Educational factor in the process of Christianization of Non-Russian Peoples of the Middle-Volga Region in the second half of the 19th century

by

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Abstract

The 19th century Middle Volga region represented a polyethnic and multicultural entity, which included several religious groups: Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Old Believers and pagans. The population of the region was very heterogeneous—alongside with the indigenous population - Tatars, Udmurt, Chuvash, Mari, Mordva – there lived a large group of Russians who first came as colonizers in the 16th century and continued to coexist with the locals. By the beginning of the 19th century the religious sphere of life of indigenous peoples had become complexly challenged. Orthodoxy was either imposed on them by the Russian empire or came to blend with their culture through voluntary baptism, mixed marriages and monopoly of the Orthodox faith in the Russian administrative system.

The imperial assimilative attempts, however, met the resistance of the indigenous population which manifested itself in the apostasies of 1860s, when Islamic proselytism, being the result of the rising national movement among the Tatar people, resulted in the conversion of Kriashen (baptized Tatars) and pagans into Muslim faith. The process caused immediate reaction of the authorities, introducing the whole system of education of non-Russian peoples named after its founder N.I. Il’minskii, in the basis of which was the introduction of the inorodsy to the Orthodox tradition, together with teaching them school basics, in indigenous languages. The policy of training and recruitment of teachers and clergy from non-Russian milieu and the promotion of literature in indigenous languages contributed to the solution of urgent imperial problems.
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Introduction

The Middle Volga region, being one of the largest polyethnic and polyconfessional regions of the Russian empire, can be viewed as a geographic zone between Europe and Asia, having historical, anthropological and cultural significance for the development of the country. The mixture of languages and cultures of Finno-Ugric, Turkic and Slavic peoples gave much to the formation of their image. In the 19th century, the Middle Volga was inhabited by a number of ethnic groups: Russians, Tatars, Mari, Chuvash, Mordva, Votyak (Udmurt), with different religious affiliations what made the region a specific crossroads of Christianity, Islam and paganism.

The process of Christianization of Non-Russian peoples of the region takes a long period in history. Since Moscow established control over the multinational population of the region and founded a separate diocese in Kazan (1555), the territory was always viewed as part of the policy of strengthening the imperial power in the eastern borderlands. The Orthodox Church regarded the expansion as an important part of spreading Christianity among the infidels of the empire. It is possible to claim that Kazan territory was perceived by the clergy as an experimental basis for the approbation of forms and methods of missionary work which were later used in the further expansion of Orthodoxy at the eastern borders of the Russian Empire.

There is no unified opinion as to the definition of the geographical borders of the region (Volga-Vyatka, Povolzh’e, Middle Volga), although generally it is referred to the same territory. The geographical framework of the research is based mostly on the Kazan and Simbirsk provinces of the Middle Volga region, although I touch upon the above-mentioned groups of baptized non-Russians in the contiguous provinces. The problem of missionary
education of these ethnic groups living outside the Middle Volga region is left beyond the scope of the research.

One of the crucial problems the imperial officials had to solve was to achieve the more or less universal loyalty of its subjects: by means of the Russian language or Orthodox religion as a common denominator. The policy of Russification with regard to national minorities of the Middle Volga region by forcible Christianization was not very successful. Due to the threat of Islamic proselytism, the officials and missionaries had to give up the idea of unification of the non-Muslim peoples on the basis of the Russian language, and turn to Orthodoxy instead.

The process of Christianization and Russification of the inorodsy (Non-Russians) in the second half of the 19th century was greatly influenced by the development of Il’minskii’s system, who introduced the idea of exposing baptized non-Russians to Orthodox enlightenment on the basis of indigenous languages, which made a significant impact on the process of cultural rapprochement of these ethnic groups with the Russian society.

The problems of education and Christianization of the non-Russian peoples of the Middle Volga region have abundant historiography. Nowadays missionary and educational activities of Il’minskii remain in the focus of scholarly research, although there is no agreed view on his role in the education of the inorodsy. The issues of the Orthodox missionary policy and questions of ethnopolitical and ethnocultural processes in the Middle Volga region have been studied by both Russian and Western scholars.

To give a brief overview of the approaches, Kappeler insists that N.I. Ilminskii’s missionary program became the impulse for the “national awakening” of the Orthodox population of the region. Werth, among other objects of his research, analyzing the interaction of the state and Orthodox mission in the Volga-Kama region in 1827-1905, comes to the conclusion that education served as an agent of state policy fixed on the regulation of the
religious status of its eastern subjects. Not opposing him, but assessing the situation from a
different angle, Geraci focuses his research on the role of Kazan as the centre of missionary
education of non-Russian people of the region and concludes that in the views of Russian
authorities regarding possible assimilation strategies, contested educational projects proved to
be effective.

Still, one of the drawbacks of contemporary research is that recognizing the importance
of education in solving urgent problems of the tsarist policy, hardly anything is said about
educational programs and methods used in the process of missionary education. This thesis
contributes to bridging the gap. The aim of my paper is to analyze how the process of education
in the second half of the 19th century contributed to the implementation of the imperial policy
of Christianization of non-Russian peoples of the region.

Since it is impossible to analyze the ethno-historical situation of the region without paying
attention to the religious diversity of its constituents, I will dwell upon the issue of interaction
of educational policy with religious self-identity of the population.

According to the aim of the research, the following questions thus arise:

- How were the missionary policies, promoted by the imperial centre, applied in the
  provinces of this multiethnic region?
- To what extent did the educational factor have an impact on the process of
  Russification of the ethnic groups of the region?
- What were the educational programs and methods used at schools and seminaries?
  How did they contribute to the changes in the confessional orientation of the
  baptized non-Russians?
The **methodology** of the research is viewed from a historical-anthropological perspective, which is unfolded through the situational approach, used instead of the ethnocentric one, which is characteristic of Russian historiography and of historiography of non-Russian peoples of the region, that is particularly actively developing since 1990s. The aim of the research is achieved through a retrospective analysis of the sources, systematization of the archival data, memoirs, and relevant secondary literature.

One of the primary sources which gives a major contribution to the paper are the memoirs of Il’minskii and his contemporaries, which present ideas about, and reports of, how successful the process of education of the *inorodsy* in the Middle Volga region was. Most of the archival documents are taken from the Russian State Historic Archives (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennui Istoricheskii Arxiv-RGIA) and the Central Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan (Natsional’nui Arxiv Respubliki Tatarstan-NART). The published sources along with literature come from the Mari National Library in Yoshkar-Ola, National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan in Kazan and Chuvash National Library in Cheboksary.

**Structure of the thesis.** The body of thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the analyses of historiography (pre-revolutionary, Soviet, contemporary Russian and Western) of the problem. The second chapter deals with ethno-confessional situation in the Middle Volga region in the 19th century, since the ethnic diversity of the population and their religious affiliations are at the centre of the discussion. The third chapter “Eastern Expansion of the Russian Empire and the State Policy on National Minorities” dwells upon the questions of imperial policy, explains reasons for numerous apostasies into paganism and Islam and analyzes the reaction of the authorities towards the phenomenon and counter reaction of the indigenous population. The fourth chapter is devoted to the educational
activities in the region: study of the activities of the missionary brotherhoods, analysis of the essence of Il’minskii system and its impact on the confessional situation in the region.
1. Historiography of the problem

The issue of Christianization of the peoples of the Middle Volga region has been in the scope of interest for quite a long time, which explains its abundant and multileveled historiography. Not only theoretical and methodological approaches, but also the research problems have changed with the epochs stemming from political and ideological situation. It is necessary to augment and differentiate three stages in the development of the subject: pre-revolutionary (1861-1917), when one can identify trends for missionary, ethnographical and state sponsored research; the Soviet period (1917-1991), with tangible domination of atheistic literature, including socio-philosophical, ethnographic and ethno-religious works; and finally contemporary (since 1991), characterized by retreat from a strictly atheist perspective and acquisition of a range of new ideological and methodological tools.

1.1. Pre-revolutionary historiography

Numerous books and articles published before 1917 focused on the research and description (read justification) of the official policy of Christianization of non-Russian peoples of the Middle Volga region, missionary activities of the church and clergy. Although undoubtedly censored, they remain valuable for the research, being written by the ideologists of the policy of Christianization of Non-Russians themselves: Bobrovnikov, Il’minskii, Iznoskov, Mashanov,¹ who wrote about their reflections on the state’s policy in regards to missionary

¹N. A. Bobrovnikov, Inorodcheske naselenie Kazanskoy gubernii (Inorods population of Kazan province) (Kazan: n.p., 1899); N. I. Il’minskii, Kazanskaya tsentral’naya kreschenotatarskaya shkola: materialy dlya istorii khristsianskogo prosvescheniya kreschenuh tatar (Kazan central Kriashen school: materials for the history of Christian education of baptized Tatars ) (Kazan: n.p., 1887); idem, O perevede pravoslavnih khristsianskih knig na inorodcheskie yazuki (On translation of Orthodox Christian books into the inorodsy languages) (Kazan: n.p.,1875); idem, O sisteme prosvescheniya inorodsev i o Kazanskoj tsentral’noj kreschenotatarskoy shkole (On the system of inorodsy education and on Kazan central Kriashen school) (Kazan: n.p., 1913); I.A. Iznoskov, Dvadsatipyatiletie bratstva sv. Guriya (The twenty-fifth anniversary of st. Guriu brotherhood) (Kazan: n.p., 1892); idem,
education, ethnoconfessional processes in the region, concerns about apostasies into Islam and paganism.

In this period one can observe the appearance of works summarizing the history of Orthodox missionary activities in the Kazan diocese, the first of which was written by a student of the missionary department of Kazan clerical academy Khrustalev, followed by the work of Mozharovsky, which is considered one of the most prominent works on the history of Orthodox missionary activities in Kazan region by a contemporary Chuvash historian, Taimasov. Generally supporting Taimasov’s critical view that the book, being written by an official church historian, reflects state ideology and a close connection between Christianization of Non-Russians and state policy of strengthening autocracy, fails to find connections between changes of forms and methods of missionary activities in the region with social, economic and political developments in the country, I would stress another drawback of Mozharovsky’s position—his disregard of the objects of the missionary activities themselves, which are represented as a passive mass of people, being enlightened by the local clergy.

In the of mid-19th century reforms, much attention was paid to the role of the Orthodox Church in the spiritual life of the people. Several works were written on various activities of the


A.F. Mozharovskij, Izlozhenie hoda missionerskogo dela po prosvesheniju 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).

Quoted from L.A. Taimasov, Pravoslavnaya tserkov’ i khristianskoe prosveschenie narodov Srednego Povolzh’ya vo vtoroj polovine 19-nachale 20 veka (Orthodox Church and Christian enlightenment of the Middle Volga peoples in the second half of the 19th年开始 of the 20th century) (Cheboksary: Chuvashskij universitet, 2004),11. Here and further along I take full responsibility for the possible drawbacks that may occur in the translation of quotations from Russian.

Ibid., 12.
clergy in the period of modernization of the Russian society. Thus, the role of the clergy in the development of parish education in the times of Alexander II was described by Blagovidov.\textsuperscript{6} Works of Blagoveschensky and Znamensky reflect the history of parish schools in the Kazan diocese, where the authors analyzed the church institutions and offered possible ways of the improvement of their activities.\textsuperscript{7} In the 1870s, before the Russian-Turkish war, there appeared books stressing anti-Islamic ideas and demands for strengthening the laws against apostasy from Orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{8}

One of the mains topics for ethnographical research in the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century is the study of the culture of the peoples of the Middle Volga region.\textsuperscript{9} Religious life of the non-Russians reflecting the processes of syncretism of paganism, Islam and Orthodoxy, is given its due account. In spite of interesting empirical and theoretical material, these works are largely descriptive and do not provide specific analyses of ethnoconfessional situation in the region.

At the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, an unstable socio-political situation, increased problems in the interrelations between the state and the church, social interest in the problems of spirituality had its impact on growing research of the problems of church and religion.\textsuperscript{10} The

\textsuperscript{6} F.V. Blagovidov, Deyatel’nost’ russkogo dukhovenstva v otnoshenii k narodnomu obrazovaniju v tsartvovanie Alexandra II (Activities of the Russian clergy concerning popular education during the rule of Alexander II) (Kazan: n.p., 1875).
\textsuperscript{7} A. Blagoveschenskii, Istoriya Kazanskoj dukhovnoj seminarii s vosemju nizshimi uchilischami (History of Kazan ecclesiastic seminary with eight low-level vocational schools) (Kazan: n.p.,1881); P.V. Znamenskii, Istoriya Kazanskoj dukhovnoj akademii (History of Kazan ecclesiastic academy) (Kazan: n.p., 1892).
\textsuperscript{8} See: N. Ily’in, Proiskhozhdenie i kharakter Islama (Emergence and the character of Islam)(Kazan: n.p., 1876); E.K. Voronets, Optadenie inorodtsev-khristian v mukhammedanstvo (Apostasy of inorodsy Christians into Mohammedanism) (Orel: n.p., 1876).
\textsuperscript{9} See: P.I. Mel’nikov, Ocherki mordvu (Studies of Mordva) (Moscow:n.p.,1867); G.E. Vereschagin, Voyaki Sarapul’skogo uezda (Votyaks of Sarapul district) (Saint Petersburg: n.p.,1889); V. Rogozin, Cheremisu. Istorioko- etnograficheskij ocherk (Cheremis. Historic and ethnographical studies) (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1881); V.A. Shoey, Chuvashi v butovom, istoricheskom i religioznom otnoshenii. Ich proiskhozhdenie, yazuk, obryadu, povestviya, predaniya (Chuvash in domestic, historic and religious contexts. Their origin, language, customs, popular beliefs and legends) (Moscow: n.p., 1865).
\textsuperscript{10} S.V. Eshevskii, Missionerstvo v Rossii (Missionary work in Russia) (Moscow: n.p.,1900); Ya.D. Koblov, Konfessional’nye shkoly kazanskikh tatar (Confessional schools of Kazan Tatars) (Kazan:n.p.,1916); I. N. Letnitskii, O neobkhodimosti missii i otdel’nuyh missionerov (About the necessity of the mission and separate missionaries) (Astrakhan: n.p., 1906).
main tendency was for the strengthening of missionary activities so as to oppose the growing influence of Islam on the baptized peoples of the region. Questions of inter-confessional relations and functioning of the church became more acute after the proclamation of freedom of speech and religious tolerance in 1905. One of the most often quoted works of this period is an ethnographical research made by Chicherina.\textsuperscript{11} Although she clearly did not aim at a complex study of the confessional processes in the region, she managed to create an overall image of religious life of baptized peoples. In Chicherina’s view, the main factor of progressive change was the success of Il’minskii’s educational system, which at that time was challenged by alternative educational projects implying direct Russification.

