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ISMAIL GASPRINSKY'S "USUL-I SAVTIYYA" METHODOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN THE TURKESTAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstrace: This article analyzes the Jadid movement in Turkestan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, together with the educational reforms of Ismail Gasprinsky. The study examines the distinctive features of the phonetic method ("usul-i savtiyya") created by Gasprinsky in comparison with traditional education, his idea of "Unity in language, thought, and action," and the influence of the newspaper "Terjuman" on the Jadids of Turkestan (M. Behbudi, M. Abdurashidkhonov, A. Avloni). It further substantiates the enlightenment struggle waged against the empire's assimilation policy, as well as the role and continuity of the Jadid schools in the development of the modern educational system of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Ismail Gasprinsky; usul-i savtiyya (phonetic method); Jadid movement; Turkestan; educational reforms; "Terjuman"; Mahmudkhoja Behbudi; Munawwar Qori Abdurashidkhonov; assimilation policy; national awakening.

Introduction

The conquest of the Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century gave rise to profound socio-political, economic, and cultural decline in the life of the peoples of the region [6, 9]. The principal aim of the colonial government was not merely to appropriate the material wealth of the country, but also to keep the local population in spiritual dependence by depriving it of its own language, religion, and history — that is, to pursue a policy of Russification, or assimilation [3, 71]. It was precisely under such alarming circumstances that Ismail Bey Gasprinsky (1851–1914), the great thinker of the Crimean Tatar people and the spiritual leader of the entire Turkic world, emerged onto the historical stage.

Gasprinsky believed that the only way to lead the Turkic peoples out of centuries-old backwardness and the quagmire of superstition and fanaticism was to radically reform education and to master the achievements of modern science [1, 109]. In place of the traditional education system — which took years to complete and relied on ineffective rote memorization — he proposed a new school system based on the "usul-i savtiyya" (phonetic method). This article is devoted to the scholarly analysis of Gasprinsky's revolutionary reforms in education, their penetration into Turkestan, and their reflection in the activities of the local Jadids.

Literature review

In preparing this article, the methods of historical comparison, analytical study, and retrospective review were employed. The principal materials used were the studies of scholars such as N. Karimov, S. Akhmedov, B. Kosimov, U. Dolimov, and Sh. Yusupov, together with archival documents and historical facts, as published in the scholarly collection "Ismail Gasprinsky and Turkestan" (Tashkent:

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Sharq, 2005), prepared by Uzbek researchers. In the course of the study, the distinctive features of Gasprinsky's educational methodology were compared with those of the traditional education system.

Ismail Gasprinsky's pedagogical and socio-political views were shaped by the education and life experience he gained in European countries, particularly in France. As the Uzbek scholar N. Karimov notes in his research, Gasprinsky attended lectures as an auditor at the Sorbonne in Paris and became closely acquainted with the life of factories, plants, and farms [6, 14]. This experience brought him to the firm conviction that, in order to attain civilization, it was inevitable for the Islamic world to entirely rebuild its school education and to adopt the European model of instruction. At the same time, he sharply rejected certain Western social utopias, in particular the ideas of socialism ("ishtirokiyun"). As Professor B. Kosimov points out, in his works "A Balanced View of European Culture" and "The Doctrine of Socialism," Gasprinsky demonstrated that the artificial equalization of people, the abolition of private property, and class struggle (the conflict between worker and employer) were alien to Islamic morality and inherently inhumane [7, 43–46]. His overarching conception, grounded in the idea of "Unity in language, thought, and action," was aimed at consolidating the entire Turkic-Tatar world through enlightenment.

Discussion and results

In 1884, Gasprinsky began his practical pedagogical activity in Bakhchisaray, founding the first "usul-i jadid" school [3, 77]. In this school he applied the "usul-i savtiyya" — an analytical phonetic method that was the product of many years of research. The essence of the methodology lay in abandoning the practice of memorizing the bare names of letters (e.g., "alif," "be") and instead ensuring rapid, conscious reading through the teaching of phonetic sounds.

According to historical sources, through this method Gasprinsky succeeded in making twelve pupils fully literate in only forty days [3, 77]. This result was an unprecedented breakthrough in the history of pedagogy in the Muslim world. In order to systematize his achievements and to bring about a revolution in the education of Muslims throughout Russia, he created the first primer, entitled "Khoja-i Sibyan" ("Teacher of Children"). In addition, in 1898 he wrote a methodological guide for teachers entitled "Rahbar-i Muallimin, or the Teacher's Companion," which covered the whole range of modern classroom processes — from the lesson schedule to classroom conditions, the seating arrangement of pupils at their desks, and examination procedures [3, 78].

By the end of the nineteenth century, the traditional schools and madrasas of Turkestan had significantly lost their socio-pedagogical relevance. As the scholar U. Dolimov notes, in the old schools pupils spent years blindly repeating the "abjad" system, formed from combinations of several Arabic letters, yet still failed to grasp meaning or achieve full literacy [3, 72].

Gasprinsky's usul-i savtiyya differed from the old system in the following fundamental respects:

Reduction of the period of instruction: The arduous process of achieving literacy, which took five to six years in the old schools, was reduced to two years under the usul-i savtiyya [3, 78].

Introduction of secular subjects: Owing to the three to four years thus saved, pupils began to be taught secular subjects such as arithmetic, geography, history, and natural science.

