about his childhood (1850-60s), said that the inhabitants of his village ‘were considered to be Orthodox Christians though in fact they remained pure pagans’.¹³⁶

Rather than turning the pagans to a monotheistic religion, baptism and admonitions added new elements to their former religious practices. Paganism remained, for many, a religious cult, philosophy and culture inherited from their ancestors. Large numbers of people continued to follow their traditions while visiting an Orthodox church at the same time, but their animistic religions, polytheistic as they were, experienced transformations under the influence of monotheistic religions, Orthodoxy and Islam. On a purely material basis this meant that while they supported the clergy, they also provided animals and goods for traditional pagan sacrifice.¹³⁷

¹³⁵Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*,15

¹³⁶ I. Iakovlev, *Moia zhizn’: Vospominaniia* [My Life: Memoirs] (Moscow:n.p., 1997), 51.

¹³⁷ Paul Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 82.

Formally, what we see are examples of double faith, manifesting itself in the appearance of mixed pagan-Orthodox prayers, which have survived until the present day, and in syncretic beliefs, in which paganism and Orthodoxy were not consciously distinguished, but merged into a hybrid form. Further on in this chapter we will see some examples of how paganism and Orthodoxy (and sometimes, Islam) were interwoven in the practices of the ethnic groups of the region.

The Mari, even those who were baptized, venerated *Kugu Iumo*, supposedly the supreme God, and although they would go to church now and then, the sacred for them was located in the physical world and could inhabit specific objects.¹³⁸ The places used for sacrifices, beginning with a mass prayer conducted by a *kart* (usually the most experienced and respected person, since the Mari had no church or church hierarchy) were sacred groves, some of which were so famous that people even travelled from distant districts to perform their rituals there.¹³⁹

A most interesting example of incorporation of Orthodoxy into the life of the Mari is a phenomenon that came to be known as the *Kugu Sorta* (literally ‘Big Candle’). This ritual, which developed among the Mari population in the Viatka province, became the most vivid example of how an ethnic group tried to achieve recognition not by blindly accepting the suggested pattern of belief and rituals, but instead by reforming their own pagan belief. Reformers petitioned that it should receive the status of an officially recognized religion on the same level with Islam and Orthodoxy.

The ‘Big Candle’ reform presupposed an adjustment to the basics of book-based religions within animistic perception, the points of reference being the striving for monotheism, rejection of blood sacrifice (instead, they used bread and candles), and the appearance of the notion of sin and the afterlife. Paul Werth calls this specific case ‘internal conversion’, an attempt to rationalize the religious system.¹⁴⁰ The essence of the reform was the idea that the

¹³⁸ Paul W. Werth, “Big Candles and ‘Internal Conversion’: The Mari Animist Reformation and Its Russian Appropriations,” in *Of Religion and Empire: Mission, Conversion and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* ed. Robert P. Geraci, and Michael Khodarkovsky (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 147.

¹³⁹ Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 31.

¹⁴⁰ Werth, “Big Candles”: 145.

Mari had fallen into sin, by confessing Orthodoxy, thus having rejected their own old rituals; it was implied that the Mari could not communicate with God through Christianity, they viewed their present economic and social misfortunes as the outcome of rejecting their indigenous beliefs and turning to Orthodoxy, and insisted on the exclusive practice of paganism. However, since the petitioners were formally Orthodox Christians, their claims were recognized as a sign of apostasy and unconditionally rejected.

The religious practices of the Votiak were similar to those of the Mari, who lived in the neighboring zones and with whom they had close economic and cultural contacts.¹⁴¹ The cult of *keremet*, common to the Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples of the region, was also venerated by this ethnic group along with the cult of land. Although used in contemporary Mari colloquial speech as a nickname for 'devil', the *keremet* was initially considered to be a deity, requiring blood sacrifices, to whom people prayed for some practical things like good harvests, wellbeing, good weather, etc. It was in reference to Mari and Votiak believers that priests would often complain: 'All our brethren in faith are called Christians but they cannot pronounce the name of *keremet*' without horror and almost in every misfortune and every disease try to propitiate it with their offerings. These miserable Christians are even trying to keep those who do not venerate *keremet*' from the true faith by force.'¹⁴²

Similarly, the close cohabitation of Votiak with Tatars in the Kazan province might suggest that becoming acquainted with the Muslim monotheistic faith led to the formation of belief in a higher God *Inmar*.¹⁴³ But despite the influence of monotheistic religion, pagan beliefs were still kept alive. As the missionary efforts could not suppress them completely, it became possible to equate the Christian sacred images with the images of popular religion. Thus, *Inmar, Kuldusin and Kvos*, the venerated spirits, intermingled with God the Father,

¹⁴¹ P.N. Luppov, *Materialy dlia istorii khristianstva u votiakov v pervoi polovine 19 veka* [Materials for the History of Christianity of the Votiak in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century] (Viatka: n.p. 1911).

¹⁴² "Religioznoe sostoianie iazychestvuiushchikh inorodtsev Kazanskoi gubernii i otnoshenie k nemu inorodtsev kreshchenykh"[Religious State of Pagan Non-Russians of the Kazan Province and the Attitude of Baptized Non-Russians], *Missioner*, no. 21 (June 1874), 202.

¹⁴³ L.A. Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaia tserkov' i khristianskoe prosveshchenie narodov Srednego Povolzh'ia vo vtoroi polovine 19-nachale 20 veka* [Orthodox Church and Christian Enlightenment of the Middle Volga Peoples in the Second Half of the Nineteenth-Beginning of the Twentieth century] (Cheboksary: Chuvashskii universitet, 2004).

God the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the *vorshuds* - with guardian angels.¹⁴⁴ Vladimir Vladykin considers *Inmar* to be just one of the Gods, equal to others, representing the upper layer of the world, and then under the influence of both Orthodoxy and Islam, there formed a perception of the single, higher God.¹⁴⁵

The Mordva were generally considered the most russified ethnic group in the sense that almost all the Mordva population was Orthodox.¹⁴⁶ However, in the opinion of Nikolai Mokshin, who studied the religious history the Mordva people, this ethnos could not be called religiously homogenous since Christianity was not able to completely oust traditional beliefs, but contributed to the formation of Orthodox-pagan religious syncretism.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, for this ethnic group the celebration of Easter, contrary to the Orthodox idea, became the day to remember ancestors, to ask for a good harvest, well-being, etc. A bright example of *dvoeverie* among the Mordva is the story of the ‘prophet’ Kuz’ma Alexeev, who was known by the nickname ‘Kuz’ka, God of the Mordvins’ (*Kuz’ka-mordovskii bog*). He was baptized and went to Orthodox liturgies, but he became so ‘inspired’ that he proclaimed himself a Mordvin prophet, claiming that the ‘Virgin Mary and St. Nicholas sent him to prophesy.’¹⁴⁸ At the secret prayers he and his followers would use both pagan attributes and the icon of St. Nicholas.

Given that the religious worldview of the pagan, and the baptized but previously pagan, peoples remained unstable, under favourable conditions this worldview could become inclined towards Islam just as much as towards Orthodoxy. Thus, these two plausible alternatives came to terms with each other, both being religions of the book, having long histories, a certain religious hierarchy, and centuries-long traditions of confessional schools. Islam contributed to the cultural distinctiveness of its numerous followers, who, besides a common language, had very close ties and relative self-sufficiency as a community. Given

¹⁴⁴ Ibid,78.

¹⁴⁵ V. Vladykin, *Religiozno-mifologicheskaia kartina mira udmurtov* [Religious-Mythological Picture of Udmurt’s Worldview](Izhevsk: n.p., 1994),101-102.

¹⁴⁶ Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaia tserkov’*.

¹⁴⁷ N. F. Mokshin, *Religioznye verovaniia mordvy* [Religious Beliefs of the Mordva] (Saransk: n.p., 1968), 133.

¹⁴⁸ In N.G. Iurchenkova, “Evoliutsiia traditsionnogo mirooshchushcheniia mordvy pod vozdeistviem pravoslaviia” [Evolution of the Traditional Worldview of the Mordva under the Impact of Orthodoxy] *Ispovedi v zerkale: Mezhhonfessional’nye otnosheniia v tsentre Evrazii, na primere Volgo-Ural’skogo regiona (18-21 vek)*, http://www.centre-fr.net/IMG/pdf/Liste_des_resumes_RUS.pdf (accessed on 10 February 2012).

the ability of Muslims to proselytize and the fact that the generations of baptized non-Russians still remained unstable in their faith and therefore liable to apostasy, it is evident that Orthodox missionaries could not ignore the activities of Muslims, especially in villages with a mixed population, which became a disputed space of conversion.

Why would non-Muslim non-Russians, especially those of non-Tatar origin, be attracted to Islam? The cases of conversion to Islam mostly took place in the villages where Chuvash, Mari and Votiak peoples lived together with Muslim Tatars. According to the data provided by Leonid Taimasov, Tatars lived in all provinces of the Middle-Volga region: in Kazan province, for instance, they constituted the majority in the Mamadysh district (by the end of the nineteenth century, 69.41 per cent); in the Tetiushi district they made up about half of the population, while in the Sviazhsk, Tsarevokokshaisk, Laishevskii, Chistopol'skii, and Spasskii districts, they constituted from 25 to 30 per cent, the other major population groups being Russians, Mordva, Mari, and Chuvash.¹⁴⁹

Almost all pre-revolutionary missionary writers (Nikolai Il'minskii, Iakov Koblov, Evfimii Malov, and Mikhail Mashanov) remarked upon the almost 'fanatical' devotion of the Muslim Tatars to their faith, and their ability to defend its truth and divinity. One of the most important features in this respect was the spread of Muslim education in the Kazan region. In almost every village, mullahs taught the local children the basics of the Muslim faith in return for some parental donation. In cities and towns there were mektebs (lower Islamic schools), where young people received further education. While its quality was not very high, the number of educational institutions for Muslim Tatars was greater than those available for all other peoples of the Middle-Volga region, including Russian peasants. It was not infrequent, given the lack of any alternative, for non-Muslim non-Russians to send their children to a mekteb, thus taking the first step towards conversion to Islam. At mektebs the children would learn the basics of Islam, they would read the Qur'an and hadiths but, most importantly, surrounded by Muslim fellow-students and teachers, they would gradually acquire a Muslim lifestyle. Conversion, under these circumstances, would become a question of time.

¹⁴⁹ Taimasov L., *Pravoslavnaia tserkov'*, 58.

Marriage could be another practical motive for conversion to Islam. In this case it is hard to say to what extent any personal choice was involved, for conversion could be regarded first and foremost as submission to the rules of the new family. In what way could one proselytize more effectively than that? In order to avoid punishment for the prospective relatives (according to the Penal Code of 1845, ‘a Muslim, a Jew or a pagan who, taking advantage of the ignorance and simplicity of the non-Russian, brings him from one non-Christian faith to another non-Christian one by means of seduction, instigation or suggestion,’ was to be punished),¹⁵⁰ the future wives wrote explanatory notes, like this twenty-year-old Votyak girl who married a Muslim Tatar:

I was a simple non-baptized Votyak girl when, at the age of twelve, I sincerely began to love Islam. Without being forced or seduced, or promised money, or being scared, but out of my own free will, I later became a Muslim, accepted the religion of Islam and the duties that come with it [...]. I renounced all the beliefs contrary to Islam, hoping for God’s mercy and grace, in order to avoid the tortures of Hell and be resurrected with other Muslims [...]. Now, in the presence of witnesses, I pronounce the words of confession in which I sincerely believe and become a real Muslim.¹⁵¹

Cases of such mixed marriages and subsequent conversions were quite frequent. However, even as a result of simply living in the same village as Muslim Tatars or working for them, non-Muslims sometimes found their lifestyle more agreeable, and together with clothing and dietary habits, gradually began to follow their religious rituals. Many converted for economic reasons, in order to earn more money when working for a Muslim family, since Muslims in such cases were often more highly paid than their pagan counterparts. The majority of the male population from baptized Tatar villages went to Muslim villages in search of work and remained there for the greater part of the year. Naturally, these male workers constituted a significant proportion of the apostates who troubled the rest of the population and encouraged their co-villagers to convert to Islam.

As far as the Tatar population of the region is concerned, it was split into two parts, Orthodox and Muslim, and the stronger Muslim part often pushed the indecisive Orthodox one to apostasy. However, it is important to remember that the Christian-Muslim dichotomy

¹⁵⁰ *Ulozhenie o nakazaniakh* [Penal Code] (St Petersburg: Tipografiia Vtorogo Otdeleniia Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1845).

¹⁵¹ N.I. Il’minskii, *Kazanskaia kreshcheno-tatarskaia shkola: Materialy dlia prosveshcheniia kreshchenykh tatar* [Kazan School for Baptized Tatars: Materials for the Education of Baptized Tatars] (Kazan: n.p.,1887), 5.

was not absolute among Tatars.¹⁵² The Old Converts to Orthodoxy (baptized during the sixteenth century) came primarily from an animist background, while the New converts (baptized during the eighteenth century) had originally been Muslims.

The beliefs of the Old Converts were based on popular traditions and this brought them close to other groups of baptized non-Russians (Chuvash, Mari and Votyak) as they had the images of gods and spirits typical of the traditional beliefs of native peoples: patrons of the household, rivers, forests, and so forth. Stressing the animistic beliefs of this ethnic group, one scholar has plausibly argued that the group of Old Converts originated both from non-Islamized Tatars and from ‘Tatarized’ Chuvash, Mari and Votyak.¹⁵³

Thus, although it is possible to understand the desire to return to Islam on the part of newly baptized Tatars as being a more or less natural attraction, I suggest that the cases of old-baptized Tatars, Chuvash and Votyak conversions to Islam may be explained as the result of economic factors and cohabitation with Muslim Tatars. In such apostasies the officials saw an aggressive and dynamic Islam, and in their view it had to be blocked. When Il’minskii was creating his system of missionary education, to which I devote the following chapter, he was well aware of these ‘background’ differences inside the Kriashen (baptized Tatars) milieu. Therefore, at the very beginning of his work he relied precisely on old-baptized Tatars while hoping that his system would eventually embrace newly-baptized Tatar and an ethnic entity of Kriashen, who would distinguish themselves from Muslim Tatars, would be formed.

¹⁵² A. Kefeli, “The Role of Tatar and Kriashen Women in the Transmission of Islamic Knowledge, 1800-1870”, in Geraci R. P. – Khodarkovsky M. (eds.), *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 255.

¹⁵³ Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaia tserkov’*.

1.4. The Great Apostasy

Cases of conversion to Islam and paganism occurred throughout the nineteenth century, but it was the Great Apostasy of 1866 that caused most concern and drew most attention on the part of the authorities and missionaries. This striking turn of events is referred to as the ‘Great’ Apostasy because of the enormous number of apostates – thousands of baptized Tatars as well as Orthodox non-Russians of animistic backgrounds who openly declared their wish to profess Islam. According to the data provided by the missionary Evfimii Malov, the number of apostates among Tatars reached 12,000 by the mid-1870s.¹⁵⁴ Let us examine two cases, one in the village of Kibiak Kozi, in Laishev district, the other in Elyshevo, in Mamadysh district.

In 1865, the instigators of the apostasy were two baptized Tatar peasants, Ivan Nikitin in Kibiak Kozi and Efreim Kirillov in Elyshevo. They were both arrested, but the investigator did not want to deal with the case, so he released them. Seeing that his act of apostasy remained unpunished, on 2 April 1866, Nikitin announced that, together with his family, he had converted to Islam. Another arrest and another release followed. Soon afterwards all the peasants of both villages announced their apostasy. Those who still wanted to remain Orthodox were forced to sign the petition to accept Islam. Thus, a peasant named Peter Ivanov in Elyshevo came into the house of Praskoviia Vasilieva when the latter’s husband was out and, taking icons off the wall, forced her to convert to Islam. Kondratii Filippov, from the same village, who refused to give up Orthodoxy, was threatened with expulsion and confiscation of his land. Even his son, himself an apostate, refused to help him.¹⁵⁵ Such cases did not go unnoticed and the instigators were finally prosecuted.

When Kazan vice-governor Ivan Rozov visited these villages and explained to their inhabitants that their requests were illegal, and they were, therefore, obliged to return to Orthodoxy, only nine families out of 103 agreed to do so. Moreover, they refused to sign any paper confirming the fact of their apostasy from Orthodoxy. In contrast, in the village of Elyshevo, only ten families remained Muslim, while the others agreed to sign the paper.

¹⁵⁴ E.A.Malov, “Otpadenie kreshchenykh tatar ot pravoslaviia” [Apostasy of Baptized Tatars from Orthodoxy], in *Missioner*, no. 2 (1874): 114-115.

¹⁵⁵ Il’minskii, *Kazanskaia*, 283.

Seeing that the situation was getting out of control, Rozov made the mullahs of the nearest Muslim Tatar villages sign a declaration stating that they would not admit the apostates to the mosques, would not teach them the basics of Islam and would not perform any rituals. Rozov, nevertheless, was not sure that any signed papers would keep the apostates in Orthodoxy. Indeed, he suspected that their number would grow quickly, and that the exodus would not only involve Tatars but other non-Muslim non-Russians as well, unless the diocese found the means to strengthen their belief in the Christian faith.¹⁵⁶

The situation was quite similar in Simbirsk province. In the years 1866-1868 baptized Tatars from 34 villages and merchants from the town of Buinsk declared their apostasy.¹⁵⁷ Having sent a petition to the Emperor, baptized Tatars stopped baptizing their new-born children, getting married in the church or burying the deceased according to the Orthodox rites. 188 similar cases can be found in the documents of the Simbirsk spiritual consistory and 157 official requests to be recognized as Muslims occurred in the years 1866-1868.¹⁵⁸

Tatars normally declared their apostasy to the district authorities who, in their turn, informed the priests and the police officers.¹⁵⁹ After that the apostates would not let the priests into their houses and would not listen to their preaching. As a form of protest, they also refused to pay the church dues that were usually paid separately from the fees for marriage, birth and burial services. For example, the peasants of the villages of Biurgany, Chikildym and Cherepanovo refused to pay for the construction of a building for the church watchman and the insurance of the church itself.¹⁶⁰

Why did the mass apostasy occur at this time, after almost three hundred years of missionary work in the region? In fact, it was prompted by several factors. The research conducted by Michael Johnson convincingly suggests that the number of petitions requesting permission to leave Orthodoxy for Islam in the nineteenth century grew during the periods of accession and coronation of each new emperor, since the Tatar leaders believed that the new emperor would follow the tradition of granting the formal requests of his subjects in an effort

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 284.

¹⁵⁷ *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19 veka* [Materials on the History of Tatarstan in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century](Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1936), 244-245.

¹⁵⁸ GAUO, f.134, op.7, d.70, 149, 155,181,213, 217,244.

¹⁵⁹ GAUO, f. 117, op.8, d.38, l. 4; op.9, d. 1, l.8.

¹⁶⁰ GAUO, f.108, op.1, d.50, ll.56,69-73, 85-110.

to gain their support'.¹⁶¹ Thus, as Johnson demonstrated, petitions increased in 1802 (Alexander I), 1826-1827 (Nicholas I), 1856 (Alexander II), 1882-1883 (Alexander III) and 1896 (Nicholas II). The period under Alexander II was especially important since it bred many liberal ideas. The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 brought much confusion, since for many Middle-Volga people it was a step towards obtaining other freedoms, including freedom of religion, which Paul Werth claims, gave rise to the Great Apostasy of 1866.¹⁶² Literate people in the local communities quickly grasped the import of many of the political advances and wrote numerous petitions for their co-religionists, making money from the fees for writing and often becoming leaders of apostasy movements.

Research by David Moon suggests that the introduction of the Manifesto on the abolition of serfdom was followed by many rumours.¹⁶³ From the cases analysed by Moon it becomes clear that the peasants were quite distrustful of priests, suspicious that either the priests had read the wrong document or the document was right but had been misinterpreted by the priests.¹⁶⁴ In a search for 'real freedom' peasants often turned to literate people who could explain the Manifesto to them. These literate people would often take advantage of the peasants, as for instance, Andrei Elizarov in Penza province who reinterpreted the tsar's statutes according to the peasants' expectations. There was a similar case with a religious dissenter Anton Petrov in the village of Bezdna in Kazan province. These supposedly real interpretations attracted crowds of peasants who would claim their 'legitimate' rights. In both cases, order was restored by firing into crowds of unarmed people.¹⁶⁵

In 1863, a false manifesto 'signed' by Alexander II was circulated in the Volga region in the course of an attempt by Polish revolutionaries to raise a revolt among the military and the peasants.¹⁶⁶ It contained references to distributions of land to peasants, freedom of faith, abolition of taxes and conscription:

¹⁶¹ Johnson, *Imperial Commission*:106.

¹⁶² Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 147-177.

¹⁶³ Moon, *The Abolition*, 88-93.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 90.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 92-93.

¹⁶⁶ B.P. Koz'min, *Kazanskii zagovor 1863 goda* [The Kazan Plot of 1863] (Moscow: n.p., 1929).

From now on, freedom of faith and observation of religious rituals will become the right of everyone. The inhabitants of every town and every city will elect four men... The four deputies from every district, coming to the central city of a province, will elect the head of province and other provincial authorities. Deputies from every province, coming to Moscow, will make up the State Council, which, with OUR help, will govern all Russia.¹⁶⁷

It is possible that this very manifesto was used first by the Old Believers, and then by Muslim Tatars, as proof that permission to change one's faith had been legally granted.

Another document, a real one, signed by Alexander II, was an imperial edict of July 1863, which concerned the procedures for investigating *raskol* (schism) leaders and stressed the need for persuasion rather than coercive measures.¹⁶⁸ It was a certain Andrei Petrov-Leshev, an inhabitant of the village of Tashevka in Sviazhsk district and leader of a group that had abandoned Orthodoxy for the Old Belief, who persuaded his co-villages that he possessed an official letter from the emperor that regarded their apostasy as a legal action. In Johnson's view, Muslim propagandists were using this document among the Tatars to encourage those who stayed in Orthodoxy for fear of punishment to openly declare themselves as Muslims.¹⁶⁹ In fact, it was not only Tatars who looked to the Old-Believers on the issue of changing their religious affiliation - many pagans when stating the grounds for their wish to turn to former practices explained that they wanted to return to their old faith just like (and, as the false rumors had it, successfully), the Old-Believers had returned to theirs.

The baptism of these Tatars and their reaction to the missionaries' activities are difficult to understand without being aware of the principle of *at-Takiia* (prudent concealment of one's faith), which was always present in Islam, rendering it possible, in cases of mortal danger, to accept another faith with silent reservation. This idea is supported by Faizulkhak Islaev, who argues that in the eighteenth century Muslims could formally accept Orthodoxy while spiritually remaining adherents of Islam.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ GARF, f.39, op.2, d.43, l.1.

¹⁶⁸ NART, f. 1, op. 3, d.3698, ll.1-2ob.

¹⁶⁹ Johnson, Imperial Commisiion, 131.

¹⁷⁰ Islaev F. G., *Islam i pravoslavie v Rossii: ot konfrontatsii k veroterpimosti. Vek 18* (Islam and Orthodoxy in Russia: From Confrontation to Tolerance: The Eighteenth Century] (Moscow: Russkoe slovo, 2004).

Community antagonism also contributed to apostasy issues, for the privileges that the baptized enjoyed annoyed the remaining Muslims, on whose shoulders the burden of taxes was placed. This contributed to negative attitudes towards the baptized, who were despised not only for being unfaithful to their religion, but also for enjoying privileges that they, according to the Muslim community, did not deserve.¹⁷¹

The ritual of baptism itself, without prior admonitions, was perceived as the priests' whim, for they seemed to pay the money to someone who simply agreed to get into the water. No less strange was the Christian idea of the Trinity, for Muslims were sure that only one mortal person (Mohammed) was able to see God, and no one knew what He looked like. Such views bring us once again to the issue of faith, strengthening the religious convictions of non-Christians prior to baptism – a point that was neglected in the missionary work up to at least the 1840s. This is why, if the missionaries spoke about the crisis in the 1860s, they were not entirely right in their concerns about its origins. The crisis did not come out of nowhere. In the nineteenth century they had to deal with the outcome of grave shortcomings in the missionary work of the previous period.

Conversion to Islam of former pagans, with no Muslim background, became especially pronounced in areas where there were no schools except the mektebs, for non-Russians, as mentioned above, would send their children to Muslim schools in order to obtain at least some education. Thus Antonii II Amfiteatrov, archbishop of Kazan and Sviiazhsk (1866-1879), in a letter of 1867 to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Dmitrii Tolstoi, noted the great number of mosques and mullahs as contributing to the conditions limiting the influence of the Church and Orthodox priests. Using the privilege of having a mosque for every two hundred males in the community, the Muslims built more and more mosques as soon as the population figures reached the required number.¹⁷²

Moreover, Antonii reported, there was hardly a village with even a small number of Tatars without a mosque and a mullah, while the same could not be said about Orthodox villages, which were far apart from each other, were composed of mixed baptized and non-

¹⁷¹Islaev F. G., “K voprosu ob istoricheskikh predposylkakh sistemy N.I.II'minskogo” [To the Question of Historical Preconditions of the System of N.I. Il'minskii], in *Prerevolutionary Kazan: Missionary Education and Study of the Volga Native Peoples*, Sinisalo-Katajisto P.ed. (Helsinki:n.p., 2005), 56.

¹⁷² RGIA, f. 797, op. 37, otd.2, st.3, g. 1868, d. 215, ll.1-2.

baptized populations, and by diocesan statute, introduced in 1846, had one priest for every 1500 parishioners. Building new churches and the organization of new parishes was obstructed by formalities and the poverty of the local population. At the same time, the small number of Muslim believers per mullah gave the latter the freedom and convenience not only to perform rituals but also to teach children. Thus, every mosque had mektebs and madrasah, where mullahs gave lessons to the boys and their wives taught the girls. For this reason the level of literacy of Muslim Tatars was much higher than that of Russians, and of Orthodox Christians in general. ‘What makes things worse’, the archbishop’s letter went on to say, ‘is that this literacy is non-Russian, which makes them [the non-Russians] more alienated from the Russian people and less receptive to the influence of the Church and Orthodox priests’.¹⁷³

Antonii further accused the government of having contributed to the rise of literacy among Tatars, since the printing house of Kazan University published many books, including the Qur’an in the Arabic language, and sold them at very low prices, while no Orthodox literature was printed for the Russian population. All this taken together, he claimed, testified not only to tolerance on the part of the government, but also to permissiveness: ‘such concessions, extra privileges contribute to the appearance of ‘fanaticism’ [among Muslims]...and keep up the distance from the Russian people.’¹⁷⁴

Permissive or not, the attitude of imperial authorities towards apostates was certainly inconsistent. Severe penalties for abandoning Orthodoxy before 1856 were suspended and then reintroduced with greater force in 1861.¹⁷⁵ Still, any temporary relaxation of the measures against apostates was perceived as a sanction to embrace Islam. Such vacillations together with the agitation of Muslim Tatar leaders in 1866 produced a time bomb effect. For instance, a certain Tatar by the name of Galim Samigulov was known to be encouraging Tatars of Chistopol district to file petitions before the year 1866, since a rumour had been spread that after this date one would permanently remain Orthodox.¹⁷⁶ Another phenomenon that deserves attention is the collective consciousness of the apostates: rarely, if ever, did they get baptized or apostatize alone, which is perfectly comprehensible since their religion was the identity marker that sealed their right of belonging to a definite community. And the fact

¹⁷³ Ibid., l.3.

¹⁷⁴ RGIA, f. 797, op. 37, otd.2, st.3, g. 1868, d. 215, l. 3

¹⁷⁵ RGIA, f. 821, op.8, d.759, ll.1-4.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Johnson, Imperial Commission, 134.

that community boundaries often coincided with village boundaries made them difficult to penetrate and complicated missionary work in the communities.

Having faced the unprecedented scale of the apostasy movement, the civil authorities became more watchful for apostasy cases and more willing to prevent them. The governor of Simbirsk province Baron Ivan Velio, in his report of 2 March 1866 to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Petr Valuev, wrote that coercive measures that were applied towards apostasy among baptized Tatars could also disturb Muslim Tatars. This is why he suggested improving the missionary work in the region without, however, forcing Muslims to accept Orthodoxy. Special attention was to be paid to Muslim proselytizers, who, it was advised, were to be sent away from the village.¹⁷⁷ In 1866 the proselytizers, a merchant Iagudin from the town of Buinsk, Tatar peasants Nikolai Mikhailov (Akhmet Sadyk Taneev) from the village of Utiamyshevo and Abul'khan Abdul'meneev from the village of Trekh-Boltaevo as well as a baptized Chuvash Vasili Mitrofanov from the village of Chepkas-II'metievo, were sent to Eastern Siberia.¹⁷⁸

However, these measures had little effect and the apostates did not hurry to return to Orthodoxy. A peasant from the village of Burgany Rodion Osipov (Negmetulla Iusupov), upon hearing the news about Mitrofanov's exile, told the police officer 'We do not want the Russian faith, we will petition again.'¹⁷⁹ The police officers kept Osipov under arrest for two weeks. Baptized Tatars of the town of Buinsk petitioned to the tsar twice (on 3 September 1866 and in January, 1867) for the permission to profess Islam and to let the merchant Iagudin return to town. The petitions were returned in 1867 with a refusal.¹⁸⁰ After that, only in two villages, that of Pogrebovskie Vyselki and Staroe Shaimurzino, Tatars agreed to return to Orthodoxy, but all the others still persisted in their apostasy.¹⁸¹

In the period from 1866 to 1889 Orthodox priests went to the apostate villages 23 times with admonitions after which some Tatars did indeed return to Orthodoxy. However, these cases were extremely rare.¹⁸² At the beginning of February 1866 the priest of Zelenovka

¹⁷⁷ GAUO, f. 134, op. 7, d. 213, ll. 94-94 ob.

¹⁷⁸ GAUO, f. 134, op. 7, d.213, l.95; f. 340, op.9, d.14, l.7; f.108, op.1, d.50,l. 119 ob.

¹⁷⁹ GAUO, f.108, op.1, d. 50, ll. 119-119ob.

¹⁸⁰ *Materialy po istorii*, 244-245, 270-271.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 267-268.

¹⁸² GAUO, f. 134, op.7, d. 578, ll.44-44 ob.

village visited 29 houses of baptized Tatars in the village of Elkhovoozernaia carrying Holy water. In ten houses the Tatars simply ran away from the priest, in thirteen houses they ‘locked the gates and, when they were not quick enough, the doors of the houses’ and only in six houses ‘thirteen people kissed the cross.’¹⁸³ In all, in the years from 1866 to 1868, only 14,6–18,2 per cent of baptized Tatars remained Orthodox in Simbirsk province and 82,8–86,2 per cent (which makes 2200-2300 people) apostatised into Islam.¹⁸⁴

In the 1860s, the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church complained that more and more threats were emanating from the Muslims. They believed that the aim of the missionary activities – to promote Orthodoxy and to fight apostasy among the native population – was hard to achieve because of counter-projects led by Muslims, resistance among the apostates and the evident deficit of qualified missionaries. However, if Muslim proselytism was an easy scapegoat for the failure of Orthodox missionary activities, other factors explaining the conversions to Islam among baptized Tatars were noted as well. Representatives of the St. Guriï missionary brotherhood, founded in 1867 in Kazan province to establish schools and churches for the non-Russian population and assist in the spread of Christianity in the region, noted that the baptized Tatars had not become accustomed to Orthodox Christian rituals. Some priests refused to talk to their Tatar parishioners since they did not know the language. Other missionaries, who, in contrast, knew the languages, and came to the villages to address the parishes, had a rather unclear idea of the Muslim faith and spoke about it in an insulting way while giving no sound arguments against it.¹⁸⁵

This ignorance on the part of the missionaries was precisely one of the reasons that the baptized Tatars of the village of Aziakov gave for their apostasy. One of them, Terentii Vasil’ev, a self-appointed mullah, had made a mosque out of the rear section of his house. Together with other apostates, he claimed that there was no religious instruction by the priest, who only tried to persuade them that Muhammad was a false prophet. Their Russian co-

¹⁸³ Ibid, d. 70, ll. 89-89ob; d. 155, ll.64-64ob; d. 149, ll. 289-290.

¹⁸⁴ GAUO, f. 48, op. 1, d. 362, ll. 68-70; *Statisticheskie svedeniia*, 38-40.

¹⁸⁵ P. Znamenskii, *Na pamiat’ o N.I. Il’minskom: k 25-letiiu Bratstva sv. Guriia* [To the Memory of N.I. Il’minskii: For the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of St Guriï Brotherhood] (Kazan: n.p., 1892), 333.

villagers could hardly strengthen the Tatars in the Orthodox faith, since they proved to be ignorant of Christian doctrine.¹⁸⁶

This evidence suggests that Orthodox missionaries had made anti-Muslim propaganda an integral part of their activities. They sought to explain to Muslims the falsity of their belief; by denouncing the prophet they hoped to ruin the basis of the religion he had founded.¹⁸⁷ The argument behind this approach was that Islam in itself had many drawbacks and disadvantages. The reality, however, was that the religion had grown into a system, which was not to be questioned, but required unconditional acceptance on the part of the believers.¹⁸⁸ The missionaries admitted that the Muslim belief was so strong that the Tatars did not want to read anything other than their sacred Islamic books, so it was impossible to prove them wrong.

However, Christian authorities soon understood that by anti-Muslim polemics alone the mission would get nowhere, since the parishes and apostates were many and the missionaries were few. A speech given once in a while did not have a great impact on the population, and did not make them abandon their beliefs; once the missionary left, the people would return to their earlier practices. Priests did nothing to remedy the situation. When a missionary arrived in a village, it was the local priest's duty to gather the parishioners to listen to him and, in theory, also to continue exhortations in order to maintain any missionary effect that had been produced. In reality, however, priests in the majority of parishes did not speak the native languages and had no desire to learn them.

The priests who tried to conduct the liturgy in native languages signalled its positive effect on the parishioners. Gavriil Iakovlev, for example, was a priest from the village of Un'zhi, in the Tsarevokokshaiskii district, whose parish consisted of Russians, who secretly kept to the Old Belief, and baptized Cheremis (a Finno-Ugric group, belonging to Mari people), who still performed pagan rituals in their sacred groves. Iakovlev reported:

¹⁸⁶ Missioner no. 39 (1875): 313-316.