On the whole, pre-revolutionary historiography presents a significant empirical and theoretical background for the research of the religious status of the peoples in the Middle Volga region. I should mention however, that the above-viewed works touched upon the questions of Orthodox missionary activities and church history mostly reflecting official ideology, due to which several aspects of ethnoconfessional processes, interconfessional relations and parish education receive subjective treatment. Among the literature discovered there was no complex research of the history of religion of the peoples in the geographic framework of the entire region.

\textit{1.2. Soviet historiography}

After the 1917 revolution, the problems of church and religion were determined by Marxist ideology, which presupposed dramatic change of theoretical and methodological approaches to the above-mentioned issues.

\textsuperscript{11} S.V. Chicherina, \textit{U privolzhskih inorodtsev. Putevue zametki} (The Volga inorodsy. Travel notes) (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1905); idem, \textit{O privolzhskih inorodsakh i sovremennom znachenii sistemu N.I. Il’minskogo} (About the Volga inorodsy and contemporary meaning of Il’minskii’s system) (Saint Petersburg:n.p., 1906).
The Communist party doctrine clearly set new goals and objectives for historical and ethnographical research: criticism of church and religion, atheistic propaganda, creation of the image of a Soviet person. Religious studies per se were shifted to the background of scholarly interest. One can observe an increase of works aiming at rewriting the history of religion of the peoples of the Middle Volga region based on an atheistic worldview in 1920-30s.

It is not out of place to say that with the establishment of atheistic ideology in the USSR caused changes in the attitude not only towards the events in the religious past of the Soviet peoples, but also towards the activities of different missionaries and teachers. As far as I can judge, Soviet historiography has no fixed view on the evaluation of pedagogical legacy of missionary teachers of pre-Soviet epoch. Thus, Ablov’s and Matorin’s works describe Il’minskii and his followers as reactionaries. The most celebrated Chuvash pedagogue, Yakovlev, whose immense contribution to the national educational system tends to keep unceasing interest among researchers, experienced much pressure from the new government, especially in the 1930s.

In 1948 Grigoryev regarded Christianization as a method of colonial policy of the tsarist government and presented the guidelines of the process of Christianization of the Tatars and several other peoples of Tatarstan. The history of pre-revolutionary schools was partially described in Efirov’s book, but he assumed that only st. Gurii Brotherhood’s schools were working on the basis of Il’minskii’s missionary project and gave generally negative assessment

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of the work of parish schools in the region.\textsuperscript{14} Although his book is valuable from the point of view of statistical reports presented and the general overview of educational programs in the region, it is an illustrative example of how the new ideology influenced the presentation, or rather, the mispresentation, of educational reforms. Makarov,\textsuperscript{15} having studied the educational contribution of a Chuvash teacher Ul’yanov, did not take into consideration the missionary character of education and for some unknown reason artificially juxtaposed the ideas of Ul’yanov and Yakovlev on the one hand and Il’minskii on the other, although I have difficulty finding in what way they can possibly contradict each other. Tallin’s\textsuperscript{16} research on the history of pre-revolutionary Mordovian school is likely to be based on the same ideological position.

At the end of the 1950s and in 1960-70s, history and ethnography experienced a turn back to the problems of religion which were to be regarded by a new generation of historians. Denisov\textsuperscript{17} gives account of the history of religious beliefs of the Chuvash, especially stressing the process of their Christianization. Tendencies for religious syncretism of the Mordva people were analyzed by Mokshin, to name a few.\textsuperscript{18} On the whole, the research projects of 1960-70s are ethnocentric, based on sources and ethnographic material of a specific autonomous republic. Christianization process of non-Russian peoples is regarded as the peoples’ fight against forcible policy coming from the tsarist regime, which was not unusual for that period of time. Positive changes in the attitude towards the problems of church and religion came with perestroika and the declaration of freedom of conscience in 1988.

\textsuperscript{14} A.F. Efirov, Nerusskie shkolu Povolzh’ya, Priural’ya i Sibiri. Istoricheskie ocherki (Non-Russian schools of Povolzh’e, Priural’e and Siberia. Historical studies) (Moscow: n.p., 1948).
\textsuperscript{16} V.N. Tallin, Ocherki po istorii mordovskoj shkolu (Notes on the History of Mordva school) (Saransk: n.p., 1856).
\textsuperscript{17} P.V. Denisov, Religioznue verovaniya chuvash (Religious beliefs of Chuvash) (Cheboksary: n.p., 1959).
\textsuperscript{18} N.F. Mokshin, Religioznue verovaniya mordvu (Religious beliefs of Mordva) (Saransk: n.p., 1968).
1.3. Contemporary historiography

At the beginning of the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and monopoly of the Communist party there appeared a chance to overcome stereotypes and ideological clichés in treatment of the ecclesiastic problems. Socio-economic and political innovations contributed to the growth of religious activity of the population. Many statements had to be reassessed from different methodological perspectives. The interest of the state and society towards religion is most vividly manifested in the appearance of special encyclopedias, books, and other mass printed material. The questions of Christianization of non-Russian peoples and interconfessional relations are still the focus of scholarly interest. Zuryanov’s research on monasteries in the second half of the 19th-20th centuries contains allusions to Orthodox monasteries in the Middle Volga region. A significant contribution into the studies of monastery colonization in the Mari part of the region on the basis of Spaso-Yunginsky monasteries was made by Aiplatov and Ivanov. One should not, however, be misled by the idea that the research projects concerning Christianization are focused on Orthodoxy only.

Studies of the missionary activities of Il’minskii enjoy a certain revival, although some scholars still regard him as an apologist of the colonial policy of the Russian empire. History

19 P.N. Zuryanov, Russkie monasturi i monashestvo v 19 i nachale 20 veka (Russian monasteries and monasticism in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century) (Moscow: Verbum-M, 2002).
22 L.A. Efimov, „Sistemu prosvescheniya nerusskih narodov i chuvashskie shkolu Povolzh’ya i Priural’ya v poslednej treti 19-nachale 20 vekov“ (The system of enlightenment of non-Russian peoples and Chuvash schools of Povolzh’e and Priuralje in the last third of the 19th-beginning of the 20th century) (Diss.Doktor Nauk, Cheboksary State University, 1998); A.N. Pavlova, „Sistema N.I. Il’minskogo i ee realizatsiya v shkol’nom obrazovanii nerusskih narodov vostoka Rossii“ (Il’minskii’s system and its realization in school education of non-Russian peoples of the Russian East) (Diss.Candidat Nauk,Cheboksary State University, 2002).
of Islam in the region in the period of religious renaissance becomes the subject of the research of various scholars: philosophers, ethnologists, historians.\textsuperscript{24}

The history of the Orthodox mission and questions of ethnopolitical and ethnocultural processes in the Middle Volga region take a prominent place in Western and Eastern historiography. A Japanese scholar, Matsuzato, explains this increasing historical interest in ethnopolitical processes in the region by a peculiar coexistence of Slavic, Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples, their specific interrelations and particular status in the Russian empire, which is regarded as “the core of the Russian empire.\textsuperscript{25}

The centers of studies of the peoples of Eastern Europe and Russia exist in many European and Asian countries and America. Unfortunately, some works are characterized by a biased estimation of the role and place of the church in the life of Russian society. While studying tsarist Russia, Pipes devoted one of the chapters of his monograph to the analyses of church activities, but it is presented as “a state’s slave,\textsuperscript{26}” which is far from reality and does not reflect its functions. Several aspects of the religious life of the peoples of the region are touched upon in Kappeler’s research,\textsuperscript{27} where he brings forward various innovative ideas about the significance of Orthodox missionary activities. He regards Il’minskii’s educational program as an important impulse of “national revival” of the baptized peoples of the region and, referring

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} See the sets of conference papers: “Khiistianizatsiya narodov Srednego Povolzh’ya i ee istoricheskoj znachenie: Materialu regional’noj nauchnoj konferentsii” (Christianization of the peoples of the Middle Volga and its historical value: Materials of regional conference) (Yoshkar-Ola, 2000); “Uzlovue problemu sovremennogo finno-ugrovedeniya: Materialu I Vserossijskoj konferentsii finno-ugrovedenija” (Cornerstone problems of the modern Finno-Ugric studies: Materials of the first all-Russia conference of Finno-Ugric scholars) (Yoshkar-Ola, 1995); “Finno-Ugorskii mir: istoriya i sovremennost. Materialu II Vserossijskogo kongressa finougrovedov” (Finno-Ugric world; history and contemporaneity. Materials of the second all-Russia congress of Finno-Ugric scholars) (Saransk, 2000).
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Vesna narodov: Etnopoliticheskaya istoriya Volgo-Ural’skogo regiona} (Spring of the peoples. Ethnopolitical history of the Volga-Ural region) (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre, Hokkaido University, 2002),5-6.
\item \textsuperscript{26} R. Pipes, \textit{Rossiya pri starom regime} (Russia during the old regime) (Moscow: n.p., 1993), 291-325.
\item \textsuperscript{27} A. Kappeler, \textit{Rossiya kak mnogonatsional’naya imperiya. Vozniknovenie, istoriya, raspad} (Russia as a multinational empire. Emergence, history, collapse) (Moscow: n.p., 1997).
\end{itemize}
to Hroch, their reaching the cultural phase “A”\textsuperscript{28} Kappeler’s assessment of the perception of the pre-revolutionary national school by the Soviet school is no less interesting.

It would be unfair to suggest however, that the non-Russians were only grateful passive recipients of missionary education or that this problem enjoys only positive coverage in contemporary historiography. Studies of missionary activities towards the Tatar population of the region by Brian-Benningsen push the reader to the conclusion that these activities played a negative role in the consolidation of a united Tatar ethnos.\textsuperscript{29} Karpat’s presentation of Russia’s Eastern provinces as likely targets for the spread of Pan-Islamism explains the particular concern of the empire about the Tatar population and religious and educational activities of its respective elites but at the same time helps explain the possible causes for numerous apostasies of the population into Islam.\textsuperscript{30} Also, it is due to the work of Benningsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay that one can judge about the history of the Muslim national movement in tsarist times and during the civil war.\textsuperscript{31} Much attention of the authors is given to the emergence of Muslim press, the most prominent of which is the newspaper of Ismail Bei Gasprinsky, who was preaching the modernization of Islam and Islamic schools. Despite the unfortunate fact that the topic did not receive its due attention in later French historiography, the research of Benningsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay uncovers details of the emergence of the Jadids, which are necessary to get the idea of how the political and national interests in the region clashed.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 170.
\textsuperscript{29} F. Brian-Benningsen, “Missionerskie organizatsii v Povolzhje,” (Missionary organizations in Povolzhje) in \textit{Islamo-khristianskoe pogranich’e: itogi i perspektivu izucheniya} (Kazan: n.p., 1994), 116-123.
Werth, one of the most authoritative Western scholars discovering the problem in question, deals with the issues of interaction of state authorities and Orthodox missionaries in the Volga-Kama region.\textsuperscript{32} His research is based on state-church missionary policy and the most prominent events from the religious life of the Mari and the Kriashen. The spiritual life of the other peoples of the region as well as the impact of educational programs on the changes in their worldview are not discovered apparently for the lack of relevant archival sources. Some idea of a more general overview is presented by Geraci,\textsuperscript{33} who writes about the role of Kazan as a centre of missionary education for non-Russian peoples of the region. But if Werth analyzes the problem of religious policy and faith, Geraci is more concerned with the problems of enlightenment of the non-Russians. The same streamline is followed by Dowler, who deals with controversies in the education in the region under discussion, which he explains by the presence of Islam, which had its own educational agenda and school reform movement and ethnic, religious and language diversity of the population.\textsuperscript{34}

I take the works of Geraci and Werth as the most relevant to the topic. However different the focuses might be, they both dwell upon the issues of missionary activities, schooling, conversion and apostasy, while answering the following questions: Was profession of Orthodoxy a necessary requirement of a person to be recognized to be seen as a “core” citizen of the empire as opposed to its eastern other, meaning inorodets? Was it possible to russify ethnically non-Russians and was church or school the best way to facilitate the process? Was Orthodoxy the “Russian faith” and therefore incompatible with any retention of a specific ethnic identity?

