KAZAKH SCHOOLS ON THE SYR DARYA LINE AND THE COLONIAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

Safarov Tolib Todjiyevich
Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences and Physical Culture, Bukhara State Technical University. E-mail: Safarovtolib407@gmail.com. ORCID ID: 0009-0006-2735-6260
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Abstract. Drawing on N.P. Ostroumov's 1881 work "A Historical Sketch of Public Education" (Turkestan Collection, vol. 341) and other sources, the article examines the early stage of the Russian Empire's educational policy in Turkestan. It shows that the schools opened for Kazakh children on the Syr Darya line were designed to counter "Tatar-Muslim influence" and that, under Governor-General of Turkestan K.P. von Kaufman, this approach developed into a systematic language policy.

Keywords: educational policy, Kazakh schools, Perovsk, N.P. Ostroumov, K.P. von Kaufman, M.A. Terentyev, Russian alphabet, Turkestan Collection.

Introduction. The conquest of Turkestan by the Russian Empire was followed by a reassessment of the region's educational system according to colonial criteria. Historiography usually dates the Russian Empire's educational policy in Turkestan from the opening of the first Russian-native school in Tashkent in 1884. However, the key ideas of this policy – separating the local population from "Tatar-Muslim" influence and treating different ethnic groups in different ways – took shape considerably earlier, in the 1850s–1860s, in the schools opened for Kazakh children in the fortifications of the Syr Darya line. The principal source on this stage is N.P. Ostroumov's sketch published in Tashkent in 1881 [1]. The aim of this article is to reconstruct, on the basis of this source, the initial stage of the educational policy and to show its influence on the subsequent language policy.

Main Part. General Glukhov's appeal of 5 March 1859 reflects the imperial administration's first attempts to bring Kazakh children into Russian schools. He proposed admitting Kazakh children to Russian schools, provided that the people of the Horde agreed and expressed a wish to send them. The practical results of this initiative, however, were limited: only one Kazakh pupil studied in the Russian schools. This revealed the gap between the administration's plans to draw the local population into its political and cultural orbit through education and the attitude of local society towards such schooling [1, pp. 236, 275]. According to Ostroumov, Russian literacy was far more alien to the Kazakhs than Tatar literacy. Tatars who had come from Kazan and Orenburg held a much stronger position than the first advocates of Russian literacy; in his words, they were the first Muslim "enlighteners-cum-exploiters" who had long been "enlightening" the simple-hearted Kazakhs [1, p. 278]. As a result of the Russian administration's persuasion, in 1859 the Kazakhs of Kazalinsk agreed to send their sons to a Russian school on two conditions: the children were to be fed at state expense and were also to be taught the Tatar language [1, p. 278]. The very fact of the latter condition shows that, for Kazakh society, Tatar was the natural language of Islamic learning and literacy.

The Perovsk Kazakh school opened on 6 October 1863. Eighteen Kazakhs agreed to send their sons to the school, but only sixteen actually did so; of the Russian parents, twenty-seven gave their consent, yet only thirteen boys came [1, pp. 287–288]. Colonel Veryovkin's address to the Kazakhs at the opening ceremony may justly be interpreted as one of the means by which the imperial

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administration sought to legitimize its rule politically in the eyes of the local population. According to him, the governments of Khiva and Kokand had based their activities solely on the personal interests of their rulers, whereas the Russian administration, unlike the former political order, was striving to create a system that served the interests of the local population [1, p. 288]. In this speech, the new school was presented as a means of portraying Russian authority as a "caring" state, in contrast to the rule of the khanates.

The merger of the Russian school in Perovsk with the Kazakh school provoked discontent among Russian parents, who considered the Kazakh teacher incapable of teaching Russian. In addition, quarrels and fistfights frequently broke out between the two groups of pupils [1, p. 264]. This shows that the establishment and merger of educational institutions in Turkestan was not merely an administrative or organizational matter but was closely bound up with socio-cultural differences and relations between ethnic groups. Ethnic boundaries thus persisted even within an imperial educational institution.

Ostroumov's final assessment of the schools' activities also deserves attention. He noted that the Russian schools had been established because the Russian administration considered them useful for the Kazakhs, whereas the local Kazakh population did not turn to them out of any social need of its own. Assessing their results even more sharply, he concluded that the schools had not produced a single Kazakh who had become either Russified or educated at all [1, pp. 294–295, 310]. This is a critical evaluation of the empire's first educational experiment, offered by one of its own representatives.

Under Governor-General K.P. von Kaufman, this approach became systematic. At the Turkestan Teachers' Seminary, the Kazakh language and the Russian alphabet were introduced in place of Persian and Uzbek. Clause 21 of the 1879 instructions for inspectors of public schools required the removal of everything that sustained the tribal, ethnic and cultural distinctiveness of the local population [4, pp. 113, 131–132]. This requirement shows that the Russian Empire's educational policy in Turkestan was not limited to spreading literacy or opening new schools. One of its important aims was to use educational institutions to curb the influence of the factors that shaped the ethno-cultural identity of the local population. While outwardly this approach professed respect for the religious and ethnic sentiments of the local population, in practice it sought to weaken the socio-cultural mechanisms that preserved their traditional identity. In this respect, the instruction is important evidence of the close link between education in Turkestan, colonial administration and the policy of cultural integration. According to J. Ismoilova, the Kazakh language was introduced at the seminary on 28 January 1881; Kaufman justified this by regarding the Kazakhs as "culturally far more receptive" than the Uzbeks and Tajiks. In 1898, N.O. Rosenbach replaced Kazakh with Uzbek and Persian in the curriculum [3, pp. 86–87].

The theoretical foundations of this policy were also articulated by M.A. Terentyev. In 1875 he compiled a Cyrillic-based alphabet and a primer for the "settled Uzbeks". Under his project, the Russian alphabet was to replace Arabic script in Kazakh schools; in his view, the Kazakhs were "a wholly illiterate people" and, "on the whole, poor Muslims" [2, pp. 236–236a]. Terentyev's overall conclusion was that "the Kazakhs must be guarded from the Tatars as sheep are guarded from wolves" [2, p. 238]. These views reveal a tendency to interpret the literacy level and religious practice of Kazakh society through the lens of the empire's educational and political agenda rather than to study them by objective criteria. In our view, sweeping expressions such as "wholly illiterate" and "poor Muslims" disregard internal social, regional and cultural differences and convey generalized images formed by ascribing uniform traits to an entire ethnic group.

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The practical results of the Russian Empire's educational policy were modest. Of the 308 students of the Turkestan Teachers' Seminary in 1879–1898, 259 were Russians (84%), 40 Kazakhs, 6 Uzbeks (2%), 2 Tatars and 1 German [3, pp. 86–87]. The predominance of Kazakhs over Uzbeks was the ultimate outcome of the selective policy of the Kaufman era.

Conclusion. In sum, the Kazakh schools on the Syr Darya line in 1859–1867 were the Russian Empire's first educational experiment in Turkestan. It was in them that the main ideas of the subsequent period took shape: separating the local population from Tatar-Muslim influence, regarding the nomadic Kazakhs as "more amenable to Russification" than the settled population, and replacing Arabic script with the Russian alphabet. Under K.P. von Kaufman, these ideas became the language policy of the seminary, but they were revised at the end of the nineteenth century. Ostroumov's own admission that these schools did not produce a single "Russified" Kazakh clearly reveals the gap between the aims and the results of this policy.

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