¹⁸⁷ Znamenskii, *Na pamiat'*, 389.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

When we sing the prayers in Russian, the Cheremis cross themselves a couple of times and stand still and listen; but then you conduct the sermon in Mari you see their lips move and it is clear that they repeat the words of the prayer.¹⁸⁹

Evgenii Bol'shakov, in agreement with Iakovlev, made the following observations:

I explain the absence of Cheremis in church on Sunday by nothing else but their misunderstanding of the church mass in Slavonic. Church singing in Slavonic, which gives a Christian believer irreplaceable spiritual delight, means nothing to the Cheremis. As I strongly believe, the Cheremis language used in church would have the same impact on Cheremis as Slavonic had on Russians. That is why the translation of liturgy into Mari in the near future is desirable.¹⁹⁰

Still, the introduction of native languages in church was easier said than done, since the parishes were often heterogeneous, and internal tensions and oppositions rendered the usage of native languages problematic. In Iakovlev's parish, Russian Old Believers were quite fastidious in relation to the Cheremis: they would not pray together with them and could not tolerate it when part of the sermon was read in Mari.¹⁹¹ Later, this parish was split in two and, in the priest's judgment, for the better. He even proposed having two priests who would divide their activities according to the previous religion of the parishioners: one would preach against the Old Belief, and the other against paganism.¹⁹² The same issue was observed in the Chistopolskii district, where baptized Tatars went to church in the Russian village of Romanovka, to which they were assigned:

Baptized Tatars now go to our church in Romanovka; when they are numerous, we sing something in Tatar, which is quite pleasing for Tatars, but not at all for Russians. They would prefer a sermon in Russian.¹⁹³

It was then that the missionaries became aware of how little was actually known about the Middle-Volga non-Russians, the languages they spoke, and the level of their knowledge of Russian. Upon his arrival at a Mari parish, the above-mentioned priest Bol'shakov wrote optimistically that males, beginning from the age of nine or ten, understood and spoke Russian. He concluded that 'lack of knowledge of Mari by the priests is not the cause of the

¹⁸⁹ NART, f. 968, op.1, d.168, l.26.

¹⁹⁰ NART, f. 968, op.1, d.89, l. 12.

¹⁹¹ NART, f. 968, op.1, d. 168, l.42.

¹⁹² NART, f. 968, op.1, d.16, l. 41.

¹⁹³ NART, f. 968, op.1, d.86, l. 17.

population's ignorance of the faith', and that estimates concerning the poor knowledge of Russian among Maris were incorrect: only women and girls could not speak Russian.¹⁹⁴ But he himself later wrote, after having lived in the parish for some time, that

[...]two or three of these Mari pagans became Orthodox per year, and even that happens when a pagan girl marries an Orthodox Mari. What do I do with these pagans? What can I do, especially without the knowledge of the language, to make the pagans convert more quickly? Especially, how can I conduct missionary work without the knowledge of Mari? Although I wrote previously that the Mari understand and speak Russian, I suppose that when speaking of things like the faith their Russian language is not sufficient: either they will not understand it at all, or they will understand it in their own way.¹⁹⁵

It was clear that for the Orthodox Church in the region to succeed, efforts had to be made by both parties: missionaries had to know the native languages, or at least to be able to read religious texts in them, and teachers, both Russian and non-Russian, had to gradually introduce non-Russians to the Russian language.

In 1865, writing in the weekly *Missioner* (a small journal to which many missionaries reported their experiences and opinions), Evfimii Malov summed up the situation in the region as unsatisfactory:

From 1827 to 1864, parish priests and consistories, for all their admonitions, have done nothing to make baptized Tatar apostates listen to reason, because they acted without love and compassion for the apostates, without prior preparation...Police intrusion only annoyed baptized Tatars, turning them away from Orthodoxy; measures such as resettlement brought Tatars to ruin and demoralized them rather than fortifying them in the Christian faith and piety. It is not surprising that conversions of Tatars to Christianity were scarce and apostasies numerous.¹⁹⁶

Orthodox missions in the region were still badly organized, and only a few of the missionaries were properly trained. Under these conditions, the Church administration did not have many methods at its disposal that would successfully stop apostasy. The apostasy movement itself underwent considerable changes. Having started as a spontaneous act of individuals at a time when administrative restrictions were weakened, it gradually acquired a

¹⁹⁴ NART, f. 968, op.1, d. 89, l.4.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, l. 6.

¹⁹⁶ *Missioner*, no.9 (1878):66.

mass character, involving entire villages and engaging even non-Tatar non-Muslim populations of the region. By the second half of the nineteenth century it had become clear that the old administrative measures were no longer effective, and that coercive measures alone could not keep the baptized in Orthodoxy. Moreover, the Great Apostasy of 1866 proved not only the ineffectiveness of missionary work among the Middle-Volga non-Russians but also the failure of the State, at least thus far, to incorporate these subjects into the imperial system.

CHAPTER TWO. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RUSSIFICATION POLICY AMONG THE NON-MUSLIMS OF THE REGION BEFORE 1905.

Russian law and administration in the nineteenth century ‘combined tolerance for recognized religious groups with a privileged status for Orthodoxy.’¹⁹⁷ Islam was only a tolerated confession, a status which carried within itself the idea that it was inferior to official Orthodoxy, and in spite of the fact that some imperial noble families like the Tevkelevs or the Enikeevs enjoyed the rights of nobility as Muslims, conversion to Orthodoxy was always welcome. At the same time, promotion of a non-Orthodox faith, as well as apostasy from Orthodoxy to another, even Christian, faith, was considered a crime. During the whole period of this study Orthodox affiliation remained linked to the idea of Russianness and to the crucial question of how non-Russians could fit into the empire.

Religious adherence was often seen as more important than language, since religious conversion was an officially binding act (even if it was not an act of religious commitment) while linguistic assimilation was a lengthy process whose progress was difficult to measure. Moreover, people could be multilingual but, at least officially, they could be adherents of only one religion.¹⁹⁸ Every subject of the Russian empire had a religion into which one was normally born even though it was possible to convert from a non-Christian to a Christian religion. Some of the religions were tolerated by the empire. Some were ‘equated’ with certain ethnic groups, such as Orthodoxy with Russians, Catholicism with Poles, Protestantism with Germans, Islam with Muslims and, naturally, Judaism with the Jews. This could also be the reason why paganism as well as shamanism were hardly taken into account - they did not carry in themselves distinct ethnic markers.

The first ‘official nationality policy’ was announced by the Minister of Education Sergei Uvarov in 1833. The triad ‘Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality’ was presented as the basis of Russia’s political *raison d’être*, through which the empire would manage to survive inner uprisings and resist destructive tendencies coming from abroad.¹⁹⁹ Autocracy affirmed the absolute power of the tsar legitimizing it as the indispensable basis of Russia. Orthodoxy was

¹⁹⁷ Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 27.

¹⁹⁸ Kappeler, “Ambiguities”: 293.

¹⁹⁹ S.S. Uvarov, *Desiatiletie Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshchenia 1833-1843* [Ten Years of Work of the Ministry of Education, 1833-1843] (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1864), 1-4, 106-108.

recognized as the state-supported religion and, underlining the importance of the official church in foreign policy, these two components also legitimized the Vienna settlement signed in 1815 by Alexander I, according to which Russia took its due place in the Europe of Christian monarchs. Nationality (*narodnost'*) could be interpreted as the state-founding role of the Russian people who supported the dynastic government. Thus, official nationality policy held a dominant Romantic nationalist position with the nation defined in cultural terms.

Arguing that religion was a defining identity marker, Slavophiles claimed that 'only a convert to Orthodoxy could be a Russian...'²⁰⁰ This declaration was based on the idea that after the fall of Constantinople, Russia remained the sole repository of the true Orthodox faith. In the opinion of Rabow-Edling, by announcing that Russian Orthodox culture had a universally important role, Slavophiles suggested 'a way out of the feeling of backwardness felt by the members of the educated elite in their relation to the West.'²⁰¹ Speaking about the compatibility of religion and ethnicity, a representative of Slavophiles, the traditionalist Aksakov, feared the use of Russian in Catholic churches of the Western provinces, which in his opinion 'would further muddy the already indistinct lines between 'Russian' and 'Polish' in provinces with mixed Belarusian, Polish and Lithuanian population'.²⁰² For Aksakov, 'Russian' clearly meant 'Orthodox' and 'Polish' meant 'Catholic' but the combination 'Russian Catholic' was unacceptable.

At the same time a leading national ideologist, editor of *Moskovskie vedomosti* Mikhail Katkov, asserted that professing a religion different from Orthodoxy did not impede a person from being considered a Russian if he spoke Russian: 'language is the most important thing in the matter of Russification (*obrusenie*)'.²⁰³ Katkov supported the use of Russian in Catholic churches precisely because he believed in the possibility of existence of 'Catholic Russians'.²⁰⁴ While the nationalists disagreed as to what means should be used to promote Russianness,

²⁰⁰ Aksakov, *Sochinenia*, 417-424, 424-431.

²⁰¹ Susanna Rabow-Edling, *Slavophile Thought and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 87.

²⁰² Theodore Weeks, "Religion and Russification: Russian Language in the Catholic Churches of the 'Northwest Provinces' after 1863" *Kritika* 2, no.1 (Winter, 2001): 105.

²⁰³ M. Katkov, *Sobranie peredovykh statei Moskovskikh vedomostei, 1866 god* [Collection of Editorials of *Moskovskie Vedomosti*] (Moscow: Izdanie S.P. Katkovoï, 1897), 78

²⁰⁴ Weeks, "Religion":103.

both Orthodoxy and the Russian language formed a part of state ideology, and part of the state education policy, although used in different proportions when applied in different regions of the vast Russian empire.

When speaking about the Russification policy in the Middle Volga region, the first name to mention is that of Nikolai Il'minskii who created and promoted what later came to be known as the 'Il'minskii system' for non-Russian Orthodox schools. The essence of the system was that the instruction was mostly religious and offered in indigenous languages by teachers from the same ethnic group or by Russians who had mastered the language of this group. After the students had learnt to read and write in their own languages, they were gradually introduced to instruction in Russian based on the same religious texts they had already learnt in their own languages. The aim of the system was to raise convinced Orthodox non-Russians who would also be literate in Russian. As to the Muslims of the Middle Volga, the approach was quite different. No missionary education was offered at schools opened in 1870s. Instead, the emphasis was laid on the study of the Russian language and the history and geography of the Russian empire. Since instruction of Russian Muslims will be examined in detail in Chapter Three, we will now turn to the discussion of the types of schools and schooling regulations offered to non-Muslims.

2.1. Regulations on Non-Russian Schooling

In educational respects the territory of the Russian Empire was divided into twelve school districts. The Kazan district-government covered the following provinces: Kazan, Viatka, Samara, Saratov, Simbirsk and Astrakhan.

The priests and deacons from *inorodtsy* who got education at schools for the newly-baptized in the eighteenth century left quite a miserable impression both on the Russian and non-Russian population of the region. This partly came from the fact that young non-Russian boys were brought to school against their will, and the will of their parents, and studied in Russian and Russian Slavonic, not understanding anything in the books, which were not translated into their mother tongues. Such students, as was said in the report of the Holy Synod to Catherine II, turned out to be ‘difficult to educate’ (*k obucheniiu neponiatny*).²⁰⁵ When the school-leavers finally became priests, they turned out to be both useless in missionary enterprise and not quite respectable in their morals. The situation did not seem to change until the 1870s.

In spite of the fact that the clergy was actively involved in missionary and teaching activities, parish schools were supervised by the Ministry of Education which acquired the responsibility over public primary education by the order of 18 January 1862.²⁰⁶ According to the subsequently issued ‘Statute of primary schools’ of 14 July 1864, various types of schools were allowed: state, parish, *zemstvo* and private schools. Thus, the church monopoly in the sphere of primary education was dismantled, as different organizations, peasant communities, as well as private individuals were now allowed to open schools. This explains the variety of types of primary schools in Russia, Middle Volga region included.

According to the 1864 Education Statute, not all schools were united under the Ministry of Education but instead were supported and controlled by several other ministries, such as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of State Property and the Holy Synod. All of these schools,

²⁰⁵ *Dukhovenstvo iz inorodtsev Kazanskoi eparkhii* [Non-Russian Clergy of Kazan Diocese] (Kazan: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1878), 1.

²⁰⁶ RGIA, f.733, op.170, d.210, ll.215-216, see also 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.

except for those supported by the Holy Synod, were to teach children according to the program and textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum included religious instruction, reading, writing and basic arithmetic, and optional church singing. The goal of schooling was ‘to strengthen religious and moral precepts among the people and to disseminate basic useful knowledge.’²⁰⁷ This statute also established district school boards that were to supervise schools, approve private schools, and distribute books. The board consisted of two representatives from the local zemstvo, and one each from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior and the Holy Synod. According to the Statute, the teachers in primary schools could be selected from both priests and lay candidates. But, most importantly, an article of the Statute said that ‘in elementary schools teaching is conducted in the Russian language.’²⁰⁸

On 20 February 1867, one of the subjects discussed at the meeting of the School Committee of the Ministry of Education, was the language of tuition. The Committee affirmed Russian as the language of instruction while the native languages were recommended only as a ‘tool’ at the initial stage of instruction and ‘the sooner this tool is abandoned, the better.’²⁰⁹

At the same time, measures to control schools, especially private ones, were reinforced. In 1867 the Ministry of Education took all the elementary schools, except those of the Church, under its direct supervision. To implement this, in 1869 the position of inspector of elementary schools was created in every province. The task of the inspector was at first to help with the organization of schools in the villages but later, starting from 1871, he was also the one who controlled the teaching program of the schools and employed and dismissed teachers.²¹⁰

The use of the Russian language at school did not contribute to a rise in literacy level among the non-Russian population of the region. Neither did it help non-Russians to

²⁰⁷ *Sbornik postanovlenii. Ministerstvo Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia*, vol.3 (1855-64), col.1226, quoted in Dowler, *Classroom and empire*, 42.

²⁰⁸ *Sbornik postanovlenii*, 3: 1227.

²⁰⁹ *Sbornik dokumentov i statei po voprosu obrazovaniia inorodtsev* [Set of Documents and Articles on Non-Russian Education], 161-168.

²¹⁰ Patrick L. Alston, *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia* (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1969), 61-62.

understand and embrace Orthodoxy. The issue of the usage of Russian or the native language in the classroom was thus a question of dispute. This theory, independently put forward by the editor of the newspaper *Viatskie Gubernskie vedomosti* N.I. Zolotnitskii, missionary N.I. Il'minskii and supported by the curator of the Kazan School District P.D. Shestakov on the pages of the Journal of Ministry of Education (*Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia*), centered around the use of native languages among the non-Muslim non-Russians of the region.²¹¹

Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century the aim of the mission was not so much to convert Muslims to Orthodoxy, as to limit the influence of Islam on both baptized Tatars and other ethnic groups – Orthodox and pagan Mari, Chuvash, and Votyak. The Kazan lay and church officials and missionaries generally admitted that ‘Tatarisation’ and ‘Islamisation’ of the non-Russian population of the Middle Volga region was taking place and that ‘Russian Christian education should be firmly established across the whole territory of the eastern borderlands.’²¹² The point for discussion here is what should be understood by the term ‘Russian Christian education’. Those who maintained that the main criterion for *obrusenie* was not Orthodoxy but the Russian language and culture, argued for cultural unification with the Russian population. That is why education of the non-Russian people should be organized in such a way that non-Russians became ‘...really Russian through the language, through civic feeling...Christian education and full *obrusenie*...should be the aim.’²¹³ The church authorities, in their turn, argued that ‘the Orthodox mission in relation to non-Russians is not only a mission of true enlightenment but also a mission of true *obrusenie*.’²¹⁴ Embracing Orthodoxy was considered an essential prerequisite for joining Russian culture.

It was at this time that Il'minskii proposed his system of Orthodox education in native languages, first tested among a small group of baptized Tatar children but later spread to all the non-Muslim *inorodtsy* of the Middle Volga region. Most importantly, his ideas were

²¹¹ For more information on the discussion see Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 62-75.

²¹² *Sbornik dokumentov i statei po voprosu ob obrazovanii inorodtsev* [The Collection of Documents and Articles on Non-Russian Education] (Saint Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1869), 5.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Dionisii, *Idealy pravoslavno-russkogo inorodcheskogo missionerstva* [The Ideals of Russian Orthodox Missionary Work among the Non-Russians] (Kazan:n.p., 1901), 32-33.

enthusiastically supported by the Minister of Education Dmitrii Tolstoi. This, as Dowler noted, was a striking example of how local actors could influence public policy.²¹⁵

The meeting of the Council of the Ministry of Education on 2 February 1870 set out a new policy on education of the non-Russians of the east and south regions of the empire. One of the most serious concerns discussed at the meeting was the ‘Tatarization’ of the population of the eastern regions of the empire. The impulse for this new approach to the education of the non-Russians was both the understanding of the failure of the previous methods of schoolwork and the move towards literacy of the population of the empire on a more general level.

As an outcome of the meeting, the Regulations entitled “On the Measures for the Education of the Russian *Inorodtsy*”, were issued on 26 March 1870. The goal of non-Russian education was defined as ‘unquestionably...russification [*obrusenie*] and assimilation to the Russian people.’²¹⁶ The Regulations defined various degrees of *obrusenie* among different ethnic groups of the empire. The Orthodox indigenous population was subdivided into the following groups: a) poorly-Russified, for whom teaching had to be done in indigenous languages with the use of books published in these languages, in order to facilitate their subsequent learning of Russian. The books included a primer, prayers, short stories from the Bible and religious moral books; b) those living together with the Russian population, who were to share their schooling with them, with the same instruction in Russian but with the possibility of learning some subjects in native languages, which was to be financed by the *inorodtsy*; c) those who were quite Russified, and who attended Russian primary schools. Teaching at such schools therefore should be conducted in Russian. Education provided in all the three types of school had a strong missionary character.²¹⁷

Following the line of strengthening the Orthodox component in teaching, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, who became the head of the Holy Synod in 1880, turned his attention to the religious and moral upbringing of the peasants, the improvement of the financial situation of the village clergy, the raising of the level of their general education, and also to increasing the

²¹⁵ Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 83.

²¹⁶ *Agrarnyi vopros*, 285.

²¹⁷ Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 83.

network of parish schools.²¹⁸ In his report of 1884, Pobedonostsev spoke about the Statute on parish schools signed on 13 June 1884 by Alexander III. He argued that popular primary education should be linked to the Russian Orthodox Church and laid special emphasis on the fact that the 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.’²¹⁹ S.A. Rachinskii, a teacher, ideologist of parish schools and Pobedonostsev’s close friend, believed that the best school leader was a priest, ‘the best teacher is a deacon, school should be led by the church only.’²²⁰ An important role should therefore be given to the clergy, who had to ‘encourage a conscious religious feeling.’²²¹

The main trends of religious education suggested by Pobedonostsev were aimed at the unification of people and the state, which was to become the responsibility of the Russian Orthodox Church, through its domination 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.’²²² This point of view was at one with the ideas reflected in Il’minskii’s system of non-Russian schools.

A confirmed conservative, Pobedonostsev believed that the liberal reforms of 1860s were incompatible with autocracy. Thus, he intended to restrain the reforms with the help of ‘church advocacy of submission, humbleness and discipline.’²²³ Before 1884, the clergy could not open schools and the brotherhoods that enjoyed such a right, being private institutions, pursued first and foremost missionary aims. In fact, at the moment of publication of the new Regulations (13 July 1884) there were only seventeen church schools in the vast Kazan diocese, nine out of which were parish schools and eight literacy schools (these latter were the schools of the most primitive type, usually established on peasant initiative. In 1891,

²¹⁸ Ibid,88.

²¹⁹ K. Pobedonostsev quoted in 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),188.

²²⁰ *Khrestomatiia po istorii pedagogiki* 4, part 2 (Moscow, 1938), 74-75.

²²¹ RGIA, f.1263, op.1,d.4229, l. 73-74.

²²² K.P.Pobedonostsev, *Uchenie i uchitel’*.*Pedagogicheskie zametki* [Schooling and Teachers. Pedagogical Notes] (Moscow: n.p., 1900), 29.

²²³ Iskhakova, *Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie*, 54.

these schools were incorporated into the church parish school system).²²⁴ In addition, there were 94 brotherhood schools the internal organization of which was similar to that of parish schools. The Regulations gave churches and brotherhoods more freedom to open new schools. Already a year after the Regulations, 114 church schools had been opened, in five years there were 229 schools and in ten years – already as many as 503. Besides the education of children, teachers of these schools, starting from the school year 1889-90, also saw to the education of adults and conducted ‘popular readings’ (*narodnye chteniia*) at schools. The number of schools having such popular readings had already reached 223 by the school year 1902-03, and the number kept growing.

The journal *Tserkovnye vedomosti*, issued by the Holy Synod, expressed the idea that the promotion of Christianity would ensure the numbers of loyal and willing subjects of the Russian tsar, and supporters of autocracy.²²⁵ For the *inorodtsy*, ‘embracing Orthodoxy was said to be the fullest Russification...not just changing customs (*pereoblachenie*), but rebirth (*pererozhdenie*) of a non-Russian person, in the second or third generation, into a Russian person’.²²⁶ On the contrary, apostasy from Orthodoxy, for a Russian person, into various sects (with the exception of the Old believers), ‘gradually turned a Russian person into non-Russian’. This quotation demonstrates that for the Holy Synod ‘Orthodox’ and ‘Russian’ were almost interchangeable concepts and *obrusenie* was seen as a cultural, spiritual phenomenon, the unification of Russians and non-Russians in Orthodoxy.

As a result of these reforms and changes, by the end of the nineteenth century, there were various types of elementary schools: one class schools with a duration of studies from one to three years (parish, zemstvo, literacy schools and schools of the Ministry of Education) made up 94 per cent of all elementary schools of the empire; two class schools with four or five years of schooling (also some Ministry schools and parish schools, among which were also non-Russian schools) constituted four per cent, while city schools with six years of instruction made up the remaining two percent.²²⁷

²²⁴ P. Zakhar’evskii, *Tserkovnye shkoly Kazanskoi eparkhii za 25 let ikh sushchestvovaniia* [Church Schools of Kazan Diocese in 25 years of their Existence] (Kazan, Tsentral’noe izdatel’stvo, 1909), 5.

²²⁵ *Tserkovnye vedomosti*, no. 3 (1889):59.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ S.V. Rozhdenstvenskii, *Obzor deiatel’nosti Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia, 1802-1902* [The Overview of the Activities of the Ministry of Education] (Saint Petersburg: MNP, 1902), 655.

One of the best summaries of the types of schools in Russia has been provided by Ben Eklof, which is presented in the following table: ²²⁸

Table 2: Types of Russian Schools.

	Urban parish school (<i>prikhodskoe uchilishche</i>)	District school (<i>uezdnoe uchilishche</i>)	Municipal school (<i>gorodskoe uchilishche</i>)	Primary school (zemstvo, Church, parish, ministerial)	Higher elementary school (<i>vysshee nachal'noe uchilishche</i>)	Two-class primary school (zemstvo, ministerial)	Literacy schools (Church)
Year of study							
1	1		1	First	1		1
2	2		2	class	2		2
3	3		3	Second	3		
4		1	4	class	4		
5		2	5	Third		1	
6		3	6	class		2	
7		4				3	
8						4	

The majority of schools functioning in the Middle Volga region in the second half of the nineteenth century were brotherhood schools that were established and controlled by the Brotherhood of St.Gurii. First the schools supported by the Ministry of Education were not very numerous but later the 1884 Regulations on church-parish schools provided the state funding to support the schools run by the Church and contributed to the growth of church-

²²⁸ Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1990), 488.

parish and literacy schools.²²⁹ Most of these types of schools adopted the program developed by Nikolai Il'minskii.

²²⁹ Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 90.

2.2. N.I. Il'minskii and His Opponents

The educational approach of Nikolai Il'minskii has been studied by a number of scholars from different angles.²³⁰ I am going to analyze this system from the point of view of its 'usefulness' to the Empire. To what extent did it contribute to the solution of the problems identified by the imperial centre? What was its role in Russification policy? Did Il'minskii himself fancy 'making' the Middle Volga *inorodtsy* Russian by creating his system or did it have a much more spiritual basis? To answer these questions, I suggest we look into the system itself. As we will see in this chapter, in spite of the fact that the system enjoyed the support of central authorities (in the person of Ober - Procurators of the Holy Synod, first Tolstoi and then Pobedonostsev) at least until Il'minskii's death in 1891, it had its opponents and rivals. I will therefore also briefly deal with the lesser known alternative education projects.

When in the years 1866-1880 Tolstoi simultaneously served as the Minister of Education and Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, the collaboration between school and church became more evident. Tolstoi claimed that 'the basics, that our church contains, are unchangeable, and its priests will always have an advantage over other teachers of the people, who can sometimes be carried away by their own ideas.'²³¹ In the Kazan education district, such a position was ardently defended by P.Shestakov, who was at that time the curator of the district and a conservative professional teacher. Similarly, later in the century, when the conservative Pobedonostsev took the position of the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, ecclesiastic education following the model of Il'minskii enjoyed his full support in spite of the fact that there were always people who questioned the 'correctness' of the system.

²³⁰ See a short and by no means limited list of works: Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, Geraci, *Window on the East*, R.R. Iskhakova, *Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie v Kazanskoj gubernii v seredine 19-nachale 20 vekov* [Pedagogical Education in Kazan Province in the Middle of the Nineteenth-Beginning of the Twentieth Century] (Kazan: Novoe znanie, 2001), Michael W. Johnson, "Imperial Commission or Orthodox Mission: Nikolai Il'minskii's Work Among the Tatars of Kazan, 1862-1891" (Phd Diss.) (Chicago: Illinois, 2005), David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010).

²³¹ S. V. Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor deiatel'nosti Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia (1802-1902)* [Historical Overview of the Activities of the Ministry of Education] (Saint Petersburg: Ministerstvo Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia, 1902), 481.

Why was this Kazan missionary so influential, why did he enjoy such trust and strong support in the highest imperial circles? His system was certainly very timely, well-suited to the region and, as the initial experiment showed, efficient. Still, much of the special attention Il'minskii's activities attracted was due to his personality and competence both in non-Russian languages and in missionary work.

A graduate of Kazan Academy, where he studied eastern languages in the class of a professor Mirza Kazem-Bek, he himself became an instructor in Near Eastern languages. Though Il'minskii had not only studied the languages in the classroom: when he was a student he moved into the Tatar quarter of Kazan and quickly mastered colloquial Tatar, studying the everyday life of the Muslims and going to mosques and madrasahs.

This experience allowed him to become a member of translation committee in 1847 together with professor Kazem-Bek, the then rector of the academy archbishop Grigorii, and professor Sablukov. Later, during a summer trip around the villages of baptized Tatars, Il'minskii took a number of translations in order to test their effectiveness. Many of them proved to be incomprehensible. This came partly from the fact, that the Tatar language that the orientalist and missionaries studied, was a sort of jargon, 'a mix of Tatar and Turkic expressions and full of Arabic and Persian words'.²³² The translations could thus be understood only by *shakirds* (madrasah students) who had studied some books in this language, but not by the target population – the baptized Tatars. It was then that the translation committee opted for spoken Tatar as the language to translate Orthodox literature into.²³³ Since many religious notions simply did not exist in spoken Tatar, to broaden the gap between Orthodoxy and Islam the committee decided to use Russian words. The reasoning behind was that 'since in this case an Arabic or a Persian word is just as unknown to the

²³² *16 godovshchina otkrytiia tsentral'noi kazanskoj tatarskoj shkoly* [The Sixteenth Anniversary of the Opening of Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars] (Kazan: Tipografiia Kharitonova, 1905), 8.

²³³ K. Prokop'ev, *Perevody khristianskikh knig na inorodcheskie iazyki v pervoi polovine 19 veka (istoricheskii ocherk)* [Translations of Christian Books into the Cheremis Language in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century (Historical Overview)] (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1904), 32.

Tatars as a Russian one, it is better to take the latter, as it gives more inclination towards the Russian Orthodox side than to the Muslim Tatars' side.²³⁴

When Il'minskii studied the problem of translation of religious books into the languages of Middle Volga *inorodtsy*, he concluded that in the translation into the language of baptized Tatars one should accept some, though not many, expressions invented by Tatars themselves, if they were somehow close to Christian teaching. If there was an insufficiency of words to denote some Christian notions in their language, it was better to use Russian words rather than Arabic ones, 'more or less always full of Muslim ideas'. Personal names should certainly be written the way they were pronounced in Russian. In order to break the connection between baptized Tatars and Islam, the alphabet used should be Russian with changes made to express Tatar sounds. One of the reasons for this necessity, according to Il'minskii, was that the alphabet was always adopted together with religion.

Like Western Europe that took the Latin alphabet from the Latin Church, we use the Greek alphabet. Likewise, Tatars, like all other Muslim people, together with the teaching of Arab false prophet, adopted the Arabic alphabet; which means that it constitutes the connection between the Tatars and Islam. Secondly, knowledge of the Arabic-Tatar language is harmful for baptized Tatars since it would be the key to their understanding of Muslim books. Thirdly, translating religious books into Tatar we should also take into consideration old-baptized Tatars from the districts of Mamadysh and Laishev, none of whom can read Tatar.²³⁵

Il'minskii believed that if, by some miracle, all the Muslim ethnic groups of the Russian empire converted to Orthodoxy, they would also adopt the Cyrillic alphabet. While they remained Muslims, it was very difficult for the Cyrillic alphabet to compete with the Arabic one unless Muslims themselves found it more attractive. Non-Christian *inorodtsy* who had their own script, like Muslim Tatars or Buddhist Buriat, would never accept the Russian alphabet either in its pure form or with some deviations.

²³⁴ Prokop'ev, *Perevody*.

²³⁵ N.I. Il'minskii, *Perepiska o chuvashskikh izdaniiax perevodcheskoi komissii* [Correspondence about Chuvash Publications of Translation Committee] (Kazan: Tsentral'naia tipografiia, 1890), 13-14.

On the other hand, he argued, unification in the alphabet would not lead the *inorodtsy* to an ‘internal rapprochement’ with Russians unless they received a Russian education and, still more importantly, converted to Orthodoxy. Il’minskii suggested that, at this stage, even among the Muslim non-Russians who had no written language, for example, the Kirghiz, the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet should be gradual and should be based on spoken Kirghiz language not only in schools but also in the administration.²³⁶

In the year 1848, Archbishop Grigorii commissioned Il’minskii to visit Kriashen villages to study the religious situation there. Il’minskii, seeing that many Kriashen had returned to Islam by that time and that many priests and missionaries had proved not to be sufficiently competent to combat apostasy, suggested establishing a missionary division in the Kazan Academy. The students of the division would study indigenous languages and also the fundamentals of Islam in order to be able to combat it better. Grigorii approved this project and, after six years such a division was indeed opened. Il’minskii was obviously a suitable candidate to head its anti-Islam section.²³⁷

Before being assigned this responsibility, however, Il’minskii was sent to the Near East for two and a half years, travelling across Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor, improving his languages and also studying history and Islamic theology. He had two specific duties as well: at Grigorii’s request, he was to study Catholic and Protestant Near Eastern Missions. The other request came from the Grand Duke Konstantin Nickolaevich, who was interested in turkology, to send him regular reports of the trip.²³⁸ During his trip, which started in November 1851, not only did Il’minskii study Muslim theology and law, literary works and grammar, but he also visited a numbers of mosques, bazaars, and schools. His mission was cut short in October 1853 because of the deteriorating relationship with the Ottoman empire, but when he returned to Kazan, ‘...no other Russian Arabist could match his training in the

²³⁶ “Uchastie N.I. Il’minskogo v dele inorodcheskogo obrazovaniia turkestanskogo kraia.” *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo universiteta, 1900): 185.

²³⁷ David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010),131.

²³⁸ Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*,132. See also Johnson, “Imperial Commisiion”.

field nor equal his knowledge of the Arab East.²³⁹ By this time Il'minskii was already sure that the traditional missionary approach of debating with Muslims was hopeless and the Russian Orthodox Church could only be successful among Kriashen and animists of the Middle Volga and only through missionary education.

Studying the organization of madrasahs in Cairo and Bukhara, Il'minskii was impressed by the way the teaching process was set up. At first sight, there seemed to be no organization, since the students or, as they were called, *talebe*, which means 'knowledge seekers', decided for themselves what subject they were going to take for the year and who their teacher would be. In Cairo, the students had the right to listen to one or two lectures from all the teachers before they chose the one they would learn from during the whole year; this free choice created a situation where the best teachers had most students and those less gifted - sometimes only a few. The students of Bukhara madrasahs, for example, even though they lived at school and even got a scholarship there, sometimes for as long as ten or fifteen years, were not obliged to follow the classes of the school's teachers. They could take classes at a different school if it had better teachers. 'This is the best and the simplest form [of schooling] and the main thing about it is that there is not a single formal paper.'²⁴⁰ Il'minskii, whose school was often accused of lack of system, lack of assessment and examination of the classic type, was against any formalism in the teaching matter. His colleagues at the University even accused him of being pro-Muslim when he expressed his views on the madrasah education system.

Il'minskii's point, however, was different. His was not the intention to turn Russian educational institutions into Muslim madrasahs. By saying that the approach to schooling should not be reduced to a set of rules and regulations, he meant that it was important to set some general rules that in every particular case could be adjusted to the local circumstances. Otherwise, he said, 'if one makes an eclectic mixture of regulations to be adapted to five or

²³⁹ I.Iu.Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki* [Overview of the History of Russian Arabic Studies] (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1950), 180.

²⁴⁰ N.I. Il'minskii, *Zapiska ob ustroistve uchebnykh zavedenii* [A Note on Organization of Teaching Institutions] (Kazan: Tipografiia Kliuchnikova, 1904), 8-9.

six Universities, in the end it will be suitable to none of them, just as if one tried to make a frock-coat for five or six persons of different height.²⁴¹

Besides trips to the Middle East and familiarity with both Muslim and baptized Tatar villages, Il'minskii was appointed to another position that was crucial for the development of his ideas. The plan to use indigenous languages in primary education was inspired by Vasilii Grigoriev, a scholar of Central Asian history, who worked at the Orenburg Borderlands Commission, which Il'minskii joined in 1858. During the three years of his stay in Orenburg, Il'minskii studied Grigoriev's method of Christian education of Kazakhs in their own language but with the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. This was to discourage the use of Arabic and thus to block the access of Kazakhs to Muslim teaching. Il'minskii became convinced that this was an efficient technique, which could be used in the Middle Volga region in order to combat apostasy among the Kriashen and obstruct Muslim proselytism, not only among baptized Tatars, but also among other non-Russians who came under Muslim influence.²⁴²

In 1864, Il'minskii turned to Shestakov for the permission to open a private school for Kriashen children, with the appointment of Vasiii Timofeev, a literate baptized Tatar. Il'minskii became acquainted with during his trips across the baptized Tatar villages, as its first teacher.²⁴³ The school was opened with an initial twenty Tatar and Chuvash pupils who were taught catechism in Tatar on the basis of the Russian alphabet, religious instruction [*zakon Bozhii*], prayers and the history of the Church, with the later introduction of basic arithmetic, reading first in Tatar, then in Russian, geography and drawing. Special attention was paid to church songs both in Tatar and Church Slavonic.²⁴⁴ Later, thinking about the first years of the school existence, Il'minskii said:

I confess we opened this school quite rashly. We were driven only by the immediate necessity for a school for baptized Tatars...if the old-baptized are alien to Christian enlightenment and more prone to their old shamanism and

²⁴¹ Il'minskii, *Zapiska*, 16.