The change of the notion determining non-Russian population from *novokreschenu* into *inorodsy* identifies the change of reference to religious status to ethnic origin of the population. The implication suggested by Werth is that assimilation was now more than just Christianization—it required Russification. 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. He shows that although the institutions and missionaries themselves were actively involved in the “civilizing” project, they “simultaneously exposed uncertainties in Russia’s own national and imperial identity, thus rendering the assimilation of ‘others’ potentially problematic and even dangerous”. Comparing and contrasting two educational strategies—Malov’s and Il’minskii’s views on Muslims and discussing their political importance he does not straightforwardly claim whether the assimilation should be based on language or religion. Examining ambiguities of nationality (not nationalism) and assimilation in the late imperial period, he presents analyses of various ethnic groups and how Russian attitudes towards them varied according to how well each was believed to have assimilated. The advantage of his research, in comparison to Werth’s is clearly in his broader focus on both secular and religious institutions viewed as agents of assimilation but to my mind it is too biographical.

Werth examines the dynamic 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 formulation and implementation of official religious policy throughout the period was hampered by inconsistency of state’s attitude towards its non-Orthodox subjects, which for Geraci lies also in “the uncertainty, controversy, and

contradictions in Russians’ engagement in the task of self-definition”. While paying much attention to the missionary activities, Werth stresses that the scope of these missions was limited by contradictions in the state policy between religious tolerance and support for a privileged state religion, shortage of financial resources and lack of qualified clergy. He argues that these activities after mid-century were shaped by a series of related conceptual transitions—notions of state were shifting from a traditional multiethnic composite model to a national state as modern colonial empire. Equally important his work uncovers the extent to which indigenous population responded to religious policies and in doing so shaped their evolution.

Taking into account numerous views on the problem, with various theoretical and methodological approaches to the research questions, I can state that despite the unceasing interest of the subject, there exist certain gaps in its presentation. Most authors deal with the question of what was going on in the region in the period of time under discussion, many try to explain why these specific processes took place and developed the way they did. Unfortunately, what is to an extent marginalized is how the particular missionary policies were carried out, what their methods and mediators, means and educational techniques really were, how alternative educational projects clashed and if it is possible to regard non-Russians not as objects but as subjects of the educational policy. When elaborating on the problem of assimilation in my research, I am going to stress the importance of the educational factor in the imperial policy towards its non-Russian eastern subjects in the above-mentioned terms. While taking Kazan teacher’s seminary and missionary schools as target educational institutions, I will analyze its curriculum in order to answers the following questions: what were the educational subjects and effective methods, what was/were the language(s) of instruction, what were the means of control of the quality of education, contributing to the formation of future missionaries? Also, statistic files provide reports about the nationality status of the students.

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36 Geraci, Window on the East, 11.
which allows to suggest in what part of the region literacy (and Christianization) was more wide-spread, due to the efforts of the representatives of indigenous population, and in which Christianization was held with greater help on behalf of the Russian missionary clergy. When dealing with parish schools in indigenous communities, some additional questions will be addressed. Initiated among Kriashens, Il’minskii’s system of using native languages in education was spread among the other peoples of the region, first and foremost thanks to the activities of st. Gurii Brotherhood. The question is how effective were the activities of the brotherhood in the communities? This deserves special attention in Muslim/Kriashen areas where Islamic and Orthodox missionary projects coexisted side by side—was Islam finally ousted by Orthodoxy? The sources to investigate the questions would be mainly Il’minskii’s diaries, his reports to Pobedonostsev, archival files with reports from the local schools.

Bearing in mind the political situation, the internal interests of the empire and its specific assimilative projects vis-à-vis its indigenous population, I do not wish to become an apologist or an accuser of the imperial policy. Such evaluation is not the purpose of my research. Rather, recognizing that in comparison to the Russian educational institutions the inorodtsy type of school and seminary education were quite backward, I am going to prove their effectiveness in both the solution of the problems of the state and the identity formation of the local peoples of the region. In order to present a general overview of the population of the Middle Volga region, the most important initial question to be addressed concerns the ethnic composition and religious affiliation of the peoples that will be discussed in the second chapter.
2. Ethnoconfessional Situation in the Middle-Volga region in the 19th century

In this chapter I am going to present an outlook on the ethnic groups inhabiting the region, primarily focusing on their religious affiliation. In this multiethnic and polyconfessional region neighboring villages became the centers of ethnic and religious assimilation, which made the imperial policy of Christianization especially difficult. The co-existence of Islam, Orthodoxy and animism in the region consequently made it a target of the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The population of the Middle Volga region in the 19th century was represented by a number of peoples, the most numerous of which were Russians, Tatars, Chuvash, Mordva, Mari and Votyak. The historical migration of the peoples contributed to the increase of contacts among Turkic, Finno-Ugric and Russian peoples. By the middle of the 19th century the Russians dominated the indigenous population in all the provinces of the Middle Volga. In the Kazan province there lived about 1.5 million people, of which Russians constituted 40.7%, Tatars-29.8%, Chuvash-21.6%, Mari 5.5%, Mordva-1.2%, Udmurt-0.5%. Besides, the representatives of other non-native nationalities constituted 0.1%.

As to the religious affiliation the peoples of the Middle Volga region were mostly Orthodox, Muslims and animists (pagans). Although the Kazan diocese was considered to be one of the largest and powerful ones in the infrastructure of the Russian Orthodox Church and many animists and some Muslims were converted in the 1820-1860s, Christianization did not

39 D.M. Makarov, Samoderzhavie i khrisiantizatsiya narodov Srednego Povolzhya vo vtoroj polovine 16-18 vekah (Autocracy and Christianization of the peoples of the Middle Volga in the second half of the 16th-18th centuries) (Cheboksary: Chuvashskij universitet, 2000), 176-212.
cause the desired change in the religious worldview of the newly converted, who kept to their traditional beliefs. Rather than turning the pagans to a monotheistic religion, Orthodoxy got mixed with animism thus adding new elements to their religious practices, in stead of ousting the popular beliefs altogether. Paganism for them constituted a religious cult, philosophy, and art inherited from their ancestors. Masses of people continued to follow their traditions while visiting an Orthodox church at the same time. This blending of practices was primarily due to the fact that either the people ignored the dogmas of Orthodoxy or did not understand them.

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. A scholar Gareev provides an interesting example of Christianization of eastern Mari people. He discovers the case of forced Christianization, when it was used as a punishment for the committed crime: “A Mari of the Asakovo village of Birsk district Uruskul Yanbergin, who had stolen a horse from a peasant and 47 roubles from a merchant was sentenced by the Birsk court to community work and baptism.”

Whatever the reasons may be, the non-Russian population soon had to reconcile with the existence of dvoeverie (double faith), which constituted their cosmology.

By the 1860s the majority of the population of the Kazan province was Orthodox (71.5%), the second largest confession were Muslims (27.1%), and the other religious minorities constituted 1.4%. The data were alike in the Simbirsk province-92.5% Orthodox, 7.3% Muslims and 0.2% other confessional groups. Representatives of the second largest

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40 I.S. Gareev, “Khristianizatsiya marijtsev Prikamya i Priuralya v kontse 18-pervoij polovinе 19 vekov” (Christianization of Mari of Prikamje and Priuralje in the end), in Khristianizatsiya narodov srednego Povolzh’ya i ee istoricheskoе znachenie (Christianization of the peoples of the Middle Volga and its historic significance) (Yoshkar-Ola: Marijskij gosudarstvennuj universitet, 2001), 59

41 Raspredelenie naseleienia imperii po glavnym veroispovedaniyam (Division of the population of the empire according to the main confessions) (Saint Petersburg: n.p., 1901), 5-9.

42 Ibid.
confession were mostly Tatars and Bashkirs living in Samara province. The cases of conversion to Islam drew attention of church and secular authorities, they mostly took place in the villages where Chuvash, Mari, Votyak peoples lived together with Muslim Tatars. The greatest concentration of the Muslim population was in the Kazan province.

According to the data, provided by Taimasov, Tatars lived in all provinces of the Middle Volga region. In the Kazan province they prevailed in the Mamadysh district (in the year 1897-69.41%). In the Tetushi district they made about half of the population, while in Swiyazsk, Tsarevokokshajsk, Laishevskij, Chistopol’skij, Spasskij district they constituted from 25 to 30%, the other groups of population being Russians, Mordva, Mari, Chuvash. In Simbirsk province the number of Tatars was about 10% of the population.43

On the whole, Tatars outnumbered the majority of the peoples of Russia by the growth of the population. They often managed to assimilate neighboring peoples, such as Mordva and Chuvash, while only some part of the Tatars was assimilated by Bashkirs who were linguistically and religiously close to them.44 The Middle Volga Tatars were an object of special attention of the government. Almost all pre-revolutionary missionary writers (Il’minskii, Koblov, Malov, Mashanov), remark on almost “fanatic” devotion of the Muslim Tatars to their faith, and the ability to defend its truth and divinity. One of the most important features in this respect is the spread of Muslim education in the Kazan region. Almost in every village mullahs taught the local children the basics of Muslim faith for some parental donation. In cities and towns there were mektebs, where young people got further education, the quality of which was not very high, but still the spread of educational institutions put Muslim Tatars above all other peoples of the Middle Volga regions, including Russian peasants.

43 Taimasov, Pravoslavnaya tserkov’, 58.
44 Ibid.
Coming to the problem of formation of the ethnic group of the Kriashens (baptized Tatars), the first point to address is the existence of two distinct groups - Old Converts and New Converts. It is their religious background, rather than the time of conversion, that makes the difference. The beliefs of Old Converts were based on popular traditions and that made them close to other groups of baptized non-Russians - Chuvash, Mari, Votyak, as they had the same images of gods and spirits typical for the traditional beliefs of indigenous peoples: patrons of the household, rivers, forests, etc. Taimasov makes a hypothesis that the emergence of the group of Old Converts comes either from non-Islamized Tatars or from “Tatarized” Chuvash, Mari, Votyak. Werth mentions that the Kriashen themselves considered those who kept to animistic beliefs chii (pure, true) Kriashen. There he gives an example that Kriashen “invoked Mohammed and Allah in their prayers, maintained that Mohammed was God’s prophet (or at least a saint), and could recite a multitude of legends about his activities and goodness.

Of all the converted ethnic groups of the middle Volga region only the New Converts were the slowest to accept the Orthodox religion. They were converted in the 18th century during the missionary movement for Christianization of Muslims. As a result of forcible missionary actions and also the strive of the poor levels of Tatar population to improve their financial situation owing to the tax concessions, a part of Tatars were baptized. Due to organized resistance on behalf of Muslims the government of Catherine II turned to the policy of religious tolerance, but the ethnoconfessional difference within the Tatar ethnos was still kept by force of law.

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47 Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 33.
Muslims did not recognize Kriashens as Tatars—in the course of national movement the confessional term “Muslim” became synonymous to “Tatar.” In effect, New Converts were in a most unprivileged position—apostasy and proselytism among Christians were persecuted, but they constantly fought for the return to Islam— they applied a great number of petitions to the government for such a permission, which met strong resistance on the part of the authorities. Finally, a priest was sent to each Kriashen village in order to instruct the apostates in Christian faith, but until the emergence of Il’minskii’s educational system this move had little success.

Although the official data may look quite optimistic from the point of view of the Orthodox Church, the real state of things was different. Kazan which is called by Geraci “A window on the East,“ was officially recognized as a centre of Orthodox missionary activities in the eastern borders of the Russian empire. Orthodox confessional entity can be regarded as the largest in the number of people and at the same time the most heterogeneous in its ethnic structure. Peoples, being officially Orthodox, often kept to their former beliefs, and even if they did not, the degree of their perception of what it was—to be an Orthodox—often meant just observing the holidays while the traditions were often mixed with non-Orthodox rituals.

The greatest part of Orthodox population were Russians, as Orthodox affiliation went together with the concept of Russianness. Although one can observe the spread of the schism and the appearance of Christian sects on the territory of the region (e.g. skoptsy), they did not to a large degree threaten the Russian Orthodox entity. The other part of the Orthodox population was comprised of baptized indigenous peoples, upon whose religious worldview I will now dwell in more detail.

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48 Taimasov, Pravoslavnaya tserkov’, 88.
49 Geraci, Window on the East.
Speaking about the Chuvash ethnos, it should be mentioned that they, comprised of two sub ethnic groups viryal (highland) and anatri (lowland), took the third place after the Russians and the Tatars in the Kazan province in the middle of the 19th century (21.6%), mostly in Yadrinsk, Tsivilsk, Cheboksaru, Kozmodemyansk, Chistopol and Tetushu district. In Simbirsk province there were more than 10% Chuvash, mostly in Kurmysh, Buinsk, Simbirsk districts.\(^{50}\) As is explained by their geographical location, they had close contacts with Tatars, Mordva, Mari, Russians.

As to their religious worldview, the sub ethnic groups of Chuvash lacked the vivid confessional difference which was characteristic of highland and lowland Mari. At the same time it was the viryal group inhabiting Kozmodemyansk and Yadrinsk districts that first became the object of missionary activities as this dialect was the one the first Christian texts were translated into. In 1820s, when mass apostasies of baptized Tatars into Islam became the major problem in the Middle Volga region, the government and the church started paying more attention to newly-converted Chuvash population that lived close to Muslim Tatar villages.\(^{51}\) The authorities were especially concerned with the cases of Chuvash conversion into Islam.

A famous Chuvash teacher Yakovlev, remembering his childhood says that the inhabitants of his village “were considered to be Orthodox Christians though in fact they remained pure pagans.”\(^{52}\) The newly-converted hardly had any basic knowledge of the religion they had accepted or had been pushed to accept. On the whole, religious state of the Chuvash people, like that of other pagans, represented a mixture of Christian and traditional rituals.

