

## **THE ROLE OF ILMINSKY'S ETHNO-PEDAGOGICAL SYSTEM IN ACHIEVING "STABLE CONVERGENCE" OF THE PEOPLES OF THE MULTINATIONAL VOLGA-URAL REGION OF RUSSIA**

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The relevance of the topic is based on the fact that the problems of intercultural dialogue of the peoples of the Volga-Ural region in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century, have not lost their significance at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The experience of the interaction of cultures of the peoples living in the region and the formation of inter-cultural dialogue can be used to create the concept of the development of culture of multinational Russia at the present stage. The purpose of this article is to show the role of Ilminsky's system in achieving rapprochement of the peoples of the region. The leading approach to the study of this problem is a multidisciplinary approach that allowed to look at the problem from a new angle and to come to a number of generalizations. The article reveals the basic principles of Ilminsky's ethno-pedagogical system as a missionary and educational one in its intentionality, and it also emphasizes the role of the Kazan Baptized-Tatar School as a pattern of Ilminsky's pedagogical practices among other ethnic groups of the region. Also the article makes a conclusion about the contradictory nature of Ilminsky's heritage, who solved irreconcilable tasks: Christianization and development of indigenous cultures. The article may be used in educational process; when writing manuals and generalizing works.

**Keywords:** non-Russian peoples ; education ; N.I. Ilminsky ; intercultural dialogue ; the Volga-Ural region.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social and cultural changes of the late 20<sup>th</sup> - early 21<sup>st</sup> century showed that no culture can exist in isolation, when the processes of interaction and mutual influence of national cultures are intensifying on the background of increasingly intense intercultural contacts. Culture, as it was noted by Yu.M. Lotman, is always connected with the history, always implies the continuity of the moral, intellectual and spiritual life of man, society and humanity (Lotman, 1994). Since the late 1990s, the content of the concept of cultural interaction has been changing. Now it includes the recognition of the real diversity of cultural and historical systems and dialogical principles of their interaction (Larchenko, 1999; Yatsenko, 1999).

Russia and the Volga-Ural region have a centuries-old experience of interethnic and interfaith dialogue. The difference between self-consciousness and peaceful coexistence were the phenomenon of life of the peoples of the Russian Empire (Werth, 2002). One of the concepts that consider the interaction of cultures of the

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peoples of Russia, is the concept of Eurasians, which represents the Russian culture as a synthetic one, in the formation of which European and Asian beginnings are equivalent (Troubetzkoy, 1995).

The interaction of the empire and its “oriental subjects” in Robert Geraci’s work are considered at different levels: through school education, missionary work, as a part of theoretical, ideological and specific practices, including Ilminsky’s system (Geraci, 2005). Paul Werth reveals the problems of ethnic diversity within the Orthodox community, the relationships of orthodoxy and “foreign confessions” in the monograph. The author also points out the innovations created by Ilminsky (Werth, 2002). Vera Tolz wrote on the role of Asian studies in Russia in the dialogue of cultures (Tolz, 2012). Michael Kemper highlights the features of the spiritual and socio-political development of the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region (Kemper, 2009).

### **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The methodological base of the research is based on the principles of historicism and objectivity; dialectical, cultural and civilization approaches. The article also attempts to disclose the research topic through the interdisciplinary approach.

The study addressed the following tasks: defining the concept of “Ilminsky’s ethno-pedagogical system”; collecting material about his activity; analyzing the collected data in order to identify the system’s role in achieving rapprochement of the peoples of the region on their basis.

The conducted analysis shows that a significant role in the rapprochement of the peoples of the Volga-Ural region in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century was played by Ilminsky’s ethno-pedagogical system, the experience of which is in demand even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **RESULTS**

#### **Ilminsky’s missionary and educational system**

A lot of works are dedicated to N.I. Ilminsky (Kolcherin, 2014) and his system of pre-revolutionary and Soviet historiography. But most considered saw him as only a practical missionary who used education of non-Russian peoples for their Christianization. Today, a growing number of authors agree that he played not only a role of a missionary, but also of an educator for foreigners. Ilminsky himself did not see a conflict in dealing with tasks such as Christianization and Russification of foreigners (Geraci, 2005). Geraci also draws our attention to the inaccuracy and ambiguity of such terms as Russification, Christianization, assimilation.

There are two main directions in missionary work: “hard”, “forceful” and “soft” educational. The second direction is firstly connected with the name of Ilminsky (Ilminsky, 1888), who advanced the original missionary and educational ideas.

According to him, the success of the Orthodox mission should contribute to: the creation of the translations of Holy Writ, liturgical texts, prayers, patristic and spiritual literature; worshipping in the languages of small peoples; Church preaching and explanation of the basics of the Orthodox faith in the languages of small peoples; balanced anti-Muslim and anti-pagan controversy.