²⁴² Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, 136.

²⁴³ Pobedonostsev, *Uchenie i uchitel.*

²⁴⁴ Il'minskii, *Zapiska*, 14.

Islam, the majority of the newly-baptized along Volga and Kama are influenced by Islam, for they send their children to the Tatar madrasahs.²⁴⁵

The whole discussion about the schooling of non-Muslim *inorodtsy* was not around whether it should, or should not, be missionary in its nature, for there was no doubt about giving Orthodox education to the baptized. It was rather an argument about the method and the introduction of the Russian language. Contrary to some of his opponents, who supported the direct Russification by means of teaching in Russian and conducting sermons in Church Slavonic, Il'minskii was profoundly convinced that, when studying in Russian, an *inorodets* did not understand much, or understood it in a wrong way which meant that such education 'separates him from the mass of *inorodtsy*.'²⁴⁶ On the contrary, by using the *inorodtsy* language at school, one could 'assimilate archaically simple...ideas of shamanistic non-Russians into Christianity...since a people's thinking and worldview is expressed in their mother tongue. ...A person who speaks the language of *inorodtsy*, is easily understood and is able to convince them, for together with the words he uses their elements of thinking', Il'minskii wrote in 1863,

As soon as the *inorodtsy* became convinced, by means of their mother tongue, in Christian truth, they would feel love towards the Russian people...then they would study the Russian language and wish to get a Russian education. In contrast, the idea of some teachers to use the Russian language at the very beginning, would probably lead to quite opposite results.²⁴⁷

There were not infrequent cases where students who came to the Kazan school had already finished a Russian school and spoke Russian. But as it turned out, such students often could not understand much in books written in Russian and could not retell in their own language a single story from the Gospel. These students would be first of all taught to read and understand books in spoken Tatar and only afterwards would they start learning Russian.

²⁴⁵ *Kazanskaia kreshcheno-tatarskaia shkola: materialy dlia istorii khristianskogo prosveshcheniia kreshchenykh tatar* [Kazan School for Baptized Tatars: Materials for the History of Christian Enlightenment of Baptized Tatars] (Kazan: Tipografiia Kliuchnikova,1887),77.

²⁴⁶ Ibid,7.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

A remarkable case demonstrating that education in non-Russian language could lead to conscious acceptance of Orthodoxy and could fight apostasy, is that of a former madrasah student from the village of Tri Sosny. The inhabitants of this village, baptized Tatars, often came to work for Muslim Tatars in Kazan just like the father of this boy did. Wishing to give his son a Tatar education, he first sent him to a madrasah where the boy was often beaten and did not show much progress in his studies. When the boy heard about the school for baptized Tatars, he asked his father to take him there. When Timofeev, in order to test the boy's knowledge of Tatar, asked him to read some lines from the Gospel, he could only recognize some letters, but not a single word, however short it was. His father was anxious for the son to get a Russian education since, he explained 'he has already almost become a Tatar, and although I myself lead a Tatar way of life, I see that we can no longer be real Tatars.'²⁴⁸ When the boy came to school, his head was shaven and he was keeping the *sawm*. However, after a few days he began eating together with the rest of the school and later learned Christian prayers and started to pray and cross himself.

The experiment with the first school for baptized Tatars proved to be reasonably successful and Il'minskii then turned to Minister of Education Tolstoi with the suggestion of creating a network of such schools. Unlike Russian schools, Il'minskii's primary school consisted of four years of schooling, composed of two two-year cycles. During the first two years, the children learnt sacred history, reading in their mother tongue, church singing and the basics of arithmetic. They started to learn Russian a little later, since attention was mainly focused on teaching the basics of the Orthodox faith in indigenous languages. By the second year, the pupils had acquired as much knowledge as that of their counterparts in literacy schools.²⁴⁹ When reading Russian texts every phrase was first translated into their mother tongue, then pronounced several times and memorized in Russian. The main subject being religious instruction, the pupils had to learn it twice: first in their mother tongue, then in

²⁴⁸ *Kazanskaia*, 85.

²⁴⁹ Ia. I. Khanbikov, *Russkie pedagogi Tatarii i ikh rol' v razvitii prosveshcheniia i pedagogicheskoi mysli tatarskogo naroda* [Russian Pedagogues of Tataria and their Role in the Development of the Teaching Activities and Pedagogical Thought of the Tatar People] (Kazan: n.p., 1968), 92.

Russian.²⁵⁰ Before studying written Russian and its grammar, the pupils had first to learn to speak Russian and to understand the teacher.²⁵¹

Geraci claims that 'Il'minskii was adamantly opposed to both pedagogical theory and school standardization, and even denied that he had created a standardized system.'²⁵² It is true that, when the leaders of the Kazan diocese and St. Gurii brotherhood instructed Il'minskii to set up the new schools project in the region, he expressed the view that having a rigid structure of schooling was not important, indeed useless:

The Cheremis of the Koz'modemiansk district studied the Gospel in great depth, but could not write at all; many of them were good teachers and priests, but could hardly sign their signatures to get their salaries...So, why would anyone restrict the first schools of literacy with a program? Let them teach and study, as much and as well as they can, as long as this is an Orthodox education with good morals.²⁵³

I do not believe, however, that the education at Kazan Central School for baptized Tatars was as chaotic as one might imagine, especially if one remembers the favorable image of Middle Eastern madrasahs that Il'minskii undoubtedly kept in his mind. I would claim that the point that Il'minskii was making, when he rejected standardization of his system was of a protective nature: he wanted to avoid the endorsement of some conventional means of measurement of the students' progress. The method of assessment actually used in schools in this period was very similar to the system called the Dalton plan at the beginning of the twentieth century when the students were given assignments and completed them at their own pace. Moreover, the school organization resembled an extended family, meaning that the director with his family actually lived in the school building together with the students. The students were not very many and the teachers knew them well enough to be able to evaluate their progress without keeping record books.

As the main recipients of missionary work were the non-Russians of the region, Il'minskii introduced a method in which the main focus fell on the use of local languages in missionary

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 93.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 94.

²⁵² Geraci, *Window on the East*, 131.

²⁵³ *Pis'ma Nikolaia Ivanovicha Il'minskogo* [Letters of Nikolai Ivanovich Il'minskii] (Kazan: n.p.,1895), 170.

work, since this was the quickest and the most efficient way to convey Orthodox ideas to non-Russians. Therefore, it was crucial to train the *inorodtsy* priests and missionaries, as sermons delivered in native languages enabled them to make greater impact on the local population.²⁵⁴ Johnson convincingly demonstrates that Il'minskii included in his system the broader Orthodox missionary tradition, following the activities of Cyril and Methodius, the so-called Apostles to the Slavs in the ninth century in Moravia. These Byzantine missionaries developed an alphabet for Slavic languages based on Greek, translated religious texts into the language that later became known as Church Slavonic, and trained indigenous clergy who could later preach and conduct liturgies for the local population.²⁵⁵ Indeed, one cannot but note Il'minskii's reflection of Cyril and Methodius' approach as underpinning the ideology of his system, which manifested itself in the famous triad: '*inorodtsy* books, *inorodtsy* liturgy, *inorodtsy* parish with the priest at its head.'²⁵⁶

As early as 1866 Count Tolstoi, visiting Kazan educational district, suggested that it would be useful to appoint clergy from baptized Tatars limiting the required education level to school and simplifying examinations. In response, Il'minskii proposed a project which was approved by archbishop Antonii and as of May 1867 by the Holy Synod, which affirmed the following rules for non-Russian priests: an aspirant should be no younger than thirty; his moral qualities should be without reproach; he should know the events of the Old and New Testament, the Gospel and dogmas of the Orthodox faith. Moreover, he should have a practical knowledge of Russian. The first non-Russian to be ordained a priest was Vasilii Timofeev.²⁵⁷

The system proposed by Il'minskii was not universally approved and accepted. The language of instruction and the issues of the usefulness of translating religious literature onto the languages of the small ethnic groups remained a stumbling block in discussions that went well beyond church circles. The fact that Russian scholars raised the question of translations at the Third International Congress on Eastern Studies (*Tretii mezhdunarodnyi kongress*

²⁵⁴ *Pis'ma Nikolaia Ivanovicha*, 170.

²⁵⁵ Johnson, "Imperial Commission".

²⁵⁶ N.I. Il'minskii quoted in Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaia tserkov'*, 225.

²⁵⁷ By the end of 1870s among the non-Russian clergy there were already four baptized Tatars, six Mari and two Chuvash. Two of them were married to Russian, and five-to *inorodtsy* girls.

vostokovedov) in 1876, demonstrates its importance for the authorities and Russian society.

²⁵⁸ The point of view of the Russian scholars was summarized in the words of an orientalist V. Vasiliev. Arguing that some languages were too primitive to express the ideas of Christian teaching, he claimed that ‘to translate sacred books into these languages would mean to artificially create non-Russian literature; more than that, it would mean, to a certain degree, to create the language itself.’²⁵⁹

The idea of teaching in indigenous languages was also criticized. Even Malov, who worked with Il'minskii, was against teaching of the Tatar children in their own language, at least initially. We can read this in his ‘missionary diary’:

Why should we force children to study in Tatar when their parents want them to be instructed in Russian? We should be happy with such a desire and organize [teaching] in order to make *inorodtsy* forget their language completely, become russified (*obruseli*); otherwise they will always be our enemies.²⁶⁰

From this entry it becomes clear that for Malov the Russian language was clearly the precondition for *obrusenie* when Russian was supposed to take over from indigenous languages. One of Il'minskii's opponents the archbishop of Buinsk district in the province of Simbirsk, Alexei Baratynskii, also claimed that it was necessary to educate non-Russians in Russian. He stressed that the lexis of the *inorodtsy* languages was not adequate to express basic Christian notions, thus leading to distortion and misinterpretation of the meaning. In his view, a sacred text translated into Tatar came out somewhere between Orthodoxy and Islam.

Moreover, he expressed the idea that the introduction of indigenous languages into church and school practices could lead to the development of a national self-consciousness among non-Russian peoples, and that this would be quite dangerous in the multiethnic empire.²⁶¹ Baratynskii's supporters agreed that non-Russian languages could be used as ‘auxiliary tools’

²⁵⁸ “Tretii mezhdunarodnyi kongress orientalistov v Sankt-Peterburge,” in *Zhurnal MNP* (November 1876): 52-53.

²⁵⁹ *Zhurnal MNP* (January 1878): 2.

²⁶⁰ E. Malov, “Krestom kak mechom. Iz dnevnika missionera” [By Cross like by Sword. From a Missionary's Diary], *Idel'*, no.6 (1993): 41.

²⁶¹ A. Baratynskii, “Zapiska o vvedenii russkogo iazyka i russkoi gramotnosti v tatarskikh uchilishchakh,” [A Note on the Introduction of the Russian Language and Russian Literacy in Tatar Vocational Schools] in *Sbornik dokumentov i statei po voprosu obrazovaniia inorodtsev* (Simbirsk: n.p., 1884), 619.

to ensure that students understood what was being taught, but only after the students had learnt Russian. They claimed that the primary use of the *inorodtsy* languages ‘implied that these languages were more important instructionally than Russian.’²⁶² Finally, it was claimed that a movement towards the development of national languages, making them languages of schools and the church, would lead to a rise in ethnic consciousness and separatism. In these debates, Baratynskii spoke of ‘civil Russification’ and stated that ‘the assimilation of a language assimilates nationality as well.’²⁶³

Interestingly, Ivan Iakovlev (the first Chuvash to get a gymnasium education and to study at Kazan University), who would later become the head of the Simbirsk Chuvash school and inspector of Chuvash schools promoting Il’minskii’s method, was initially Baratynskii’s protégé. At a small school Iakovlev established for Chuvash boys while he was still a student himself, he taught the boys only in Russian. Later, when he met Il’minskii and studied his system, he also started to use the Chuvash language in teaching.

During the summer vacation of 1871, Iakovlev translated the Gospel of St Matthew and went with the boys of his Simbirsk Chuvash School to Chuvash villages to read the Gospel. The traditional oral folk stories and sayings collected during this trip, together with the translated Bible stories and prayers were used to compile the first Chuvash primer which was published in 1871. Teaching Iakovlev how to deal with the translations Il’minskii would say,

Don’t be over-confident. Learn and go on learning! Don’t be ashamed to learn from...the ordinary people. You must believe that if some thought has entered the head of a Russian, or Frenchman or a German, then it must also be in the head of some African savage. God has given each people the means to understand all kinds of ideas... You just need to be able to find them and draw them out.²⁶⁴

This quotation demonstrates that there were no ‘high’ and ‘low’ level languages, and the universal ideas, such as Christianity, could be conveyed to the people if translated into their native, vernacular languages. And only by means of the native language was it possible to help people accept and embrace Orthodoxy. It took some time for Iakovlev to abandon his

²⁶² Geraci, *Window on the East*, 123.

²⁶³ *Ibid*, 138.

²⁶⁴ Iakovlev, *Moia zhizn’*, 272.

convictions about the supremacy of the Russian language in the classroom, but later he became one of the most ardent supporters of the Il'minskii's method.

In 1877, Iakovlev's school gained the right to train teachers for village elementary schools. In the following 30 years, up to 1917, it had trained over 1000 teachers, mainly Chuvash, but also Russians, Tatars and Mordva, who worked in native schools across the Volga-Urals region and Siberia.²⁶⁵ The curriculum of the Simbirsk school included basic Chuvash, Russian and Slavonic, catechism, history, geography, mathematics and gymnastics; the school also taught agriculture and beekeeping and had its own model farm from 1893. It had workshops for a variety of practical skills such as carpentry, cobbling, bookbinding and smithying. All of Iakovlev's students learnt a musical instrument and sang in the school's choirs which from 1885 sang the Orthodox services in Chuvash at the school's 'Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit', named after the moment when the apostles began to speak in other tongues.

However, Iakovlev modified the program and devoted fewer hours to religious subjects and more to the learning of the Russian language. The fact was that Iakovlev wanted his school graduates to go further, to enter a University. Probably with the same intention, he introduced teaching of trade subjects. This was something Il'minskii disapproved of, warning about the danger of educating the *inorodtsy* 'too much', in any case against giving them access to higher education at a stage when their religious and moral level was still too low, and they were simply not ready for higher education. He was afraid lest the *inorodtsy* should identify with Russians so much that they would feel antipathy towards their own tribe and see them as 'untidy, and ignorant, and in general alien to education', at time when the only purpose of their education was to be useful actors among the *inorodtsy*.

²⁶⁵ Mashanov, *Obzor*, 140-141.

2.3. The Implementation of the Method

As we have seen, the language of instruction remained a stumbling block in the discussion over the *inorodtsy* schools. Officials in St. Petersburg - whose point of view was published in the Journal of the Ministry of Education – did not consider either Chuvash or Tatar suitable for school practice. Tatar was equally unacceptable for ideological reasons:

[...]to transfer Christian belief and especially psalms of the Orthodox church into the Tatar dialect, it is unavoidable that one will have to express its Christian contents by the expressions and images borrowed from the language of Muslim religious doctrine and Muslim prayers, and...will it not result in something halfway between Christianity and Islam?²⁶⁶

Chuvash was described as one of the poorest languages in the world, with no more than one and a half thousand words and lacking words to express abstract notions.²⁶⁷ Other languages such as Mari, Mordva and Udmurt had the same problems. The important point made by Il'minskii, nevertheless, was that teaching in the vernacular did not lose much from the fact that this latter did not have a high literary language, since the main concern was that it could be used as a reliable tool to convey Orthodox ideas.

In fact, Il'minskii was criticized by many who believed that the native languages were too primitive to express Christian teaching correctly, but he defended his views saying,

[...] the Russian language will not penetrate to the depths of consciousness of the natives, to their hearts, and in these depths their former, pre-Christian beliefs will remain untouched in spite of them knowing by heart the Catechism and prayers. ... It is true that the language of the people is not Christian. But you see Greek was formerly the organ of Greek mythology and vain philosophy according to the elements of the world, but the Gospel made it Christian. The Slavonic language was also pagan and then became Christian. Similarly with us, through the translation of Christian services into the language of the people, it is permeated with the Christian spirit and receives a Christian character. ... There can be and

²⁶⁶ *Sbornik dokumentov i statei po voprosam obrazovaniia inorodtsev* [Set of Documents and Articles on the Question of Non-Russian Education](Saint Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1896), 14.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

there are noble elements in the popular language. You need only to select them skillfully, like a wise bee.²⁶⁸

Il'minskii, putting the accent on the hypothesis that the spread of Islam might become the main obstacle to the Christianization and Russification of all the eastern subjects of the empire, addressed his opponents in the following way: in the following way: in the following way:

If, because we are afraid of a certain people, we refuse to use non-Russian languages in non-Russian schools for the complete, conscious acceptance of Orthodox faith, all the *inorodtsy* will turn into a single tribe (*plemia*) in terms of both the language and faith –the Tatars and Muslims (*magometanskoe*). 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 choice!²⁶⁹

Finally, the indigenous language was recognized as the primary tool for teaching the *inorodtsy* language; thus, the immediate strategy was to achieve the Russification of *inorodtsy* by means of Orthodoxy and, later, through familiarization with the Russian language. The system was supported and promoted in schools by missionary brotherhoods, the most well-known of which was the brotherhood of St. Gurii in Kazan.

Teaching in indigenous languages, holding meetings for non-Russian school teachers, printing activities, addressing the problems of the religious upbringing of the Russian population and fighting against the spread of paganism and Old Belief²⁷⁰ all formed part of the plan of the activities of the St. Gurii brotherhood in 1870, together with the support of the baptized Tatar (Kriashen) school and state schools, There was a similar brotherhood in Simbirsk district: the brotherhood of Three Baptizers (*Trekh Sviatitelei*) was founded in 1875 on a voluntary basis to maintain the system of education in the district.

²⁶⁸ K.V. Kharlampovich, "O khristianskom prosveshchenii inorodtsev: perepiska Arkhiepiskopa Veniamina Irkutskogo s N.I. Il'minskim" [On Christian Missionary Work among the Non-Russians: The Correspondence between Archbishop Veniamin of Irkutsk and N.I. Il'minskii], *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (July-August 1905): 1-38.

²⁶⁹ Quoted in Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaia tserkov'*, 228

²⁷⁰ Khanbikov, *Russkie pedagogi*, 77.

Started for the Kriashen, brotherhood satellite schools for other indigenous peoples were soon launched throughout the region. P. V. Znamenskii called the schools of the St. Guriï brotherhood ‘small...colonies of the Kazan school for baptized Tatars.’²⁷¹ This school was in fact the center that attracted most missionaries, university teachers, and merchants supporting missionary work. Most importantly, it enjoyed the support of Dmitriï Tolstoi and, as long as Tolstoi was the head of both the Ministry of Education and the Holy Synod, Il’minskii’s projects got their funding from both these sources.²⁷² In his turn, Il’minskii became Tolstoi’s, and later, Pobedonostsev’s, advisor on matters of Islam and non-Russian missions. In fact, close personal connections helped Il’minskii gain some concessions in the education of non-Russians, the greatest of which was the use of a native language in instruction (as has been mentioned, according to the 1864 Statute on Primary Education, all instruction at schools was to be carried out in Russian). So, if at the beginning Il’minskii was using Tatar at his school without permission, the authorities did not interfere, partly because, legally, Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars was a private institution.

It should be mentioned that there were certain limits to the activities of the missionary schools. Since these were non-state, public-supported institutions, the salaries were much lower, so the schools had constant problems with the teaching staff and had limited teaching supplies.²⁷³ A priest, but also a teacher - Bol’shakov, wrote to Il’minskii about his experience in the Mari village of Arino, where two hundred pagans lived:

Opening a school is difficult even in a Russian village, to say nothing of a non-Russian one, especially among pagans. ...I talked to the Cheremis many times, usually face-to-face, it is easier to convince one than many at a time...And finally I decided to have a general meeting - as soon as I entered the room, the people started shouting in Mari and Russian that they were against the school, but later they agreed to it...I am quite sure that school should be the main means by which to influence *inorodtsy*, but its impact on the masses is slow, almost invisible, while the Cheremis remain in the dark, which is a deplorable fact.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Znamenskii, *Na pamiat’*, 196.

²⁷² Il’minskii, *Kazanskaia Tsentral’naia*, 198.

²⁷³ NART, f.4, op.148, d.373, l.45.

²⁷⁴ NART, f.968, op. 1, d.89, l.7.

Another case that shows how reluctant the natives were when it came to opening a school in a village was reported by Kuz'ma Andreev, an old-baptized Votyak from the village of Bol'shoi Karlygan, in the district of Viatka; the school was opened and later became the center of education for the Votyak. The reluctance was in this case directly connected to the unwillingness of *inorodtsy* to accept things that were 'Russian' in the public awareness. In 1872, when Andreev studied in a school for old-baptized Tatars, he began to read about Orthodoxy in Tatar (which he understood better than Russian), and later he started studying Il'minskii's books, praying at home in Votyak with his brothers, and teaching reading to village children. His parents were against his studies because 'literate people are considered unhappy', and because they 'drank, stole things and offended others.'²⁷⁵

Taking into account the frequency of such accusations with respect to the Russian population of the region, I presume that the notions of literate, Russian and Orthodox were to some extent equal in the public consciousness, especially, as we further read Andreev's letter, his parents later accused him of a desire 'to become a Russian.'²⁷⁶ He also mentioned that 'there are no girls in our schools - their parents won't let them go there. They say that, after getting an education, girls will stop wearing home-made dresses and will marry Russians.'²⁷⁷ Andreev further suggested taking the orphans or daughters of poor parents and teaching them literacy and the basics of Orthodoxy so that they in their turn would send their daughters to school.²⁷⁸ In the matter of the religious education of *inorodtsy*, the education of girls was indeed a very important aspect since the male population very often went to other villages in order to make money, which did not allow them to supervise the religious upbringing of their children. Women instead, remained at home and had great influence not only on children, but also on grown-up men.

Another shortcoming was that the teachers had to meet only minimal professional requirements: the main criteria were their religiosity and the ability to do missionary work.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ NART, f. 968, op.1, d.16, l. 17.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ "Shkoly 'bratstva Sviatitelia Guriia' v Chuvashii," (Schools of St. Guriia Brotherhood in Chuvashii), *Narodnaia shkola* no.4 (1996): 108.

If one analyzes the school curriculum for the period of tuition (hours a week per subject), it is possible to state that most time was still devoted to the Russian language, then came religious instruction, which presupposed that mastering Russian as well as the basics of Orthodoxy were the main aims of this education while mother tongues were the means to achieve them.

Table 3: Educational Curriculum of a Typical Brotherhood School²⁸⁰

Subject	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Religious instruction	4	4	5	5
Russian	10	12	11	11
Church Slavonic	-	-	2	2
Mother tongue	6	4	3	3
Arithmetic	4	5	5	5
Writing	4	3	2	2
Singing	2	2	2	2
Total	30	30	30	30

The curriculum was challenging enough, especially when compared to the list of subjects per week recommended by the Ministry of Education for the ministry and zemstvo primary schools for Russian students until 1897:

²⁸⁰ Source: “Shkoly ‘Bratstva Sviatitelia Guriia’.

Table 4: Educational Curriculum for a Typical Russian Primary School²⁸¹

Subject	Hours per week
Religious instruction	6
Church Slavonic	3
Russian	8
Writing	2
Arithmetic	5
Total	24

Il'minskii explained why the work of an *inorodtsy* priest or teacher would be more effective than that of a Russian. He based his preference for *inorodtsy*, first of all, on the greater trust and sympathy of the people towards a person coming from the same tribe. Secondly, he believed that an *inorodtsy* priest or teacher knew how to approach people from his own milieu better. And, thirdly, Il'minskii was convinced that for a native 'the wilds, the worst living conditions, would seem agreeable when for another person the lack of conveniences of civilized life would be hard.'²⁸² That is why the best kind of teacher in a school for the *inorodtsy* would come from the same tribe, and would be socially close to the peasant community.

Similarly, one was supposed to permit communal living among Russian and non-Russian students only to the extent that the latter acquired some liking for Russians while at the same time maintaining connection with the people of their own tribe. As regards the higher possibilities for the *inorodtsy* to learn Russian when living among Russians, this was for Il'minskii a matter of less importance.²⁸³ Immediate introduction of the Russian language did not matter that much, what mattered were 'the people's beliefs, notions a people lived with,

²⁸¹ I have borrowed these data from Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, 487.

²⁸² N.I. Il'minskii, *Tsentrāl'naia kreshcheno-tatarskaia shkola* [Central School for Baptized Tatars] (Kazan, 1887), 128.

²⁸³ *Kazanskaia*, 272.

so it is important first of all to Russify the *inorodtsy* internally, in the religious and Christian sense of the word (*v tserkovnom i v khristianskom smysle*).²⁸⁴ Il'minskii was careful about pushing the non-Russian population towards Russification considering that in teaching Orthodoxy one should neither attempt to oust indigenous languages, nor pry into the everyday life of the people too much. His views are vividly expressed in his letter to Pobedonostsev:

We should convince a non-Russian that even keeping his way of life he can be a Christian, that even living in a nomad's tent, wearing his national dress, going hunting and fishing, he can live as a Christian, according to God.²⁸⁵

That is why, even if Il'minskii not infrequently uses the word 'assimilation' in his works and letters, it is usually used in the sense of 'internal conversion', adoption of Orthodoxy by the non-Muslim population of the region by means of missionary education in native languages.

In accordance with the aims of Il'minskii's system and the St. Guriï brotherhood schools, its graduates became teachers in non-Russian schools while some also became non-Russian priests in indigenous Orthodox communities.²⁸⁶ Moving from a teacher's seminary or parish school into the priesthood was quite common for non-Russians, and can be explained by various reasons: firstly, the importance of people's spiritual education at the above-mentioned schools; secondly, the Kazan seminary (1872) was accessible to many *inorodtsy*, while other state secondary educational institutions were virtually closed to them. This was because at the schools based on Il'minskii's system there was no teaching of languages (such as Greek and Latin and modern foreign languages) and so graduates could only get secondary education in an ecclesiastic seminary. Moreover, there were favorable terms for the *inorodtsy* in ecclesiastic seminaries: they started to study in the fourth class and studied for three years only, without studying ancient or modern languages, but, all the same, they received the certificate just as did other students who had studied there for seven years.

²⁸⁴ *Sbornik dokumentov i statei*, 334.

²⁸⁵ *Pis'ma Nikolaia Ivanovicha Il'minskogo k ober-prokuroru Sv. Sinoda K.P. Pobedonostsevu (1882-1891)* [Letters of Nikolai Ivanovich Il'minskii to Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod K.P. Pobedonostsev] (Kazan: Pravoslavnyi sobesednik, 1898), 195.

²⁸⁶ R.R. Iskhakova, *Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie v Kazanskoi gubernii v seredine 19-nachale 20 vekov* [Pedagogical Education in Kazan Province in the Middle of the Nineteenth - Beginning of the Twentieth Century] (Kazan: Novoe znanie, 2001), 43.

At the opening ceremony of the seminary in 1872, Il'minskii defined its educational mission, laying particular emphasis on Orthodoxy: 'Christianity is a religion, which... does not efface the traits of a person or people but unites the peoples, making them God's children and brethren in Christ. This religion, acquired by the *inorodtsy*, makes them close to the Russians since the latter have already been Orthodox for a long time'.²⁸⁷ His speech was seconded by Shestakov, who said that opening the seminary

[...] connects and unites future non-Russian teachers with future Russian teachers and gives the former the possibility...to learn Russian, to become carriers of the Russian spirit, science and civilization among the representatives of their own tribe and contribute to *sblizhenie* of *inorodtsy* with Russians. Here, in this institution...non-Russians, our brothers in faith and compatriots, become united with Russians like brothers, sons of the Russian Orthodox church, sons of the a multimillion Russian family.²⁸⁸

Shestakov, trustee of the Kazan educational district, realized that the process of *sblizhenie* was not a short-term process and saw the roots of alienation not in the religious or national particularism of the non-Russians (for, they thought, only educated people were capable of defending their nationhood and the non-Russians were not at that stage yet). Consequently, the only way to reach *sblizhenie* was Orthodoxy, a uniting force that was supposed to draw non-Russian neophytes close to Russians who had been Orthodox for a long time.²⁸⁹

Thus, the Kazan teachers' seminary was established to train teachers for Russian and *inorodtsy* children, even if the Ministry of Education was initially skeptical of this idea and planned two separate seminaries: one for Russians and the other for baptized non-Russians. The reasons given were as follows: the *inorodtsy* did not need the Slavonic language while it was compulsory for the Russians, and, most importantly, studying together with the Russians could be embarrassing for them and they would enter the seminary only reluctantly.²⁹⁰ However, in the end, only one seminary was opened and much attention was paid to the learning of languages, both Russian and *inorodtsy*. An inspector of the seminary, Archpriest

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ *Kazanskaia*, 437.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 444.

²⁹⁰ NART, f. 968, op.1, d.16., l.25.

V. Lozhkin, suggested that students studying Tatar should be allowed to take classes at Kazan Central School for baptized Tatars at least twice a week, while those studying Chuvash should ask the inspector of the Chuvash schools, Zolotnitskii, where they could go.²⁹¹ According to the regulations of the teacher's seminaries, they had equal status to a secondary educational institution and were aimed at providing training for the people of Orthodox denomination who wanted to become school teachers.²⁹²

Some special rules were introduced by Shestakov and Il'minskii for the Kazan teacher training seminary, regulating the ethnic and confessional composition of the students '...there should be no less than one third Russian students, the others can be non-Russian, baptized and pagans, but the overall number of pagans both in the seminary and primary schools at the seminary should not exceed ten.'²⁹³ Il'minskii explained this demand by the fact that the *inorodtsy* students needed the Russian environment to practice the language and besides there was no other teacher-training institution in the Kazan province, and the Russian village was also in the need of teachers. There were supposed to be several primary schools at the seminary: Chuvash, Mari, Mordva and Votiak. The scholar Iskhakova makes the point that it was very difficult to find sufficient numbers of Votiak and Mordva children to be enrolled in missionary education. They were not that numerous in the province and in Kazan itself, where one would mostly find grown-up men coming to earn money. Iskhakova also underlines the tendency, in the second half of the nineteenth century, for peasants coming to the city to gradually break connections with their own milieu, which explains why seminary teachers had to go to the villages to collect those children whose parents had agreed to send them to the city.²⁹⁴ The seminary was a closed institution and many of the teachers including Il'minskii and his own family lived in the seminary building.²⁹⁵ An example of the ethnic quota in the seminary is shown below.

²⁹¹ NART, f.968, op.1,d.2, l. 26.

²⁹² *Nastol'naia kniga po narodnomu obrazovaniuu. Zakony, rasporiasheniia, pravila, instruksii, ustavy, spravochnye svedeniia i pr. po shkol'nomy i vneshkol'nomy obucheniiu naroda 2.* [Table Reference Book on Education: Laws, Directives, Rules, Instructions, Regulations, Reference Material etc. Concerning People's Education] (Saint Petersburg: Izdanie Tovarishchestva Znanie, 1901), 1152.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1236.

²⁹⁴ Iskhakova *Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie*, 173.

²⁹⁵ *Spisok dolzhnostnykh lits Kazanskogo uchebnogo okruga* [The List of Public Officers of Kazan Educational District] (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1889): 167-169.

Table 5: Ethnic Composition of the Students of the Kazan Teachers' Seminary in 1875-76²⁹⁶

	1 st class	2 nd class	Graduates
Russians	26	18	11
Mordvins	1	-	1
Tatars	10	-	7
Cheremis	6	-	5
Chuvash	5	11	3
Votiak	1	-	-

Eligible candidates had to finish either a parish or a *zemstvo* school or a two-year primary school, where they would have learned the following subjects: religious instruction, Russian, arithmetic, geometry, history, geography, writing, drawing and arts.²⁹⁷ The students' abilities and the initial level of knowledge were sometimes quite varied, for not every student was able to meet the standards of the seminary and many had to leave after a year or two.

During the monitoring of the seminary in 1879, the assistant of head of the teaching district Malinovskii was impressed by the strength of the religious component in education: students read the Gospel, knew a lot of prayers and psalms.²⁹⁸ Given the importance of the use and knowledge of indigenous languages, it remains strange that Il'minskii deemed studying the grammatical structure of *inorodtsy* languages unnecessary, supporting the teaching of Iakovlev in Simbirsk Teacher Training school as a role model:

[...]instead of teaching the mother tongue, there are special classes for the comparison of articles in Russian, when unknown words or expressions are explained orally, in Chuvash.²⁹⁹

However, the monitoring committee was surprised at the absence of any student record books or records of the meetings of the teaching staff, and that the system of assessment was similar to the one used in Kazan Central school for baptized Tatars. In spite of this, the inspector was very satisfied with the quality of the teaching in the seminary, especially in Church Slavonic,

²⁹⁶ Source: NART, f.93, op.1,d.49, ll. 109-110.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.,17

²⁹⁸ NART, f.93, op. 1,d.84, l.6.

²⁹⁹ NART, f. 968, op.1, d. 8, l. 172.

literature, history and church singing.³⁰⁰ In the seminary, the students were taught the following subjects: religious instruction, Russian, Church Slavonic, arithmetic, geometry, Russian history, geography, natural sciences, painting and drawing, church singing, physical training.³⁰¹ Virtually no grades were awarded, and exams had a rather informal character (often there were no exams, but revision of the material studied during the year) and the teachers relied on their impressions of the students' progress. Naturally, the teaching process was controlled by Il'minskii and after his death such practices were abolished and assessment was regulated as in other educational institutions at this level.

Il'minskii chose people carefully to fill teachers' positions. He considered that an aspirant had to be a true believer and a good Christian, and in this respect one of the role models was Timofeev, who took part in the organization of the school for baptized Tatars and in the end became a priest.³⁰² Preparatory courses at the Kazan teachers' seminary aimed at strengthening pagans' Christian faith; the students learned the Bible, the main events in Holy history and received a general idea of a public liturgy. Both the Kazan teachers' seminary and the school for baptized Tatars had 'home' churches, where every working day would begin and end with a prayer.³⁰³

The graduates became primary school teachers and if they had studied free of charge, they had to work for at least six years as village school teachers or pay back the money spent on their tuition.³⁰⁴ An analysis of the programs of the seminary subjects suggests that the teaching quality of the institution was high, for the program of religious instruction included the study of the Bible, church history, church holidays, prayers and psalms, with constant revision of the material.³⁰⁵ The final exams tested the knowledge of the Bible, geography, history, Russian and Slavonic languages, mathematics, natural history and pedagogy. The

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 1.10.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 1.75.