The people that was generally considered to be the most Russified-Mordva-was represented by two sub-ethnic groups - moksha and erzya. The greatest degree of their

\(^{50}\) Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaya tserkov’,* 60.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 82.

accumulation was in Simbirsk province, where they outnumbered Chuvash and Tatar population.\(^53\) In Simbirsk, Penza and Tambov provinces Mordva hardly experienced cultural and linguistic influence on behalf of neighboring peoples. In Saratov and Nizhnii Novgorod provinces one could observe a steady decrease in the number of Mordva population what can be explained by its assimilation by the Russians. Kabuzan underlines partial assimilation of the Mordva people in Orenburg province by Tatars and Bashkirs.\(^54\)

The successful Christianization of the Mordva people could be explained by the fact that they lived close to the Russians, and together with them, and thus received both religious and cultural influence. Still, among the representatives of this ethnic group we can observe differences in the religious worldview from district to district depending on the strength and length of ethnocultural contacts with Russians and missionary activity of the Orthodox Church. According to the opinion of Mokshin, who dealt with the problem of history of religion of the Mordva people, this ethnos cannot be called religiously homogenous. He states that Christianity could not completely oust traditional beliefs from popular consciousness, but still influenced the formation of Orthodox-pagan religious syncretism.\(^55\) As an example he gives the celebration of Easter, which for this ethnic group became the day to remember ancestors, to ask for good harvest, cattle-being, well-being, etc.\(^56\)

This example shows that the elements of paganism remained in the Mordva religious culture, although one can observe positive dynamics in the spread of Orthodoxy in comparison to other indigenous peoples. Such interweaving of elements of different confessions in the religious rituals testifies to the transformation of worldview. There is no achieved unanimity

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
\(^{54}\) Kabuzan, *Narodu Rossii*,177.
\(^{55}\) Mokshin, *Religioznue verovaniya*, 133.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 132.
among the scholars whether we can perceive it as construction of new religiosity on the basis of traditional beliefs or co-existence of two beliefs in the peoples’ consciousness.

The Mari people was comprised of three groups: highland, lowland and eastern group. Almost all highland Mari lived in Kozmodemyansk district of Kazan province, while lowland Mari lived in the vast territories of Tsarevokokshajsk and Cheboksar districts of Kazan province. Already in the 16th century a part of lowland Mari moved to the Urals, thus creating an ethnic group of the eastern Mari. Eastern Mari, being an ethnic minority among the indigenous population of Turkic language groups were assimilated by Tatars and Bashkirs. Highland Mari of Vasilsursk district of Nizhnij Novgorod province and Kozmodemyansk district of Kazan province were culturally influenced by the local Russian population.57

What concerns the specific religious situation of the Mari people one can mention the differences in religious perception of highland and lowland Mari. Already in the 1850s there was a tendency for the recognition of Orthodoxy among the highland population, which Iznoskov explains by educational activities of the Orthodox clergy. The priests of Kozmodemyansk district Albinsky and Urusov tried to implant Christian education into the mass of converted Maris in their native language and used translated Christian literature at the sermons.58 Werth states that the reasons for the changes in the religious worldview of highland Mari should be explained not only by the educational efforts of the priests, but to a large extent by the social, economic, geographic, ethnocultural and other factors, paying special attention to their location near two important waterways- the Volga and the Sura, which means that they had favorable conditions for close ties with Orthodox population.59 In the very beginning of the

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57 Taimasov, Pravoslavnaya tserkov’, 72.
59 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 200-223.
Russian colonization Russian Orthodox population settled close to highland Mari people which created ethnocultural tolerance as the basis for acculturation.

Lowland Mari rejected Christianity for a long time. They venerated _Kugu Jumo_- supposedly the supreme God, although one can not say that their religion was monotheistic. No less peculiar is the recognition that the sacred was located in the physical world and could inhabit specific objects.\(^\text{60}\) The places for such sacrifices, beginning with a mass prayer conducted by a _kart_ (usually the most experienced and respected person, since the Mari had no church and church hierarchy) were sacred groves, some of which were so famous that people from various far districts came there to perform a ritual.\(^\text{61}\)

To ensure the greater spreading of the Orthodoxy among the Mari population, the authorities decided to settle Russian peasants in the local villages. Smirnov considers that such co-existence of Russian and indigenous population, cultural and economic ties had even greater missionary effect than the activities of Orthodox priests.\(^\text{62}\) Despite this, only part of the highland Mari population could be called truly Orthodox in the middle of the 19\(^{th}\) century, while lowland Mari kept to their traditional belief.

The greatest part of the other group of indigenous population- Votyak- lived on the territory between the Kama and the Vyatka, while in Kazan province they lived only in Mamadysh and Kazan districts.

Religious beliefs of Votyak were studied by Luppov, who draws parallels between their religious practices and those of other Finno-Ugric peoples, namely lowland Maris, who lived in

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\(^{61}\) Werth, _At the Margins of Orthodoxy_, 31.

the neighboring zones and with whom they had close economic and cultural contacts. The cult of *keremet,* common to Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples of the region, was also venerated by this ethnic group along with the cult of land. Although used in the modern 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 harvest, well-being, good weather, etc. Votyak practiced sacrifices in sacred groves (*lud*) and family sacrifices in public and family places (*kual*). Orthodoxy thus had only external character, while great part of the population kept to their traditional beliefs.

Close cohabitation of Votyak with Tatars in Kazan province allows for a hypothesis that getting acquainted with Muslim monotheistic faith led to the formation of belief in the highest God *Inmar.* But despite the influence of the monotheistic religion, the pagan beliefs were still kept alive. As the missionary efforts could not oust them completely, it was considered possible to equate the Christian sacred images with the images of popular religion. Thus, *Inmar, Kuldusin and Kvos* - the venerated spirits - intermingled with the God-Father, God-Son and the Holy spirit, the *vorshuds* - with guardian angels, separate saints with natural spirits. Vladukin considers that *Inmar* used to be just one of the Gods, equal to others, representing the upper layer of the world, and then under the influence of Orthodoxy and Islam, there formed a perception of the single, higher God. As a result of missionary activities many rituals underwent some changes absorbing into themselves elements of Christian veneration.

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64 Taimasov *Pravoslavnaya tserkov*, 77.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., 78.
Speaking of linguistic representation in the region Russians were the only representatives of the Slavic population, Tatar and Chuvash coming from Turkic group, while Mari, Mordva and Votyak were Finno-Ugric. Although close coexistence presupposes certain linguistic assimilation, especially in the neighboring villages, it was still very difficult for the indigenous population to speak and get education in Russian and to understand the liturgy in church Slavonic.

The analysis of ethnoconfessional situation in the Middle Volga region allows to divide the population of this multiethnic region into some groups according to their religious worldview and proximity to the official state religion: Russians, for whom Orthodoxy to a great extent became a part of national identity; Mordva and highland Mari who, keeping to their traditional beliefs, accepted the basics of Orthodox doctrine; Chuvash, Votyak, lowland Mari, old-converted Kriashens who recognized symbolic, ceremonial part of Christian life while still living with their pagan beliefs; newly-converted Kriashens, who wanted to return to Islam and Muslim Tatars refusing to become Orthodox.\(^\text{68}\)

This confessional heterogeneity crowned with cases of apostasy and the threat of pan-Islamism caused serious concern from both the secular and church authorities, which became the impetus for the reforms of the missionary movement and the appearance of the system of Orthodox education of inorodtsy-the problem which will be developed in the next chapters.

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\(^\text{68}\) Taimasov, *Pravoslavnaya tserkov’,* 92.
3. Eastern Subjects of the Russian Empire and the State Policy on Ethnic Minorities

The attitude of the empire to its subjects was predetermined by the necessity for its self-identification, strive for greater homogeneity of its population, which in the 19th century was characterized by different degrees of loyalty to the imperial centre, aggravated by an unstable social, political and economic situation in the borderlands. In the Middle Volga region the authorities had to deal with multilingual and polyconfessional entity of the population, the non-Muslim part of which they were going to transform into a socium recognized as Orthodox Russians. The idea of the policy conducted by the imperial government towards its eastern subjects got various presentations and interpretations by the indigenous population, who was not the passive object of the “civilizing mission.” The *inorodsy* reaction to the imposed activities varied from direct rejection, to eager acceptance, with cases of subversion or reinterpretation in between. The chapter thus discusses the strategies that made up the imperial policy towards the eastern subjects and the subsequent response from the non-Russian side characterized by the variety of models of reaction.

In an attempt to define the structural pattern of the Russian empire, it is possible to turn to various views on its very notion. Thus, Paul Werth gives the definition of the empire as “on the one hand, an essentially premodern, composite state made up of different peoples and regions ruled by a hereditary non-national dynasty, and, on the other, a multinational state, characterized by the subordination of diverse, culturally distinct, and at least implicitly ‘inferior’ peoples to a core, dominant nation.” At the same time, Andreas Kappeler defines

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Russia as a traditional premodern empire and contrasts it with the 19th century Western, overseas empires. Unlike Edward Said, he portrays the treatment of conquered non-Russian populations as remarkably flexible, paradigmatic, tolerant and non-racist. Taking into consideration Paul Werth’s argument that the period in question must be viewed as a transition “from an imperial model featuring tolerance and religious diversity and emphasizing dynastic loyalty above all else, to one of a unitary national state, which aspired to a higher degree of integration of its diverse population,” the question arises if the process of unification of the Russian empire was “caught in the permanent tug of war between the vision of the universal and the attachments of the particular,” or was the process of cultural assimilation of ethnic minorities with the imperial center voluntary, and all-embracing?

The analyses of the situation in the Middle Volga region of the empire shows that one cannot give a definite answer to the question due to the ethnic, linguistic and confessional diversity of the population.

Tsarist Russia of the 19th century was a multiethnic empire, but the imperial authorities at least since 1830s were striving to create a more homogenous nationalized core of the empire. Assimilation projects were especially pronounced in regard to the Volga region, where, as it was assumed,“the process was natural and even inevitable because Russians’ essentially European culture was much stronger and more highly developed than the culture of ‘Oriental’ or ‘Asian’ minorities.” Russia’s relationship with the “East” presented a unique set of problems in the history of modern empires, unlike those of Britain, France and other European countries due to its geographical position. By the 19th century Russian leaders were acutely

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70 Kappeler, Rossiya.
71 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 7.
73 Geraci, Window on the East, 248.
sensitive to judgments about the country’s place in “European” or “Western” culture, as it was often viewed by Europeans as part of the Orient.

In his book Edward Said presents his idea of “Orientalism” through historical and cultural perspective situating Europe’s interests in the Orient within the context of expansion of modern bourgeois Europe “outside its traditional confines and at the expense of the rest of the world in the form of its subjugation, pillage, and exploitation.”\(^74\) In spite of Said’s idea that “the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority,”\(^75\) in the Russian context “the cognitive boundary between ‘us’ and eastern ‘others’ often grew blurry because Asia interpenetrated Russia so extensively in geographical, historical and cultural terms.”\(^76\)

Russian law and administration in the 19\(^{th}\) century “combined tolerance for recognized religious groups with a privileged status for Orthodoxy.”\(^77\) Thus the non-Orthodox population was persecuted for either promoting their faiths or for apostasy from Orthodoxy to another, even Christian, faith. Although Orthodox affiliation remained linked to the imperial goal of Russification, the most crucial question the Great Reforms of 1860s brought was “how non-Russians…actually fit (or should fit) into the larger society.”\(^78\)

The shift in the classification of the diverse population of the empire was characterized by the extended use of the term *inorodsy*. The notion *inorodsy* (of a different origin) replaced the old *inovertsy* (of a different faith) in the course of eventual Christianization of the indigenous population to define baptized non-Russians. The explanation, however, can not be absolute, for it was often used as a synonym for “non-Russians”, regardless of their religious

\(^{75}\) Ibid.
\(^{77}\) Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 27.
\(^{78}\) Ibid., 133.
affiliation. In Slocum’s definition “the term originally meant to designate the empire’s most radically different ‘others’ had come to signify an insurmountable barrier of difference separating Eastern Slavs…and all other inhabitants of the empire.”

From the 1860s the term seems to have been used to “signify both ‘national minorities’ (those understood to be different from Russians but amenable to assimilation) and ‘colonial subjects’ (those who were so different and/or uncivilized that they should be administered in a particularistic fashion).” This holds especially true for the diverse population of the Middle Volga region: while Muslims were considered hard to assimilate, the Chuvash, Kriashen and Finno-Ugric ethnic groups were viewed as subjects for assimilation.

In this regard it is worth while viewing a particular ethnic group, which lived in the Middle Volga region of the empire – baptized Tatars (Kriashens), whose identity lay in the space between the Russian and Tatar worlds and was thus the primary target of the assimilation policy. From the other ethnic groups in the region one must also distinguish Chuvash due to the linguistic proximity to the Turkic population, although only those living in the contact zones with Muslims experienced Islamic influence. Since it was assumed that for the Finno-Ugric groups the process of assimilation was something more natural, they were not given their due attention, until massive apostasies into Islam shook the community, which would be discussed further along.

Agnes Kefeli maintains that the Christian-Muslim dichotomy was not absolute between Tatars and Kriashens. In persuading Kriashens to accept Orthodoxy, missionaries often tried to expose the heretical nature of the Kriashens’ Islamic faith and ignored the links between popular Sufi Islam and learned Islam. The Old converts (baptized in the 16th century) came

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80 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 139.

Because missionaries had a bookish, rationalized idea of Islam, they tended to differentiate between “low” and “high” Islam. “Low” Islam meant “popular Sufi books in Tatar and superstitious beliefs in amulets, charms and evil spirits”, whereas “high” Islam was the Islam taught in medresse of the Middle East or Central Asia, in Arabic or Persian.