The creator of the system gave an important role to Russian missionaries in the system of inter-ethnic and cross-cultural interactions, who could influence the formation of sympathies of the non-Russian population towards Russian people. The missionary had to know the language of the people, their history, culture, traditions. Ideally, missionaries were to be natives of the small people themselves, who were educated and knew the basics of the Orthodox faith. Particular importance was attached to the knowledge of "local foreign languages" not only by teachers and clergymen, but by Russian population. At the same time, he was also studying Tatar and Arabic.

Ilminsky (1885) developed an original system of Christian education of non-Russian peoples, the basis of which was the concept of the unity of school and church. He argued that school should become the centre of attraction of the non-Russian population to the Russian Orthodox culture. According to him, school education conducted in the mother tongue of the students will contribute to the spiritual uplift of the non-Russian peoples and their rapprochement with Russians (Ilminsky, 1885). Teachers in schools should be of the same nationality as the pupils, and they should be not only sincere believers, but also get pedagogical education before taking the office. Ilminsky also believed that in order to convey Christian teaching to foreigners it is necessary to adapt to their religious concepts, moral convictions and the course of thinking. He published seven books ("Bukvar" ("ABC book"), "Pervonachalnyy uchebnyk" ("The original textbook") and others) in Tatar (Iskhakova, 2002). R. Geraci also draws attention to the inverse effect which influenced Russians in their interactions with other people (Geraci, 2005).

The establishment and the approval of the missionary and educational system were happening in struggles. "Conservative men of power" were forced to accept the educational methods under the pressure of public opinion, but they were categorically against the use of the native language in national schools and churches, blaming Ilminsky, his colleagues and successors in spreading separatism and nationalism.

#### **Kazan Central Baptized-Tatar School:**

The first educational institution of Ilminsky system (Ilminsky 2011) was Kazan Central Baptized-Tatar School. Ilminsky took on financial support for the school, the development of curricula and textbooks, obtaining permits for educational activities (Ilminsky, 2011), and Timofeev was entrusted to be the principle of the school. It was a free private school, parents just provided the students with food

and clothing. The school educational system was tested, and the results exceeded all expectations. Its students showed consistently high results both in the first years after the opening of the school, and after many decades of work. Children quickly acquired skills and learnt the Russian language, which became the language of interethnic communication.

Baptized-Tatar School became an example for other schools of this system for Kryashen, Chuvash, Mari, Udmurt, Mordovian peoples, who inherited not only curricula and textbooks from it, but also living conditions and even the image of the relationships of the teacher and students. Such schools were opened as branches of Kazan Central Baptized-Tatar School, teachers in these schools graduated from the school headed by Basil Timofeev. Soon the teaching system began to be adopted by the schools of district councils and the Ministry of Education.

### **Orthodox mission in the region after the death of Ilminsky**

Orthodox mission after the death of Ilminsky (Kolcherin, 2014) was not developed, because there was not any worthy successor (either in terms of education and personal influence), who would be able to promote his missionary and educational ideas. A part of the Orthodox episcopate and priesthood was against these missionary and educational systems. They insisted on ending the practice of divine services in the languages of small peoples and the ordination of their representatives to the priesthood without receiving religious education, as well as some public and political figures were demanding to stop teaching in mother tongues in public schools.

The “struggle” for the legacy of Ilminsky began immediately after his death (Kolcherin, 2014). This was due to the fact that in the official documents and publications Ilminsky (Ilminsky, 1888) agreed that the goal of Christian education should be introducing small peoples to the Russian language and culture, but he told his closest associates that language, culture and traditions of every nation should be preserved. The unity of the peoples of Russia, in his opinion, should be done in the Orthodox faith, so he saw the main purpose of the activity in the Christianization of small peoples. The successors of the founder of the system began to publish his own works and correspondence in his favor, as Ilminsky had already answered all the claims against the system and explained each of its point in detail there (Ilminsky, 1885).

### **Evaluation of Ilminsky’s activity**

Unambiguous evaluation of the educator’s activity and his system has not been given so far. Some scholars believe that due to the missionary and educational activity of Ilminsky it became possible to preserve Kryashen people, who were threatened to merge with the Tatar nation and to lose their identity (Fokin, 2012), language and culture. If there were no Ilminsky system (Pavlov, 2001) literary

languages and literature of the peoples of the Volga and the Urals would be different.

Others emphasize that Ilminsky was a man of his time, a true Russian patriot, a devotee of Russian spirituality and the Russian state system (Taymasov, 2004). He acted within the ideology, moral and ethical standards of that time for the sake of the progress of the Russian people, on which he had his own opinion. Ilminsky (2011) perceived russification of baptized peoples as the spiritual unity based on the Orthodox community and regarded it as inevitable and progressive process (Taymasov, 2004).