³⁰² A.S. Rozhdestvin, *Nikolai Ivanovich Il'minskii i ego sistema inorodcheskogo obrazovaniia v kazanskom krae* [N.I. Il'minskii and His System of *Inorodtsy* Education in the Kazan Province] (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1900), 57.

³⁰³ *Nastol'naiia kniga*, 1238.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ NART, f.93, op.1, d.81, l.1.

graduates had to write two compositions: in Russian and pedagogy.³⁰⁶ What is surprising is that the teaching curriculum did not include the study of indigenous languages and it is probable that Russian-speaking teachers were destined to carry out missionary work amongst the Russian population of the region.

As the future missionaries and teachers were taught pedagogy, it is interesting to see that this included anatomy, psychology and methods of teaching. The anatomy part was strangely subdivided into two parts: study of the human body and the soul, including the following topics ‘Independence of the soul in relation to the body’, ‘Superiority of the soul’, ‘Religion’, ‘The heart as the domain of feelings’, suggesting that the psychological aspect was closely related to morality and religion. In the methodological part, students were given the basic methods of teaching reading, writing and numeracy; the importance of visual aids (that is why all the teachers had to be able to draw, so that illiterate pupils could look at the picture) and methods of teaching church singing.³⁰⁷ Teaching practice was carried out in *inorodtsy* primary schools (for Mordva, Chuvash, Votyak, Cheremis), in the Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars, and in one of the Russian primary schools for the Russians.³⁰⁸ In this respect, the considerable number of Russian graduates suggests that missionary work among the Russian population of the region was given much importance. As the classes were taught by Il’minskii himself, it is possible to suggest that he passed onto his students the fundamentals of his educational system, principles and methods of teaching.

In order for the future teachers to learn the methods of missionary work, the main focus was placed on the effective organization of church singing as an important psychological factor influencing the feelings of the pupils. They sang the prayers of matins and vespers set to music and the liturgy, all of which was translated into indigenous languages.³⁰⁹ Lessons of church singing at school gradually prepared students for celebration of the Divine Services in church.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 1.86.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 1.100.

³⁰⁸ V.N. Vitevskii, *N.I. Il’minskii-direktor Kazanskoi uchitel’skoi seminarii* [N.I. Il’minskii-Director of Kazan Teachers’ Seminary] (Kazan’: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1892),22.

³⁰⁹ George Robinson, “The Mission of Nikolai Il’minskii, Lay Missionary of the Russian Orthodox Church,” *International Journal of frontier missions* 7, no.3 (July 1990) : 81.

Much prominence was also given to the methods suggested by Il'minskii and Malov - techniques for expressive reading of books in indigenous languages and the ability to debate with the non-Orthodox population. The graduates had to know the religious texts by heart, but above all they had to be able to understand and explain them to the illiterate population. So, when visiting a church, a missionary teacher was expected to explain the meaning of every icon and the meaning of each religious symbol. He was to explain that the icons of the Savior, Virgin Mary and the saints brought their Holy Blessing to the church.³¹⁰ It was the church that gave the people the feeling of fear and love towards God; it was there that the study of prayers and the symbols of faith had their greatest psychological effect.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Il'minskii's system was attacked by conservatives and, after his death in 1891, began to decline. Even the Central School for Baptized Tatars seemed to have lost its significance – St. Gurii brotherhood suddenly stopped supporting it, 'cancelling it from its list of schools' and thus it was left in isolation.³¹¹ By 1903, the *zemstvos* in different provinces of the Volga regions started to abolish the system in their schools. In 1903-1905 Archbishop Dimitrii of Kazan (Koval'skii) forbade liturgies in indigenous languages in the diocesan churches. An ex-inspector of the Mamadysh district of the Kazan province, Krasnodubovskii, claimed that 'N.I. Il'minskii...was mistaken, giving...too much freedom to pagan languages...at school...at the expense of state Russian and Church Slavonic.'³¹²

The shift to the Russian language and Russian-speaking teachers was becoming more pronounced. The priest V. Kamenskii was greatly in favor of Russian teachers in *inorodtsy* schools:

In the history of *inorodtsy* education there are non-Russian schools with a Russian teacher, both in Siberia and in European Russia. Such teachers worked

³¹⁰ *Ocherk prosvetitel'skoi deiatel'nosti N.I. Il'minskogo* [Studies of Teaching Activities of N.I. Il'minskii] (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo uchilishchnogo soveta pri Sviateishem Sinode, 1904).

³¹¹ *Kratkii otchet o sostoianii kreshcheno-tatarskoi shkoly za 1904-1905* [A Short Report about the State of the School for Baptized Tatars in the Years 1904-1905] (No place:no date),42.

³¹² *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* , no. 2 (16 January 1904): 84.

hard compiling dictionaries, textbooks...and by their hard work awoke in *inorodtsy* a trust and love of all things Russian.³¹³

This meant that an ideal teacher for him would be a Russian, knowing the language, customs and traditions of the *inorodtsy*. Kamenskii was clearly in favor of Russian teachers, who

[...]could do no harm to *inorodtsy* schools giving explanations in Russian, translating where necessary. Such schools should have a patriotic upbringing as a priority, so that non-Russians would not be distanced from the customs of Russian life that have been formed under the influence of Orthodox faith. Where there is no Russian national school it is hard to expect non-Russian tribes to...become spiritually equal to Russians. And only a Russian but not an *inorodets* is capable of fulfilling this task.³¹⁴

Not only in the Middle Volga region, but also in Turkestan the Il'minskii system, initially accepted and used in non-Russian schools, was becoming less and less popular by the 1890s. Il'minskii's opponent in Turkestan, the school inspector Sergei Gramenitskii, criticizing the system, wrote:

In this system, the task of teaching Russian to the *inorodtsy* is shifted to the background and children start learning it only in the third year of studies, and during the first two years they are taught in native languages...In Turkestan, where the administrative policy for non-Russian subjects is based on non-interference in the religious affairs of the local tribes and teaching children the Russian language, this system is absolutely unacceptable. Teaching in indigenous languages during the first two years of studies is a waste of time.³¹⁵

In the explanatory note to the textbooks for the Russian-*inorodtsy* schools of Turkestan, Gramenitskii explained that the school-leavers had to be able to understand spoken Russian without difficulty and be able to speak, read and write in Russian. They also had to know the main facts about the history and geography of Russia, and the school was 'to make them

³¹³ V. Kamenskii, *Na sluzhbe missii. Deiatel'nost' inorodcheskogo missionera sredi tatar* [Missionary Service. Activities of a Non-Russian Missionary among Tatars] (Penza: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1913),59.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ S. Gramenitskii, "Inorodcheskoe obrazovanie v Turkestanskom krae", in *Turkestanskii vedomosti*, no.2 (1900).

understand the power of the Russian empire and to develop in the *inorodtsy* a feeling of patriotism and loyalty to Russia which had accepted them under its patronage.³¹⁶

This is not to say that the system of teaching in *inorodtsy* languages was abandoned - it had many ardent defenders including Il'minskii's students and relatives, such as Chicherina, Bobrovnikov and Iakovlev. I believe that the crucial question, when assessing Il'minskii's system and its effectiveness, is how much of it was based on imperial ideology, Russification policy, and how much on missionary ideas. While for Il'minskii's opponents Orthodoxy was but a tool of Russification, his own primary concern was a deep and conscious acceptance of the Orthodox religion by non-Russians, and he believed that this could only happen in a familiar environment. Instead of making non-Russians adapt to a system, he adapted the system to them, giving them an education in their own language, and native teachers and priests who would bring them to Orthodoxy and literacy. For Il'minskii, Russification was not an immediate goal; he believed in a gradual progress uniting Russians and non-Russians by means of a common faith. The whole system, from primary to higher professional education, led to, as Geraci suggests, the creation of an intermediate class of non-Russians who would be russified but at the same time would maintain the ties to their native groups, helping them to become loyal Russian subjects.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ "Uchastie N.I. Il'minskogo v dele inorodcheskogo obrazovaniia turkestanskogo kraia" [Participation of N.I. Il'minskii in the Matter of Non-Russian Education in Turkestan], *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1900):370.

³¹⁷ Geraci, *Window on the East*, 157.

CHAPTER THREE. CIVILIZING THE OTHER? EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS FOR MUSLIM TATARS

The issue of education of Muslim Tatars of the Middle Volga, and especially of the Kazan province, is a multifaceted problem which, although discussed in the present-day historical research, still retains several aspects to explain and to uncover, actors to introduce and outcomes to analyze.³¹⁸ This relatively closed Muslim community, in the second half of the nineteenth century experienced internal reforms, which were first characterized as reforms within Islam, but gradually acquired a more social and political coloring. Muslims' encounter with modernity steadily led to their social mobilization and to transformation of the communal identity.

When working on the Regulations of 1870, officials were well aware of the fact that the Russian school with its Orthodox component was not compatible with traditional Muslim educational institutions. In fact, the Regulations made sharp distinctions between schools for Muslim and non-Muslim non-Russians of the Middle Volga. It was decided to establish Russian-Tatar schools for the children of Muslim Tatars, financed by the Treasury, where they would learn the Russian language and Russian and local history and geography. In addition, every madrasah established after 1870, had to include classes of the Russian language in its curriculum, which were to be financed by the parents of the children. Russian classes at madrasahs established before 1870 were also encouraged. The task of controlling such schools and classes was given to the curator of the Kazan School District and its school inspectors.³¹⁹ In October 1871 the Ministry of Education appointed Vasilii Radlov, a specialist in oriental studies, as head of the newly-created office of inspector of Tatar, Kirgiz and Bashkir schools in the Kazan School District. His duty was to establish schools, to

³¹⁸ See, for example: Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, Alexander Benningsen, Chantal Quelquejay, *Les mouvements nationaux chez les musulmans de Russie: Le "sultangalievisme" au Tatarstan* (Paris; La Haye: Mouton, 1960), Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, S.A. Dudoignon & F. Georgeon (Eds.) "Le réformisme musulman en Asie Centrale. Du 'premier renouveau' à la Soviétisation 1788-1937" *Cahiers du monde russe* 37, no.1-2 (Jan-Jun 1996), Geraci, *Window on the East*, Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), idem "Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan" *Slavic Review* 5, no. 2 (1996).

³¹⁹ NART, f.92, op. 1, d. 9940, ll.82-83.

appoint teachers and to supervise the publication of schoolbooks.³²⁰ In 1874, Radlov worked out a plan for Russian-Tatar schools, which were similar to Russian two-class or one-class schools. Muslim students were supposed to learn reading, writing, arithmetic, the Russian language and Muslim religion, the latter being financed by the parents of the students.

In this chapter, I will first deal with the imperial reforms in the sphere of Muslim-Tatar education, namely the system bearing the name of Radlov, and the conditions and consequences of its introduction. As we will see, in comparison with Il'minskii's system, this system was even less stable. Then I am going to examine the reforms in the *milieu* of Muslim *ulama* concerning education and finally, look at how far the imperial project of Muslim acculturation had managed to progress by the beginning of the twentieth century.

³²⁰ RGIA, f.733, op. 170, d.263, ll. 315-316.

3.1.V. Radlov's Project for Russian–Tatar Schools

As the inspector of Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College Sh. I. Akhmerov recalled in 1900 in his letter to the curator of Kazan educational district M.M. Alexeenko,

[...]before the beginning of the 1870s, nobody paid attention to the education of Tatars, except for orientalists who studied their intellectual development, daily life and culture and also missionaries who had to fight Islamic doctrine. Only in the second half of the 1860s, did the government pay attention to *inorodtsy* education as a whole and Muslim education in particular.³²¹

In 1866, Alexander II noticed, in the report on Kazan province of 1865 that ‘Tatar madrasahs, numbering 652, were out of control of the government.’³²² On closer inspection, it was found out that ‘in every Muslim settlement with a mosque there are schools both for boys and girls, but the type of schooling and the number of students and teachers are unknown.’³²³ The wish to strengthen control over Muslim education in order to do away with separatist aspirations, was the impetus for drafting the resolution published in the Journal of the Ministry of Education of 2 February 1870. As it stated, ‘Russification ? (underlining and question mark in the original) of Muslim Tatars could be introduced only by spreading the Russian language and Russian education’.

It was decided that rural and city primary schools should be established in places with all-Tatar population. To facilitate admission of the children of Muslim Tatars into general schools, where possible, preparatory courses with the aim of teaching the children spoken Russian should be organized. In spite of the fact, that the children of Muslim Tatars did not study the basics of Orthodox religion nor follow classes of Church Slavonic, Greek and German, they could still study in gymnasia, provided that they were capable of fulfilling the course in all other subjects.

³²¹ NART, f.92, op.2, d.451, l.5.

³²² NART, f.1, op.3, d.6811.

³²³ NART, f.160, op.1, d.195, l.13.

These favorable conditions notwithstanding, certain restrictions were introduced. Namely, Muslim communities were expected to pay for the establishment of Russian classes, without which no mekteb or madrasah could be opened. Teaching Russian in the mekteb and madrasah was to be first conducted in Tatar gradually passing to Russian. Attendance at these classes had to be mandatory for all mekteb students and for all boys up to the age of sixteen at madrasah. In cases where there were no Tatar teachers of Russian, these functions had to be carried out by Russian teachers who spoke Tatar and who could teach the children spoken and written Russian.

It was suggested that there should be special shifts for teaching girls in the Russian-Tatar primary schools established by the state. Moreover, in the places where instead of Russian-Tatar primary schools there were Russian classes at mekteb and madrasah the state was ready to pay for the organization of primary schools, specifically for girls. Control over all these kinds of schools was supposed to be the responsibility of the inspectors of primary schools.

One of the factors that was supposed to encourage Muslim Tatars to learn Russian and to get a Russian education was the newly-introduced requirement for certificates of knowledge in spoken Russian, reading and writing ability and arithmetic. This was a general requirement for all those completing a primary Muslim school course and wishing to take religious positions in subsequent years.³²⁴

The official Muslim body, the muftiate, was faced with the hard task of maneuvering between the communities and the authorities. Ufa mufti Tevkelev, in connection with the resolution on the opening of Russian classes wrote to Count Sivers in April of 1871:

In spite of the fact that some schools have teachers of Russian, having them at every mekteb and madrasah is a sort of a tax, since it is a mullah's duty to teach prayers to the boys, but he does not have a separate building, so there is no school in this sense, all classes are held in the mullah's house. And he does not get much, parents normally give him some part of the harvest.³²⁵

³²⁴ RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d.807,l.15.

³²⁵ Ibid, l.33

At first, the experiment was considered to be a failure. The inspector of Tatar, Bashkir and Kirgiz schools of Kazan educational district, collegiate assessor Radlov, stated that not all, but the majority of schools opened in 1870 in the district of Malmyzh in conformity with the Journal of the Ministry of Education had closed in 1872 out of poverty, and that mullahs claiming to understand the usefulness of Russian classes for Muslims and to be willing to assist in their introduction also claimed to be incapable of doing it. The view expressed at the meeting of the State Council of 6 March 1872 was but a confirmation:

As the experience has shown, in relation to Muslim Tatars, in order to introduce them to general lay education, as well as to unite them with Russians, it was impossible to successfully manage it through Russian schools or by means of missionary activities.³²⁶

The first madrasah that opened with a Russian class was *Usmaniia* in Kazan, in 1872. The attitude to both the Russian classes and the teachers of these classes was quite negative. The first teacher of Russian, Mirza Hal'fin, was forced to leave by the madrasah's trustees. The mullah of the *Usmanovskaia* mosque Garifulla Salikhov, asked for the appointment of Iskhak Kazakov, an honorary citizen of Kazan, but instead another person was given this position - Timersha Soloviev, who did not last long either.³²⁷ It was quite clear that the Muslims had no wish to make their children learn Russian, let alone pay for such tuition.

In his report to Radlov a mullah Akhmet-Safa Muhammed Iunusov of the villages of Ardora Sadi Fata and Mengera in Malmyzh district wrote:

Since in our village there is a madrasah, we gathered the parishioners and read the resolution to them asking if they agreed to have a Russian teacher. All of them unanimously claimed to be against it. We are against opening a school in our village and against teaching Russian. We do not want to learn Russian, but on the contrary ask His Imperial Majesty to let us live without the teacher and without teaching our children Russian.³²⁸

³²⁶ RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d.807, l.74.

³²⁷ NART, f.160,op.1,d.815,l.90.

³²⁸ NART, f.160,op.1,d.815,l.90, l. 76

The answers of mullahs and village-dwellers from the village of Tunder in the same district were a bit more respectful and apologetic, but still expressed profound disagreement with the imperial resolution

[...]we do not have enough money to hire a Russian teacher and in the case that somebody else pays for teaching this subject we are still against learning Russian and against our children learning Russian, because we have no strength, and no time, and finally no need to learn Russian as it is written in the order. From your [Radlov's] resolution it is clearly seen that the reason for its introduction is that not knowing Russian brings harm to Muslims. Well we never had any problems not knowing Russian. We are working people and peasants and with our work we pay the taxes. If our children start learning Russian they will never be able to become state functionaries and get paid - and they will no longer be suitable for dirty work, thus it would be difficult for them to pay taxes.³²⁹

This unexpectedly well-argued letter was signed by eighteen people. Although in numerous petitions one comes across claims that the mullahs were disinterested people, understanding the protests of the communities against opening the Russian classes requires an assessment of the crucial role the mullah played in his parish - he was teacher, 'priest' and judge. It was enough for him to tell his parishioners that he was against the idea, or that learning the Russian language was against the rules of the *sharia* or that this was the initial stage of baptism for people to give up the idea of sending their children to a Russian primary school.

Lack of funding for the Russian classes and madrasahs meant a financial burden for the parents, which, naturally, they were quite reluctant to bear. Besides, the fear that these 'Russian schools' were another missionary trick and would lead to further baptism of Muslim children was always present in the communities. At the end of 1870s, conflict between the authorities and the Muslim population was caused by the government circular concerning the order to build and maintain churches and Russian Orthodox schools, according to which every community had to support their priest and teacher. Even if this document was meant for the Orthodox population, rumors about it spread among Muslims and provoked fears that they would have to open churches and Orthodox seminaries in their villages.³³⁰

³²⁹ Ibid, 1.78.

³³⁰ *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19 veka*, Part 1 (Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1936), 354-433.

Furthermore, the widespread fires in the 1860-70s on the territory of Russia led to certain amendments to the rules concerning village construction and safety regulations.³³¹ In view of the above-mentioned circular, the construction of bell towers, indispensable if a fire broke out, caused instant alarm among the Muslim population, for whom a bell apparently had an immediate association with an Orthodox church. To complicate things, in 1874 the Holy Synod passed a regulation according to which all the Orthodox churches in Russia from then on were supposed to have a cross (Christian symbol) above a crescent (Muslim symbol), which was supposed to imply that the cross was higher than the crescent. This was one of the complaints Muslim *ulama* would later (in 1892) make in a letter to the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II asking for protection of the Russian Muslims against missionary oppression.³³² These examples show that the Muslims were quite suspicious of every novelty introduced by the Russian authorities and did not hurry to send their children to the newly-established Russian–Tatar schools.

In contrast to the cases of popular discontent instigated by local mullahs, the above-mentioned mufti Tevkelev continued to demonstrate his loyalty and cooperation with the imperial authorities and admitted the usefulness of Russian for the mullahs. In his instruction to the mullahs within the jurisdiction of the Muslim assembly, he tries to persuade them ‘...how can you know the laws of our tsar, and his orders, how can you speak with his representatives, if you do not speak Russian, the language of the great empire you belong to?’³³³ By getting Muslim mullahs to speak the Russian language, the authorities hoped to attract the local population to the Russian schools, again taking into consideration the role of the mullah in a community. The mullahs, however, were not so easily convinced. For his cooperation with the imperial authorities mufti Tevkelev received a short letter in Kazan, warning him that he should stop his activities. As a supplement to the letter there was a copy of a Turkish newspaper published in Constantinople with reprint of his own admonition, sent

³³¹ Cathy A. Frierson, *All Russia is Burning! A Cultural History of Fire and Arson in Late Imperial Russia* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002).

³³² Ottoman archives at the office of the Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic (OATR), f.Y.MTV,op.57,d.50, quoted in Ismail Turkoglu, “Pereselenie is Volgo-Uralskogo regiona v Osmanskuiu imperiiu (1876-1914) i ego prichinu” [Resettlement from the Volga-Ural Region to the Ottoman Empire (1876-1914) and its Reasons], forthcoming.

³³³ RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d.807, l.36.

only to mullahs under the jurisdiction of the Muslim Assembly, followed by insulting comments.³³⁴

Being aware of the mullahs' hostility to Russian language teaching and the estrangement of Muslim Tatars, Radlov made sure these points were taken into account when establishing the Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College. The administration of the College was very anxious lest they should scare off Muslim Tatars, as it was to be the first lay institution, established in 1876, on the basis of the Regulations on Tatar Teacher Training Colleges of 27 March 1872.³³⁵ Radlov wanted to make it 'the main centre of all Tatar primary schools,' financed exclusively by the Ministry of Education.³³⁶

The students of the college dressed like all other Muslim Tatars, looked like them, studied the Qur'an and followed Muslim religious rituals. This gradually won over the trust of the Muslim Tatar population of the Kazan province, and Radlov, as well as subsequent inspectors of Tatar schools, were careful to keep this balance. When choosing the staff for the college, in the regulations about the appointment of two supervisors Radlov found the words 'supervisors of Russian origin' and wrote to Shestakov, administrator of the educational circuit, that these should be omitted so as not to make the Tatars think that this appointment was aimed at establishing control over the religious life of the students.³³⁷ (These Russian supervisors were actually needed to help students practicing in Russian). The special place that the Tatar College occupied – in Kazan, the center of the province - made its administration conscious of its reputation among Tatars. Any disturbance that diminished the population's trust towards the authorities was reflected in a diminution of the number of students at schools. That is why the fortification of trust towards the college in the Tatar *milieu* was to be achieved through control of the moral status and behavior of students - observing Muslim prayers, customs, going to the mosque at least once a week, wearing the Muslim costume. All this was supposed to bolster the good reputation of the seminary students in the eyes of their co-religionists.

³³⁴ Ibid, 1.85

³³⁵ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*. (Saint Petersburg, 1875) 348-351.

³³⁶ NART, f. 92, op. 1, d.13158, l.6.

³³⁷ NART, f.92, op.1, d. 13158, l.4-6ob.

The main subject at college was Russian, which was not only the language of education, but also the specialization of the future teachers. However, during the first years the level of Russian among applicants was very low and many were admitted having but rudimentary skills and the first years were spent on mastering the language. At the beginning, one of the main difficulties in filling teaching positions was to find a teacher of Russian, because ‘teaching Russian in the first year was unthinkable without the teacher’s knowledge of the Tatar language’ and there were very few such people.³³⁸ In order to help the students to master Russian, the college inspector Makhmudov suggested having additional evening classes in the first three years of studies, taking the Teacher Training College in Ufa as a model.³³⁹ Among other subjects studied were mathematics, religion, science, history and geography, pedagogy and didactics supplemented by arts, drawing and gymnastics - the curriculum quite different from that of a madrasah at that time, where no secular subjects were studied.

The students came from various estates: gentry, priests, merchants, petty bourgeois and peasants, who were the majority.³⁴⁰ The fact that there were rather few city-dwellers at college is explained by the reciprocal lack of trust between the inhabitants of Kazan who were reluctant to send their children there, especially in the first years, and the seminary administration who assumed that a city dweller would not be an efficient teacher of Russian in a remote Tatar village.

In 1877 Minister of Education Count Tolstói recommended the following entrance requirements for students of the college: reading in Russian, ability to understand books suitable to the age of the students, ability to write dictations without grammar mistakes, mastering spoken Russian, ability to make simple arithmetical calculations and ability to read in Tatar. As for the examinations in Muslim religion, Tolstói was opposed to them, stating

³³⁸ NART, f. 92, op. 1., d. 12513, l.22-22 ob.

³³⁹ Ibid, l.25-25 ob.

³⁴⁰ NART, f.92, op.2 ., d. 759, l. 12 ob.

that the aim of the college was to train people who would spread Russian education among their co-religionists and not to work as mullahs or in other positions.³⁴¹

Later, in 1884, there was an attempt to modify the teaching objectives, which, although a failure, is worth mentioning. Radlov wrote in 1884 to the curator of Kazan educational district Maslennikov that the authorities planned to train people who, having become teachers at village schools, and having a good knowledge of Islam, could argue with the mullahs in matters of Muslim theology and at the same time possibly become mullahs themselves. To meet both needs, it was necessary to accept young people who had already graduated from madrasah and pay sufficient attention to teaching the Muslim religion at college, choosing teachers renowned for their erudition. At first, it was believed that college graduates with a knowledge of the Russian language would be much respected in Muslim society and would gradually create among Tatar mullahs a group that would support the intentions of empire and disseminate education among the *inorodtsy* population in the region. In other words, if one could not do without the mullahs, essential in everyday life of any Muslim community, it was better to have 'one's own' mullahs.

Unfortunately for the local authorities, such aspirations were not fulfilled, even though the Russians were not the only ones to put forward these ideas; as we will see below, Muslim Tatar reformists also reassessed the role of the mullah in their favor. Only a year after the opening of the college it was found out that the students admitted did not have the level of knowledge of religion required, and even older *shakirds* (students of the madrasah) could not continue their studies of religion at a proper level, because they had to study many other subjects, quite new to them. Mullah Bogautdinov, who had many years of experience working with senior students at madrasah, found it impossible to teach Arabic to the ill-educated students of the college. Gradually his lessons became boring and useless and consisted only of translating Arabic books which were hard to understand into Tatar.

³⁴¹ NART, f.92, op.1, d.12513, ll. 38-39 ob.

As practice showed, the initiative to have the college graduates replace mullahs failed. There was only one case when a graduate of Ufa Teacher Training College became a mullah and even he was to leave this position since the population was against the idea that someone could simultaneously be a Muslim mullah and a Russian language teacher. That is why it was given up and the methods of teaching Islam were changed. As was now envisaged, a teacher of Russian in a Tatar primary school was not a rival to a mullah, but should be one of the parish, like others. At the same time he should acquire a complete, conscious knowledge of Islam to resist ‘fanaticism and separatism.’³⁴²

As time passed, Tatars became less suspicious of the college and began to send their children to study there. At the end of the century, the director of schools of Kazan province A.S. Nikolskii noted with satisfaction:

This college really meets the demand - all of its graduates, who work at present as teachers at Tatar primary schools and Russian classes at madrasah are well-educated; all speak Russian well; all of them know the rules and methods of teaching Tatars and they are alien to both religious and ethnic fanaticism.³⁴³

This judgment was a bit premature but the authorities were trying to see how far they could still go in the spread of Russian culture among the Middle Volga Tatars. In fact, the graduates of the Kazan Teacher Training College did not all become teachers: by the year 1891 only 38 out of 79 graduates obtained teaching posts.³⁴⁴

Below we see a graph of the number of students accepted each year at the Teacher Training College. It starts with the year 1890, since the documents containing the information about the students between 1876 and 1889 were lost in the fires of 1902 and 1914.³⁴⁵ As we observe, after the year 1895 we see a steady growth of the number of students until it reaches

³⁴² NART, f.92, op.2, d. 16128, ll.1-4 ob. , f. 92, op.1, d. 24602.

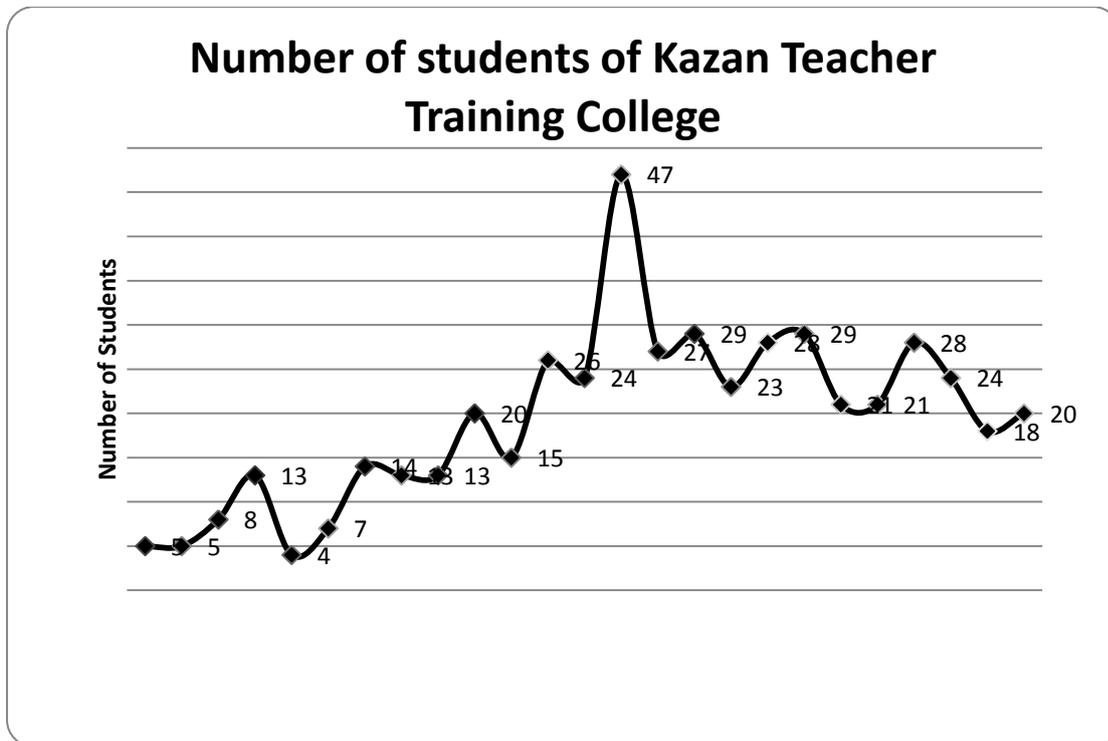
³⁴³ NART, f. 92, op. 1., d. 19983., l.5 ob.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 1-1ob.

³⁴⁵ In 1890 there were only five students in the college, but the number soon started growing. In fact, there were already thirteen students in 1893, twenty- in 1899, 47 - in 1903. Sources: NART, f.142, op.1, d.1, ll.17, 18ob, 44ob, 80ob, 123-123ob, 171ob-172; d.25, ll.37ob.-38, 40, 45, 103.105ob, 155-155ob, 158ob; d.72, l.26ob, ll.47-69, ll.83-83ob, l.112-112ob, 146-146ob, 175-175 ob; d. 270-296, d.311, l.3 ob; dd. 314-333; d.354, ll.159-159ob, ll. 160-161; d. 370, l.15-28; d.374, l.107ob; d.370, l. 1-14; d.384a, l.128ob; d.387, ll.11-11ob; d.406, ll.58ob-59; d.421, ll.17-26.

its peak in 1903 (47 students) and then gradually diminishes, although it never fell below the level of the years preceding 1895, which could testify to the fact that, although it did not have a successful beginning, the Teacher Training College gradually acquired a recognized place among educational institutions for Muslim Tatars.

Figure 4: Growth of the Number of Students of the Kazan Teacher Training College



In 1900 the confessional character itself of the Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College was called anomalous and, to the astonishment of the college inspector Sh. I. Akhmerov, a proposal was introduced to start admitting Russian students in equal proportion. Akhmerov’s argument in the letter to the curator of Kazan educational district Alexeenko was that, even if there might be people who said that teaching colleges, being state institutions, should not support the Muslim spirit, it was important not to disregard the Muslim character of the instruction in the teaching colleges and ‘one could not expect immediate results in the matter of Russification by suppressing Muslim spirit by trying to introduce co-education of Russian and Muslim Tatar students.’³⁴⁶ Akhmerov realized that such schools would be perceived as missionary ones by the parents who would be unlikely to send their children there. And even if they did, these children would be coming from poor families, rather indifferent to religion,

³⁴⁶ NART, f.92, op.2, d.451, ll. 5-18.

and thus would hardly make any difference in Muslim communities as carriers of Russian education.

The projected co-educational schools made several major difficulties unavoidable. First of all, successful teaching of the Russian language to both groups of students with different mother tongues during the first years of studies would be impossible. Secondly, one had to exclude Muslims from the teaching staff (which would not pass unnoticed among the Muslim community) since even if it was possible for an Orthodox to teach Muslims, the reverse idea of a Muslim teaching Orthodox Christians was unacceptable. And finally, it would be very difficult to arrange the daily routine of the students in matters of daily habits, prayers and fasting.

Ignoring Orthodoxy as the state religion was impossible and it meant that, in the case of co-education, Muslims had to adjust to the needs of the Russian students. Also, it was necessary to include religious instruction in the teaching curriculum and the presence of the priest at college would immediately raise suspicions among Tatars and convince them that the college served missionary ends. On the other hand, one could not avoid letting a priest in, since it would harm the interests of Russian Orthodox students and supposedly put Muslim interests higher.

The idea of co-education did not rise out of nothing: a Russian-Kirghiz school already existed in Orenburg. But Ahmerov rightly claimed it was impossible to have similar requirements for all ethnic groups and one could not expect to obtain similar results when dealing with different groups. In the case of Middle Volga Tatars, with a rich culture and a solid religious basis and a reluctance for unification with Russians, such co-educational measures were doomed, if not impossible then very problematic, when the expected usefulness was not guaranteed but the harm was evident.

As we can see from the above-mentioned graph, the number of students of the Teacher Training College reached its peak by the turn of the century. Akhmerov enthusiastically commented that the College finally enjoyed the respect of the Muslim population since among its students there were children of mullahs and merchants and ‘the existing Russian-Tatar primary schools satisfied acculturation demands fortifying the students in the idea of superiority of Russian culture and Russian education.’³⁴⁷ However, much of it was just wishful thinking. The Teacher Training College was the only educational institution that enjoyed success. The picture was quite different in the Russian-Tatar schools. As one inspector noted in 1901, after visiting the Russian-Tatar schools of the Kazan province, a very small number of students finished these schools, while the majority left after a year or two. In 1902, only nine madrasahs in the province had Russian language classes.³⁴⁸

Even the success of the Teacher Training College was not guaranteed. The officials clearly understood that if children of the Muslim elite disappeared from the College (and that was the most likely reaction to the introduction of co-education), the animosity of the Tatar population would burst out with new force. The absence of trust in the Teacher Training College would certainly block the spread of general Russian education among Muslims. Tatars were even afraid to bind themselves with obligations to open Russian classes at school since they suspected that once such classes were established there would be no chance to abolish them, even if it became harmful for their religion.