Though Kriashen spoke the same language as nearby Muslims, and though Russian authorities referred to them as “baptized Tatars”, old-converted Kriashen regarded themselves as being distinct from Tatars as they thought that the designation “Tatar” could apply only to a Muslim. Because of their dubious situation—they continued to speak a Turkic language, and were at the same time converted to Orthodoxy—they had to adopt a label that would differentiate them in some way from the neighboring groups. Yet, despite the clear connection with Christianity, an important place in the religious world of most Kriashen was occupied by indigenous, pre-Islamic forms of veneration (what was called “paganism” by the missionaries).

Every ethnic group had its own terminology, denoting faithfulness to their group’s ethnocultural values (e.g. “chi Mari”, “chan Chavash ”—correspondingly pure Mari, pure Chuvash). Those Kriashens who kept to their pagan belief were called “pure, true Kriashens.” The designation “Kriashen” thus distinguished they religiously form Muslims and linguistically from other nearby peoples. Christianity continued to have only a formal status for quite a long time, while Islam, in its popular form, remained an important part of their religious world,
despite their baptism. Russian Orthodox Church was considered “foreign” by a great part of the non-Russian population and was regarded as a threat to their ethno-cultural unity. From the start of the 19th century, collective apostasies to Islam by some of the Kriashen shook the Orthodox Christian Tatar community. Kefeli argues that “for Kriashens, conversion to Islam was not simply a choice between two world religions, but involved a complex dialogue between a variety of cultural systems (including mystical Islam and animism), then flourishing in the Middle Volga region.” Various strategies and agents of Islamization were at work—including “the use of popular Sufi religious books, the appropriation of pre-Islamic and pre-Christian sacred places, and the development of economic networks.”

Imperial powers, facing the threat of Islamism and Pan-Turkism in its eastern borders, exercised tolerance to indigenous population, which could fall under the assimilation project of progressive Tatar elites. Both the state and the Russian nationalist groups were anxious about certain ethnic groups, possessing a great assimilative potential and being capable of fulfilling their own expansive national projects; the Tatars, living close to, and sometimes together with the Kriashen, no doubt constituted such a threat. Muslims were able to propagate a critical view on Christianity as a mere collection of rituals, because of their linguistic and cultural proximity to the latter. In some communities, Christianity even became a source of shame for its adherents. By the middle of the 19th century, many Kriashens were engaged in migrant labor

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84 Ibid.
85 Kefeli, The Role of Tatar and Kriashen Women, 251.
86 Ibid., 252.
87 Alexei Miller, Imperiya Romanovikh i natsionalism: esse po metodologii istoricheskogo issledovaniya (The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: An Essay on the Methodology of Historical research) (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2006), 92.
and, spending many months in Muslim areas, they naturally adopted many Islamic beliefs and practices.\textsuperscript{88}

By the end of 1860s over ten thousand baptized Tatars asked in their petitions for a permission to recognize them as Muslims.\textsuperscript{89} The fact that not only Kriashen, but Chuvash and Votyak in the contact zones filed a number of such petitions, caused immediate alarm, for it demonstrated the weakness of the Orthodox church and missionary activity and at the same time the fact that the Kriashen refused to be called by Christian names, constructed their own mosques and served as mullahs for each other,\textsuperscript{90} was an indicator of Islamic influence in the region. Also, if in the case of the Kriashens one could explain the apostasies by the “more or less natural attraction”, in relation to other ethnic groups of the region the officials saw “an aggressive and dynamic Islam.”\textsuperscript{91}

Perhaps the biggest cause of the problem remained baptized Tatars’ cohabitation with Muslims, which “exposed them to Islam through the mosques and schools that invariably existed in every village”\textsuperscript{92} and sometimes were the only way for the Kriashen to provide education for their children.

Paul Werth makes a plausible hypothesis that the “Great apostasy of 1866” was predetermined by the Kriashen’s misinterpretation of the 1861 emancipation statute, which, being extended in 1866 to state peasants, allowed for a certain degree of self-government in local peasant communities.\textsuperscript{93} What made the apostasy still more impressive was that not isolated individuals, but the whole villages apostatized. Such open rejection of Orthodoxy en

\textsuperscript{88} Werth, “From ‘Pagan’ Muslims to ‘Baptized’ Communists,” 499.
\textsuperscript{89} E.A. Malov, “Otpadenie kreschnukh Tatar ot pravoslaviya” (Apostasy of Kriashen from Orthodoxy), Missioner 11 (1874):114-115.
\textsuperscript{90} Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 148.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 182.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.,162.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 153.
required legal regulations, since many of the apostates claimed that they were waiting for the official reply to their petition and would return to Orthodoxy should their claims be rejected.

In this connection E. A. Malov puts an emphasis on the need in the official and open announcement of the illegality of the reconversion to Islam, for only then one could persuade them of the divinity of the Christian faith. Many apostates claimed that they had never been Christians, for their parents, or themselves, were forcefully converted and they did not understand the Christian faith as well as the Muslim faith to which they were now returning.

The difficulty with the regulation of the problem was that it was virtually impossible to prosecute the whole villages, since the apostates refused separate interrogation and claimed that they should be questioned all together. By creating this unity they instigated other indigenous peoples to apostasy, thus in one mixed Votyak-Tatar village a Votyak explained his apostasy by saying that “one cannot remain alone in the Orthodox faith in the village.”

The fact that many apostates and proselytizers, sentenced either to exile in Siberia, hard labor, or imprisonment, tried to contest their punishment, and many were released because of the time they had already spent in prison waiting for the hearing of their case, convinced the local baptized Tatars that the local authorities had no grounds to prevent their return to Islam. The problem with the imperial government was that they were not quite sure how to deal with the apostates-to choose tolerance or persecution. Here I support Werth’s proposition that “this revolving door of arrest and release deeply compromised the government’s ability to counteract the apostasy,” since in the eyes of the baptized Tatars the protest came not from the imperial

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94 E.A. Malov, Missionerstvo sredi mukhameddan i kreschenukh tatar (Missionary work among Mohammedans and baptized Tatars) (Kazan: n.p., 1892), 185.
95 NART, f.4, op. 101, d.111. 20.
96 RGIA, f. 821, op.8, d. 763, l. 161ob.; quoted in Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 160.
97 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 161.
centre, who would not prevent them from denouncing Orthodoxy, but from the local authorities and the clergy.

Contrary to the massive apostasies one comes across the examples of incorporation of Orthodoxy in the life of indigenous population, though on various terms. The establishment of a non-Russian monastery in Kozmodemyansk district of the Kazan province can be regarded as a manifestation of embracing Orthodoxy. On the level of the animist cosmology this phenomenon can be viewed through the changes of the cult of the keremet, central to local pagan religions, which ceased to be the spirit of ancestors and now became a representative of the devil. Many Mari people thus saw the conversion to Orthodoxy as a way to escape the evil spirit.

We could also explain the reasons for such open acceptance of Orthodoxy in the desire for literacy and Orthodox education. Since 1860s a group of young literate Highland Mari petitioned the Synod for permission to establish their own monastery and school, which was granted in 1868. Female representatives of the local parish founded first a women’s commune and eventually a convent in Kozmodem’yansk in 1877. The peculiarity of the monastery was that the priests and the monks were the representatives of indigenous population, who brought the Orthodox enlightenment to the inhabitants of the region. As the ethnographers noted, “literacy and the Russian language became widespread in the affected villages, and highland Mari even visited their meadow counterparts across the Volga as missionaries.” Werth stresses that highland Mari’s religiosity was largely due to the efforts of the local priests, who taught their parishioners and performed liturgy in the local languages. He

98 Ibid., 201.
99 Ibid., 202.
100 Ibid.
101 Evgenii Popov, Ob userdii k missionerskomu delu (On eagerness for missionary work) (Perm:n.p., 1874), 52-60; quoted in Paul W. Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 202
gives the most prominent example of the priest Andrei Al’binskii who translated the liturgy into the local language and completed the first Mari grammar.102

The fact that the case of non-Russian monasticism appeared among the highland Mari people was probably due to the fact that it was situated near the Volga river, close to trade routes that connected Kozmodem’yansk with other cities. This geographical factor was quite significant, for it gave highland Mari people more opportunities for trade and cultural connections both with Russians and other indigenous peoples than to their meadow counterparts. The deforestation of the highland part also contributed to the changes in the religious worldview, for the forest has always been central to the pagan cosmology of the peoples of the region. The monastery, which received the name of Archangel Michael, in one way or another, served as a role model for the other non-Russian monasteries in the Middle Volga region- e.g. among Chuvash, Kriashen.103

But perhaps the most interesting example of incorporation of Orthodoxy into the life on indigenous population can be viewed through the analysis of the phenomenon, that received the name Kugu Sorta (literally ‘Big Candle’). It emerged among the Mari population in the Vyatka province and became the most vivid example of how an ethnic group was trying to achieve recognition not by blindly accepting the suggested pattern of belief and rituals, but instead reforming their own pagan belief, which, as they saw it, could receive the status of an officially recognized religion on the same level with Islam and Orthodoxy.

The reform presupposed the adjustment of the basics of bookish religions in the animistic perception, the points of reference being the strive for monotheism, rejection of blood sacrifice (instead, they used bread and candles), appearance of the notion of sin and afterlife.

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102 Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy*, 203.
103 Ibid.,221.
The open manifestation of the reform expressed itself in the public presentation of their belief, together with the artifacts from their rituals, at the Kazan Scientific and Industrial Exhibition in 1890. Likewise, they petitioned the Emperor, requesting exclusion from Orthodoxy on the basis of their own indigenous belief. They also used modified Cyrillic orthography- in other words, they exercised a pragmatic approach to the imposed Orthodox religion, wishing to take from the dogmas of Orthodoxy what seemed appropriate and necessary for legal recognition, and at the same time defending animism in their own, rather sophisticated ways. Since the petitioners were formally Orthodox Christians, their claims were recognized as the sign of apostasy and unconditionally rejected. Paul Werth calls this specific case “internal conversion”, the attempt to rationalize the religious system “not through the adoption of an external religious system, but through a fundamental reworking of one's own religious beliefs.”

The reformers called their beliefs tochto chii Marla vera ("ancient pure Mari faith") and in their Russian petitions they used the expression “customary ancient white-cheremis-oral-pagan faith and ritual.” In the essence of the faith lay the idea was that the 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 insisted on the exclusive practice of paganism. They viewed their present economic and social misfortunes as the outcome of refusal their indigenous belief and turning to Orthodoxy.

The most radical innovation the reformers made was the achievement of monotheism, when Kugu Jumo now became the single deity. This testified to the fact that the previously pragmatic perception of animistic religion now incorporated the idea corruption of a human

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104 I.N. Smirnov, Etnografiya na Kazanskoj nauchno-promushlennoj vystavke (Ethnography at the Kazan scientific-industrial exhibition) (Kazan: n.p., 1890), 30-31.
105 Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 237.
106 Werth, Big Candles, 145.
107 RGIA, f.796, op. 172, d.2686, ll. 3-11.
nature and the necessity to pray for forgiveness of the sins. Still, in order to maintain the
difference from the “Russian faith”, they rejected the cross, icons, Christian prayers and
“church-civil enactments,” thus maintaining that the basis of ethnicity lay in the religious
affiliation, and being not Russians, and they did not have to accept Orthodoxy.

However explicitly the reformers rejected Orthodox Christianity, in their debates they
used the language of Orthodox discourse, which allows to draw the conclusion that the state-
approved religion, imposed on the indigenous population, created the impetus for conscious
transformation of indigenous belief as a protective measure.

The processes, described in the chapter, suggest that it was impossible to keep the
baptized non-Russians in Orthodoxy by means of simple conversion. The missionary activities,
conducted by the priests, proved effective only in the cases of conscious acceptance of
Orthodoxy by the inorodsy, usually when the church relied on Orthodox Christian
enlightenment that was chosen as a new strategy for the successful fulfillment of the imperial
policy in its eastern borderlands.

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4. Educational Question in the Context of Orthodox Missionary Activities.

Together with the question of educating the Non-Russian population of the empire there appeared questions related to the state belonging that is being a subject of the Russian empire and/or the member of the Russian nation. The concept of “Russianness” found its immediate reflection in the sphere of education. Of the two alternative Russification programs for the indigenous population that emerged in the Middle Volga region one was based on the Orthodox religion with the usage of native languages as the means of education (Il’minskii system of inorodsy schools). The other, Russian-Tatar school system, which was connected with the name of Radlov, put up with Islam, but regarded the usage of the Russian language as the main means to carrying out the Russification project. The chapter deals primarily with the first approach, presenting the general missionary situation in the region and the educational process at various institutions of the Il’minskii system. To give a broader perspective of the situation, I am first going to dwell upon the state of missionary activities in the region, after which I will analyze the basics of the above-mentioned system. The third and the fourth subchapters will be devoted to the overview of how the ideology was realized in the daily practice—both at school and teacher-training institutions.

4.1 The Main Trends of Missionary Activities in the region from 1860-1905.

The analyses of the religious missionary work in the given period shows a certain structure of the missionary institutions. In the Middle Volga region the duties of missionary
work fell on the shoulders of brotherhoods, the most famous of which was st. Gurii brotherhood. The missionaries of the brotherhood, assigned to certain districts, supervised the work of the priests, made important decisions, especially when they discovered the facts of mass apostasy into paganism or Islam.  

The usual forms of missionary activity were the following:

1. Trips to remote districts, providing methodical help to the local priests, giving speeches on religious topics.

2. Taking part in the daily missionary work, especially in the difficult cases when there was a need to debate with strong opponents.

3. Distribution of religious literature. Since the population was mostly illiterate it was the illustrated literature that interested the people.

4. Speaking with the Russians or the inorodsy (in their indigenous languages) on religious topics (persuading that Orthodoxy was the state religion and therefore must be practised by the patriots of the empire, whereas the other religions were considered to be non-state in their essence).  