A modern classroom-lesson system: As in European schools, a system of 45-minute lessons and breaks was introduced, together with the use of desks and blackboards [6, 1].

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Attention to the native language: Instruction was firmly ensured to be conducted in the native language rather than through blind memorization, since Gasprinsky regarded the motto "Unity in language, thought, and action" as a vital necessity [3, 74].

Gasprinsky's enlightenment ideas spread rapidly into the Turkestan region. According to the research of S. Akhmedov and Sh. Yusupov, Ismail Bey Gasprinsky set foot in Turkestan for the first time in 1893 [2, 26]. In Tashkent he met with prominent intellectuals such as Qazi Muhiddinkhoja and the former beg of Kitab, Jurabek. He also met with the Emir of Bukhara, Abdulahad Khan, whom he persuaded of the advantages of the new-method school, thereby succeeding in opening the first usul-i jadid school in Bukhara [3, 80–81]. The school established in Samarkand with the support of wealthy patrons produced literacy so rapidly that the people, in astonishment, began to call it the "machine school." The spread of enlightenment, however, met with fierce resistance from the tsarist administration. N. Ostroumov, the chief ideologist and missionary of the colonial government in Turkestan, rejected Gasprinsky's proposals for educational reform, regarding the process as a threat to the interests of the empire [3, 80]. Russian missionaries, following the doctrine of N. Ilminsky, openly pursued a policy of assimilating the local population, separating it from Islam, and Russifying it.

Despite these prohibitions, the newspaper "Terjuman," which Gasprinsky had published since 1883, quickly became the most popular publication in Turkestan [4, 91]. The ideas disseminated through this newspaper accelerated the process of national awakening in the region.

In his book "Russian Islam," written in 1881, Gasprinsky demanded that the tsarist government transform the madrasas of Turkestan and other Muslim centers into higher educational institutions capable of training modern teachers [3, 73]. His attitude toward the past also deserves particular attention. As the literary scholar B. Karimov notes, in response to the hasty proposal of the young poet Abdulhamid Cho'lpon — expressed in a letter to the "Terjuman" newspaper — to "burn" classical literature (Bedil, Hafiz), Gasprinsky gave a highly wise reply, insisting on the need to preserve the heritage of the past while creating new works suited to the demands of the age and mastering modern science. Likewise, in his treatise "The Ulama of Turkestan," Gasprinsky analyzed the works of hundreds of thinkers from Movarounnahr, such as al-Bukhari, al-Zamakhshari, Ibn Sina, and al-Farabi, thereby serving to awaken among the Turkestanis a sense of national pride [5, 102–106].

By the beginning of the twentieth century, under Gasprinsky's ideological guidance, enlighteners such as Munawwar Qori Abdurashidkhonov, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, and Abdulla Avloni emerged in Turkestan. In 1901 in Tashkent and in 1903 in Samarkand, they established independent usul-i jadid schools at their own expense [3, 82].

In order to adapt the educational process to the national environment, the Jadids also undertook the writing of textbooks. The primers and reading books they created raised the quality of education in the region to an entirely new level. M. Behbudi called Ismail Bey Gasprinsky his "perfect master" and regarded the dissemination of his ideas on Turkestan soil as a sacred duty [3, 88]. These schools freed young people from the confines of religious backwardness and laid the groundwork for their acquaintance with international events and modern science.

In analyzing the above historical facts, we come to understand that Ismail Gasprinsky's "usul-i savtiyya" methodology was not merely a pedagogical innovation, but an ideological strategy of profound socio-political and emancipatory significance. At a time when colonial Russia, following the principles of N. Ilminsky, was exploiting religious fanaticism for its own ends, Gasprinsky, through knowledge and enlightenment, dealt a devastating blow to this policy of dependency [3, 75–76].

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Within a very short period, the generation educated under the “usul-i savtiyya” became an advanced stratum capable of recognizing the rights of its own nation and analyzing the world press. As the researcher B. Do'stqoraev notes, the “Terjuman” newspaper directly gave impetus to the birth of the national press in Turkestan [4, 91]. Publications such as “Taraqqiy,” edited by Munawwar Qori, Behbudi's “Samarqand” and “Oyina,” and “Turon” in Bukhara, all emerged under the influence of this same “Terjuman” school. It may therefore be concluded that the usul-i jadid schools, while raising the quality of education, also actively contributed to the germination of civil-society elements within the community.

Conclusion

Ismail Bey Gasprinsky's reforms in the sphere of education and enlightenment constitute an exceptionally significant social phenomenon in the history of the Turkic peoples and of Turkestan alike. The “usul-i savtiyya” methodology that he discovered laid the cornerstone of the Jadid movement in Turkestan, awakening the people from centuries of dormancy and giving a powerful impetus to the formation of ideas of national liberation and independence.

The findings of this study confirm that the sole key to the development of any society and nation lies in high-quality, modern education, as well as in the mastery of advanced technologies and the achievements of world science, while firmly preserving national identity. The broad-based reforms currently being carried out in the sphere of education in the modern Republic of Uzbekistan — in particular, the alignment of school education with international standards and the introduction of advanced pedagogical methodologies (CBE, STEM) — are not merely pedagogical changes, but a historical necessity whose foundation was laid by our Jadid forefathers, serving to elevate the intellectual potential of our people. Ismail Gasprinsky's ideas, calling for knowledge, enlightenment, and unity, will forever remain relevant for the youth of Uzbekistan, who are today laying the foundation of the Third Renaissance.

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