Among the measures undertaken in order to improve the situation with the education of Muslims was the establishment of summer courses for the teachers of Russian-Tatar schools.³⁴⁹ The necessity of such courses arose from the fact that Russian-Tatar schools were scattered around in villages that were sometimes very distant from any Russian settlements, so the teachers did not get any practice in Russian. Under these circumstances, young graduates of the Russian–Tatar school in Kazan could quickly lose their Russian language skills, for they would only speak the language in class, to their students. The position of the teacher in a village would become even shakier due to the lack of trust from the villagers. A

³⁴⁷ NART, f.92, op.2, d.451, ll. 5-18.

³⁴⁸ Efirov, *Nerusskie shkoly*, 31.

³⁴⁹ NART, f.92, op.1, d. 23958.

Russian school teacher was still frowned upon as someone who brought undesired innovations and Russian ideas into the village.³⁵⁰ This is why, in order to win the sympathy of Muslims a young teacher often had to adapt to the realities of the Tatar life. Thus, he did not really have much influence on the Muslim community, but on the contrary was assimilated by it. The habit of speaking Russian that the young teacher had acquired during the college years gradually disappeared and the teacher became simply a Tatar with a Russian education and some ability to teach.

The task of a Teacher Training College was two-fold in this respect. First of all, it had to help young teachers to overcome the difficulties they came across in their teaching practice. The young people would be shown new books and would be taught some new teaching methods. Secondly, it had to maintain the educational level of the teachers.

In Akhmerov's view, although the first task of the Russian-Tatar schools was to spread Russian language and literacy among the Muslim Tatars, it would be a mistake to consider this the only *raison d'être* of such schools. It was more important to integrate the young generation of Tatars into Russian cultural life, promote connections between the Russian and the Tatar population and try to 'bring the young Tatar people out of the narrow circle of religious beliefs and prejudices where they are kept in by the system of education in the madrasah.'³⁵¹ This was possible only if the teachers themselves reached a certain level of civic education and kept up a high educational level. In order to raise the level of the teachers' civil-mindedness, the introduction of regional studies (*rodinovedenie*) on the courses was suggested. This would include information on the geography, history and economy of the region, as well as the activities of the people.

The primary Russian Tatar schools and the Tatar Teacher Training College enjoyed a certain success however unstable it might have been. The initial number of graduates was very low, only three or four people a year, and by the end of the nineteenth century just 395

³⁵⁰ Ibid, l. 4.

³⁵¹ Ibid, l. 5 ob.

children were attending fourteen schools.³⁵² In the period of 1876 to 1917 the number of teachers graduating from Kazan Teacher Training College also remained very low - 389 graduates, among them eight women³⁵³). At the same time, managing and controlling purely Muslim religious institutions from outside was impossible - they remained impenetrable. This may be seen as I now turn to the problem of introduction of Russian language classes at mekteb and madrasah and attempts to manage the latter.

In order to gain control over the system of Muslim religious education, in 1875 the Ministry of Education had already taken under its authority all Tatar, Kirgiz and Bashkir educational institutions, both those that were financially supported by the state and those that were supported by communities or individuals 'on the same basis as the non-Russian and Russian schools.'³⁵⁴ At the same time, four Russian classes were established in Kazan and the students of the city madrasah went to study Russian in these classes. Radlov was appointed the first inspector of Tatar and Bashkir schools but the first years of his work in the region proved unsuccessful in seeing much of the madrasah work.

As Count Devletkildeiev explained, mullahs were quite hostile towards Radlov, which was not a response to particular person, but towards the innovation in itself. Such behavior on the part of the mullahs is clearly understandable if one takes into account the fact that Tatar madrasahs were private educational institutions, with no financial help from the state. There was even no strict curriculum - teaching was limited to interpretation of Muslim books and teaching the boys the rules of Islam. This type of schooling had a long history and the process of study was controlled by a mullah, who was also the teacher. Overall control over the madrasah was traditionally exercised by the mufti and so the situation, where a non-Muslim was prying into matters of religious upbringing, led to such a great deal of protest both from the mullahs and from the communities.³⁵⁵

³⁵² NART, f.1, op.3, d.9947, ll.5-9.

³⁵³ S.M. Mikhailova, *Kazanskii universitet i prosveshchenie narodov Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia* [Kazan University and the Education of the Peoples of Volga and Urals] (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo Universiteta, 1979), 68.

³⁵⁴ NART, f.1, op.3, d. 3538, ll.1-3ob.

³⁵⁵ NART, f.1, op.3, d. 5883, ll.3-4 ob.

As a result, the Minister of Education postponed taking control of the activities pending a special instruction of the Ministry (which was never issued).³⁵⁶ The prevailing idea was that the only possible control that could be established was by indirect measures, by getting acquainted with mullahs as well as with other representatives of the Muslim community on a personal basis. This was supposed to give the possibility of gathering statistical information as well as getting an idea of the teaching procedure without resorting to official procedures. Tatars viewed these first steps of the government towards changing the schools according to the Russian model and gradually changing their everyday religious life as interference with the internal affairs of the community and religious Muslim education.

As to the inability to establish direct control over Muslim educational institutions, ex-Minister of Education Baron Nikolai expressed the opinion that one had to be more tolerant in relation to the mullahs, since a mullah deprived of freedom of action at a Muslim school would be more liable to spread rumors and instigate Muslim resistance. According to him, it was advisable not to demand any official reports from the mekteb and madrasah and visit them instead in an unofficial manner, giving advice where possible and reporting to the Ministry of Education. The other point was that the controlling bodies should begin with those localities where the Muslim population lived in a mixed environment with Russians or baptized non-Russians, and then gradually move to visiting schools in the villages with all-Muslim population. These measures, approved by the tsar on 5 February 1882, virtually abolished the measures of 1874, in reality there was no control over madrasah, meaning that not only could it not be visited, but that even basic information could not be obtained unless the mullah was willing to cooperate.³⁵⁷

Although some concessions had been made as to the control of madrasah, the government was not going to give up the idea that anyone wishing to become a mullah had to be able to read and speak Russian. However, the striking features of this program were again indecisiveness and lack of organization from the very beginning. Even if the Journal of the Ministry of Education no. 42 of 2 February 1870 stated that to obtain the title of mullah one

³⁵⁶ NART, f. 1, op.3, d. 6811, ll. 5-9ob.

³⁵⁷ NART, f.92, op. 1, d. 21785, ll.13,14,16ob.

should know Russian, neither the level of language required nor the method of verification were specified. Until these requirements were defined, the successful establishment of Russian classes at madrasah remained impossible, since the majority of Muslims thought that to know Russian meant reading and writing by rote and that is why they stopped studying it as soon as they learn to read and write a bit.

In order to fill this gap, Radlov proposed that the required level of proficiency in Russian should not be too high. Otherwise, given the unsatisfactory teaching conditions, it would make exams impossible to pass. In addition, the knowledge should be of real use to the future mullah and should serve for *sblizhenie* with the Russian population.³⁵⁸ Finally, the required standard of Russian was defined as equivalent to that of the graduates of a one-year primary school. Even afterwards many mullahs contented themselves with three or four months of private classes in Russian before taking the exam and their cooperation in the matter of establishing some system of Russian language learning at madrasah was doubtful.

As the inspectors complained, to prevent any intrusion into the affairs of a madrasah, a mullah would say that it was not an organized school, but a place for spiritual conversation which meant that there was no program, no lists of students and no information about them. If a mullah taught the Tatar children literacy, he explained, that came out of his duties according to the *sharia*. The subjects in a typical madrasah could be divided into three groups: those connected with the Arabic language (morphology, syntax, study of rhythm and rhyme, etc), those that could be called ‘intellectual sciences’ (logics, mathematics, metaphysics, etc.) and, finally, those that were based on religious sources, *qalam* (developments in Muslim philosophy, or study of the dogmas of Islam), *figh* (law), methodology of *figh*, inheritance rules, recitation of the Qur’an, *hadith*, and *tafsir* (Interpretation of the Qur’an).³⁵⁹ The program of a traditional or, as it was called, qadimist, madrasah presupposed learning one subject after another and there was no division of the studied material into terms, days and lessons. The approximate order of subjects studied was

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 1.2.

³⁵⁹ D.S. Mukhametzianova, *Kadimistskaia sistema obrazovaniia v istoricheskom i pedagogicheskom kontekstakh* [Qadimist System of Education in Historical and Pedagogical Contexts] (Kazan: Institut Istorii Akademii Nauk Respubliki Tatarstan , 2008), 114.

as follows: Arabic morphology, Arabic syntax, logics, *qalam*, *figh*, methodology of *figh*, ethics, inheritance rules, *hadith*, *tafsir*. In the following table we see the programs of two madrasahs: that of the mullah Gabdulgalliam Bubi, which his sons would later transform into one of the most radical new-method madrasahs of the region and that of Shigabutdin Mardzhani, whose name is connected with the start of reforms within Islam. The programs, as we can see, are quite similar and contain the subjects one usually studied at a madrasah at that time, and with no Russian classes.

Table 6: Programs of the Madrasahs of Gabdulgalliam Bubi and Shigabutdin Mardzhani (1860s) ³⁶⁰

“Bubi”	“Mardzhaniia”
Arabic morphology	Arabic morphology
Arabic syntax	Arabic syntax
Logic	Logic
<i>Qalam</i>	<i>Qalam</i>
Oratory	Oratory
<i>Figh</i>	<i>Figh</i>
Basics of <i>sharia</i>	Basics of <i>sharia</i>
Ethics	Ethics
Hadith	Hadith
Inheritance rules	Inheritance rules
	Ancient philosophy
Counting	
<i>Tafsir</i>	

Mullahs would often claim not to have any influence on the *shakirds* in terms of encouraging or discouraging them to study Russian, which was impossible to control. Thus, paradoxically, while on the one hand, Muslim religious education was functioning quite well,

³⁶⁰ A. Makhmutova, *Lish' tebe, narod, sluzhenie* (Kazan: Magarif, 2003), 40.

on the other there was no person responsible for religious education at any separate madrasah and it was impossible to demand any reports on administrative and pedagogical matters.

Quite telling in this respect is the experience of Akhmerov as a teacher of Russian in Usmanovskoe madrasah - the *shakirds* showed no hostility, they just ignored the classes. Later, when Akhmerov got to know the *shakirds* better by visiting them in their madrasah, he found out that it was the mullah who did not approve of the *shakirds* studying Russian³⁶¹ and since the students were afraid of falling into disgrace and becoming pariahs, the mullah's silent disapproval was sufficient for no-one to come to the Russian class. Thus, successful inspection, without reform of the madrasah was impossible.

Who could an inspector turn to in case he needed information about a madrasah when a mullah said he was just a teacher of *sharia* according to his direct duties? How were Russian classes to be introduced into the madrasah, if the person, to whom the madrasah building belonged, could protest against it? How was it possible to demand adherence to the law about obligatory attendance at the mekteb and madrasah if there were no lists of students? All these questions pointed to the necessity of establishing legal relations between Muslim religious schools and state institutions, in other words, adjusting them to the model of other educational institutions.

Among the measures proposed to prevent this separation the director of Kazan province Nikolskii suggested that the teachers of mekteb and madrasah should only be those who knew spoken and written Russian and could teach their students the language, especially when there was sufficient number of graduates of Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College who could not find work due to the small number of Tatar primary schools. Later, when there were enough teachers who spoke Russian it would be possible to introduce Tatar primers into madrasah, as well as Muslim religious books printed in Russian letters with the use of specific signs to convey Muslim transcription, like the ones used at schools for baptized

³⁶¹ NART, f. 92, op. 1, d. 17454, ll. 25-29.

Tatars. These would gradually eliminate Arabic print from use in Muslim education and gradually it would be possible to teach at madrasah only in Russian.³⁶²

But it was as not only the Russian authorities who were interested in bringing changes into the madrasah. Tatars themselves had gone a long way in reforming their own educational institutions, a process that some contemporary historians compare even to the process of Christian reformation.³⁶³ This was a specific regional phenomenon, begun in the late eighteenth- early nineteenth centuries. I now turn to the question of reforms both in the thinking of Muslim *ulama* and madrasah.

³⁶² NART, f. 92, op. 1, d.19380, ll.34-38ob.

³⁶³ See Aidar Iuzeev, *Mirovozzrenie Sh. Mardzhani i arabo-musul'manskaia filosofiia* [Worldview of Sh. Mardzhani and Arab Muslim Philosophy] (Kazan: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1992).

3.2. The Jadid Movement and the Reform of the Madrasah

The first changes in the philosophy of the Middle Volga Muslim thinkers are connected with the name of Usman Utyz-Imiani al Bulgari who became the leader of the Tatar theologians protesting against the Muslim Spiritual Assembly. He regarded the Assembly as an institution that controlled, among other things, the Muslim process of schooling and supported those mullahs who did not teach the *shakirds* anything other than the Qur'an and scholastic texts. That was why the majority of *shakirds* did not even understand what they were studying since most of the texts were written in Arabic and Persian, the obstacle to knowledge noted by Il'minskii when he chose education in spoken Tatar for his schools.

Utyz-Imiani, assessing the laws of the *sharia*, came to the conclusion that learning the laws themselves did not provide good Islamic education. That is why, he claimed, it was necessary to revise critically the works of Muslim thinkers, to get rid of scholasticism at madrasah and, supporting the idea of another prominent scholar Al Kursavi, to 'open the doors of *idzhtikhad*', meaning the ability of every Muslim to pass judgments on questions of faith. He came to believe that it was necessary to reform the laws of *sharia* which became known as 'the concept of Utuz-Imyani' – a development of critical thinking, *idzhtikhad*, which was not, and could not be, accepted by traditionalist mullahs.³⁶⁴

Quite a different line of reform was the Vaisov movement, described by Crews as a 'distinctive product of the Russian imperial environment.'³⁶⁵ Indeed, the claims of the leader demonstrate a reaction to outside influence and also show that the process of Muslim reformation was not homogenous. Bakha ad-din Vaisov, a peasant of the village of Molvino, protested against the mullahs and Muslim Spiritual Assembly who, as he thought, misinterpreted Islam. He claimed that constant living together with the Russians influenced the life in Tatar communities. Tatars began to copy the Russian way of life, women stopped covering their faces; the curriculum in madrasahs started to let in European education and young Muslims started to enter Russian educational institutions. These innovations, Vaisov

³⁶⁴ Iuzeev, *Mirovozzrenie*, 33.

³⁶⁵ Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, 319.

believed, were contrary to the teaching of the Qur'an. Thus, according to him, one should not go to a mosque and believe mullahs nor trust local authorities, but only the tsar.

As a demonstration of his protest, Vaisov organized a society called 'God's regiments' (*bozh'i polki*)³⁶⁶ of Muslim Old Believers (*musul'manskie starovery*). The term 'Old Believers' was used in order to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Muslim community while the word 'Muslim' distinguished them from the Orthodox Old Believers.³⁶⁷ Claiming to be the descendants of the Volga Bulgars and underlining the difference between themselves and Tatars, the members of the sect said on various occasions: 'The difference between us and Tatars is equal to the difference between the sky and the earth.'³⁶⁸

In his desire to 'purify' the Muslim community by 'going to the roots', Vaisov went a bit too far, questioning the legitimacy of the ruling dynasty itself. Apparently, some revision was necessary not only among Muslims but among the Russian rulers as well. An article in one of the issues of *Sotrudnik bratstva sv. Guriia* in Kazan mentioned that on inspection of Tatar books it was discovered that one of the history books said that the Romanov dynasty did not exist anymore and Russia was ruled by the Holstein dynasty. The Kazan official for special commissions I.Iakimov reported to the governor of the city: 'On page 54 of the history book there are the following lines : 'When Peter III, son of Duke Charles Frederick of Holstein-Gottorp, became the heir to the Russian throne...the Romanov dynasty ended and the Hostenin dynasty began.' This was followed by the list of successive emperors who belonged, according to the author of the book Bogautdin Vaisov, to the Holstein dynasty.'³⁶⁹

The text was later repeated in the second edition of the book, which passed the censors in St. Petersburg on 21 April 1897 and was published in Kazan. E. Malov, who studied the contents of the book, commented that, in Bodautdinov's opinion, the roots of the Russian

³⁶⁶ Iuzeev, *Mirovozzrenie*, 35.

³⁶⁷ D. Usmanova, *Musul'manskoe sektanstvo v Rossiiskoi imperii* [Muslim Sects in the Russian Empire] (Kazan: Academia Nauk RT, 2009), 5.

³⁶⁸ RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 508, ll. 77-88.

³⁶⁹ NART, f. 1, op. 4, d. 4957, l.1.

tsars came from three dynasties – the Rurik, the Romanov and the Holstein. There was reason to believe that, due to Bogautdinov's popularity, these lines were repeated in some less well-known Tatar books published outside Kazan, and that the contents of the book were studied at least by members of the sect.

The attitude of the Muslim community to Vaisov's people was generally quite positive, as to the people of the same faith whose delusions could be tolerated. Followers of Vaisov promised that those who joined the sect were safe from Russian missionaries who could otherwise baptize them, make them study at Russian schools and subject them to conscription.³⁷⁰ In the end, more than three hundred families took part in the movement.

However, neither the Russian authorities nor the Muslim Spiritual assembly were willing to tolerate the sect: the members of the community did not use state passports, kept their own registers, and refused to serve in the army or pay taxes. The only tax they recognized and paid was the eight kopecks from each *desiatina* which had been introduced by Ivan IV in the sixteenth century. After several cases of confrontations between the sect and the authorities, Vaisov was sent to prison and, later, to a mental asylum, while the majority of the sectarians were exiled to Siberia and the movement was suppressed.

Returning to the transformations suggested by learned Muslim community leaders, one cannot avoid mentioning the name of Shigabutdin Mardzhani. In the second half of the nineteenth century, he reformed Muslim education and transformed Tatar society itself, bringing it to a new level of development. The ideas of Mardzhani were more moderate than those of Vaisov, and they had a steadier conceptual basis: according to him, it was necessary to reform the religious consciousness of Muslims, without reforming the dogmas of Islam. He proposed a return to early Islam, its purification from the shortcomings of later development. An educated Muslim should understand the sources of the religion and on their basis he should be able to make the *idzhtikhad*. Proper Muslim education, free of scholasticism should

³⁷⁰ NART, f.41, op.15, d.1, ll.3-5.

also borrow from the achievements of western civilization and this combination would trigger the rise of Tatar ethnic consciousness.

It is here that the Muslim ethnic claims appear - Mardzhani imagined that the reformed society would first get its autonomy within the Russian empire and then achieve its own statehood.³⁷¹ According to Uli Schamiloglu, Mardzhani was the first person who tried to identify the Muslims of the Volga-Kama region in ethnic terms. In the 1880s he called them 'Kazan Tatars' and linked their genealogy to the Volga Bulgar state existing in this region between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries.³⁷² The questions he posed were the ones that even now await answers: 'Did the Turkic-speaking Muslims in the Russian empire constitute a common 'Turk-Tatar'/'Bulgar'/'Muslim' nation or multiple small nations? Did the Volga-Ural Muslims descend from the Tatars of the Golden Horde, the Bulghar Khanate, or a combination of both?'³⁷³ The first step towards this one's identity, Mardzhani argued, was not to refuse to be called a Tatar:

Some consider it a vice to be called Tatar, avoiding this name, saying that we are Muslims, not Tatars. Poor things! If you are not a Tatar, a Tajik, a Noghai; and you are not a Chinese, Russian, French, Prussian or a German, then who are you?³⁷⁴

Furthermore, in order to enable Muslims to participate in state activities, the most capable of them should try and get a position in the state administration in order to protect the interests of Muslims. This was something he had tried as early as 1862 but failed. On that occasion, after the death of mufti Suleimanov, Mardzhani was nominated for this position. Il'minskii, although on friendly terms with the candidate, ardently opposed it, and recommended to Pobedonostsev other candidates who were more indecisive and incapable of introducing any innovations in the Spiritual Assembly.

³⁷¹ Iuzeev, *Mirovozzrenie*, 36.

³⁷² Uli Schamiloglu, "The Formation of a Tatar Historical Consciousness: Shihabuddin Marrjani and the Image of the Golden Horde," *Central Asian Survey* 9, no.2 (1990):39-49.

³⁷³ Quoted in Mustafa Ozgur Tuna "Imperial Russian Muslims: Inroads of Modernity" (PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2009): 17.

³⁷⁴ *Mardzhani o tatarskoi elite (1789-1889)*[Mardzhani about the Tatar Elite] (Kazan: n.p., 2009), 34.

But in fact, it was more the traditionalists who found fault with Mardzhani's ideas than the authorities, and he is often sidelined and labeled 'not a real reformist.'³⁷⁵ Mardzhani's views on education were progressive enough for his time, as he understood the necessity of both conscious study of the Islamic heritage and accepting modern Russian education. He maintained that learning Russian was not against the rules of the *sharia* as many mullahs tried to show (in fact, he taught Muslim religion in the Kazan Tatar teacher training College for nine years) and won fame as a missionary, heretic and apostate in Muslim conservative circles. Marzhdani, being a religious reformer, claimed that Islam did not contradict European science and school reforms, but on the contrary could profit from coexistence with them.

Mardzhani's student, Kh. Faizkhanov, suggested a project of Tatar lay secondary education similar to the Russian gymnasium. In 1857 he became a teacher of eastern languages in St. Petersburg University where he was teaching Turkic languages (Turkic, Tatar and Arabic). In addition, he spoke Russian, Chuvash, Mari, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Mari, Uzbek and Farsi. It was also Faizkhanov who produced a 'Short Grammar of the Tatar Language' (1862). Having understood that it was important to borrow Russian and European values without having to renounce Muslim ones, in the 1860s he introduced his own project of 'school reform'.³⁷⁶ According to the project, schooling was to last ten years. During the first three years the students were to learn geography, geometry, Russian, Persian, Turkic and Arabic. After the third year the students were to be divided into two subgroups – the first one was to study mathematics, medicine, astronomy, natural sciences, literature and the Qur'an. The students of the other subgroup were supposed to study the program of a gymnasium to be able to enter university later. Geography, natural sciences, medicine and European languages were to be taught in Russian and other subjects in Tatar. Moreover, the school was supposed to have its own Tatar print shop. The author thought that the school ought to be financially supported by the state, but in case the state refused to pay, the money was to be collected from the Tatar community. It is not known why this did not receive state support. As far as the community was concerned, an innovation like this was seen as a move against Muslim religious ideology and philosophy.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Alexander Bennigsen, Chantal Quelquejay, *Les mouvements nationaux*, 38.

³⁷⁶ M.A. Usmanov, *Zavetnaia mechta Kh. Faizkhanova. Povest' o zhizni i deiatel'nosti* [A Cherished Dream of Kh. Faizkhanov. A Story of Life and Work](Kazan: Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1980),34.

³⁷⁷ Ia. I. Khanbikov, *Istoriia pedagogiki Tatarstana* [History of Pedagogy of Tatarstan] (Kazan: n.p., 1964), 35.

Kaium Nasyri, another Tatar scholar, also wanted to reform the traditional Tatar school to include lay subjects and study history and the traditions and customs of Tatars and Russians alike. In 1855 he became a teacher of Tatar in the Kazan Ecclesiastic School and later in the Ecclesiastic Academy where he worked until 1871. When he left the academy, he decided to devote himself to teaching Russian to Tatar children, and organized a school which functioned until 1876. Much like Mardzhani, Kaium Nasyri maintained the independence of the Tatar language from the universal Turkic language and created several grammar books, books on lay subjects and dictionaries of Tatar.³⁷⁸ Mardzhani, Faizkhanov and Nasyri were pioneers of the new-method (*jadid*) school in Kazan province.

Ismail bei Gasprinskii, the head of Bakhchisarai in Crimea and the editor of the newspaper *Terdzhiman* [Translator] that was printed from 1883 to 1918 in both Russian and Ottoman Turkish, was the founder of *jadidism*, or the use of a new, phonetic method of teaching. *Qadimists*, old-method teachers, used the system of syllables in teaching reading, when letters were made into syllables and syllables into words. The method of *jadids* was based on the approach that every letter corresponded to a sound. This not only simplified the process of learning to read, but generally shortened the time of studies, leaving thus enough time to study secular subjects at madrasah. Gasprinskii was greatly inspired by Mardzhani's ideas and he himself published a number of philosophical works, which were often read by his Russian contemporaries as appeals to pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism.³⁷⁹ These texts are far more important than Gasprinskii's newspaper in understanding of the rise of nationalism among the Russian Muslims.

The Turkish scholar A. Kanlidire argues that the *jadid* movement made use of both Islamic and Russian sources to develop Muslim national and political ideas.³⁸⁰ According to Kanlidere, *jadids* borrowed the idea of Pan-Islamism from a Syrian Abd ar-Rakhman

³⁷⁸ D. Validi, *Ocherki istorii obrazovannosti i literatury tatar* [Essays on the History of Tatar Literature and Education] (Moscow; Petrograd: Gosizdat, 1923),63.

³⁷⁹ Gasprinskii I., *Russkoe musul'manstvo. Mysli, zametki i nabliudeniia* [Russian Muslims. Thoughts, Notes and Observations] (Simferopol': Spiro,1881); *Russko-vostochnoe soglashenie.Mysli, zametki i pozhelaniia* [Russian-Eastern Agreement. Thoughts, Notes and Wishes] (Bakhchisarai: Perevodchik,1896).

³⁸⁰ Kanlidere A, *Reform within Islam: The Tajdid and Jadid Movement among the Kazan Tatars (1809-1917). Conciliation or Conflict?* (Istanbul: Eren, 1997), 99-100.

Kawakibi, who protested against tyranny and called for the organization of a conference for the unification of Muslims. Gasprinskii from the Crimea, as well as Musa Bigiev from Kazan and Ziia Kamaev from Ufa, were quite familiar with these ideas.

Russian culture became the second channel of transmission of concepts such as ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’. In his youth, Gasprinskii had studied in Moscow military gymnasium where he made friends with the son of the editor of *Moskovskie vedomosti* Mikhail Katkov. It was from him that Ismail got the idea of educating a nation by means of printing activity.³⁸¹ Here he was also inspired by Slavophile ideas about the uniqueness of every nation. When Gasprinskii spoke of a nation, he did not mean separate Muslim ethnic groups, but all the Muslims of Russia united under the leadership of the clergy, the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia.

Another source of inspiration for Gasprinskii was his visit to Paris during the time of the Third Republic. There he studied the experience of the French Ministry of Education and was impressed at how much effort was given to the development of primary education. Some of the French theories were fundamental to his phonetic method.³⁸²

An important idea ‘brought home’ from Europe, was the idea of evolution, which often appeared in the pages of Gasprinskii’s newspaper. The Crimean reformer argued that the reason for Muslims’ political and intellectual backwardness lay in the lack of ideals or clear aims. ‘An Englishman or a German,’ he argued, ‘sets himself an aim and tries to pursue it for many years. There [in England or Germany] society and people think today about the issues of tomorrow. The life of people...is impossible without a common aim.’³⁸³

³⁸¹ A.Iu. Khabutdinov, “Tatarskoe obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v rossiiskom soobshchestve (konets 18-nachalo 20 vekov).” [Tatar Social Movement in the Russian Society (End of the Eighteenth – Beginning of the Twentieth Centuries)](Diss. Doctor of science)(Kazan, 2002):156.

³⁸² Ibid: 157.

³⁸³ *Terdzhiman*, no. 9 (November 1904).

Gasprinskii's works were devoted to the internal problems of the Muslim peoples of Russia and their integration into the existent social, cultural and educational environment. They represented the advanced stage in the struggle of various Muslim communities in Russia for cultural self-preservation, using their resources to reconstruct themselves into new sociopolitical entities. In fact, Gasprinskii raised several very sharp questions concerning the relations between the Russian authorities and Muslim subjects:

The Russian rule over Tatars until now, as far as I know, was expressed in the following: 'I own, you pay and live as you wish'. This is very easy, but it does not make sense. Indeed, what sort of relations should there be established between Russians and Tatars? What should Tatars, Russian Muslims, be in relation to Russian and vice versa? What is the good sensible aim of Russian power in relation to Muslim non-Russians? What should Russians do for them and how and what should they demand from them? Should Russians and Russian Muslims live on the same land as casual partners, neighbors, or should there be developed closer ties as between the children of our great and vast motherland?

³⁸⁴

He argued that the idea of the Russian civilizing mission in the East was welcome, but its essence should go deeper than simply changing '*quadii* into *uezdnyi nachalnik*, *naib* into *pristav*, *bekstvo* into provinces, silk gowns into *dvorianskii vorotnik*'.³⁸⁵ The civilizing mission should, instead, lead Russian and Muslim subjects to a mutually beneficial coexistence. It should, as Gasprinskii saw it, make Muslims aware of the interests of Russia and the state's aims and ideas.

In response to the civilizing attempt of the imperial centre, Gasprinskii wanted to create a united Muslim community. Some of his ideas can be found in his novel "Letters from France" where he used a literary trope, a dream, in which the main character found himself in an ideal country, where a high level of civilization was united with the perfect morals of Muslims who were very religious and consciously performed their devotional duties. The ideal country was, in fact, none other than the Russian empire, provided that the Turkic peoples were united and autonomous. Gasprinskii was dreaming of raising 'a Russian

³⁸⁴ Gasprinskii, *Russkoe musulmanstvo*, 5.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

national flag in the middle of which there would be a small green field with a white crescent,' although he admitted that his ideas at that time were utopian.³⁸⁶

Dowler claims that Gasprinskii's pan-Turkism 'was primarily cultural and linguistic and scarcely political.'³⁸⁷ While I agree that one of main ideas was the creation of a single Turkic language, later called the language of Gasprinskii, in which *Terdzhiman* was printed. and another strengthening the ties among the Turkic peoples of Russia, his pan-Turkism was political enough to scare the authorities. In fact, Il'minskii more than once warned Pobedonostsev against the danger coming from the Crimean Tatars, calling them 'progressivists and nationalists.'³⁸⁸

I believe, one cannot offer an undifferentiated assessment of Gasprinskii's idea of Orthodox-Muslim coexistence and of his idea of unification of the Russian Muslims. This, however progressive, was not going to happen and the reason for this was not only the suspicion and resistance coming from the imperial centre, but also the fact that the Islamic peoples of Russia were at different levels of cultural and linguistic development and different groups had their own projects. Thus, it is not possible just to speak of the Russian Muslims without territorial specification and as will be seen, Kazan Muslims had their own scenario.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslim educational system in Kazan province was characterized by the co-existence of *jadid* and *qadimist* schools. In the new-method madrasah, the education lasted four years and was conducted in Tatar with a clearly-set curriculum and sufficient number of teachers. The subjects studied included Tatar, geography, arithmetic, an introduction to Sacred history, history of Islam, the Qur'an. In the old-method madrasah, on the contrary, there was no strict division into subjects and even the primer was in Persian. Knowledge was evaluated not according to level of proficiency reached, but the skills the student acquired to get him a certain position in the Muslim community. The missionary Koblov summed up the aims of such education: 'Confessional

³⁸⁶ V.Iu. Gankevich, S. P. Shendrikova, *Ismail Gasprinskii i vozniknovenie liberal'no-musul'manskogo politicheskogo dvizheniia* [Ismail Gasprinskii and the Appearance of the Liberal Muslim Political Movement] (Simferopol:Dolia,2008), 38.

³⁸⁷ Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 157.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

school is very important for Muslims: it disciplines them, turning them into an organized mass of people, where the motto ‘all for one and one for all’ is at work’ in practice.³⁸⁹

In the second half of the nineteenth century this classic Muslim tradition could not respond to the challenging situation in Russia. Its role was being taken over by new-method Muslim schools, the students of which had both Muslim and European knowledge. The centers of *jadidism* in Kazan were madrasahs *Mukhammadiia*, *Rasuliia* and *Apanaevskoe*. Both *Mukhammadiia* (led by Galimdzhan Barudi) and *Rasuliia* (by Zeinulla Rasuli) started as regular madrasahs and at the beginning only small changes were made.³⁹⁰ The innovation made by Barudi was that instead of focusing on the foundational sources of Islam, he taught the *Hadith* among Islamic societies. Later, he introduced courses in the Russian and Turkic languages and lay subjects, such as geography, history, maths and the science of nature. The major transformations in *Rasuliia* took place in the early twentieth century, when Zeinulla’s son started to administer the madrasah. Until that time, Rasuli had provided *shakirds* with physical facilities and a library not all regular madrasahs could boast of.³⁹¹

The main representative of the new-method of teaching Tatars, the mullah Galeev, lived in Kazan and produced books himself in all subjects that were studied at school. Around the years 1898-99, the phonetic method was introduced first in the Tatar teacher training seminary and then Galeev began to teach it at madrasah, where he was teaching not only religious subjects, but also geography, history and even arts (to the discontent of many Muslims). A policeman P.B. Panfilov signaled that the supporters of the old method of teaching were utterly against this new tendency and there were cases where the villagers drove away the newly-appointed mullahs - graduates of Galeev’s school – if they tried to introduce the new method of teaching.³⁹² Even if the new method was spreading in madrasah and mekteb in Kazan, *qadimist* mullahs still regarded it almost as a heresy.³⁹³

³⁸⁹ Ia. D. Koblov, *Konfessional’nye shkoly kazanskikh Tatar* [Confessional Schools of Kazan Tatars] (Kazan: n.p., 1916), 64-65.

³⁹⁰ Mustafa Tuna, “Madrasa Reform as a Secularising Process: A View from the Late Russian Empire”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no.3 (2011): 552.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² NART, f.1, op. 6, d.99, ll.19ob.

³⁹³ NART, f.160, op.1, d.847, l. 166-166ob.

In 1878, a mullah Giliazitdin Mukhiddinov published his work *Steel Pikes against the New Methodology* in Kazan.³⁹⁴ Prince N. V. Shakhovskoi, a Slavophile, commented on this work in his report *New Trends in Kazan Printing*.³⁹⁵ Devoting a good deal of attention to the issue of the phonetic method, he criticized all the innovations inside the madrasah, starting from the introduction of benches and rostra into schools and finishing with the use of Tatar as the language of schooling. In his view, it was not necessary to teach Tatar boys in the Tatar language since it was similar to teaching a duck to swim. Shakhovskoi mentioned that the reading of Tatar books would only distract students from the main purpose of Muslim studies that is, learning the Arabic language and the Qur'an. Besides, translating the Qur'an into Tatar would equate it to the speech of the ordinary people. These were completely new trends for Muslim traditional schooling, and Shakhovskoi wondered whether this new trend really threatened the Muslim religion and fostered the merging of Tatars with Russians.³⁹⁶ Yet, judging from the new-method literature, the authors of which were calling for progress on the basis of Islam and Turkic nationality, there was no sign either of faith betrayal or an attempt to merge with the Russian population.