As can be seen, the scale of the activities and the responsibilities were impressive, the missionaries carried out the task of the Orthodox proselytism, returning the apostates to the “bosom of the church” and fighting Muslim propaganda as was determined by the imperial policy.

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109 NART, f.4, op.1, d.120764, II.7-9; quoted in A.V. Morohov, “Organizatsionno-pedagogicheskie osnovu religiozno-vospitatel’noj deyatel’nosti pravoslavnyh missionerskih oschestv Srednego Povolzh’ya v kontse 19-nachale 20 veka” (Organizational and Pedagogical basis of religious and educational activities of the Orthodox missionary societies of the Middle Volga at the end of the 19th-beginning of the 20th century) (Diss. Candidat Nauk, Cheboksary, 2004), 80.

110 Ibid.
During the period in question, the Russian Orthodox Church regarded progressive Muslim elites as the main threat to its activities. It was especially characteristic of the Middle Volga region, where Islam proved to be a plausible alternative for Orthodoxy due to the large number of Muslim Tatar population. What constituted the main concern of the Orthodox church was that the representatives of the Russians, Kriashen, Chuvash, Votyak were the objects of Islamic proselytism, in both Kazan and Simbirsk districts. Non-Muslim inorodsy, living together with Muslim Tatars, sometimes found their life style more attractive, and together with clothing and dietary habits gradually started to follow their religious rituals. Such cases became especially pronounced in the areas where there were no schools, except the mektebs, for the inorodsy would send their children to a Muslim school in order to get at least some education.

The analysis of the religious situation in the region, conducted by Yumankulov, suggests that the main proselytizers were the well-educated mullahs, who were usually also madrasah and mekteb teachers. The motto of these educational institutions was “First religious upbringing, then teaching.” What is also typical of the 19th century Islamic education in the region was that, like the Orthodox, they carried out the function of missionary work, aimed against the alternative religion. Their main task was to bring up generations of true Muslims, with unconditional devotion to their religion that they would spread onto their future pupils. The authorities thus often referred to Muslims as “religious fanatics.” This was partly determined by the fact that the madrasah gave its pupils a strong religious background, which made them capable of giving arguments in favor of Islam when talking to their opponents.


112 Ibid.
The main objects of Islamic influence as a rule were the inhabitants of remote villages neighboring on Tatar villages. The Islamic preachers used simple Muslim books translated into Russian and other languages. What also to a degree simplified the job was the fact that the people in such villages usually spoke more than one indigenous languages. The main tendency in Islamic missionary work was the stress made on monotheism. Islamists were trying to persuade the Orthodox peasants that “God is one, but the faith is different”, not forgetting to mention that the Muslim faith was the best. Sometimes they went the other way around, claiming that the Trinity was the embodiment of polytheism, thus nearly assigning to Orthodoxy the status of a pagan belief. Purely practical arguments also worked: they convinced their interlocutors that to pray five times a day is more beneficial than one, that Islamic fasts are not so difficult and that the rules of the sharia are more advantageous, especially for men. The other crucial argument the Muslim Tatar made was that they are generally well-off and help their “brethren in faith.” Orthodoxy among Tatars was perceived to be the religion of the poor, since many converted for the sake of tax concessions.

Another strong factor of ideological influence was the propaganda of Islamic way of life, costume, dietary habits. When during season works Russian or indigenous people dressed in the Tatar style, attended the mosques and took part in the holidays, they were more highly paid. This was also one of the forms of attraction to Islam. Markets turned out to be the places of active pro-Muslim propaganda - these were the places for distribution of Islamic religious literature, meeting places for the opponents of Orthodox missionary activity. The mullahs themselves advised the Kriashen to behave like Christians, for being the subjects of the Russian

113 Morohov, Organizatsionno-pedagogicheskie osnovy, 89.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
empire, it was difficult to practice Islam openly. At the same time they advised people not to lose deep inner attachment to their fathers’ faith.\footnote{116}{P. Znamenskii, \textit{Na pamyat’ o N.I. Il’minkom: k 25-letiju Bratsvva sv. Guriya} (To the memory of N.I. Il’minskii: For the 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of St. Gurii brotherhood) (Kazan: Tipografiya N.A. Il’yashenko, 1892), 329.}

Such manifestations of open or implicit proselytism did not leave either the authorities or the missionaries impartial. When analyzing the reasons for Kriashen apostasies into Islam the representatives of st. Gurii brotherhood mentioned the fact that the Kriashen had not got used to Orthodox Christian rituals; some priests refused to talk to their Tatar parish since they did not know the language. The missionaries, who, in contrast, knew the languages, and came to the villages in order to talk to the parish, did not have a good idea of the Muslim faith and spoke about it in an insulting way while giving no sound arguments against it.\footnote{117}{Ibid., 333.} The main task of the Orthodox missionaries was thus to explain to the Muslims the falsity of their belief, as denouncing the prophet they hoped to ruin the basis for the religion.\footnote{118}{Ibid., 389.} The argument behind this approach was that Islam in itself had a lot of drawbacks and disadvantages. But in the course of time the religion was built into a system, which was not to be questioned, but unconditionally accepted by the believers.\footnote{119}{Ibid.} The missionaries said that the 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. It was by means of Christian education that the missionaries hoped to turn the baptized Tatars from Islam; Il’minskii was against the idea of providing secular education to the Tatars as he was afraid that the educated Tatars would give a more scientific basis for their faith thus making it even stronger.\footnote{120}{Ibid., 399.}

The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church were well aware of the dangers of the massive Islamization of the population of the region and were trying to resist it. That is why
new missionary schools opened in all the unstable districts, the staff being graduates from Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy where they received special training.

The main peculiarity of the missionary activity on behalf of both Muslims and Orthodox was that they were not trying to convert the strong believers to their respective religions. Instead, they were fighting each other for the hearts and souls of the hesitating population, mostly with an animistic background. The educational sphere became a virtual arena for the fight. Thus, in one of his letters to Pobedonostsev, Il’minskii gave him advice whom to appoint to the mullah’s position:

A fanatic without the Russian education, not knowing the Russian language, is much better, than a civilized Tatar, still worse is a person with University education.¹²¹

He especially warned about the danger coming from the Crimean Tatars, calling them “progressivists and nationalists.”¹²² By saying this he obviously referred to the ideas of Pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism emerging in 19th century Russia as part of the process of nation formation and the rise of nationalism among the Muslims. 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. The ideologist of this movement and the founder of a new method (jadid) school in Russia, Ismail Bey Gasprinskii, used the Russian language and the Cyrillic alphabet in schools for Muslims. The new method school could safely teach the Russian language, along with other secular subjects, and provide both practical training and religious knowledge. Accepting Il’minskii’s thesis, that religion defined nationality, in Islam Gasprinskii saw the guarantee against assimilation of Turkic peoples by Russians, which was in disaccord with the current imperial policy.¹²³ Thus,

¹²¹ N. A. Bobrovnikov, comp., Pis’ma N.I. Il’minskogo (Letters of N.I. Il’minskii) (Kazan’: Izdatel’stvo redaktsii Pravoslavnui sobesednik, 1895), 175.
¹²² Ibid., 176.
¹²³ Karpat, The politicization of Islam.
Il’minskii’s non-Russian Orthodox education was the card the empire was going to play against the apostasies into Islam against the background of initiated unification movement of Russian Muslim Tatars.

Not of the least importance on behalf of the Orthodox missionaries was the struggle against Old Believers, which had been going on since the schism. Although in 1860-70s the priorities of the fight shifted to Islam, the missionary department of Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy trained specialists in the work against the Old Belief. The main stress in the formation of missionary skills was made on the ability to persuade that the philosophy of the schismatics was antireligious. The students were also taught the duties of a priest, peculiarities of the Old Believers’ praying house and specific rituals. In the period from 1859-1869 16 specialists graduated from Simbirsk Ecclesiastic seminary. Among the subjects they studied was the History of Russian schism, schism bibliography, theological training. Still, the number of missionaries was far from sufficient.

The aim of the missionary activities-to promote Orthodoxy and to fight the apostasy among the indigenous population, was hard to achieve because of counter projects led by Muslims, the resistance of the apostates and the evident deficit of qualified missionaries. By the middle of the 19th century it became obvious that the church alone could not carry out the task set by the government in relation to the eastern subjects of the empire.

124 NART, f. 10, op. 1, d. 4448, l. 8-9
125 NART, f. 10, op. 1, d. 4448, l. 8
4.2. The essence of the educational system of N.I. Il’minskii. Alternative Russification projects.

In spite of the fact that the clergy was actively involved in missionary and teaching activities, the church found itself under pressure from both the Ministry of Education and zemtsvo organizations, who stood against the missionary and educational activities of the Brotherhoods, as a result of which it was very difficult to open a new parish or missionary school. During the Great Reforms of 1860-70s, according to the order of January, 18, 1862 the responsibility for public primary education was assigned to the Ministry of Education. Since the Minister of Education Tolstoy conducted the policy of secular education, the parish schools, with strong religious component, lost their significance. As a result, the seminaries became less popular than the zemstvo schools and many of them closed down. The other factor that contributed to the difficulties in parish schools was the hard financial situation of the teachers from the clergy. When in the years 1866-1880 Tolstoy simultaneously served as the minister of education and over-procurator of the Holy Synod, religious education experienced a sharp decline, as Tolstoy’s plans lay in the direction of a totally secular school system. The government, however, was not going to abandon the idea of religious education altogether. Consequently, when in 1880 Pobedonostsev became the head of the Holy Synod, he turned his attention to the activization of religious and moral upbringing of the peasants.

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128 Morohov, Organizatsionno-pedagogicheskie osnovu, 21.
improvement of the financial situation of village clergy, raising the level of their pedagogical and general education and also increasing the network of parish schools.\footnote{130}{Ibid.,88.}

In his report for 1884, Pobedonostsev spoke about the statute on parish schools signed on June 13, 1884 by Alexander II. He argued that the popular elementary education must be linked to the Russian Orthodox Church. He laid a special emphasis on the fact that the popular school “should be based on firm principles of the Orthodox faith, whose guardian and interpreter can only be the Orthodox clergy” and “should correspond to the religious feelings and desires of the \textit{narod} itself.”\footnote{131}{K. Pobedonostsev quoted in Sorenson, “Pobedonostsev Parish Schools”,188.}

An important role had to be given to the clergy, who had to “encourage a conscious religious feeling.”\footnote{132}{RGIA, f.1263, op.1.d.4229, l. 73-74} Pobedonostsev wanted to turn the Russian Orthodox Church into the leading force in the matter of improvement of religious education of the people. Thus the parish school, as its representative, was viewed as a center of spreading the Orthodox faith. On the 20\textsuperscript{th} of May, 1883 the Minister Education introduced a decree on “Providing assistance to Orthodox clergy in opening and support of parish schools.”\footnote{133}{RGIA, f.733, op.171, d.632, l.4.} The main role in the organization of educational process now belonged to the clergy. Church authorities became independent of the Ministry of Education in matters of organization of teaching process in parish schools.

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

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

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

It is clear enough that the above-mentioned points underline the a priori superiority of the Russians over the other imperial subjects that had to undergo a certain cultural rapprochement towards the “core nation,” that was seen as an agent of civilizing mission. By teaching the submission to the God’s will one could ensure the loyalty of the population to the tsar. Taking

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136 K.P. Pobedonostsev, Novaya shkola (New school) (Moscow: Sinoidal’naya tipografiya, 1898), 81.
137 Ibid.
into consideration the tense pre-revolutionary situation in the country one sees that such a program was quite timely.

The main trends of religious education, suggested by Pobedonostsev, were aimed at the unification of people’s masses and the state, the essence of which was in the establishment of the power of the state on nothing but the unification of spiritual self-consciousness between the people and the state, on the peoples’ faith, which was to become the responsibility of the Russian Orthodox Church, that to dominated 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.”

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

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Aim at missionary activities.

Fight against apostasy of baptized non-Russians into Mohammedanism

Take into consideration large masses of the pagan population of the region, for they constituted the weakest group, most likely to fall under Muslim assimilation project.

Resist the decrease of morality, spirituality, refusal to live according to God’s laws among the people of the region, as it was threatening the state interests of Russia.

In 1864 Il’minskii turned to Shestakov for the permission to open a private school for the Kriashen children with the appointment of Timofeev (priest of the church at the kazan Kriashen school) as its director.\textsuperscript{139} The school was successfully opened, with the teaching of Catechism in Tatar on the basis of Russian alphabet, God’s Law, prayers, history of the church with the later introduction of basic Arithmetic, Reading first in Tatar, then in Russian, Geography, Drawing. Special attention was paid to the Church songs both in Tatar and Church Slavonic. The school was inspected by Il’minskii and a scholar on missionary polemics and a teacher of the Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy E.A. Malov.\textsuperscript{140} Started for the Kriashen, the satellite schools for other indigenous peoples were soon launched throughout the region.