Still others associate him with K.D. Ushinsky (1968), the founder of scientific pedagogy in Russia. It is emphasized that Ushinsky (1968) suggested "the nationality principle as a basic requirement of the construction of the Russian education system", and Ilminsky developed and implemented "the systematic approach to the education of the nationalities of Russia, the variance of the folk school" (Skovorodkina, 2008).

There is also an opinion that the Russian Orientalists, including Ilminsky, managed to avoid the "colonial arrogance" in relation to the Eastern peoples and cultures, using "local labour" (Tolz, 2012).

## DISCUSSIONS

An integrated, multi-disciplinary nature of the problem identified the specifics of its historiography. On the one hand, it includes numerous works about Ilminsky's activity. On the other hand, it also comprises works on the problems of intercultural communication and a dialogue between cultures.

M. Buber (1995) is considered a classic and one of the founders of the theory of dialogue. The central idea of his philosophy is existence as a dialogue between God and man, man and the world. Man finds his own essence just absorbing everything common to mankind, correlating himself with other people. José Ortega y Gasset (2008) stressed that the formation of human values happens only in a complex, multi-layered dialogue between cultures".

The understanding that culture is dialogical was reflected in the works by Claude Lévi-Strauss (2000). Only dialogue is a universal principle, which provides self-development of a culture. Huntington (2003) also supports the same idea: he considers dialogue as a true form of international communication.

An integral part of intercultural dialogue is the dialogue that arises in the course of educational activities, in the process of education. Ilminsky reflected the problems of education of non-Russian peoples of the post-reform period in his works (Ilminsky 1885; Ilminsky 1888; Ilminsky, 2011).

Ilminsky's activity often received polar assessment in different socio-political conditions. In pre-revolutionary literature, the most complete assessment of Ilminsky's system was made by M.P. Petrov (1916), who emphasized that it was

aimed at creating a solid foundation for rapprochement of non-Russian peoples with Russians. V.F. Zaleskiy (1911) and S. Krasnodubrovsky (1903) opposed Ilminsky's system because the use of the mother tongue gave rise to separatist aspirations of "foreign tribes".

Most of the works in the 1930s and the first half of the 1980s considered missionary and educational work only as a method of Russification of foreigners. The main attention was paid to the activities of national teachers and educators.

In the second half of the 1980s, the situation began to change. Academician A.N. Kononov did a great job on the restoration of the name of Ilminsky in the history: he recognized the importance of Ilminsky's educational activity, and stressed that his ultimate dream was to bring the peoples of multinational Russia together (Kononov, 1989).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by the increased interest of scientists to ethnic and religious relations. Considering the results of the Christianization, Paul Werth (2002) noted that this process was not limited only to missionary activity. Christianization also implied an educational aspect. Robert Geraci considers the competition of the Muslim and the orthodox projects in the Volga region on the example of the school system for foreigners, established by Ilminsky (Geraci, 2005).

A considerable number of papers were published in the regions. A.N. Pavlov (2004) examines Ilminsky's activity on developing basic provisions of education system, its approval at the state level and the problems of its implementation. L.A. Efimov (2000) showed the process of teaching foreigners of Russia with the help of bilingual education, the preparation of national teaching staff. He revealed the results of practical activities of Chuvash educators in raising the culture of the Chuvash people. M.Z. Khabibullin and M.A. Kostryukov (2012), the researchers at Kazan School of Oriental Studies in the 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> cc., showed Ilminsky's contribution to the development of Oriental and Islamic Studies. A comprehensive analysis of Ilminsky's missionary and educational system was conducted by a priest A. Kolcherin (2014).

The analyzed literature considered Ilminsky's system as "merely" educational or "Russification"; it was not considered as one of the prerequisites for the creation of conditions for intercultural dialogue in the Volga-Ural region.

## **CONCLUSION**

For Russia, the dialogue of cultures is a way of survival of the country, the removal of inter-ethnic tension, as well as a way to consolidate the society, because only the dialogue of the equal can ensure preservation and development of cultural diversity (as it was evidenced by the experience of Ilminsky). The dialogue of cultures is necessary in the context of globalization and the problems associated with it. Goodwill is not enough for understanding and having a dialogue, it requires cultural literacy, which includes awareness of differences in customs and cultural

traditions, the ability to look at the native culture through the eyes of other nations. And in order to understand the language of another culture, one must be open to understanding the culture of their own. The dialogue will be fruitful with the help of "from native to universal" concept. Therefore an ongoing dialogue and education for mutual understanding is the way to the formation of inter-confessional and inter-ethnic tolerance.

### *Recommendations*

The article may be used in the training and educational process; when writing manuals and general works; when taking management decisions in the educational and socio-cultural spheres.

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