The note, sent to the Ministry of the Interior, was accompanied by a censor's comment:

On the one hand, old Tatariness (*starotatarshchina*), represented by the educated section of mullahs ... cannot be recognized as loyal from the point of view of Russian statehood. Keeping and isolating the dark Tatar people from reasonable ideas and human views they could get by means of integration with Russians, ... is seen by mullahs as a key to controlling this people and exploiting their ignorance. Thus, the triumph of old Tatar stagnation and estrangement from Russia would be undesirable in terms of state policy. On the other hand, Tatar innovations which stirred the prosperous Tatar people, eager to establish their own Tatar schools, could also bring about various significant side effects and would be equally undesirable for Russian statehood.³⁹⁷

In spite of the evident confrontation of *qadimists* and *jadids*, this dichotomy was far from absolute. We will take just one example of the imam of St. Petersburg Ataullah Baiazitov who, although a graduate of a *qadimist* madrasah, was serving the interests of the state and

³⁹⁴ “*Stal'nye piki protiv novogo metoda*”, in Makhmutova, *Lish' tebe*, 79.

³⁹⁵ RGIA, f.821, op.8, d.1194, ll.3-18.

³⁹⁶ Makhmutova, *Lish' tebe*, 81.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 83.

welcomed Russian and European education for Muslims. I believe that Geraci has misrepresented his personality describing him as a traditionalist opposing any reform in Muslim education.³⁹⁸

The first and most famous work of Baiazitov was ‘Islam and Science’ [*Islam i nauka*] (1883), which was a protest against the speech of Ernest Renan given in the French Scientific Association on 19 March 1883. Baiazitov objected to Renan’s conclusion that Islam contradicted the achievements of modern science. In his later book ‘Islam and Progress’ Baiazitov dealt with the problem of the place of Islam in the world claiming that it was not alien to modernity. He accused Europe of measuring Islam from his own standpoint and, having found something unfamiliar and non-standard, rejecting it, calling it a conservative phenomenon that was holding back social progress in the East.³⁹⁹

In addition, Baiazitov had tried for many years to publish a newspaper in Russian and Tatar, proposing various projects and basically giving the same reasons as Gasprinskii - to keep Tatars informed of what was going on in the empire, to help them understand laws and also to promote reforms in Muslim education, which had to be supplemented by the teaching of science and lay subjects as well as the Russian language. It was only in 1905 that Baiazitov managed to break through the censorship with the newspaper *Nur* [‘Light’].

The dichotomy *qadimists* - *jadids* certainly went far beyond the method of learning to read. Dudoignon believes, for instance, that the representatives of these two camps defined the functions of the institutions inside the Muslim community (*mahalla*) differently. While the *qadimists* believed that one should give preference to collective governance and collective management of money and the traditional structure of the *mahalla* should be preserved intact,

³⁹⁸ Geraci, *Window on the East*, 266-267.

³⁹⁹ Ataula Baiazitov, *Izbrannye trudy* [Selected Works] (Kazan: Milli kitap, 2007), 7.

jadids believed that there was nothing wrong in individual development of the members of the *mahalla*.⁴⁰⁰

Strangely, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the curriculum of reformed madrasahs had little by little become similar to that of the Kazan Teacher Training College, save for the Russian classes. In order to compare the curricula of the two institutions – Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College and Bubi madrasah (in the district of Sarapul in the West Urals, present-day Bashkortostan), I have taken the curricula of the year 1901. First of all, it is hard to say how lessons on the basics of faith at the college were organized, but we can assume that all the topics relating to Islam (most likely, in a reduced form) were united in one course. Secondly, we see that the existence of Russian lessons (or their absence) still made the difference among the schools for Muslims. No Russian was yet taught (in the years 1901-1902) in Bubi madrasah but Arabic, Persian and Turkish were. In fact, the madrasah graduates who wanted to learn Russian, often continued their studies at the teacher training College. Finally, it is evident that the program of the Bubi madrasah, and similar reformed madrasahs, was different from the traditional *qadimist* one. Although there appear to be relatively few secular subjects in the Bubi madrasah in 1901, already by 1902 a whole block of natural sciences (botany, zoology, chemistry, physics) have been added to the curriculum. The quota of secular subjects grew considerably in the following years. The students of the reformed madrasahs began to be more and more attracted by lay careers and social and political issues of a secular, rather than religious, nature.

⁴⁰⁰ S.A. Dudoignon, “Kadimism: elementy sotsiologii musul'manskogo traditsionalisma v tatarskom mire i v Maverannakhre (konets 18-nachalo 19 vv)”[Qadimism: Elements of Sociology of Muslim Traditionalism in the Tatar World and in Maverannakhr (End of the Eighteenth-Beginning of the Nineteenth Centuries)], *Islam v tatarskom mire: istoriia i sovremennost'* (Kazan,1997), 62-63.

Table 7: The Curricula of the Kazan Teacher Training College and the “Bubi” Madrasah

Subjects	Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College	“Bubi” madrasah	
		1901	1902
Basics of faith	+	-	-
Figh	-	+	+
Methodology of figh	-	+	+
History of Islam	-	+	+
Ethics	-	+	+
Oration	-	+	+
Logic	-	+	+
Pedagogy and methods of teaching	+	-	+
Philosophy	-	-	+
Russian	+	-	-
Arabic	-	+	+
Persian	-	+	+
Turkish	-	+	+
Mathematics	+	+	+
History	+	+	+
Geography	+	+	+
Natural sciences	+	-	+
Calligraphy	+	-	-
Drawing	+	-	-
Painting	+	-	-

The problem with the *qadimist-jadid* dichotomy is that, for the authorities, it gradually came to define not only adherence to an educational system, but became a marker of political activity. Backward *qadimists*, who had protested against the introduction of Russian in mekteb and madrasah, suddenly came to be seen as conformist, loyal and collaborating.

Jadidism, which for the Muslims gradually became a synonym for the rising national movement, for the Russian authorities became somewhat synonymous with separatism. At the end of the nineteenth-beginning of the twentieth century, the authorities started to show concern lest the Muslims of Russia be influenced by the events in Turkey; ideas of pan-Turkism started to be perceived as a threat to Russian statehood and the ‘Muslim question’ appeared. Elena Campbell claims that what caused the appearance of the Muslim question was the uneasy situation in Turkestan, namely the Andizhan uprising of 1898.⁴⁰¹ However, disturbances in Kazan and Crimea also contributed to concerns about the spread of Pan-Turkism.

Soon after the introduction of the educational requirements relating to the Russian language teaching, and especially before the census of 1897, there was another flurry of rumors about possible Christianization. Moving to Turkey was often viewed as the only way to escape forced conversion, and the authorities did not hesitate to react to this. The mullah of the village of Sluzhilaia Eltan’, Agliulla Bilialov, and the muezzin of the village of Narat-Ilga in Chistopol district, Makhomet-Rakhim Rezvanov, were dismissed from their positions for agitating the people and spreading rumors.⁴⁰² Likewise, the request of Iusuf Fazullin (the son of the ex-mullah of the village of Tatarskaia Bagany in Chistopol district) to become a mullah was denied on the pretext that he, having spent six years in Turkey, might try to persuade his co-religionists to move there. The decision was based on suspicion that Iusuf praised the organization of schooling in Turkey too much and took it as a model when teaching the children of his co-villagers.⁴⁰³

On investigation of possible Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic movements, the governor of Kazan P.A. Poltoratskii reported that there was hardly any evidence of relations between Kazan Tatar innovators and the Young Turks. He also remarked that two distinct tendencies were seen in the use of the new method. The centre of the first was the Kazan Teacher

⁴⁰¹ Elena Campbell “The Muslim Question in Late Imperial Russia” in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, Anatolyi Remnev, eds. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press): 320-347.

⁴⁰² *Kazanskii telegraf*, no.567 (1894).

⁴⁰³ NART, f.2,op.3, d.2283.

Training College of the Ministry of Education. Its graduates were quite confident, he said, of the necessity of the Russian language for their co-religionists, and by working at various places they could gradually break down Tatar estrangement from Russians. In Galeev's madrasah, on the contrary, although all subjects were studied, the students refused to attend Russian classes and Galeev was trying to get his madrasah out of the control of the authorities.⁴⁰⁴

However, fears of Pan-Turkic ideas did have their grounds, and their appearance is connected with the name of Iusuf Akchurin (Akchura) who taught history at madrasah *Mukhammadiia* and became one of the leaders and organizers of the Muslim union *Ittifak al-Muslimmin*. In 1904 he published his most famous work called 'Three politics', which was addressed to Ottoman Turks and urged them to leave the multiethnic Ottoman Empire and turn to nationalism and Pan-Turkism, ideas that could not pass unnoticed in the progressive circles of Kazan Tatars. In this article he argued that the 'Turkic nation is the inheritor of both Islam and Western civilization.'⁴⁰⁵ Akchurin promoted Pan-Turkic ideas among the Muslims of Russia. He, together with the other Muslim leaders, argued that the only way to face the challenges from the Russian government was to be united on the basis of Turkic nationalism and common religion, that is, Islam.⁴⁰⁶

The revolutionary movement in Russia, reaching its climax in 1905, sharpened the opposition of 'revolutionaries' and traditionalists in Tatar society. Even in the Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College students were organizing themselves in secret groups and one of the measures suggested in order to deal with the complicated situation was to expel several of the students. This was never carried out in order not to 'compromise the Russian authorities who had always been tolerant towards non-Russians.'⁴⁰⁷ Instead, the college was closed for

⁴⁰⁴ NART, f.1, op.6, d. 99, ll.29-31 ob, 34-36.

⁴⁰⁵ Abdul Hannan Shah, *Islam in Russian and Central Asia*, www. http://www.witness-pioneer.net/vil/Books/SH_CA/chapter_3.htm (accessed August, 1, 2012).

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ NART, f.142, op. 1, d.72, ll. 158-163ob.

some time and students sent home. Later, young people wishing to enter the College, had to produce a certificate of political reliability together with medical and birth certificates.⁴⁰⁸

One of the most crowded and significant meetings was held in Galeevskoe madrasah in 1905, when the mullah Salimzian Galeev and other leaders introduced the idea of unification of all Muslims within the current political regime and claimed that it was necessary to form a separate autonomous Tatar entity. At this meeting the union *Islakh* [‘*Ispravlenie*’] of mullahs, *mugallims*, *shakirds* and Tatar teachers, was created. Members of *Islakh* wanted to reform the educational system - they fought against the educational routine at mekteb and madrasah and wanted to transfer control over them to the lay Tatar authorities. In the autumn of 1907 the union *Bregi* [‘Unification’], that was part of *Islakh*, introduced its own program that, however, contained political proposals for Russian Muslims’ rights that *Islakh* did not approve of.

The program of *Bregi* was to unite all the *shakirds* of the region. The leaders of the union were not satisfied with the current situation at the madrasah and were going to reform it. They asserted the necessity of universal primary education for men and women. They understood the advantage of using the mother tongue in teaching and claimed that the process of teaching should be in Tatar only, while Russian, since it was a state language, should be given the role of a separate subject. An important, revolutionary idea was that this union, understanding the different aims of lay and religious educational institutions, wanted to separate them, while at the same time demanding that madrasah (but not parish mektebs) should be taken out of the control of the mullahs. They also considered financial aspects – indeed since it was impossible to teach about twenty million children on private donations alone, the union of *shakirds* was planning to solicit the zemstvo, city council and the government for the money. Understanding that to accomplish this task it was necessary to gain social power, which was not possible under autocracy, the aim of the union was to fight autocracy, overthrow it and to restore the constituent assembly.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ NART, f.142, op. 1, d.307, l.34.

⁴⁰⁹ NART, f.92, op.2, d.7084, ll.39-39 ob.

Bregi, deprived of the support of a much stronger organization, limited itself to campaigning with caution among the local people. The Kazan police department, however, alerted the Special Police department to ‘the birth of a Tatar revolutionary organization.’ The report stated that at the head of this organization there were many Muslim mullahs and progressive merchants, and that their aim was to overthrow autocracy, establish a democratic republic, and separate all Muslim Tatars into a special federation completely divorced from all things Russian, in order to obtain autonomy on the model of Finland. Later, the police drove the leaders, mullahs Salihdzian Galeev, Galimdzian Galeev and Abdulla Apanaev, out of Kazan province and the rich merchants Abdulla Kazakov, Sadyk Galikaev and Suleiman Aitov were put under police surveillance for a year.⁴¹⁰

The stumbling block in managing the unstable and increasingly dangerous situation lay in the previously unsolved problem of control. In fact, the system, created in 1870 on the basis of the resolution of the Ministry of Education, was in practice badly organized since it presupposed a very cautious approach to Muslim schooling. In this way it paralyzed the activity of the local controlling bodies, and did not provide them with any legal basis, while at the same time shifting all the responsibility onto them. Too tolerant an attitude towards Muslim education and an inconsistency in legislative aspects were the main drawbacks in the system of control. The rules of 1870 concerning measures on the education of the *inorodtsy*, presupposed that no madrasah would be permitted to be established without a Russian class. The rules of 31 March 1906, however, abolishing those of 1870, gave the school inspectors the right to allow a school to be opened. The only requirement necessary was to convince the inspector that there would eventually be a Russian class at the school and that the director of the school was qualified.

Later, due to the disturbances within Muslim communities, the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs decided that these rules would not be applied to confessional schools, such as madrasah and mekteb. Consequently, new regulations of 2 January 1907 stated that the Russian classes could be opened both at madrasah and separately from them, which meant that there was no necessity to open a Russian class at any newly-

⁴¹⁰ NART, f.199, op.1, d. 485, ll.18-19.

established madrasahs.⁴¹¹ At the same time, the question of control was not even raised. The new regulations, in late 1907, concerned primary schools for the *inorodtsy*, which were established in the same way as all primary schools in the empire, but nothing was said about Muslim confessional schools. This meant, in short, that the obligation to establish Russian classes at mekteb or madrasah, abolished by the regulations of 31 March 1906, was not rehabilitated.

Both the authorities and mullahs became aware of the dubious status of confessional schools and both sides tried to find a way out of the uncomfortable situation. Even before the year 1907 in the Muslim *milieu* there had been a return to the old method, as many Muslims demanded teaching according to the old method, considering the new one harmful for Islam. In response the new-method teachers, in order to keep their places, made certain concessions - they gave up teaching lay subjects and restricted the phonetic method to the primary stages of education, while still popularizing ideas of Pan-Muslim cultural unification and trying to foster an all-Muslim literary language, thus using the Tatar language as a shield against linguistic assimilation.

The Vice-Governor of Kazan G.B. Petkevich in a letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs N.A. Maklakov gave a warning that the state could soon face a problem it would be no longer able to control, since the Muslims understood the concept of acculturation, but did not accept it in the way the empire dictated, instead adapting it to their own needs. In an attempt to regain authority Petkevich suggested that the idea of establishing the Kazan Teacher-Training College had been a mistake in the first place and advised, if possible, to try and turn the clock back. Muslim children, he warned, should not be gathered together at schools, and they should necessarily be taught by Russians who knew the Tatar language. That meant that the Teacher Training College would have to be reorganized, and later possibly closed.⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ NART, f.92, op.2, d. 12615, ll.71-73ob.

⁴¹² NART, f.1, op.4, d.5482, ll.122-127, 128-129ob.

The head of the printing committee and director of schools of Kazan province M.N. Pinegin, commenting on the possible success of the imperial policy, noted that

Muslim mullahs and schools...create such a strong fanaticism that only by constant, systematic and energetic activities directed to the development of Russian ideas...it is possible to succeed in Russification, at present certainly only a civil one.⁴¹³

He suggested having a single type of state school with teaching in all subjects, except for religion, in Russian, to those who needed general education. And if the state recognized the possibility of having *madrrasah* and *mekteb* as educational institutions, their existence should be aimed only at religious education and one should not allow lay subjects to be taught there.

While the question of the coexistence of lay and religious components in Tatar educational institutions after 1905 requires further analysis and while the present work does not claim a complete presentation of the problem, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the internal reforms taking place in the Muslim community in the second half of the nineteenth century resulted in only partial implementation of acculturation on the basis of the Russian language. Here I support Mustafa Tuna's argument that, under the influence of both the Russian state and Muslim intellectuals, the Muslims of Russia did adapt to modernity but since they 'felt these changes and the need to adapt them only partially...they adapted only partially.'⁴¹⁴

The imperial policy, which Olivier Roy characterizes as both 'ideological assimilation which respects ethnic specificity and a collaboration between two communities in a common state project,' made the Russian Muslims politically active.⁴¹⁵ Started as a reform within the Islamic tradition, Muslim education at *madrasahs* gradually adopted a secular model which was more evident after the years 1905-7. Islam as a religious system lost its attraction for many graduates and they, under the influence of Russian and European modernity, engaged

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Tuna, "Imperial Russia's".

⁴¹⁵ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), 31.

themselves in social reforms, leaving behind the purely religious sphere.⁴¹⁶ The changes in the post-1905 Russification policy towards both Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic groups of the Middle Volga region, are the subject of the following chapters.

⁴¹⁶ Mustafa Tuna, “Madrasa Reform as a Secularising Process: A View from the Late Russian Empire”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no.3 (2011):540-570.

CHAPTER FOUR. NEW CHALLENGES FOR OLD STRATEGIES

The decree of April 1905 was the first practical move towards ‘freedom of conscience’ for imperial subjects. Indeed, the then-Prime Minister Sergei Witte noted that, ‘after two hundred years of the policy of religious restrictions Russia has embarked on the path to religious toleration.’⁴¹⁷ This gave thousands of Orthodox non-Russians an opportunity to change their religious status if they did not wish to remain Orthodox. Such a change was possible in cases where these people were registered as Orthodox, but in reality practiced a non-Christian faith to which they or their ancestors belonged before they became Orthodox.⁴¹⁸ This meant that those, who wanted to apostatize from Orthodoxy, had to prove that they or their close relatives (parents or grandparents) were actually adherents of a faith different than Orthodoxy before the decree of 1905.

In fact, after the proclamation of the Manifesto, tens of thousands of the Orthodox in the Middle Volga region apostatized into Islam.⁴¹⁹ In the years from 1905-1907, there were 1316 apostates in the province of Viatka and 4346 apostates in the province of Simbirsk.⁴²⁰ In the same period, from right after the proclamation of the Manifesto until 1907 in Kazan province alone there were 38753 apostates into Islam. The number of apostasies decreased later, as the statistical data show, in the years from 1906 to 1908, 2994 people apostatized from Orthodoxy to Islam in Kazan diocese, but the process was ongoing.⁴²¹ However, the problem was that in reality this number was much higher, for the figure mentioned referred to the ‘new apostates’, those who first petitioned to be recognized as Muslim after 1905. If one

⁴¹⁷ S. Iu. Vitte, “O sovremennom polozhenii Pravoslavnoi tserkvi” [On the Present-Day State of the Orthodox Church], in *Slovo*, 1905: 12-14.

⁴¹⁸ *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 3rd series, vol 24, no. 26126 (17 April 1905), section I, article 3.

⁴¹⁹ V.N. Eslivanov, *Trudnosti i nuzhdy Kazanskoj inorodcheskoj missii* [Difficulties and Needs of the Kazan Inorodtsy Mission] (Kazan: Tsentral’naia tipografiia, 1915), 2.

⁴²⁰ RGIA, f. 821, op.8, d. 797-799. N. V. Nikol’skii, *Naibolee vazhnye statisticheskie svedeniia ob inorodtsakh Vostochnoi Rossii i Zapadnoi Sibiri, podverzhennykh vliianiiu islama* [The Most Important Statistical Information about the Inorodtsy of Eastern Russia and Western Siberia Liable to the Influence of Islam] (Kazan: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1912).

⁴²¹ S.Bagin, *Ob otpadenii v magometantsvo kreshchenykh inorodtsev Kazanskoj eparkhii i o prichinakh etogo pechal’nogo iavleniia* [About the Apostasy of Baptized Inorodtsy of Kazan Diocese into Islam and about the Reasons for this Sad Phenomenon] (Kazan: Tsentral’naia tipografiia, 1910), 10.

considers those who had petitioned to be recognized as Muslims or pagans during the 1860s and 1880s, and who were also sending new petitions, the number could amount to thousands of people.

This freedom of conscience placed the Orthodox mission in the Middle Volga region in a new situation. In this period of change the position of the Church became more vulnerable and churchmen faced the necessity revising their methods of missionary work, including missionary education, to fit the new circumstances. The Orthodox missionaries in the region had to work surrounded by thousands of pagans, thousands of Muslims and ‘tens of thousands of still double-believers, still weak in their Orthodox beliefs’ and had to defend not only the interests of the Orthodox Church but, as some missionaries believed, the interests of the state as well: ‘gaining faithful sons of the Church, they also gained loyal servants for the Orthodox state.’⁴²² Orthodoxy remained an important prerequisite for Russianness, but the methods of Orthodox education among the non-Russians were subject to revision. Although the supporters of the Il’minskii system continued to defend non-Russian languages in education, the voices of its opponents became louder. As we will see in this chapter, in the post 1905 period there were attempts to introduce the Russian language at non-Muslim schools as early as possible, as the school curriculum was gradually changing towards wider introduction of secular subjects.

⁴²² Eslivanov, *Trudnosti*, 4.

4.1.Missionary Education System Revised

At the turn of the twentieth century, both missionaries and secular authorities understood the need to review the methods of school policy in the region. The question of the efficiency of the Il'minskii system had already been raised at the end of the nineteenth century. On 3 December 1889, the chairman of St. Guriu Brotherhood, bishop Sergii of Cheboksary (Sokolov), in his speech at the general meeting of the brotherhood claimed that it was impossible to publish missionary books in local languages. Later he tried to reorganize brotherhood schools into parish schools with teaching in Russian. It was only Il'minskii's authority that enabled him to keep missionary institutions intact at that time.⁴²³

Even members the Brotherhood itself were not united in their views on the Il'minskii system. On the one side there were the supporters of the system - M. Mashanov, N.Bobrovnikov, I. Iznoskov, I. Iakovlev, T.Egorov, R. Daulei. On the other, there were the representatives of missionary school headed by professors of an anti-Muslim faction of Kazan Ecclesiastic academy E. Malov (A. Miropil'skii, I. Totskii, P. Akhmerov) Indeed, Iskhakov shows that the differences in their views were explained not only by different approaches to the problem of Christianization of ethnic minorities but by different understanding of the aims of the mission.

For Malov, for instance, Christianization was understood as part of Russification and assimilation of *inorodtsy*. Malov was a supporter of active anti-Muslim missionary methods and claimed that it was necessary to restrict the use of native languages both at school and in missionary practice. The followers of Il'minskii's tradition did not believe proselytizing among Muslims was effective and claimed it was necessary to continue to use the native languages at school.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ "Elabuzhskii uezd"(Elabuga Uezd), *Volzhskii vestnik* 70 (1891).

⁴²⁴ Iskhakov, *Missionerstvo*, 177.

Even if Il'minskii was right that the use of the Russian language did not prevent Tatarization of the non-Muslim ethnic groups, his system alone, in practice, could not solve this problem either. The years of 1902-1903 were marked by massive apostasies of Old-baptized Tatars in the uezds of Laishev and Mamadysh.⁴²⁵ In 1902, 51 baptized Tatar inhabitants of the village of Saltygan Kliuch openly expressed their desire to profess Islam. In 1903, a similar decision was made by 30 inhabitants of the village of Bol'shie Savrushy and 52 inhabitants of Elyshevo. Missionary schools using the Il'minskii system existed in all of these villages and about half of the apostates had attended these schools.⁴²⁶

In the years preceding the revolution of 1905, use of the Il'minskii system was very limited in parish schools due to the policy of the archbishop of Kazan and Sviiazhsk, Dmitrii⁴²⁷ (Koval'nitskii) (1903-1905). The problem with archbishop Dmitrii's understanding of the situation was that he did not know the diocese well. During the two years of his episcopacy, he almost never visited the parishes. Only in 1904, did he go to two cities, Spassk and Troitsk, but he visited non-Russian parishes only once - those of Bolshie Savrushy and Gorokhovie Pole in the Mamadysh district on 13-14 June 1904. Being a strong supporter of the sole use of the Russian language (the so-called direct method) in parish schools, Koval'nitskii prohibited teaching in native languages at parish schools, save for the first year of studies. It was soon prohibited to teach religious instruction or to conduct sermons in native languages.

Dowler's study suggests that the direct method, where the students were forbidden to speak their native languages at school, was supported by those who viewed the acquisition of the Russian language as the key to Russification and feared that teaching native languages would contribute to separatism and raise nationalism among non-Russian ethnic groups.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵ *Izvestiia po Kazanskoj eparkhii* 13 (1906): 386.

⁴²⁶ Iskhakov, *Missionerstvo*, 175.

⁴²⁷ M.G. Koval'nitskii, *O znachenii natsional'nogo elementa v istorii razvitiia khristianstva* [On the Importance of National Element in the History of Development of Christianity] (Kiev: n.p., 1880).

⁴²⁸ Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 162.

In the Middle Volga region, the attack on the Il'minskii system was not limited to the introduction of the direct method at schools. In 1903, the Minister of Education dismissed I.Ia. Iakovlev from the position of inspector of Chuvash schools, which was followed by the abolition of the office of inspectors of non-Russian schools altogether.⁴²⁹ The reasons for the discharge are clear enough. First of all, Iakovlev was one of the most ardent supporters of the Il'minskii system and of teaching in Chuvash at local schools. Secondly, he was actively promoting the interests of the Chuvash, the raising of their educational level and the development of the Chuvash language. To Russian nationalists, this seemed to be leading a long way from the ideas of *obrusenie*, and 'excessive' enthusiasm for the promotion of the Chuvash language raised suspicions about ethnic separatism. The elimination of the post of inspectors of non-Russian schools' was also a step in diminishing the special status of non-Russian schools. From then on, statistical reports from the local education authorities did not always distinguish between Russian and non-Russian students.

Among the supporters of the system who were always ready to intervene, was the wife of V. Bobrovnikov, Sofia Chicherina. She was a maid of honour to the empress Alexandra Fedorovna and, observing that the principles of the Il'minskii system were being violated, turned to the empress for help. Chicherina was opposed to the introduction of the direct method at school and wrote that the absence of indigenous languages at school, instead of speeding up the russification of inorodtsy, retarded their development.⁴³⁰ At the same time, Ivan Iakovlev turned to Pobedonostsev for help. As a result, on March 26, 1905 archbishop Dmitrii left for Odessa, while Derevitskii, the trustee of Kazan educational district, who supported the archbishop, left office shortly after. Another opponent of the Il'minskii system, the trustee of the Orenburg educational district N.Ch. Zaionchkovskii, was also dismissed.⁴³¹ When the next archbishop Dimitrii (Sambikin) (26 March 1905 – 17 March 1908) came to Kazan, sermons in indigenous languages resumed and parish schools started to use the Il'minskii system again.

⁴²⁹ Kreindler, "Educational Policies", 184.

⁴³⁰ NART, f.92, op.2, d. 3798, l. 6.

⁴³¹ *Arkhiepiskopy Kazanskie* [Kazan Archbishops](Kazan: n.p., 2009), 279.

The letters of Chicherina and N. Miloslavskii (an inspector of elementary schools in Kazan school district) and his aide, sent to the then-newly appointed Minister of education V.G. Glazov, demonstrate that the local officials of the Ministry of Education, much as they understood the importance of missionary education, were quite reluctant to promote it.⁴³² The letters of Miloslavskii's aide reveal that the school officials were calling for more secular subjects at schools and more practical direction of non-Russian education. It was explained that the missionary character of the Il'minskii system, which had been useful during the age of Great Reforms, had outlived itself. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the letters stated, it was important for non-Russians to learn the Russian language in order to be able to approach government officials, enter a court of law, carry out military duties and participate in other aspects of the life of the country.

Miloslavskii was dissatisfied with the brotherhood schools, pointing out that they produced mechanical reading of Church Slavonic without much understanding of it. Besides, he complained, by studying Russian through the translation method the students did not learn it well: 'Students and even graduates of the program in non-Russian schools do not and cannot speak Russian, not just at home, but even in the classroom.'⁴³³ Since most parents were convinced that two years of studies were sufficient, the majority of students (up to 85 per cent) dropped out even before they could actually start to study Russian.⁴³⁴

Miloslavskii was quite critical of Il'minskii's belief that Orthodox education in indigenous languages was more important than the study of the Russian language. Like the officials in the second half of the nineteenth century, he believed that education in the indigenous languages drew non-Russians apart from Russians rather than contributed to their *obrusenie*. He suggested that the system should be revised in order to acquire a more secular, rather than missionary, colouring, and to accept the priority of the Russian language learning.⁴³⁵ This discussion raised the question of the effectiveness of Il'minskii's methods in russifying non-Russians, in schools for baptized non-Russians and pagans.

⁴³² Ibid, ll. 1-40, for a detailed study of these letters see Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 164-170.

⁴³³ Quoted from Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 168.

⁴³⁴ NART, f. 92, op.2, d. 3798, l. 37.

⁴³⁵ NART, f.92, op.2, d. 3798, l.39.

Out of 795 church schools of the province, in 1904 there were 205 literacy schools and 162 non-Russian parish schools, and 25 mixed parish schools.⁴³⁶ At the same time, the Russian and non-Russian population of the province were almost equal in number together making up 1,500,000 people. From this it may be calculated that among Russians nine children per 100 people attended school, while the figure among non-Russians was only 2.7 children. This could be attributed to the above-mentioned fact that *inorodtsy* dropped out of schools more often than Russians, and the quantitative results of education were really low - by 1904 only 1400 non-Russians had received school education, that is one person per 540.

Brotherhood schools were also among the poorest ones. See, for example, the data on expenditure on different types of schools in Kazan province in 1904:⁴³⁷

Table 8: Expenditure on Primary Education

Type of school	Expenditure per school (in rubles)	Expenditure per student
Schools of Ministry of Education	1077.1	11.6
Zemstvo schools	505.6	8.7
Private schools	524.5	11.0
Parish schools	254.9	6.7
Brotherhood schools	127.2	5.1
Literacy schools	154.7	5.6

In May 1905, Minister of Education V.V. Glazov, with Pobedonostsev's support, ordered a 'Special Commission on education of the Eastern *inorodtsy*' to be summoned. The members of the Commission were famous experts of *inorodtsy* education – N.A. Bobrovnikov, S.V. Chicherina, A.I. Iznoskov, N.F. Katanov, P.N. Luppov, M.A. Mashanov,

⁴³⁶ Bobrovnikov, *Shkol'naia set'*, 4.

⁴³⁷ *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Kazanskoj gubernii*. [Popular Education in Kazan Province] (Kazan, 1907),110.

S.V. Smolenskii, I.Ia. Iakovlev.⁴³⁸ It was chaired by A.S. Budilovich, who had inspected a number of non-Russian schools of the region. None of the participants was opposed to Il'minskii's ideas. This meant that the question of abolishing the system was not on the agenda. The participants wanted to reform the system so that it could become even more effective.⁴³⁹

Contrary to Miloslavskii's vision of non-Russian schools, Budilovich was quite impressed by the level of Russian language skills at the Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars and Kazan Teaching Seminary. In his report on the inspection he stated that by 1905 there were 473 Russian graduates who had been trained as teachers in non-Russian schools and 488 non-Russian graduates who worked as teachers or priests.⁴⁴⁰ Budilovich also visited the Chuvash Teaching School in Simbirsk still directed by Iakovlev, the Chuvash Central School in Ushak, the Votyak School in Karlygan and the Cheremis Central School in Un'zhinsk, and gave similar positive reports on the students' knowledge of Russian. All these institutions used Il'minskii's method in their work.⁴⁴¹ In Budilovich's conversation with Miloslavskii the latter also admitted that the Il'minskii school system could be considered successful in the matter of unification of Russian and non-Russian people through the Orthodox religion.⁴⁴²

At the 1905 meeting much attention was devoted to evaluation of the Il'minskii system. One of his followers, the teacher Miropiev, argued 'Il'minskii's system has a great educational force which is based on religion, which re-educates (*perevospytyvaet*) the soul of people....it attracts them [non-Russians] to the Russian people and prepares their *sliianie* with Russians.'⁴⁴³ Budilovich confirmed these words saying that in order to help both missionary and Russification ends, these schools

⁴³⁸ A.S. Budilovich, *Trudy osobogo soveshchaniia po voprosam obrazovaniia vostochnykh inorodtsev* [Works of the Special Meeting on Education of the Eastern *Inorodtsy*] (Saint Petersburg:Tipografiia E.L. Porokhovshchikovoi, 1905), 3.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, 22.

⁴⁴⁰ RGIA, f. 733,op.173,d.101, ll.9-12.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, l. 37, 63 and 65.

⁴⁴² Ibid, l. 47-49.

⁴⁴³ Budilovich, *Trudy osobogo*, 24.

[...]should evoke Christian feelings and moods...for the moral rebirth of a Tatar, a Chuvash, a Cheremis, and in fact any non-Russian from Ural or Altai, into a true Christian, school would become a powerful weapon, if it received a strong religious and moral component. This is exactly what was done in the Christian school of Il'minskii.⁴⁴⁴

The same idea was followed by N. Bobrovnikov in his project for a school network for non-Russian children of the Middle Volga region.⁴⁴⁵ Giving a short overview of the educational situation in the Kazan province, Bobrovnikov argued that not even all Russian children went to school, but the situation was still worse at the mixed schools (where non-Russian children studied together with Russians) and non-Russian schools. At mixed schools, non-Russian children usually dropped out during the first six months, without having learnt anything. Many observers mentioned the fact that only those who already knew Russian before they started school could finish it.

Four-year schools, Bobrovnikov argued, should be built in all villages with a population not less than 200 and not more than 800 people. For the villages with less than 200 people, where it was economically difficult to build a school, it was suggested that during the last two years (third and fourth years of studies) children should live in school residences in bigger villages or cities, whereas for the first two years, teachers could come to the small villages to teach children (one teacher for every two small villages) (*peredvizhnye uchitel'ia*).

As far as the education of the Muslim children of Kazan province was concerned, Bobrovnikov considered Russian-Tatar schools a failure, for they could not compete with the Muslim confessional schools. The reason for the poor success of the ministerial schools could be that the Ministry of Education seriously underestimated the power of Muslim confessional schools. Although there were eleven Russian-Tatar schools in the province, the only efficient one was the Kazan Teacher Training College, for even though in all eleven schools together there were 290 students (already a small number), this figure existed on paper only, and no

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 21.

⁴⁴⁵ N. Bobrovnikov, *Shkol'naia set' Kazanskoii gubernii* [School Network of Kazan Province] (Kazan: tipografiia Petrova, 1905).

one knew how many students really went to such schools. As was suggested in the project, Russian education for Muslims would be limited to running Russian classes at Muslim schools.⁴⁴⁶ It was proposed to open one Russian language class for every 600 inhabitants.