The main aim of the system was to resist the spread and dominance of Islam on the territory of the Russian empire.\textsuperscript{141} The system was ratified by the rules “about the measures to the education of the Russian \textit{inorodsy}”, issued on the 26\textsuperscript{th} of March 1870. The rules presupposed the appearance of schools for the Orthodox \textit{inorodsy} and for Muslim Tatars. The Orthodox indigenous population was subdivided into a) poorly-Russified, for whom the teaching had to be conducted in indigenous languages with the usage of books published in these languages; b) living together with the Russian population, who were to have common

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{141} Znamenskii, \textit{Na pamyat’}, 331.
schools with the instruction in Russian with possible native departments financed by the

inorodsy; c) quite Russified, with Russian primary schools. The Muslim Tatars were to be
taught by the same rules as non-or poorly-Russified inorodsy with the possibility to invite a
mullah for teaching the law of their faith.\footnote{Efirov, \textit{Nerusskie shkolu}, 12-13.}

Although Geraci claims that “Il’minskii was adamantly opposed to both
pedagogical theory and school standardization, and even denied that he created a standardized
system” (the statement being doubtful, since Il’minskii taught Pedagogy in Kazan Teachers’
Seminary),\footnote{Geraci, 131.} it is possible to sum up the suggested principles of Orthodox education as
follows:

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

Backing up his approach he claims that throughout the Russian history the Russian
population, gradually moving to the East, was always the carrier of Orthodoxy to other
peoples.\footnote{Znamenskii, \textit{Na pamyat’}, 300-320.} One of the important axes of his theory was religious-missionary upbringing of the
Russian population itself. For Il’minskii, the only way the empire would survive under if the
Russian people remain faithful to their Orthodox religion. But having visited Russian peasants
in the remote villages he came to a conclusion that the main part of them have quite vague idea
of Christian dogmas and not so zealous in keeping their faith, as Muslims or Old Believers.
The other conclusion he made was that the Russian people is eager to adopt not only various daily practices, but also rituals. Thus, what he observed in the Kazan district was that the Russian peasant turned to pagans for help in case of somebody’s illness or bad harvest so that they would pray to the idols and make sacrifices. Thus, although it was presupposed that living close to the Russian population, non-Russians would gradually pick up the peculiarities of their lifestyle, and become more convinced in their acceptance of Orthodoxy, what could be observed is the process of reciprocal assimilation, which of course was more pronounced on the Russian side. The phenomenon was determined by the syncretic basis of Russian Orthodoxy; although not practicing ritual sacrifices themselves, the Russian peasants could not serve as role models, since in extreme cases they could turn to pagans, and not to the church.

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

As the main objects of missionary work were the non-Russians of the region, Il’minskii introduced the method in which primary stress was made on usage of the local languages in the missionary work. Thus, it was a crucial task to train the inorodsy priests and missionaries, as sermons in native languages allowed them to make greater impact on the local population. The ideology of the system manifested itself in the famous triade: “inorodsy books, inorodsy liturgy, inorodsy parish with the priest at its head.” As for the organization of the school work, Il’minskii recommended the following:

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145 Znamenskii, Na pamyat’, 28
146 Ibid., 26.
147 Ibid.
1. The teacher should not rush the pupils into anything, the educational process must go gradually and smoothly.

2. The teacher must be “not the lord, but an elder brother”, must be close to his pupils and understand their needs and concerns.

3. The school must teach respect and obedience.

4. The teacher must be a role model for his pupils, thus his conduct must be without reproach.

5. The whole process of education must go in the streamline with the religious upbringing.\textsuperscript{149}

Speaking of Muslim educational strategies, Il’minskii particularly stressed that they had specific rules of using the Quran and other religious books. So when visiting a church a missionary teacher should explain the meaning of every icon, the meaning of each religious symbol. He should explain that together with the icons of the Savior, Virgin Mary and the saints, to the church comes their Holy blessing.\textsuperscript{150} It is the church that gives the people the feeling of fear and love towards God; it is there that the study of prayers and the Symbol of Faith has the greatest psychological effect.

The missionary trends were in the same streamline with the classics of pedagogy-Ushinskii supported the idea of narodnost’ in education “…we have no right in the education and upbringing to separate the people from its history, in which the faith was a consolidating component of the Slavic soul. That is why national and general upbringing may be only religious.”\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{149} Znamenskii, \textit{Na pamyat’}, 26.

\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Ocherk prosvetitel’skoj deyatel’nosti N.I. Il’minskogo} (Studies of teaching activities of N.I. Il’minskii) (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo uchilischnogo soveta pri Svyatejshem Sinode, 1904).

\textsuperscript{151} K.D. Ushinskii quoted in L.A. Efimov, \textit{Shkolu Chuvashskogo kraya v 19-20 vekah} (Schools of Chuvash krai in the 19\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} centuries) (Moscow: MGOPU, 2003), 42.
The proposed system, however, had its opponents. The archbishop of Buinsk district in Simbirsk province Baratunskii criticized Il’minskii’s views on the education of non-Russians. Baratunskii claimed that it was necessary to educate non-Russians not in the native language but in Russian. He stressed that the inorodsy languages did not have adequate words to express basic Christian notions, thus the meaning sometimes got distorted and misinterpreted. Thus, a sacred text translated into Tatar appeared to be something in between Orthodoxy and Islam. Besides, he expressed an idea that the introduction of the indigenous languages into the church and school practice could lead to the development of national self-consciousness of the non-Russian peoples which could be quite dangerous in the multiethnic empire.152 His supporters agreed that the non-Russian languages could be used as “auxiliary tools” to ensure the understanding of what is being taught, and only after the students had learnt Russian. They claimed that the use of the inorodsy languages “implied that these languages were more important instructionally than Russian.”153 In the debates Baratynskii spoke of “civil Russification” and stated that “the assimilation of a language assimilates the nationality as well.”154 In his turn, Il’miskii, putting the accent on the hypothesis that the spread of Islam might become the main obstacle to Christianization and Russification of all eastern subjects of the empire, addressed his opponents:

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

152 A. Baratunskij, “Zapiska o vvedenii russkogo yazuka i russkoj gramotnosti v tatarskih uchilishchah,” (A note on the introduction of the Russian language and Russian literacy in Tatar vocational schools) in Sbornik dokumentov i statej po voprosu obrazovaniya inorodsev (Simbirsk:n.p, 1884),619.

153 Geraci, 123.

154 Ibid., 138.
to the Tatar way of life (tatarstvo), and connected with the Russians by means of faith. Make your choice!155

After the heated discussions in the educational council of the non-Russian districts the indigenous language was recognized as the primary tool of teaching the inorodsy language with the dominating role of Russian as the basic language of the church and school since the immediate strategy was to reach assimilation of the non-Russians by means of Orthodoxy and later familiarization with the Russian language. The idea of using the Russian language as the means of Russification found itself in the creation of Russian-Tatar schools aimed at Muslim Tatars; Russian language classes became obligatory in mektebs and madrasahs, so that any child getting Islamic education was also taught the Russian language. As the linguistic Russification of Muslim Tatars is left beyond the scope of the present research, I will not discuss it in more detail here, but rather turn to the question of how the theoretical conceptions of Il’minskii system were put into practice.

4.3. Brotherhood missionary schools and their contribution to inorodsy education.

The main functions of the missionary religious education were carried out by the missionary societies and brotherhoods- st. Gurii brotherhood in Kazan province and The Three Baptizers brotherhood in Simbirsk province, although before the year 1867 the duty of fighting against the Old Believers lay on the shoulders of local Orthodox dioceses. Beginning with 1860 the priority was given to the fight against Islam. It was determined by apostasies of the whole Russian villages into the Old Belief and mass conversion of the Kriashen, Chuvash and

155 Quoted from Taimasov, Pravoslavnaya tserkov’, 228.
Cheremis into Islam. A special anti-Muslim department was established in Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy, together with the practical missionary society.\textsuperscript{156}

In the plan of the activities of st. Gurii brotherhood in 1870 together with the support of the Kriashen school and state schools was the teaching in indigenous languages, conducting the meetings of non-Russian school teachers, printing activities, solution of the problems of religious upbringing of the Russian population and fight against the spread of paganism and Old Belief among them.\textsuperscript{157}

Much attention was devoted to the supervision of missionary schools. The first school of this type, funded by private donations and by the Ministry of state property, was created in September 1863 by Il’minskii and Malov. In 1864-65 there were 20 Tatar and Chuvash pupils, who were taught God’s Law, Religious History, and short Catechism in Tatar.\textsuperscript{158}

The experiment proved to be quite successful and Il’minskii turned to Minister of Education Tolstoy with the suggestion to create the network of such schools. Unlike Russian schools, Il’minskii primary school consisted of four years of schooling. During the first two years the children learnt Holy History, Reading in their mother tongue, Church singing and the basics of Arithmetics. They started to learn Russian a little later, since the primary attention was fixed on teaching the basics of Orthodox faith in indigenous languages. By the second year the pupils acquired knowledge at the level of literacy schools.\textsuperscript{159} When reading Russian text every phrase was first translated into the mother tongue, then pronounced several times and memorized in Russian. The main subject being God’s Law, the pupils had to learn it twice: first

\textsuperscript{156} M. Mashanov, \textit{Obzor deyatel’nosti bratstva Svyatitelya Guriya za 25 let ego suschestvovaniya (1867-1892)} (Overview of the activities of Gurii brotherhood in 25 years of its existence (1867-1892)) (Kazan: n.p., 1892).

\textsuperscript{157} Ya. I. Khanbikov, \textit{Russkie pedagogi Tatarii i ikh rol’ v razvitii prosvescheniya i pedagogicheskoi musli tatarskogo naroda} (Russian pedagogues of Tatariya and their role in the development of the teaching activities and pedagogical thought of the Tatar people) (Kazan: n.p., 1968),77.

\textsuperscript{158} NART,f.4,op.148, d.373, p.45.

\textsuperscript{159} Khanbikov, \textit{Russkie pedagogi Tatarii},92.
in their mother tongues, then in Russian. Before studying written Russian and its grammar the pupils had to learn to speak Russian and to understand the teacher. The children first learnt nouns, then adjectives and only then verbs, comparing the linguistic phenomena of both languages. In writing the main technique was copying and the use of visual aids.

There were certain drawbacks in the activities of the missionary schools. Since these were non-state, public-supported institutions, the salary was much lower, so the schools had constant problems with the teaching staff, had bad conditions, were poorly provided by the teaching supplies. The teachers of these schools had to meet minimal professional requirements, the main criteria was their religiosity and the ability to do missionary work. If one analyses the school curriculum for the period of tuition (hours a week per language), it is possible to state that most of attention was given to the Russian language, then came God’s Law, which presupposes a rather auxiliary character of the mother tongue with the dominance of Russian as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Educational Curriculum of a Typical Brotherhood School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>2nd year</th>
<th>3rd year</th>
<th>4th year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God’s Law</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Slavonic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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160 Ibid., 93.
161 Ibid., 94.
162 NART, f.4, op.148, d.373, l.45.
It should be underlined that the organization of the work in missionary schools of the brotherhood was not perfect. As was reported in the beginning of the 20th century, many lessons of God’s Law were conducted in a lower level than the lessons in the zemstvo schools. The reason for such a drawback was that the priests did not want to work in the school due to low salaries. As a result, 5-6 brotherhood schools were transferred to the zemstvo school network annually. Many of them were transformed into 2-year vocational school with higher educational level.¹⁶⁶

Like in Kazan, in Simbirsk district in 1875 the brotherhood of Three Baptizers appeared on the voluntary basis in order to hold the system of education in the district. In the council of the society was the rector of Simbirsk Ecclesiastic academy Okhotin, director of military school Yakubovich, director of popular vocational schools Ul’yanov, and inspector of Chuvash popular vocational schools Yakovlev. The aim of the society was to provide financial help for both the Russian and inorodsy Orthodox institutions, to raise funds for educational purposes, to organize missionary schools in the villages under the strong influence of Old Belief, paganism and Islam, to provide the Orthodox schools with teaching supplies. The brotherhood spent much effort on fight with paganism among the Russian population and the indigenous population of the region.

In spite of certain successful trends in the missionary activities of the brotherhood school they were often criticized by the Ministry of Education, for the system did little to achieve the significant linguistic unification of inorodsy with the Russian population and "was too narrowly religious-moral in its education."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Werth, At the Margins of Orthodoxy, 232.
As the above given material suggests, the education, provided by brotherhood schools, had a strong religious component, which, united with the subsequent introduction of the Russian language, fulfilled the mission assigned to them. Much attention was given to the organization of missionary work among Muslims, pagans and Old Believers. At the same time, as the financial state support the brotherhood was insufficient, that supposedly reflected itself in the quality of the teaching, the qualification of the staff. It is the latter problem-formation of the teaching staff for the *inorodsya* schools that I will now discuss.

**4.4. The Development of Orthodox Teacher Training Institutions of Kazan Educational Circuit.**

The whole system, from primary to higher professional education, led to, as Geraci suggests, the creation of “not new Russians but an intermediate class of Russified non-Russians who would maintain ties to their native groups and educate them with the ultimate intention of turning their peoples into loyal and patriotic Russian subjects.”

Il’minskii not only promoted the non-Russians to teaching and clerical positions, but in fact contributed to the establishment of a set of institutions that trained future teachers.

Among them there was Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy, Kazan Kriashen school, Simbirsk central Chuvash school, Ufa Cheremis school, Kazan Teacher’s seminary, Birsk inorodsy teachers’ school. The schools served as centers of Orthodox education, which, besides providing education for the *inorodsy* of the region, also trained teachers for smaller *inorodsy* schools. Among the institutions mentioned above the most illustrative were the Kazan Teachers Seminary and Kazan Ecclesiastic Academy.