The level of knowledge of the Russian language remained low among all the ethnic non-Russians in the Middle Volga region. Due to the differences between Russian and indigenous languages, and due to the generally low educational level of the population of the region, even with a four-year program, primary school did not teach people to read a Russian book or a Russian newspaper. People were considered to be literate in Russian if they could read and understand something that concerned them directly. Students who continued education after primary school were so weak that it was impossible to teach them any subjects and even Russian students had to be taught the Russian language first before opening a textbook.

Bobrovnikov thought that an increase in the years of schooling and a gradual raising of standards in Russian schools to the level of a Russian school would indeed help to solve the problem of non-Russian education:

Without a general school, which would bring a Russian book and a Russian newspaper into the Russian village, we will never be able to drag it [the village] out of its present-day poor state and we should give up all dreams of Russification of non-Russians, since it is unthinkable without the cultural superiority of a Russian peasant man or woman.⁴⁴⁷

In the course of discussions a school inspector in Simbirsk, Isherskii, argued that it was essential to use the native language as an aid to the learning of Russian. He also noted that the direct teaching of the Russian language could only be used in small groups and by specially trained teachers.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, 7.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid,9.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, 69.

At the end of the discussion, the participants worked out a number of recommendations in order to reaffirm and reform the Il'minskii system. The commissioners proposed to add another year to the existing four years of studies in Il'minskii schools (the existing school model was one class divided into two two-year sections). It was proposed that in areas with little Russian population, where non-Russians could not practice their Russian language skills on a daily basis, schooling would last five years instead of four. In such schools, teaching in Russian would begin at the end of the third year. In mixed areas, the four-year program would remain but teaching in Russian could already begin after the first year.⁴⁴⁹ Consequently, the upper section would now correspond to the second and third years of the general school.

The commissioners recommended strengthening the secular component in the school program by increasing the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of arithmetic, and Russian and Church Slavonic. However, the number of hours a week for religion (six hours in each section) and native language study (four hours in the first section and two hours in the second) remained unchanged. The commission tried to suggest a unified standard for all types of non-Russian non-Muslim schools, without making distinctions between ministry, zemstvo, parish and brotherhood schools.⁴⁵⁰ In their view, the Il'minskii system was still effective and worked well for all these types of school, not only those with a strong missionary character.

These suggestions were approved both by Glazov and his successor I.I. Tolstoi who replaced him at the end of October 1905. On their approval, the new recommendations of 1906 supported the major part of the commission's suggestions. Officials in the Ministry of the Interior criticized the section of the regulations dedicated to Muslim education. Interfering in the work of Muslim confessional institutions, they argued, was a violation of the tsar's declaration on religious toleration and this could potentially arouse Muslim hostility.⁴⁵¹ However, when the regulations of 1906 were revised in 1907, Russian classes in

⁴⁴⁹ Budilovich, *Trudy osobogo*, xii-ix.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.47-48.

⁴⁵¹ RGIA, f. 733, op. 170, d. 263, ll. 66-70.

Muslim confessional schools and their inspections were abolished and the requirement concerning Russian language knowledge for mullahs was dropped.⁴⁵²

Children, who went to brotherhood schools, were now supposed to study for four years instead of the previously set three. During this period children would study the following subjects:⁴⁵³

Table 9: Curriculum of a Typical Brotherhood School

Subject	1st year	2nd year	3 rd year	4 th year
Religious instruction	4	4	5	5
Russian	10	12	11	11
Church Slavonic	-	-	2	2
Reading in native languages (<i>inorodcheskoe chtenie</i>)	6	4	3	3
Arithmetic	4	5	5	5
Writing	4	3	2	2
Singing	2	2	2	2
Total	30	30	30	30

However, there were relatively few schools of the four-year type, and most of those were Chuvash schools. Tatar, Mari and Votiak schools still ran for a period of three, and

⁴⁵² N.I. Il'minskii, *O sisteme prosveshcheniia inorodtsev*, xv.

⁴⁵³ A.F. Efirov, *Nerusskie shkoly Povolzh'ia, Priural'ia i Sibiri* [Non-Russian Schools of Povolzh'e, Priural'e and Siberia](Moscow: Uchpedgiz, 1948), 20.

sometimes only two, years of study.⁴⁵⁴ In 1905, there were 64 Tatar brotherhood schools in Kazan educational district, 48 Chuvash schools and only eighteen Mari schools.

The Il'minskii system was implemented not only in brotherhood schools but also in parish schools. According to the rules of 1884 on parish schools, in the dioceses with church brotherhoods they were to be under the control of these brotherhoods. Thus, the parish schools of Kazan province followed the program of brotherhood schools, i.e. the Il'minskii program. In 1908, there were 413 parish schools in Kazan province, with 20260 students, half of which were Russian and the other half - Chuvash, Mari and others. Girls constituted a quarter of the total number of students.⁴⁵⁵ However, the Il'minskii system was used only at parish schools with non-Russian students, whereas in Russian or mixed schools it was either not used at all, or used only partially.

The Kazan Teaching Seminary kept to its traditions. In the period 1875-1904 it had 954 graduates, out of which 473 were Russians and 481 non-Russians.⁴⁵⁶ In 1908, there were already two departments at the seminary, one for men, the other for women. There were 109 male students - two Russians and 107 baptized Tatars. There were only 45 women students: one Russian, 42 baptized Tatars, one Votyak and one Mordva. The seminary continued to give future non-Russian teachers and priests a Christian education.⁴⁵⁷

When the bishop of Cheboksary Nikanor became the archbishop of Kazan and Sviiazhsk (1908-1910), he reaffirmed the necessity of the use of the Il'minskii method at brotherhood and parish schools and in church.⁴⁵⁸ The archbishop, who in the period 1874 to 1879 gave lessons in religious instruction in Il'minskii's Kazan Teaching Seminary, and was also the

⁴⁵⁴ Efirov, *Nerusskie*, 22.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 27.

⁴⁵⁶ *32 godovshchina otkrytiia Kazanskoi uchitel'skoi seminarii* [The Thirty-third Anniversary of the Opening of Kazan Teaching Seminary] (Kazan: Tipografiia Petrova, 1904), 9-10.

⁴⁵⁷ *Otchet o sostoianii kazanskoi tsentralnoi krescheno-tatarskoi shkoly za 1907-1908 uchebnyi god* [Report on the State of Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars in 1907-1908] (Kazan: n.p., 1908).

⁴⁵⁸ *Arkhiepiskopy Kazanskie*, 294.

priest of the seminary church, knew the system from within and believed in it. Visiting the villages of the diocese, Nikanor insisted on sermons in indigenous languages and schooling according to the Il'minskii system and did not hesitate to ordain *inorodtsy* priests. And when members of the Black Hundred (*Chernaia Sotnia*, an ultra-nationalist movement that appeared in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century), under the leadership of professor V.Zalesskii, opposed the Il'minskii system claiming that it led to the isolation of non-Russians from Russians, it was Nikanor who defended it.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁹ Iakovlev, *Moia zhizn'*, 222-223.

4.2. School as a Reaffirmed Pillar of the Mission

The Church authorities still relied heavily on missionary activities in the matter of keeping non-Russians in Orthodoxy. The role of ‘professional’, specially trained missionaries was still quite important. Such missionaries alone, however, were no longer seen as the best, or the sole remedy. Trained missionaries were useless, for example, if they did not speak the languages of the non-Russians. ‘What kind of missionary are you, what do you come to talk to the Chuvash about, if you do not even speak the Chuvash language?’ asked an anonymous writer from the pages of *Kazanskii Telegraf*.⁴⁶⁰ In fact, even those missionaries who spoke the languages had little success since, in the case of pagans, they often had to deal with people who were not at all sensitive to their reasoning. It was useless to try to prove the falsity of their pagan beliefs if the missionaries could not find a proper approach to non-Russian peasants, or could not talk to them about their daily needs, including spiritual ones.

In order to discuss the urgent problems of the Orthodox mission among both Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the region, as well as the problems of non-Russian education, priests, missionaries and teachers gathered at the Third Missionary Congress in Kazan in 1910. The Congress met from 13 to 26 June 1910 and was chaired by the Most Reverend Vladimir, metropolitan of Moscow and chairman of the Orthodox Missionary Society. Among the sessions of the Congress there was one on education of baptized non-Russians, one on mission among pagans and anti-Muslim mission, as well as one on literature and translations. Much like at the Commission of 1905, most of the participants of the Congress were supporters of Il’minskii. Not surprisingly, the question of abolishing the system was not even raised, the issues discussed were focused on how to improve missionary work.

For the mission among pagans, it was recommended that private talks and sermons in indigenous languages should be organized along with Bible reading and stories about the lives of saints, and new schools for the children of pagans should be opened, using the Il’minskii system. In addition, it was planned to open libraries and reading rooms, increase

⁴⁶⁰ “Nasha protivno-iazycheskaia missiia” [Our Anti-Pagan Mission], *Kazanskii telegraf*, 15 August 1909.

the number of Orthodox churches, visit, upon invitation, the houses of the pagans with crosses and icons, organize missionary trips to distant villages, and give them booklets with religious texts in the native languages with a parallel translation into Russian. Finally, it was advised to organize the baptism of pagans in a solemn way so they could feel the importance of the event.⁴⁶¹

Bishop Andrei claimed that, among Finno-Ugric Orthodox, more attention should be paid to the Mordva, who had been long considered Russified and whose children were taught in Russian. However, children of Mordva whose mothers did not speak Russian at home could not really be educated at Russian schools, since there were no textbooks in the Mordva language. Many *inorodtsy*, whose closeness to Russians was taken for granted, in fact still had difficulties understanding the Russian language and learning in Russian. At their schools the Il'minskii system still had to be used, at least in the first year of schooling, and special books, frequently in a shortened version of the original, had to be published. A missionary had to remember that many of so-called Russified non-Russians were still prone to apostasy from Orthodoxy. Another danger was that, unless missionaries and priests intervened and explained the dogmas of Christianity in a comprehensive way, these non-Russian groups that were considered so well Russified, could easily fall prey to sects that had become quite active.⁴⁶²

It was agreed that the whole Russian Orthodox society should be mobilized to defend Orthodoxy and to continue fighting Islam and paganism. One missionary, Eslivanov, claimed that it was impossible to fight paganism with such a small number of missionaries. Kazan Orthodox mission, for example, had only one diocesan and five district missionaries. Instead, Eslivanov suggested, there should be at least eleven district missionaries: for example two for the Mamadysh district, one for baptized Tatars and apostates from baptized Tatars and one among pagan Cheremis and Votyak (the number of pagans at that time was about 3600 people). Furthermore, two missionaries were required for Chistopol and two for Tsarevokokshaisk district, since these districts were big and pagans were numerous.

⁴⁶¹ *Missionerskii s'ezd 1910* (Kazan, 1910), 27.

⁴⁶² *Ibid*, 675.

The members of the Muslim section, chaired by Professor M. Mashanov, were convinced that one should follow the example of the Tatar community and engage all levels of Russian society in helping the mission.⁴⁶³ This cooperation was very important, since this was how Muslim proselytism worked: all Muslims participated, with no difference in age, gender or wealth - men and women, scholars, and illiterate people, the rich and the poor, those who were born Muslims and the neophytes.⁴⁶⁴ Thus virtually everyone in the Muslim community contributed to the spread of Islam and consequently blocked the spread of Christianity and Christian culture in the region. In the situation the Orthodox mission found itself at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was important to learn from the rival and to start ‘fighting the enemy with his own weapon’.

Since religious teaching was a priority at Tatar schools, one of the resolutions of the congress was to strengthen religious studies at Orthodox schools as well. It was decided to compile books that approved of Christian teaching and showed the drawbacks of Muslim teaching. Such books were to be read in non-Russian schools and in Russian schools that were situated in villages with non-Russian population.

N. P. Ostroumov, contemplating the variety of educational programs for the non-Russian children in the empire, argued that the Russian administration should do its best to achieve the same systematic character in Russian schools as one found in a Muslim school:

[...]Tatars implement their school system systematically without any deviation....The Russian administration should know that and be led by their example which has been sufficiently confirmed by experience... The government is bound only to watch over Muslim schools and direct their activities to meet the interests of the state. I personally am favorably inclined to the Tatars, as a separate nationality, for they have many good qualities. But our attitude to Tatars as Muslims, and as propagandists of pan-Islamic ideas should be quite different.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Ibid, 37.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 208.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, 220.

School was recognized as the main tool of fighting against Islam. P. Zhuze, a teacher at the Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy on the Kazan missionary courses, paraphrased Napoleon's aphorism that war required money, money and money saying that war against Islam required 'schools, schools and schools.'⁴⁶⁶ The importance of schooling was not contested either by local or central authorities. However, at a time when the officials of the Ministry of Education spoke of the importance of universal literacy and were trying to introduce more secular subjects into the school curriculum, the missionaries were still trying to strengthen the religious education component in non-Russian schools.

Moreover, it was stressed that the Church needed a good deal of state support in order to preserve its authority over the population. Priests and missionaries admitted that the position of the Orthodox Church had become weaker after the Manifesto and called for the intervention of the State in order to 'restore order' in legal ways. The Church was not yet prepared to deal with many of its problems on its own. One of the most long-standing problems, despite all the discussions and all the resolutions, was the issue of the use of native languages at schools and churches.

The congress affirmed the use of native languages both at school and in church, yet in practice the Church was still not ready to fulfill the task. Non-Russian priests were not numerous and Russian priests were reluctant to learn the languages of their parishioners and conduct sermons in indigenous languages. School inspectors did not help much either – reports on non-Russian schools were often returned incomplete and often lacked information on the number of schools, number of students and teachers who knew the native languages.⁴⁶⁷ Starting from 1909, teachers began to leave brotherhood schools, primarily because of financial difficulties. Consequently, by 1914 there remained very few teachers with proper missionary training.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, 231.

⁴⁶⁷ N.A. Bobrovnikov, *Sovremennoe polozhenie uchebnogo dela u inorodcheskikh plemen vostochnoi Rossii* [Present-day State of Schooling among Non-Russian Peoples of Eastern Russia](n.p,no date), 81.

At the same time, more aggressive voices were heard, among them that of professor of Kazan University, V. F. Zalesskii, an active member of the Black Hundreds. In *Kazanskii Telegraf* he accused Il'minskii of promoting separatism among non-Russian peoples by using local languages, of contributing to the rise of pan-Turkism and of disrespect for Orthodox texts by translating them into non-Russian languages.⁴⁶⁸ Some provincial teachers thought the system was outdated and the Provincial Gentry Assembly during a debate on 11 January 1911 called the educational policy towards non-Russians inappropriate.⁴⁶⁹

A one-day census conducted on 18 January 1911 revealed that among 806 schools for both Russian and non-Russian children in Kazan Educational District there were ten Ministry schools, 213 city schools, 28 zemstvo schools, and 208 church-parish schools (among them, also missionary schools).⁴⁷⁰ Of about half a million non-Russian children of elementary school age (eight to eleven years) in the Kazan School District, 18.7 per cent (93720 students) went to schools other than Muslim confessional schools. Among them, 89220 were attending ministry, zemstvo, or parish schools for non-Russians. And 4400 children went to 166 missionary schools, many of which were the schools of St. Gurii brotherhood.⁴⁷¹ In the table below we can see the percentage of all students attending ministry and church schools by language in Kazan Educational District, as revealed during the same census.⁴⁷² The figures show that the majority of non-Russian children were not involved in the network of ministry and church schools.

⁴⁶⁸ Il'minskii, *O sisteme prosveshcheniia inorodtsev i o Kazanskoi Tsentral'noi kreshcheno-tatarskoi shkole* [About the System of Non-Russian Education and Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars], A. Voskresenskii, ed. (Kazan: n.p., 1913), xxvii-xxviii.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, xxxi-xxxiii.

⁴⁷⁰ *Odnodnevnaia perepis' nachal'nykh shkol v imperii, 18 ianvaria 1911* [One Day Census of Elementary Schools in the Russian Empire, 18 January 1911] (no place; no date), 11.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 25.

Table 10: Distribution in Percent of Students in Ministry and Church Schools by Language, Gender and Province in Kazan Educational District, 18 January 1911.⁴⁷³

Language	Kazan' province		Viatka province		Samara province		Saratov province		Simbirsk province	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Russian	53.7	71.2	80.8	89.5	67.4	59.0	76.6	71.3	75.7	89.4
Votiak	0.75	0.65	14.1	8.5	0.12	0.04	-	-	-	-
Mordva	0.92	0.41	-	-	6.6	3.0	4.1	1.8	9.5	4.2
Cheremis	8.0	5.0	3.2	0.76	0.06	-	-	-	-	-
Tatar	6.2	3.7	1.7	1.0	0.21	0.08	0.11	0.03	1.0	0.42
Chuvash	30.4	18.8	-	-	2.5	0.82	0.61	0.17	11.7	4.8

The census also showed that there were only eight Russian-Tatar schools in the district with a total of 423 male and twenty female students. Russian language classes existed in only three madrasahs, with a total of 250 students. In contrast, 95,329 boys and 36,895 girls went to 2805 Muslim confessional schools.⁴⁷⁴

It should be underlined, however, that the above-mentioned data, as well as the whole discourse on the language of tuition concerned primary school only. The language of instruction in secondary and higher education had always been Russian. At the same time, even if the number of non-Russians attending primary school was increasing, for the majority of them education stopped at this primary stage. It is difficult to judge the overall level of Russian language literacy of school leavers since first of all, much depended on the teacher's competence. Secondly, we must not forget that the Russian language instruction in Il'minskii method schools was mostly missionary and only at the beginning of the twentieth century was it extended to some secular subjects. Thirdly, we have no data that demonstrate that a peasant finishing a primary school did not lose Russian language competence after several years of living in a non-Russian community. The system had a strong missionary character; no wonder church authorities had defended it throughout all these years. Yet, from the point

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 26.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, 22.

of view of Russification it was losing its efficiency and could not keep up with the standards the Ministry of Education was trying to set. Although a number of committees had examined non-Russian primary schools in the region the Il'minskii method was continually reaffirmed despite the voices of some Russian nationalists. There were still many supporters at the local level, but, after the death of its main defender Pobedonostsev in 1907, its position at the central level was gradually becoming shakier.

In October 1910 the Third Duma discussed a bill concerning national education. The draft of the bill established Russian as the language of instruction at school. At the same time, it extended the Regulations of 1906, which concerned schooling in the eastern regions of the empire, to all non-Russian schools (save for schools for Belorussians, Ukrainians and Jews). The draft stated that teaching in non-Russian languages was permitted during the first two years of study although teaching of Russian was to start already after three months. In this way the students were supposed to cope with instruction exclusively in Russian, which had to start in the third year of studies. Native language was still taught as a separate subject and religious instruction was to be provided in the native language, not in Russian.⁴⁷⁵

The majority of the members of the Duma argued for native-language instruction during the first four years of studies instead of the proposed two. In contrast, a significant number of deputies, although in minority, called for more restrictive measures. The opposition from the right and the centre viewed the language issue as a national one and argued that the language of schooling should be Russian, while non-Russian languages were to be used only at the initial stage. The left parties mostly opposed the religious direction of schooling.⁴⁷⁶ The Duma passed the bill extending native language education for the first four years for some groups of non-Russians while leaving it at the first two years for those groups of non-Russians for whom mastering the Russian language was considered relatively easy. However, the State Council rejected it in two readings. The main arguments against the bill were quite similar to those expressed by those opposed to it in the Duma.

⁴⁷⁵ In Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 202.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 205.

Nonetheless, many of the points proposed in the bill were reflected in the new Regulations on Non-Russian schools issued by the Ministry of Education on 5 June 1913. According to these new Regulations, the use of the native language in the classroom was no longer crucial. Although the regulations still supported teaching in a native language during the first two years of schooling, students had to begin learning Russian no later than three months after they had started school. Teachers were to be either Russians or non-Russians ‘familiar with the native language of the students.’ This meant that knowing a non-Russian language to a level enabling one to teach in it was no longer necessary.⁴⁷⁷ A new circular of the Holy Synod of 6 June 1913 also rejected the recommendation of the Kazan Missionary Congress of 1910. Contrary to the previous circular of 1899 which made the use of the Il’minskii method in Church schools obligatory, this new circular only spoke of using native languages in the first year of school and recommended that teaching in Russian should start as early as possible.⁴⁷⁸

Privately-funded schools (like the Kazan Central School for Baptized Tatars) were also restricted by the law of 1 July 1914. Although privately-funded schools were allowed to use non-Russian languages in teaching, a number of subjects (the Russian language, literature, geography and history) were to be taught in Russian. In the zemstvo schools which were not financed by the Ministry of Education, Russian language was mandatory. The native language could still be used for lessons of religion, native language and literature and foreign languages (other than Russian). Native languages could also be used as an oral aid in the first year of instruction where the students spoke no Russian.⁴⁷⁹

This was a strong point of departure from the basis of the educational system which had been approved by the authorities for the previous 40 years. It was no longer necessary for the teacher in the non-Russian school to come from the same ethnic group or even speak the native language of his students. Being ‘familiar’ with the language was necessary only to understand the students, and certainly not to teach in the language. These new Regulations clearly demonstrated a decisive move towards more aggressive and more rapid Russification.

⁴⁷⁷ Il’minskii, *O sisteme*, 133-5.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid*, xxxii-xxxiii.

⁴⁷⁹ Tiumen and Zelenko, eds, *Inorodcheskaia shkola*, 76-77, in Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 230.

Still, issuing these Regulations did not lead to the abrupt abolition of the Il'minskii method. The Kazan Teaching Seminary had 165 students (95 Russians and 70 non-Russians). In the Kazan diocese, 664 church-parish schools functioned in the school year 1913-14 (the number down drastically from that of the census of 1911 since the literacy schools had been transferred to parish schools). Among these church-parish schools, 346 were non-Russian ones. The Il'minskii method persisted both at these schools and in the remaining brotherhood schools.⁴⁸⁰

The post-1905 debates on non-Russian education demonstrate that by this time almost all the actors understood the importance of teaching in native languages at the initial stage of schooling. A trickier question was to define the duration of this initial period. Would three months or two years be enough before a non-Russian student could learn in Russian? When it came to the purposes of Russification, the gradual character of teaching Russian according to the Il'minskii system seemed no longer to satisfy either the claims of Russian nationalists or the officials of Ministry of Education, who were aiming for school unification, and promoting the idea of universal literacy.

Yet at the same time, the Il'minskii system retained a strong missionary character and most missionaries, as the Commission of 1905 and the Congress of 1910 showed, anxiously kept to it. Religious instruction became especially important after the Orthodox Church could no longer rely on the legal support of the State when it came to countering Islamic proselytism among non-Muslim non-Russians of the region. The post-1905 period brought its further changes and challenges into Middle Volga Muslim society as well. This is going to be the subject of my last chapter.

⁴⁸⁰ RGIA, f. 803, op. 10, d. 489, l.2.

CHAPTER FIVE. RUSSIFICATION VS.PAN-TURKISM: THE MUSLIM SCHOOL AFTER 1905

The politicization of Muslim consciousness in the 1905 period alerted the authorities' attention to the existence of global movements such as Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Although warning voices of the existence of such phenomena in Russia had been heard since the late nineteenth century, neither of them had really developed into a coordinated movement. Here I would support Geraci's view that the authorities would often exaggerate the actual threat that Pan-Islamic or Pan-Turkic ideas posed. It is difficult to judge if the fears had any serious grounds or if the authorities 'exploited illusions as a pretext for repressive policies'.⁴⁸¹ However, it is clear that the overall attitude to Muslims deteriorated rapidly after the Young Turks revolution of 1908. And, although in the majority of cases the authorities acknowledged the loyalty of Muslim clergy, they found the appearance of Muslim political and nationalist activists quite disturbing.⁴⁸² The Ministry of the Interior checked each candidate for the position of mullah for political reliability. This reflected Russian fears of rising Muslim nationalism that could possibly undermine the integrity of the empire.

In this chapter, I would like to analyze the changing aspirations of Russians towards the acculturation of Muslims of the Middle Volga region after 1905. Much of the blame for the spread of Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic ideas was placed upon the new method schools of the region. The other important issue was the further changes in the Muslim educational system concerning the teaching of the Russian language and other secular subjects. We will see what measures were undertaken by the Muslim community to continue to reform their educational system and how the local authorities reacted to the idea of a 'Muslim school'.

⁴⁸¹ Geraci, *Window on the East*, 177.

⁴⁸² RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, d. 577, l. 11 ob.

5.1. Discussion on the Muslim ‘National’ School

The fears and suspicions of the Russian authorities concerned the development of cultural ties between Russian and Turkish Muslims, which legitimized the idea that these ethnic groups could unite in a new political entity on the basis of common religion or on a common ethno-linguistic basis (Turkish). Indeed, Petr Stolypin, who was appointed Prime Minister in 1906, viewed the ‘Muslim question’ not as a religious question but rather as a cultural and state issue. On 19 September 1909, he wrote to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod S.M. Luk’ianov that the propaganda of Pan-Islamism, as well as any other Muslim activity in any part of the empire, merited serious attention and possible counteraction from the government:

Turning to Povolzh’e and the district of Kazan, I cannot help mentioning that we must make serious efforts to resist the Tatar national onslaught in this region with its non-Russian population which wavers between Russian Orthodox and Muslim Tatar influence. To give up this struggle would mean to give up all the centuries-old historical tasks, the negative consequences of which would be incalculable.⁴⁸³

To control the activities of mullahs on the level of the Spiritual Assembly, the head of the department of religious Affairs of Foreign Faiths Alexei Kharuzin sent an inspection in June 1910 in order to find out if the Assembly was responsible for any possible inclination towards Pan-Islamism or supported the new-method schools. I.M. Platonnikov, the person in charge, spoke to the members of the Assembly and examined the correspondence of the Assembly, which was in complete disorder. What he deduced from his inspection was that the activity of the Assembly was incompatible with the interests of the Russian government and did not even satisfy the needs of the Muslim population.⁴⁸⁴

This issue was discussed at a special Interministerial conference summoned by Stolypin and chaired by Kharuzin in 1910. There was a general feeling that the ‘rigidly consistent program of religious and cultural unification of all the Muslim population of Russia, fully independent of the government in matters of religion and school on the principle of autonomy under the control of a religious leader’ which was ‘scheduled by Muslim leaders’ should be

⁴⁸³ RGIA, f. 796, op. 191, otd. 6, st. 3, d. 163, ll. 4-5 ob.

⁴⁸⁴ RGIA, f. 821, op. 133, dd. 573, 576, ll. 235 ob-41.

considered quite dangerous.⁴⁸⁵ The governor of Viatka, P. Kamyshanskii, argued that it should be the task of the government to support the ‘cleanliness of Islam’, which should be protected from reformist political and educational ideas, since Muslims who renounce qadimist principles were likely to become ‘revolutionaries who dream of overthrowing autocracy.’⁴⁸⁶

After the conference Kharuzin wrote a report which was to reflect the ideas of the conference participants about the ambitions and cultural aspirations of Middle Volga Tatars. In this report Kharuzin accused Tatar nationalists of spreading ‘anti-state’ Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideas. He would use the terms ‘Pan-Islamism’ and ‘Pan-Turkism’ interchangeably, stressing that the contacts of the Volga Tatars with Muslims from other countries were the main reason for the spread of these expanding ‘movements.’⁴⁸⁷

As far as Muslim confessional schools were concerned, the conference participants admitted that the 1870s idea, that Russian classes at confessional schools could help to weaken the ‘fanaticism’ of the madrasahs, was no longer valid. Instead of bringing Muslim Tatars closer to Russians, new-method schools teaching Turkish, and the history and geography of Turkey were widening the gap. It was decided that the new-method schools should be taken under stricter control. All schools with non-confessional subjects were now supposed either to drop them or close. In contrast, all the schools that were previously considered illegal, precisely because of the absence of the Russian language classes, were to be legalized. It was supposed that the Ministry of Interior would later work out a uniform curriculum for all the confessional schools. At the same time the Ministry of Education was expected to cooperate with local organizations to open more Russian-Tatar schools (of the Radlov school type) where Muslim children would study.⁴⁸⁸ However, the Ministry of Education did not hurry to implement the restriction of secular subject teaching at confessional schools. Instead, the police started a campaign of raids searching for the

⁴⁸⁵ A.A. Alov, *Islam v Rossii* [Islam in Russia] (Moscow, 1996), 52.

⁴⁸⁶ RGIA, f.821,op.8, d.41, l.154-154 ob.

⁴⁸⁷ “Iz istorii natsional’noi politiki tsarizma” [From the History of the National Politics of Tsarism], in *Krasnyi arkhiv* 4 (1929):107-127.

⁴⁸⁸ RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 801, l. 166; Robert Geraci, “Russian Orientalism at an Impasse: Tsarist Educational Policy and the 1910 Conference on Islam”, *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and peoples, 1700-1917*, Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzarini, eds.(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997): 138-163.

instigators of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic propaganda. In 1911 alone over 150 raids were conducted in the Volga region, which resulted in the closing of about 70 institutions, among which were schools, publishing houses and various community organizations.⁴⁸⁹

Apparently, many people thought that ideas of Pan-Turkism were imposed on the Russian Muslims from outside and were the result of the external threat coming from the Ottoman Empire rather than due to internal ideological reforms in the Muslim milieu. This explains the police investigations into possible pro-Ottoman sentiments in madrasahs and mosques, which increased after the Young Turk revolution. For instance, *Mukhammadiia* madrasah in Kazan was often the subject of police investigation. Its founder and director Galimzhan Galeev Barudi had introduced secular subjects along with the traditional religious subjects in the teaching program. The madrasah offered the *shakirds* Arabic, Turkish and Russian, law, history of Russia and Turkic people's history (*istoriia tiurkskikh narodov*) among other subjects. Barudi was an active member of *Ittifak* (a Muslim nationalist organization founded at the beginning of the twentieth century), an educator, an expert in religion and a philosopher. His authority was so great that, according to rumours, mullahs of Mamadysh district wanted to make him 'king of the Muslims' in 1906.⁴⁹⁰ Although upon investigation the rumours received no factual confirmation, it was Barudi who became the first mufti freely elected by Muslims in 1917.

In 1905, Muslim schooling remained an actively discussed issue since the development of the new-method school was often seen as the embodiment of rising Muslim nationalism. The new-method schools, although teaching the Russian language, were drawing Muslims away from Russians on the issue of acculturation. There was a general fear that new schools were developing a worldview that would make Muslim Tatars associate more with Turkey than with Russia. Secularisation of a Muslim school could transform the Muslim question from a religious to a political one and turn religious 'fanatics' into Pan-Turkic or Pan-Islamic leaders. Besides, introduction of general subjects at madrasahs would keep Muslims from

⁴⁸⁹ From the speech of Sadri Maksudov in the Third Duma, in Geraci, *Window on the East*, 291. I will focus on this issue in detail in the following section.

⁴⁹⁰ NART, f.1, op.4, d.4764, l.8.

sending their children to Russian-Tatar schools further widening the gap between Russians and Tatars rather than bridging it.

Among all the non-Russian ethnic groups of the Middle Volga region, the Tatars were the ones who most eagerly accepted the opportunity to participate in the reforms on the imperial agenda, to promote their national interests. If the years of the 1880-1890s could be called the years of ideological preparation of the movement of national renewal, or even of national renaissance, as the *jadids* often called it, after 1905 *jadidism* spread across the whole set of values of Tatar society. Changes touched upon every sphere of life, even the way people dressed and behaved in their every-day life. And even if the term '*jadidism*' spread out of the classroom and started to be used for all the innovations in Tatar society, the idea of Muslim education remained closely linked to the idea of nationhood.

This was widely discussed at the Third Muslim congress in Nizhnii Novgorod in 1906. A special report of the committee, elected by the congress participants, contained 33 points. We will now take a closer look at some of them. Besides general ideas about the necessity of schools for Muslims, more specific points focused on demands concerning the language of education, which was to be in the mother tongue with the use of the Arabic alphabet. Studying Russian in the primary school was considered unnecessary, and even in the secondary school it was to be but a school subject, not the language of education. Instead, major emphasis, both in gymnasiums and teacher training schools with Russian language education, was to be put onto the study of Islam and the literary native languages (Tatar, Bashkir, Kirghiz) so that the Muslims who graduated from these schools could teach children later.

Special attention was paid to the literary Turkish language, which was to be introduced not only in the secondary schools, but also in primary school wherever possible. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic ideas were the basis for the developing nationalism of the Russian Muslims. Literary Turkish was seen as the language that could potentially unite Russian Muslims both among themselves and with the Ottoman

Turks. It was desirable that young Russian Muslims should begin to study literary Turkish as early as possible. The project, outlined by the congress, was to create a ‘Muslim national school’.⁴⁹¹

The head diocesan missionary with responsibility for combatting Islam and animism (from 1901), Ia. Koblov, was extremely suspicious of the idea. In a booklet entitled ‘Dreams of Muslim Tatars about the National School’, he warned the reader that Tatars, being ‘most extreme nationalists’, keep almost exclusively to their national goals and behave in a suspicious and negative way towards people of another faith, being barely influenced by co-existence with other ethnic groups, but effectively assimilating (*pretvoriia v sebii*) weaker ethnic groups.⁴⁹²

In his book, Koblov touches upon an important question; whether it is possible to speak of a ‘Muslim national school’ at all. The idea of assigning the definition ‘national’ to a Muslim confessional school certainly demonstrates an attempt at unification of Islamic people on the basis of common religion but, to Koblov, religion and ethnicity were two distinct categories:

A nationality is not the religion of the people, nor the language the people speak, but it is the whole spiritual and physical particularities of a group of people, which distinguish it from another group of people. This is why, for example, the Tatar and the Kirghiz, being both Muslims and speaking similar languages, belong to different ethnic groups. This is why the question of the national school itself is absurd. There can be no national Muslim school, there only can be national schools of ethnic groups professing Islam: Bashkir, Kirghiz, Votyak – which would satisfy not only the religious but also the general spiritual needs of the people according to their peculiarities.⁴⁹³

Among the above-mentioned Muslim ethnic groups (Tatars, Bashkir, Kirghiz), the Tatars were more advanced and found themselves in a privileged position. In fact, the ethnic name ‘Tatar’ had been long used as synonymous with ‘Muslim’, and the two words would sometimes be used interchangeably by the local population. Thus, if Tatar was voted the

⁴⁹¹ Ia. Koblov, *Konfessional'nye shkoly Kazanskikh tatar* [Confessional Schools of Kazan Tatars](Kazan:n.p., 1916), 74.

⁴⁹² Ia. Koblov, *Mechty Tatar-magometan o konfessional'noi shkole* [Dreams of Muslim Tatars about the Confessional School](Kazan, Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1908), 2.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, 8-9.

language of schooling, because it already had a rich literature, schools for Bashkir or Kirghiz would immediately become non-national. Koblov suggested that, although the idea of a Muslim ‘national’ school seemed absurd, it was possible to have separate schools for each ethnic group in their mother tongue. This would separate groups of Muslims, or at least, prevent them from unifying. Koblov’s reasoning shows that by this time the official discourse on ethnicity had undergone considerable evolution. It is no longer described or limited by confession but includes cultural and anthropological categories. Religion and ethnicity, in this case ‘Muslim’ and ‘Tatar’, ‘Bashkir’, ‘Kirghiz’ are seen as separate categories.