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The Kazan Teacher Training seminary was established in 1872. At the opening seminary Il’minskii, defined its educational mission, laying particular emphasis on Orthodoxy:

Christianity is the religion, which… does not efface the traits of a person or people but unites the peoples making them Gods children and brethren in Christ. This religion, acquired by the inorodsy, makes them close to the Russians since the latter have already been Orthodox for a long time.\(^{170}\)

Kazan teachers’ seminary was established for the Russian and inorodsy children and they were admitted in equal proportions. When the Nizhni Novgorod zemstvo council decided to send 22 Russian students to the seminary providing them with stipends, Il’minskii accepted only 5.\(^{171}\) The example of ethnic quota in the seminary is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Ethnic Composition of the Students of the Kazan Teachers’ Seminary in 1875-76\(^{172}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1(^{st}) Grade</th>
<th>2(^{nd}) Grade</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mordvins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatars</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheremis</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvash</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votyak</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eligible candidates had to finish parish or zemstvo school or two-year vocational school, where they learned the following subjects: God’s Law, Russian, Arithmetic, Geometry, History, Geography, Writing, Drawing and Arts.\(^{173}\) The abilities of the students and the initial level of knowledge were sometimes quite different for not every student was able to meet the standards of the seminary and many had to leave after a year or two.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.
\(^{171}\) NART, f.93, op.1.d.49,1.5.
\(^{172}\) Source: Ibid., ll. 109-110.
\(^{173}\) Ibid., l.7.
In the course of revision of the seminary in 1879 by the assistant of head of the teaching district Malinovskii it was stated that the building of the seminary needed renovation, though the library had a large stock of books and teaching supplies. Malinovskii especially stressed the strength of the religious component in education—the students read the Gospel, knew a lot of prayers and psalms.\footnote{NART, f.93, op. 1.d.84, l.6.}

What caused the incredulity of the revision committee were the absence of the student record books and the records of the meetings of the teaching staff. In spite of it, the inspector was quite satisfied with the teaching quality in the seminary, especially in Church Slavonic, Literature, History, Church singing.\footnote{Ibid., l.10.} In the seminary the students were taught the following subjects: God’s Law, Russian, Church Slavonic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Russian History, Geography, Natural Sciences, Painting and Drawing, Church singing, Physical Training.\footnote{Ibid., l.75.} The graduates became the primary school teachers, and should they had studied free of charge they had to work for at least 6 years as village school teachers or pay back the money spent on their tuition.\footnote{Ibid.} The analysis of the programs of the seminary subjects suggests the serious teaching quality of the institution, for the program of God’s Law included the study of the Bible, church history, church holidays, prayers and psalms with constant revision of the material.\footnote{NART, f.93, op.1, d.81, l.1} The final exams consisted of God’s Law, Geography, History, Russian and Slavonic languages, Mathematics, Natural History, Pedagogy. The graduates had to write two compositions: in Russian and Pedagogy.\footnote{Ibid., l.86.} What is surprising, the teaching curriculum did not include the study of indigenous languages. This is understandable with regard to the inorodsy students, but if the Russian students would then have to work with the local village population,

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{NART, f.93, op. 1.d.84, l.6.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., l.10.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., l.75.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.}
  \item \footnote{NART, f.93, op.1, d.81, l.1}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., l.86.}
\end{itemize}}
how and where did they learn the languages? Since the indigenous subjects were not in the curriculum, it is probable that the Russian-speaking teachers were destined to hold missionary work among the Russian population of the region.

As the future missionaries and teachers were taught pedagogy, it is necessary to analyze the program of the subject that includes anatomy, psychology, methods of teaching. The anatomy part was strangely subdivided into two parts: study of the human body and 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 psychological aspect was strongly related to morality and religion. In the methodical part the students were given the basic methods of teaching to read, write and count; the importance of visual aids (that is why all the teachers must be able to draw, since the illiterate pupils not understanding what is written could look at the picture), methods of teaching the church singing.180 The teaching practice was held in inorodsy primary schools (for Mordva, Chuvash, Votyak, Cheremis), in the Kriashen school for the Tatar and in one of the Russian primary schools for the Russians with 15 pupils in each school.181 In this respect, considerable number of Russian graduates suggests that the missionary work among the Russian population of the region was given much importance. As the classes were taught by Il’ininskii himself it is possible to suggest that he gave the students the idea of his educational system, principles and methods of teaching.

Simbirsk Chuvash teacher training school appeared in 1868, having three classes with two years of studies in each of them. The education was conducted in Russian. Since 1878 a

180 Ibid., l.100.
special women’s department was created to be transferred later into a two-year women’s vocational school.\(^{182}\)

So that the future teachers learned the methods of missionary work, the main focus was made on effective organization of church singing as an important psychological factor influencing the feelings of the pupils. Much prominence was given to the methods suggested by Il’minskii and Malov—techniques of expressive reading of the books in indigenous languages, ability to debate with non-Orthodox population. They 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.\(^{183}\)

An extremely interesting teaching technique was suggested by Yakovlev. In the Simbirsk Chuvash teachers’ school he established a “domovaya (home) church”\(^{184}\) without the parish. Every student who had finished the school had to know how to make such a “home church” right in the classroom. The main task that the Yakovlev school graduate had to fulfill with the help of such a church was to organize missionary education quickly and effectively. Soon the “home church” for the children of baptized non-Russians turned to the parish church for their parents. One of the family members, after getting Orthodox education, became a so-called family missionary. The missionary school was also developing along with the development of the church, and later it turned into the usual parish school. The process of conversion of the indigenous population of Orthodoxy seemed irreversible,\(^{185}\) since the school brought Orthodox religion to the family through the children’s education thus undermining possible negative attitude to Orthodoxy from within.

\(^{182}\) Efirov, *Nerusskie shkolu*, 37.

\(^{183}\) Yumankulov, “*Sistema obrazovaniya*”, 215-216.

\(^{184}\) Morohov, “*Organizatsionno-pedagogicheskie osnovu*”, 55-56.

\(^{185}\) Ibid.
The higher level educational institution- Kazan Ecclesiastical seminary and academy was formed in 1732. The eligible candidates for admission were graduates from Kazan, Tambov, Nizhnii Novgorod, Vyatka, Saratov, Simbirsk, Penza, Astrakhan, Orenburg, Perm, Tobolsk, Irkutsk seminaries. The institution’s mission was to train priests for the inorodsy parishes, that is why the teaching focus was made on the study of indigenous languages, ethnography and culture. The students received a strong theological background, as they had to know their foes and be able to debate with them should the need arise.

Since 1854 there opened a missionary department with the following sub departments: anti-schismatic, anti-Muslim, anti-Buddhist with the chairs of Mongol, Kalmyk, Tatar and ethnography, Arabic and History of Mohammedanism. Among the faculty were the famous orientalists Kazem-Bek, Popov, Bobrovnikov, Il'minskij. Although the students studied pedagogy, their ambition was to become priests, not teachers. They wanted to study pedagogy for better work with the parish.

In 1889 at the Academy appeared two-year missionary courses with two departments- Tatar and Mongol. The students of the Tatar department learnt the following subjects: History of Mohammedanism, Ethnography of Turkic tribes and the History of their Christianization, Arabic, Theory and Practice of the Tatar language, General overview of indigenous languages.

The future missionary Mashanov’s studying curriculum of the first three years in the Academy in 1872-1873 included the following subjects: 1st year:-Holy Bible, General Theology, Psychology, History of Philosophy, Latin, German, Linguistics; the 2nd year-Holy

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186 Khanbikov, Russkie pedagogi Tatarii, 72.
187 Ibid., 73.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
189 NART, f.10, op.1, d. 8925, l.1.
190 NART, f.10, op.1, d.8937,l.34.
Bible, General Theology, Logics, Psychology, History of Philosophy, Latin, German, Slavic languages, Ministerial Theology, Liturgy, Church Law, Linguistics; the 3rd year-Holy Bible, General Theology, Logics, Psychology, Metaphysics, History of Philosophy, Pedagogy, Latin, German, Ministerial Theology, History of Liturgy in the Orthodox and Western Churches, Church Archeology and Liturgy, Theory of Linguistics and History of Russian Literature, Overview of Foreign Literature, Russian and Slavonic languages.\textsuperscript{191}

By the abundance of the subjects and certain continuity one can judge about the depth of the training the students received-this was really an institution creating church elite-highly educated erudite with deep knowledge of Orthodoxy and at the same time capable of resisting their Islamic opponents.\textsuperscript{192} Coming from the indigenous milieu they could really become quite skillful in serving the purposes for which they were trained.

The unfortunate truth about the system is that it served only as a way of ratification of imperial policy of Russification of non-Russian peoples, leaving behind the aim of reaching more or less universal literacy of the peasants in secular terms. Having chosen the religious education in indigenous languages, providing schools with necessary biblical literature and bringing up the generations of talented missionaries and teachers, the system became the embodiment of the imperial ideology in relation to the population of its eastern provinces. Although the followers of the system had to combat numerous difficulties, manifested in the necessity to first prove its effectiveness and then to meet the opponents on behalf of the Muslim population, and a certain degree of resistance from the target ethnic groups, they managed to realize the ultimate goal-the decrease in the number of apostates, creation of the army of

\textsuperscript{191} NART, f.10, op.1.d. 6750,II.239-253;d. 7023/a,1,1 ; quoted in M.Z. Khabibullin, "Mikhail Alexandrovich Mashanov-professor Kazanskoj dakhovnoj akademii" (Mikhail Alexandrovich Mashanov-professor of Kazan spiritual academy), in Pravoslavie v polikonfessional’nom obschestve, ed. R.A. Nabiev (Kazan’: Magarif, 2006), 243.
\textsuperscript{192} Khabibullin, "Mikhail Alexandrovich Mashanov", 245.
Orthodox non-Russians for whom Orthodoxy became a consciously accepted belief. One should mention however, that such a short period of time did not allow for a complete Russification—the baptized inorodsy stayed at the level of acculturation, carrying in themselves both the traits of Russianness and their indigenous ethnos.
Conclusion

The Orthodox education of the Russian eastern inorodsy in the second half of the 19th century must be viewed as a part of a larger assimilative project supported by imperial elites that in the end had to arrive at spiritual and linguistic Russification. Mass Christianization of non-Russians of the Middle Volga region, which started in the 16th century, became an important part of Orthodox unification of these ethnic groups that by the second half of the 19th century led to the change of the ethnoconfessional structure of the population- the major part of the pagan peoples were then officially referred to as Orthodox Christians. Kazan diocese, the “Window on the East”, now turned out to be a large missionary centre.

Together with the official policy of Christianization, one of the factors that influenced changes of confessional affiliation of the baptized population of the region was “popular missionary”-natural assimilation that occurred in the places of cohabitation with Orthodox Russians-as a result of Russian acculturation and social and economic transformation. The appearance of missionaries and clergy from the inorodsy milieu also contributed to the promotion of Orthodoxy.

Not all the ethnic groups were subject to Russian assimilative projects, which were primarily aimed at Kriashen, Chuvash and Finno-Ugric peoples. Muslim Tatars, who demonstrated profound devotion to Islam, were exposed only to linguistic Russification. However, non-Muslim ethnic groups by the mid-19th century could be considered Orthodox only formally. The phenomenon of double faith still prevailed among Chuvash, Mari, and Votyak population, whose cosmology was formed during many centuries as the result of syncretism of different ethnocultural and religious components. In spite of the fact that paganism never turned to a structured, dogmatic, complete religious system as the outcome of
natural ethnocultural development due to the lengthy influence of monotheistic religions, it continued to be very important for the *inorodsy* since it meant preserving their ethnoconfessional peculiarity.

Islam remained a definite alternative to Orthodoxy and for many centuries influenced the religious beliefs of the Middle Volga peoples. In the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Islam preserved its status and became the ideological basis for Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism movements and also for the Tatar national movement.

It the 1860s massive apostasies from Orthodoxy shook the Kriashen community. The choice of Islam as a religion was influenced not only by the similar historic and cultural development of the peoples, but also by pragmatic interests. To some degree this tendency can be viewed as a social and anticlerical protest.

What made the clash between Islam and Orthodoxy so peculiar was the spiritual fight for the hearts and souls of the Kriashen, who were linguistically and culturally close to Muslims. Finno-Ugric peoples with animistic background were also seen as a “group of risk”, open for apostasy. Since they were formally already Orthodox, the church was now faced with the task of “baptizing the baptized”. The Orthodox missionaries began to use the methods of Christian enlightenment that came into force with the emergence of Il’minskii system as the state program of the *inorodsy* education, which now took responsibility for the solution of missionary problems.

At the core of the system was the idea of education of non-Russians in indigenous languages, the creation of the army of *inorodsy* teachers and clergy, and promotion of religious literature in *inorodsy* languages. The system, aimed at inner acceptance of Orthodoxy, spiritual Russification, became the impetus for changes in the religious worldview of the non-Russians. Its success was initially due to state support, but later also to the emergence of an active group of teachers and missionaries from the local population.
The role of Orthodox education as means of Russification remained contested throughout the 19th century. Russification of the non-Russian peoples as spiritual unification on the basis of Orthodox entity was regarded by some not only as an inevitable and progressive process but also as the main means of assimilation at this stage of development. Others were gradually putting more stress on the language and national culture. Here I confer with the opinion of Robert Geraci that by the end of the 19th century Orthodoxy alone could not serve as a guarantor of successful assimilation\footnote{Geraci, 350.}. Since the project of Russification did not reach its terminal phase, it remains uncertain to what extent the Russian authorities wanted “to make them like us”, as the aspirations for rapprochement did not presuppose the equality of the “eastern Other” with the core nation.

What bears no doubt is that the introduction of the system of Christian enlightenment in indigenous languages made the strategy of promotion of Orthodoxy quite successful. At the same time the process triggered the rise of ethnic consciousness of the local population, which manifested itself in attempts to construct their own identities within Orthodoxy, adaptation of Cyrillic for their indigenous languages and turn to the national culture, what confirms Kappeler’s hypothesis about the “national revival” of the baptized inorodcy.

Even if the benefits of both the imperial authorities and the eastern subjects got as the result of assimilative project remain ambivalent, Orthodox school, as the ideological bastion of the empire, successfully fulfilled one of the main tasks it was set for—it unconditionally blocked the Islamic expansionist project in the region.
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