In fact, like many other missionaries in Kazan diocese, Koblov feared that the projected ‘national’ school would in reality not be national, but Muslim confessional, and in the Middle Volga region it was likely to become a Muslim Tatar school with the introduction of general subjects, that is a school more or less following Gasprinskii’s model. The authorities would not dream of strengthening a Muslim nationality, Tatar in this case, nor would they allow Muslim ethnic groups to unite, even when it came to schooling. Although Muslims earned a reputation as loyal Russian citizens, it did not mean that the government would rush to finance, or to take care of, Muslim schools. Muslims, Koblov warned, ‘under different conditions, could cease to be loyal. This is why one should worry not about the strengthening and the spread of Islam, we should be worried about its possible weakening.’⁴⁹⁴

As Alexandre Bennigsen claimed, ideas of nationalism in the modern sense of the term were not yet established among Russian Muslims before the October Revolution.⁴⁹⁵ Russian Muslims identified themselves not in ethnic but in religious terms, as the community of believers. The problem with the Tatar understanding of ‘national’ education could be attributed to the beliefs of Islam. Members of the Muslim *umma* are not divided into national or ethnic groups, for they oppose themselves only to *al-kafirun*, the non-believers, those who do not believe in Islam, no matter what nationality or state *al-kafirun* belong to. Given this

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, 14.

⁴⁹⁵ A. Bennigsen, “Islamic or Local Consciousness among Soviet Nationalities?” in *Soviet Nationality Problems*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 176.

perception, when Tatars spoke about a Muslim ‘national’ school, they probably did not take into consideration the ethnicity of the members of the *umma*, calling ‘national’ what should really be called ‘confessional’.

5.2. Reforms in the Madrasah after 1905

The freedoms of 1905 allowed Middle Volga Tatars to publish more books and newspapers. In the period from 1905 to 1907, 21 newspapers and twelve magazines in the Tatar language circulated in the Russian empire. The first periodic newspaper in Tatar appeared in Kazan in November 1905 and lasted for six years. It was the literary newspaper of Tatar liberals '*Kazan mukhbire*' (Kazan Newsletter) edited, among others, by Iusuf Akchura. Kazan was not the only Russian city where newspapers in Tatar were published. The Ramiev brothers published the newspaper '*Vakyt*' ('Time') and the political magazine '*Sura*' ('Advice'). Among the journalists on this newspaper were Akchura and Gabdulla Tukai. However, Kazan remained the centre of book printing. The publishing house of the Karimov brothers printed the majority of books in Tatar, by various writers (M. Gafuri, F. Karimi, M. Faizi, A. Pushkin, L. Tolstoi, I. Turgenev, D. Defoe, H. Andersen etc.).

The quantity of the Tatar educational literature also started to expand. Many mullahs tried to write at least one book for a mekteb or madrasah. As a result, the number of books grew dramatically, in several years twenty titles of primers appeared, about seventy readers, about twenty geography books and about fifty history books. However, most of these books were of a poor quality, and they were mostly translations and compilations from Russian textbooks.⁴⁹⁶

Among the most advanced madrasahs at that time were *Bubi* madrasah in the district of Sarapul (present-day Bashkortostan), *Khusaniia* in Orenburg, *Usmaniia* in Ufa, *Galiia*, *Mukhammadiia* and *Apanaevskaia* in Kazan. In addition, the following new-method schools of Kazan were quite well-established: *Mardzhani*, *Alimov*, *Usmanov* and also *Amirkhan* and *Mansur*. The last two were still at the level of mekteb, for they had an unequal duration of studies which was a drawback left over from the old-method school. There was, however, an extension as to the notion of the 'new method school'. If one speaks only of the reading method then the majority of Muslim schools in the Middle Volga region were already new-method ones by 1906. If instead, one has in mind the spread of general education, there were

⁴⁹⁶ Koblov, *Konfessional'nye shkoly*, 105.

different 'stages' of madrasah development, which usually depended on the teacher's knowledge. This meant that a new-method school could often be recognized as such if the teacher was knowledgeable and taught general education subjects. Unfortunately, once that teacher left the school, it easily turned back to an old-method one. Thus, although Muslims were aware of the necessity of general subjects, the majority of their new method schools still remained confessional with additional general subjects. The Russian language was often taught as a supplementary subject and the major stress was put into teaching Turkish and Turkish literature.

Let us now have a look at curricula of the two most popular madrasahs – the Bubi and the Mukhammadiia⁴⁹⁷. The Bubi madrasah, in particular, actively used the Gasprinskii method in teaching (as early as 1895-96, four to six hours a week in the school curriculum were devoted to reading in the Turkish language and the other two to four - to writing in it.)

⁴⁹⁷ Makhmutova, Lish tebe, 171.

Table 11: The Weekly Time-table of Bubi Madrasah Compared to Mukhammadiia (1906)⁴⁹⁸

Subjects	Bubi							Mukhammadiia						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Arabic language	3	3	3	3	2	2	16		7	7	7	8	4	33
Turkic (Tatar)	3	1					4	6	3	3	2			14
Persian	1	1	1				3							
Geography	2	2					4		2	2	2	2		8
General history		2	2	2	2	2	10	1	1	1	1	2		6
Ethics	1	1	2	1			5	1	1	1	1			4
Logic			1					1					2	2
Arithmetic	4	4	4				12	2	2	2	2	2		10
Algebra				2	2	1	5							
Geometry				2	2	2	6		1	1	1	1		4
Physics	3	3	2				8							
Astronomy					2		2							
Natural sciences				2	2	2	6	1	1	1	1			4
Zoology					1		1							
Botany						1	1							
Chemistry					2	2	4							
Mineralogy						1	1							
<i>Figh</i>		1	1	1	1	1	5					3		3
Oratory art						1	1					2		2
Muslim Theology				2	1	1	4	1	1	2	3		2	9
Calligraphy	1	1	1				3	2	1	1	1	1		6
Hygiene					1	1	2	1	1					2
Russian	12	12	12	12	12	12	72			Studied in the Russian-Tatar school				
Qur'an								3	2	2	1		3	11
<i>Hadith</i>								1				2	3	6
Pedagogy													2	2
Law													1	1
Political history													1	1
History of philosophy													1	1
Economy													1	1
Total	30	32	30	28	28	31	179	20	23	23	22	22	20	130

Both the Bubi brothers of the '*Bubi*' and Galimdzhhan Barudi of '*Mukhammadiia*' certainly belonged to the *jadid* group of educators. But there were differences. Eastern languages and Qur'anic studies took 86 hours out of 130, that is two-thirds of the teaching time at Barudi's madrasah (although we should add the Russian language classes held in the Russian Tatar school to the remaining one-third). Still, very little time was devoted to general education

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

subjects in comparison to the *Bubi* madrasah (with only 39 hours of religious studies and eastern languages and 140 hours of general education subjects, which included 72 hours of Russian). Moreover, in the *Bubi* madrasah, if we look at the general subjects, some part of this time was devoted to subjects of a practical nature (botany, zoology, chemistry, mineralogy), which could be useful in the rural environment. The Bubi brothers liked to experiment and did not hesitate to introduce innovations into the curriculum of their school, as can be seen from the table below showing the timetable from only two years later.

Table 12: The Weekly Time-table of the Bubi Madrasah, 1908. ⁴⁹⁹

Subjects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Arabic language and literature	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	23
Turkish language and literature	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	15
History of Islam	2	2	2	2					8
History and history of philosophy					2	2	2	2	8
Arithmetic and theory	3	3	3	2					11
Geometry				2	2	1			5
Theology			1	2	1	1			5
Geography	2	2	2	1	1				8
Natural history (<i>estestvennaia istoriia</i>)					1	1	1		3
Drawing and calligraphy	2	2	1	1	1				7
Russian	12	12	12	12	12	3	3	2	68
Physics	2	2	2						6
Ethics and Psychology				1	1	1			3
Algebra and trigonometry					2	2	1	1	6
Natural sciences and Chemistry							4	4	8
Qur'an	1	1							2
Interpretation of Qur'an							2	2	4
<i>Hadith</i>							2	2	4
<i>Figh</i>			1	1	4	4			10
Astronomy								1	1
Economy							1	1	2
Story of Mukhammed's life						1			1
Inheritance law								1	1
Pedagogy and methods of teaching				1		2	2	1	6
Hygiene								1	1
Logic						1		1	2
Accounting (in Russian)						1	1	1	3
French and German (upon request)									
Total	30	30	30	30	31	23	23	23	220

The first thing to be noted is the increase in lessons per week – forty hours more with respect to the time-table of 1906. What factors contributed to this increase? First of all, two more years of study were added and the schooling now took not six but eight years. Together with the four years of mekteb the complete course was now twelve years of studies. Secondly, the Arabic and Turkic languages were now studied with the corresponding literature. Thirdly, religious subjects now occupied 35 hours of the teaching time against sixteen in the previous curriculum.

⁴⁹⁹ Makhmutova, *Lish tebe*, 181.

The famous specialist in Islamic studies N. Bobrovnikov used this curriculum in his 'Note on the Question of the Spread of Russian Education among the Non-Russian Population of Central Asia' in order to demonstrate the changes in the Muslim school. Focusing closely on secular and religious subjects at the madrasah, he stated that

[...]the times of stagnation in a madrasah have passed...[it] can no longer be considered a hotbed of fanaticism. It has become the hotbed of something new, still unfamiliar to us, but this something is undoubtedly appealing to people.⁵⁰⁰

Shortcomings in teaching were not of great importance since the organization of a madrasah was not rigid and, as we have seen, it was quite easy to change the curriculum if an improvement was needed. Several madrasahs in the Middle Volga region adopted the curriculum of the *Bubi* and Bobrovnikov was sure that these would be followed by the madrasahs of Central Asia.

Starting from the summer of 1908, *Bubi* madrasah opened unofficial three-month courses for male and female teachers. The subjects studied were mathematics, natural sciences (botany, zoology, chemistry and physics), geography, history and hygiene. The courses were purely theoretical, with no teaching practice. The number of young teachers coming to the courses increased yearly: if during the first year only twenty teachers came to *Bubi*, by the summer of 1909 there were already 64 people and in 1910 - 84. The teachers listened to lectures in pedagogy and methods of teaching, and studied lesson plans. This was very similar to the summer courses offered by the Tatar Teacher Training College in Kazan.⁵⁰¹ What should be noted however, for all the progressive character of teaching, is that neither the *Bubi*, nor the *Mukhammadiia* curriculum had Tatar language classes. This was the question raised in 1911 at the second meeting devoted to Muslim education summoned by Ufa provincial zemstvo on 23 May 1911.

The participants at the meeting were the members of the Muslim fraction of the State Duma, teachers and representatives of the Ministry of Education. It was decided that the

⁵⁰⁰ RGIA, f. 733, op. 176, d. 46, l. 336.

⁵⁰¹ Makhmutova, *Lish tebe*, 182.

language of education in the Muslim primary school was to be the Tatar language. As regards Russian language skills, it was agreed that a school graduate was to be able to read and speak Russian, be able to paraphrase simple articles and write in a comprehensible way. It was deemed necessary to open separate Muslim teacher training schools with teaching in Russian and literary Tatar.⁵⁰² Commenting on the decisions of the Ufa zemstvo, Koblov draws the conclusion that it was taking the existing mekteb system as a basis and transforming it into a religious educational institution with a national character. In fact, for the sake of money, instead of opening new schools, madrasahs and mektebs were sometimes being transformed into schools with general education.

Stolypin's 'Interministerial Conference on the Question of School Organization among the Non-Russian, Non-Orthodox and Non-Christian Population' (November 1910 to December 1911) concluded that the key to the solution to the problem of non-Russian education was an improvement in the cultural level of all the ethnic groups of the Russian empire, and even more so, that of the ethnic Russians. In other words, the solution was universal general literacy of the population which, if made available to all the ethnic groups of the empire, would gradually diminish, or even completely eliminate confessional schools. Secondly, all the confessions of the empire, as well as all the non-Russian languages, now became a part of the state educational system. Schooling in native languages, at least during the first two years of studies, was crucial, especially for the languages that for the moment lacked an alphabet and written literature.⁵⁰³ It was important, Stolypin stressed, that the Russian language be taught both in state and private educational institutions. Without the Russian language, and the introduction of lessons in Russian history and geography, it was deemed impossible to make non-Russians understand, and live according to, state principles. However, the meeting of Kazan zemstvo with representatives of the Muslim population concerning the questions of Muslim Tatar education on 10-11 January 1911, came to a different conclusion.

⁵⁰² *Zhurnaly soveshchaniia pri Ufimskoi gubernskoi zemskoi uprave po voprosu o tipe nachal'noi obshcheobrazovatelnoi musul'manskoi shkoly* [The Journals of the Meeting on the Question of the Type of Muslim Primary School at Ufa Provincial Zemstvo](Ufa: n.p., 1911).

⁵⁰³ Charles Steinwedel "Invisible Threads of Empire: State, Religion, and Ethnicity in Tsarist Bashkiria, 1773-1917" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1999), 401.

Mullahs, editors of newspapers, teachers, representatives of school administration and merchants took part in the meeting. The outcomes of the meeting were as follows: there was unanimous support for the opening of Russian Tatar schools, but the innovation was to have a gradual character. Therefore, while such schools should be opened in every district, at first they should be model schools in order to engage the interest of the Tatar population. Secondly, the school day should be divided into two parts: in the morning Tatar students should study Tatar and basics of religion, and in the afternoon – the Russian language and other general education subjects. This was explained by the fact that it was difficult to study Tatar and Arabic languages and so it was necessary to dedicate the morning hours to the study of these subjects.

What was remarkable about Muslim Tatar schools, was that even the new-method schools remained confessional and not schools of general education in the full sense of the word. ‘...if the old school, based on religion, gave a solid ground for the spread of pan-Islamic ideas, and for the unification of Muslims on the basis of religion without distinction of nationality, the schools of new method can foster the development of national pan-Turkic ideas on the basis of common language.’⁵⁰⁴ This meant, in Koblov’s opinion, that the school projected by the Muslim Tatars would not weaken ‘fanaticism’, but would make it more conscious, encouraging small Muslim ethnic groups to unite between themselves. This ‘educated fanaticism’ was much more dangerous than ‘illiterate fanaticism’ which was developed by the old-method Muslim schools:

The graduates will not feel themselves to be Russian citizens but only followers of Islam and its prophets, whatever state they belong to. This school project leads to the creation of a state within the state, where the Muslim state is alien to Russia but lives at the expense of the empire. To help Muslims in this situation would not only mean to make an enemy, but even to strengthen him.⁵⁰⁵

Bishop Andrei, calling the Tatar intelligentsia ‘our Young Turks’, warned the public that they were taking the initiative in creating a ‘Russian Turkic State’ (*Rossiiskii Turkestan*). For him, the Muslim desire to transfer mektebs and madrasahs from the control of Russian

⁵⁰⁴ Koblov, *Konfessional’nye shkoly*, 78.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 110.

officials to the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly reflected their intention to make this institution the ‘Ministry of the Turkic State in the future.’

As before, there remained a fear that Muslim education, on the terms they were asking for, would be uniting not only Tatar, Bashkir and Kirghiz, but also the Votiak and the Cheremis who professed Islam. The creation of a single Turkish language, as well as education in Tatar as the common language for all the ethnic groups professing Islam, would lead to the undesirable Tatarization of the *inorodtsy*. The only way to resist the harmful influence of the Muslim school was to develop a wider network of Russian Tatar schools.

Muslim Tatars in general, at least openly, said they had nothing against the Russian-Tatar schooling, starting from the elementary level and up to the level of teacher training schools, should the following conditions be fulfilled: teaching in Tatar, religious education and control of the school in the hands of Muslims. In fact, Gasprinskii, at the beginning of the twentieth century argued that the state-run primary schools (both the regular Russian schools and Radlov’s Russian-Tatar schools) contributed to the intellectual development of Russian Muslims, since the graduates of such schools obtained access to a Russian University education and became acquainted with ‘contemporary progress’. By saying this, however, he was referring mostly to the situation in the Crimea, admitting that the situation in the Volga region was not that optimistic. He encouraged the Middle Volga Muslims to recognize the benefits of a Russian education,

We hope that our coreligionists up and down the Volga will recognize that they are being delinquent in this matter, and that they will endeavor to become acquainted with contemporary progress through a knowledge of the Russian language. There are thousands of scientific and technical works written in Russian, from which it is necessary to profit.⁵⁰⁶

Gasprinskii was convinced that learning the Russian language was of vital importance for Muslims in order to be a part of modern Russian society. The above quotation reveals that

⁵⁰⁶ Ismail Gasprinskii, *First Steps Towards Civilizing the Russian Muslims*, trans. Edward J. Lazzerini, “Turkic Modernism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: An Insider’s View”, www.iccrimea.org/gaspirali/modernism/html.(accessed 15 July 2012).

although the Volga Muslims did not openly refuse education in Russian, many still persisted in their wish to limit Muslim schooling to the traditional model alone.

After 1908, due to the tensions in the Ottoman empire and the Young Turk revolution, suspicion of all Muslim activities, schooling included, increased. Many madrasahs were accused of Pan-Turkism and of supporting Muslims in the Ottoman empire. Against this background, the Bubi brothers were arrested in 1911 and the madrasah was closed. Several *qadimist* mullahs testified against the brothers before and after the trial. For example, the mullah Ishmi-ishan had made a statement, on 17 December 1910, accusing the Bubi brothers of something they were scarcely guilty of:

I do not consider the pronunciation of letters to be the new method. The new method is teaching subjects that, according to the Qur'an should not be taught and the books that are used in the new-method madrasahs, are also against the Qur'an and the sharia....I talked to the people and I found out that the essence of the new method is as follows: we, Tatars, have lagged behind other peoples in education. We should learn not only religious subjects to become mullahs. Instead, we should overtake Russians in education, so that Tatars can get important positions in the government, as high as a Minister's position. Only then will we become strong and be able to claim our rights.⁵⁰⁷

It is clear that the last sentences of the report are very provocative, for the aim of the jadids, and the Bubi brothers among them, was solely to catch up with Russian and European progress. And while it is true that the jadids were willing to represent Muslims in the government and be able to defend their rights, the statement above reads as if the aim was to oust Russians from the highest positions in the government. The educational agenda of the Bubi madrasah was certainly more modest than these accusations.

Actions like the closing of the Bubi madrasah, made Muslims react and they summoned another congress in Buguruslan in 1912. The difference from the previous congresses in Kazan and Ufa was that the first two were summoned on the initiative of the zemstvo, but the one in Buguruslan was summoned on the initiative of the Muslims themselves. Questions of a more practical nature were discussed at the meeting, such as practical help to madrasah on the

⁵⁰⁷ Makhmutova, *Lish tebe*, 191.

part of the zemstvo, unification of mekteb and madrasah programs and school management. The members of Buguruslan congress had little expectation of financial support for Muslim schools on the part of the state and hoped for help from the zemstvo. In the end it was decided, that trustees from the zemstvo would take part in the management of the madrasah.

The greatest achievement of the congress was the drafting of a unified program for mekteb schools. Attempts had been made since the congress in Nizhnii Novgorod in 1906, such as the Essen village program in the district of Sarapul or the program of Muslim school teachers in Omsk. The Buguruslan program was accepted as the basis for all Muslim mektebs. As before it included the religious subjects, arithmetic, Turkish language, history and geography. The major difference was that there was a more detailed program of what material had to be taught in which school class. The general attitude to school for the Muslims of Russia was that it should help to preserve the national identity of the Tatars. In order to do so, it was essential for the school to bring up children in the spirit of Muslim religion. Secondly, children should study the national language and all general knowledge subjects should be also taught in the national language. Thirdly, it was important to have the school controlled by a secular body in the form of a board of trustees.⁵⁰⁸

The authorities, both at the local level and in the capital, felt compelled to react to the Muslim educational reforms. On closer inspection of the situation, it became clear that the old problems remained. First of all, it was still difficult to control the teaching process at madrasah, primarily because there were simply too many of them, but also because the inspectors were afraid of being attacked and insulted. By 1913 there were 994 confessional schools in Kazan province (43 of them were teaching using the sound method and in another 25 there was teaching of general subjects).⁵⁰⁹ Secondly, most Muslim schools were still in transition, there was considerable confrontation between the new and the old madrasah and the status of the new schools was not at all clear to the authorities. In October of 1913 the Vice-Governor of Kazan G.B. Petkevich reported to the Minister of Interior N.A. Maklakov:

⁵⁰⁸ Koblov, *Konfessional'nye shkoly*, 84.

⁵⁰⁹ NART, f.1,op.4, d.5482, ll.122-128ob.

The level of teaching itself [at the madrasah] is amateurish and leaves much to be desired. The teachers of new-method madrasahs are the first to be discontented with the results of such education. There is a great urge for national progress among Muslims as well as understanding of the role of schools in this matter, but they are also aware that the present-day madrasahs do not provide an adequate level of education, do not have clearly-defined aims, and do not belong to a certain type of school. The presence of about a thousand schools functioning quite by themselves, with almost no control, is certainly a threat to Russian statehood and requires taking immediate measures.⁵¹⁰

Tatars were usually quick to assign to every school the status of madrasah. Yet, not every school functioned according to the generally accepted idea of what a madrasah was. It became clear that in order to control the process of Muslim schooling, and also what was taught, besides general education subjects, first of all the schools needed to be classified.

It was also necessary to differentiate between confessional and secular Muslim Tatar schools. Confessional schools should be the property of Muslim parishes and be controlled by loyal Muslim clergy. The schools that taught general subjects besides religion, were to be considered not a madrasah, but general schools of the Radlov-school type and should follow the instructions for primary non-Russian schools. If it was not possible to assign a new Muslim madrasah the same status as schools for other non-Russians, it was to be considered a school of a different type that required a new legal status. Schools of this type were considered quite harmful, with the 'scarcely visible propaganda of Pan-Islamism', which were constituting a 'malignant tumour' on the body of society which was 'to be cut out so that the atmosphere around us became pure again'.⁵¹¹ Secular education for Tatars seemed to be a most undesirable phenomenon as far as the Russian authorities were concerned.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ NART, f. 160, op.1, d.1768, ll.10-13 ob.

CONCLUSION

The aim of my thesis has been to analyze how the central and local Russian imperial authorities engaged in a range of educational projects in order to achieve cultural merging (*sliianie*) of the Middle Volga *inorodtsy* with the Russian people. Missionary and secular authorities, central and local actors, both Orthodox and Muslim, were involved in this undertaking.

What was the best way to transfer 'Russianness' onto non-Russian subjects? Religion, language and loyalty to the ruling dynasty made up part of this concept of Russianness. From the second half of the nineteenth century the cultural transformation of the population of the eastern provinces was in one way or another connected to the ideal of assimilation, when the non-Russians were to become Russified (*obruset'*), that is voluntarily to accept Russian culture.

Education was logically the best way to instil a feeling of Russianness in the generations of young non-Russians, and the school curriculum serves as an illustration of the implementation of linguistic Russification policy in different regions of the empire. The Russian language was the language of instruction for the non-dominant Christian ethnic groups and Jews of the Western provinces of the empire. The Muslims of Turkestan had Russian, as well as bilingual (Russian-Kirghiz or Russian-Kazakh, etc.) schools that existed alongside traditional mektebs and madrasahs .

The peculiarity of the Middle Volga region was the heterogeneity of its population. Besides Russian Orthodox, there lived Orthodox non-Russians as well as pagan Finno-Ugric and Turkic (Chuvash and Tatar) ethnic groups and Muslim Tatars. The language of instruction for these peoples often became a stumbling block in discussions on *obrusenie*. As we have seen in the chapters of the thesis, the non-Muslim non-Russians were to become russified both by means of language and Orthodoxy. Disagreements relating to schools, most of which were missionary in their nature, chiefly arose concerning the language of

instruction. Traditional missionaries voted for direct Russification, that is, for the early, almost immediate, use of Russian in the classroom and sermons in the Russian language in the church. On the other hand, missionaries with the 'new approach', the most famous of whom was N. Il'minskii, supported sermons and teaching in indigenous languages during the first two years of schooling with later introduction of Russian. The Il'minskii method won the support of the central authorities in the person of Tolstoi and Pobedonostsev, since it was hoped that the use of indigenous languages to facilitate conscious embracing of Orthodoxy would eventually lead also to linguistic Russification.

The opponents of the system would argue that educating non-Russians in their own languages would contribute to the development of non-Russian separatism rather than *obrusenie*. (Paradoxically, the only ethnic group that was later suspected of separatism in the Middle Volga, was the Muslim Tatars, even though the Russian language was taught at their schools.) The other point opponents stressed was that creating specific programs to educate non-Russians at a time when the majority of Russian peasants remained illiterate could promote non-Russians to a higher level thus putting them in a privileged position. At the same time as Il'minskii's supporters were promoting non-Russian languages at school, Russians were being given the Bible and Church sermons in Church Slavonic which was hardly understood by anyone.

The non-Muslim ethnic groups of the region, even literate both in Russian and their native languages, hardly demonstrated any desire for separation during the period of research. There was no ethnic literature since the written languages were only just being created in this period. The only books in indigenous languages were translated sacred texts published in Cyrillic, and the Russian literature available to non-Russians was also mostly on religious subjects. Russian language was accepted more eagerly by the literate non-Russians since there was hardly any alternative in the form of ethnic literature. This was a considerable step towards Russification of these ethnic groups.

That said, it should be also noted that an analysis of Il'minskii's views on non-Russian education suggests that his system was designed not only to merge non-Russians with Russians but also to keep a certain distance between the two groups. A major concern was, in fact, not only the acceptance of Orthodoxy and the Russian language but that the non-Russians would merge with the Russians 'too much'. As we have seen, graduates of brotherhood schools with the Il'minskii program were supposed to return to non-Russian communities to work as teachers and priests. In order not to lose ties with their own communities these non-Russians were not supposed to mix a lot with the Russian population. In this sense, although non-Russians acquired a common cultural background with the Russian population that is, Orthodoxy and Russian literacy, this sort of protective social barrier remained also a barrier to *obrusenie* in the sense of cultural assimilation. At the same time, it contributed to creation of a two-level identity where non-Russians would eventually identify themselves with Russians in the cultural sense but would at the same time preserve their ethnic peculiarities. In relation to the Finno-Ugric groups, there were clearly attempts at acculturation, understood as embracing Russian culture, where Orthodoxy would become the religion of a non-Russian ethnic group and the Russian language and the way of life would be accepted together with that of the ethnic group. Cultural assimilation, where the Russian language and culture would oust the ethnic one, was less frequently aspired to and was seen as a project for the distant future that intermarriage and living within Russian society, especially in cities and towns, could help to implement.

Although the term 'russifikatsiia' was used both in discussions on non-Muslim and Muslim schools, in the official rhetoric we often come across the word *obrusenie* in regard to non-Muslims and *sblizhenie* in regard to Muslim population. This difference suggests that while non-Muslims were supposed to become akin to Russians in the long run as a result of common cultural and linguistic background and intermarriage, the aspirations regarding Muslims were different. It was believed that the only possibility of drawing them closer to the Russian population was by means of the Russian language since there was no other common cultural background. This is why, in the attitude of officials towards Muslim Tatars we observe an attempt at partial acculturation, by means of the Russian language, not cultural assimilation. It was partial precisely because only part of Russian culture, the language, was to be accepted by the Middle Volga Muslims. It should be said, however, that even this

partial acculturation process was not consistently carried out. As we have observed, by the end of the research period the Russian language classes at madrasah were not held in great esteem.

The authorities supported, in reality, insisted on the introduction of the Russian language at school and madrasah, where the language was to be the means of transmission of the ideas and ideals of Russian statehood. At the same time the authorities had doubts about the usefulness of the Russian language when it apparently became the transmitter of something else such as possible ethnic separatism. In fact, Muslim Tatars were the only group strong enough to be able to carry out their own national agenda.

The idea of Russian-Tatar schools, suggested by Radlov, started with the conviction that it was difficult to convert Muslims to Orthodoxy and therefore the Russian language was chosen as the means of cultural Russification. As practice showed, Russian-Tatar schools did not enjoy much success in the Middle Volga region. The only educational institution for Muslims financed by the Russian authorities that enjoyed success among the Muslim population of the region was the Kazan Tatar Teacher Training College. Most Tatar leaders, among whom were such famous representatives as Sadri Maksudi, deputy of the Second and Third Duma and Mirsaid Sultan Galiev, known as the ‘Tatar Bolshevik’, an ‘architect of national communism’, were graduates of the college.⁵¹²

One of the most remarkable phenomena in the Muslim Tatar milieu of the Middle Volga region was the rise of jadidism which began as a reform in the spiritual sphere and developed into educational and political jadidism. Besides bringing reform into various spheres of the Muslim community, jadidism gave rise to discussions on the potential threat of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. These fears of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism were surely exaggerated. Russian Pan-Islamism, as police documents demonstrate, did not have a specific program or

⁵¹² *Musul'manskie deputaty Gosudarstvennoi Dumaty Rossii 1906-1917gg* [Muslim Deputies of the Russian State Duma of 1906-1917] (Ufa: n.p.,1998), 295.

organization.⁵¹³ Although Pan-Turkic ideas were present in the writings of Tatar leaders such as Gasprinskii, they did not result in initiatives directed against the integrity of the Russian empire.

One of the most determined opponents of the reforms in Muslim education was Il'minskii. In his opinion, the failure of the Russian-Tatar schools in the region was caused not so much by the fear of Christianization that Russian language teaching could eventually bring, but by the 'organized hostility of Islam to education and its tendency to isolate Tatars from Russian culture.'⁵¹⁴ This statement, however, is hardly credible and tells us more about the personal fears of Il'minskii than the real situation. Nevertheless, Il'minskii, who was generally opposed to the secular education of Tatars, was already predicting at the end of 1880s that the new-method schools would become more 'dangerous' than the old madrasahs.

At the beginning of the twentieth century conservative Muslim 'fanatics' who often used to refuse the introduction of the Russian language at the madrasah suddenly became more accommodating than the reformists who, on the contrary, strove for the introduction of the Russian language in the Muslim schools and played an important role in the secularisation of Muslim education. The jadids were more likely than the qadims to react positively to Russian influence on Muslim education. Yet, it seemed that the authorities now preferred Muslims to be ignorant rather than educated for they could patronize the former but feared the latter.

It appears that officials like Alexei Kharuzin were more concerned with distancing Muslims from secular and general education. Although the resolution of the Interministerial conference in 1910 voiced a complaint that the issue of Russian language teaching at Russian-Tatar schools was somewhat neglected, it also recommended the prohibition of Russian language classes in madrasahs and mektebs.⁵¹⁵ The recommendation was never implemented in practice though. Should the madrasahs and mektebs be closed because of

⁵¹³ RGIA, f.821, op.8, d. 800, ll. 37-38, 471-472.

⁵¹⁴ *Pis'ma N.I. Il'minskogo k K.P. Pobedonostsevu* [Letters of N.Il'minskii to K. Pobedonostsev](Kazan: Pravoslavnyi Sobesednik, 1895),175.

⁵¹⁵ RGIA, f. 821, op.8, d.801, ll. 155-170.

their secular curriculum or Russian language classes, the Ministry of Education did not have much to offer as an alternative and it never prohibited secular learning in Muslim confessional schools. At the same time, several madrasahs that had Turkish language and history in their curriculum, were closed under the suspicion of spreading Pan-Islamic, Pan-Turkic and anti-governmental ideas. The clearest example of this was the case of Bubi madrasah.

Sadri Maksudi, in his speech on the Russian policy towards Muslims in the Duma on 13 March, 1912 expressed the following opinion:

Either the Russian government wishes to destroy our progressive movement and cultural life at any cost, because it does not want us to be cultured or to move ahead or [the government] mistakenly imagines a sort of anti-governmental movement or organization among the Russian Muslims, which the state has to fight...In my opinion, both of these suppositions are correct.⁵¹⁶

He was certainly right. Both of his suppositions made sense. The project of *sblizhenie* between Muslim Tatars and Russians by means of the Russian language did not achieve the desired results. Having incorporated the Russian language and secular subjects into Muslim educational institutions, Tatars did not give up contemplating the single Turkic nation or a single Turkic language. Naturally, their aspirations were often perceived as a threat to Russian nationhood. The Russians authorities at this time were also working on the project of building the Russian nation at its core, and if non-Muslim groups of the non-Russian population of the region could potentially be included in this nation-building process, the inclusion of the Russian Muslims seemed to be a matter for the distant future.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the tone of the discussion on *obrusenie* became less optimistic as the authorities started to doubt the general success of the Russification enterprise. The results obtained through nineteenth century educational policies were far from encouraging in this respect. The concept of Russianness

⁵¹⁶ Sadri Maksudi, in *Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Stenograficheskie otchety. Tretii sozyv*. [Third State Duma. Stenographic reports] *Ch.III. Sessia V. Zasedaniia 84-119 (March, 5-April, 28, 1912)*(St. Petersburg, 1912), col.979.

that the Muslim subject acquired through Russian education was not satisfactory. In the post-1905 period, when Orthodoxy lost its privileged position, the Russian language became the most important component of *obrusenie*. As the programs of schools, especially those funded by the *zemstvos*, became more secularized, the Russian language more and more often became the first language of instruction in non-Muslim schools of the region. While Orthodoxy was still very much associated with Russianness, it was more often associated with a different agenda, that of nationalist groups, such as the Russian Union or the Black Hundred.

In the period between 1860 and 1914 the Russian authorities worked out various strategies of *obrusenie*, of *sblizhenie*, the merging of the non-Russian population of the Middle Volga region with the Russians. Some strategies had an experimental character, some were never implemented. As I mentioned in the historiography section of the introduction to the thesis, Geraci is right to believe that the russifiers were not particularly successful since the results of experiments were different from those that were expected. However, it is not possible to evaluate the success or failure of the policies objectively since the First World War that broke out in 1914 brought other issues to the foreground.

Although the theories of the ideologists of Russification did not achieve the desired results, the issue did not disappear with the fall of the empire. The young Soviet state also had to solve the problem of integration of the non-Russian people. The ideas of Il'minskii concerning the non-Russian school 'ethnic in form, Orthodox in content' found a new use in the educational experiments of the 1920s. Middle Volga schools now became 'ethnic in form, Communist in content.' Separatist tendencies among Muslims were reflected in the Muslim project which came to be known as 'Sultangalievism'. In my future research, I am planning to compare the educational policies among non-Russian peoples of the Middle Volga region in the late imperial and Soviet periods, to analyze their differences and similarities and to see what borrowed practices were masked by the new ideology.

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