

Migration policies of the Russian Empire in relation to the Muslims living in the interior and cross-border regions

P K Dashkovskiy^{1*} and E A Shershneva¹

¹ Altai State University, 61 Lenina av., Barnaul 656049 Russia

E-mail: Dashkovskiy@fpn.asu.ru

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the problem of state control over migration processes that took place on the territory of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In particular, the key focus is made on the interior and cross-border regions of the Russian Empire. The authors note that during this period, an influx of population from the Muslim states increases. At the same time, despite some attempts of the state to restrict contacts of the Russian Muslims with co-religionists abroad, this was not fully possible. During the period under review, especially at the beginning of the 20th century, in Russia, the number of immigrants from Eastern countries practicing Islam gradually increased. The research presented in this article sheds light on the historical perspective of migration, social risks, and the security problems of internal and cross-border regions.

Keywords: migration processes, Muslim peoples, immigrants, co-religionists, interior region, cross-border region, Russian Empire

1. Introduction

By the end of the 19th century in the process of accession of new lands to the Russian state is completed. This process was marked by the entry of Muslim peoples into the empire. These processes led to massive migrations of the Muslim population to the countries of the East. The resettlement of the Caucasian mountaineers, after the end of the Caucasian War, was the most significant [1]. So, about 500 thousand people moved from the territory of the North Caucasus to Turkey from 1859 to 1870 [2]. Back in the late 80s of the 18th century, the process of active resettlement of the Muslim population outside the Russian Empire began to be observed. It was then that the Crimean Tatars, oppressed by the authorities, were leaving the country. During this period, about 200 thousand Tatars migrated from the Crimea to the territory of Turkey. In the post-reform period (60s years of the 19th century), a revival of migration processes was observed from the Asian states to Russia [2].

2. Materials and Methods

Archival materials, as well as legal acts adopted in this period in the Russian state, allow us to consider the situation of Muslim peoples in the territory of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries and to assess the influence of the international factor on their position. The authors used archival sources stored in the State Archive of the Altai Region and the Historical Archive of the Omsk Region. The article is based on the methodological principles of historicism and objectivity. Due to this, we can consider the migration processes taking place in the territory of the Russian state through the prism of the state-confessional policy towards the peoples professing Islam.

The use of problem-chronological and retrospective methods by the authors makes it possible to comprehensively address the problem of the relationship of the Muslims with their co-religionists outside the state, as well as to assess the role of the state in these relations.

3. Results

One of the features of the migration processes in the Russian Empire in the 19th century was the fact that the country actively accepted immigrants from European and Asian countries. The Russian statistics indicate an increasing number of immigrants. So, according to experts, about 4.15 million people arrived in Russia from 1828 to 1915 [3]. By the beginning of the 19th century, citizens from a number of Muslim countries were becoming the predominant population arriving on the territory of the Russian state. At the beginning of the 20th century, the influx of foreigners increased significantly, especially from Persia and Turkey. The influx amounted to 708 thousand people in 1901-1910, and 543 thousand people were in the period from 1911-1915 [2].

It should be noted that during this period, the imperial government noted the Turkish influence in a number of Russian regions. Also, the political activity of the Muslims was observed, with the result that the revolutionary ideas of the “Young Turks” and Pan-Islam began to emerge. The state concerns about this Turkish influence were not groundless. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the intelligence agency reported on the activating pan-Islamist committee in Turkey, which sent its agents to countries with Muslim populations [4], [5].

The Department of Internal Affairs was actively engaged in identifying individuals promoting anti-government views of pan-Islamist orientation. For example, in 1870, the General Governor of Western Siberia received a message that a Caucasian native of Haji-Ahmed-Efendi, who arrived from Turkey with inappropriate political goals, was forever sent to Siberia in the Tyumen exile order. Previously, he was exiled to Kharkov [6]. In 1876, in the territory of Akmola region, a Turkish citizen, from whom his passport and papers were confiscated, was detained. This citizen appealed to the acting governor of the Akmola region with a request to return selected papers and a passport to him, as well as to allow him to live and move in Russian cities and then return to his homeland without hindrance. For these requests, the Police Department ordered the Governor General of Western Siberia to make an order to send a Turkish citizen to Odessa and then evict him abroad. This order did not say anything about the return of seized documents [7].

In 1906, in Nizhny Novgorod, the Congress of Muslims put forward a plan for cultural and confessional autonomy. According to this plan, the spiritual leader of the Muslim population with the right of a personal report to the emperor was placed at the head of the country’s Muslims. The Sheikh-ul-Islam and councils (Majlises) from clergy and secular persons should be elected for five years in order to head the existing Muslim spiritual administrations and the newly created administration (for Turkestan and Semirechye). Moslems of Semirechye added to this the requirement to admit to the State Duma representatives from all five main peoples of the region. Representatives of the Caucasus called for the creation in Tiflis of an elective representation of Caucasian Muslim peoples in proportion to their numbers [8], [9].

The activity on the part of the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire aroused fears on the part of the Russian government, which sought to bring them out of the empire as soon as possible. The papers sent in the name of the Governor-General of Western Siberia in 1872 eloquently testify to this. In the papers, it was reported that a Turkish citizen (resident of Constantinople) lives on a passport issued by the Tobolsk Governor from 1872 and teaches the Kyrgyz Muslim faith, as well as treats them. Due to the fact that there are designated mullahs and doctors in the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) steppe, his presence there was considered unnecessary. His passport was sent to the military governor of the Akmola region, and he was offered to be expelled from the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) steppe in order to ensure calm and stability in the region [10]. The police chief of the Tobolsk province insisted on these measures, as he saw a threat to political calm in the state in the Turkish national [10]. To these requests, the Governor-General of the Western Siberia responded that he did not see any obstacles to the expulsion of a Turkish citizen from Russia. The Ministry of the Interior, taking upon itself the duties of expelling

an unreliable Turkish citizen from the borders of the Russian state, asked to send his omen to draw up a list in order to continue to prohibit him from entering the limits of the empire [10].

At the end of the 19th century, the mass visits of Russian Muslims by guests from abroad were observed. These guests called themselves relatives and recorded their stay in the Russian Empire as a guest. Processes of this kind are observed throughout Russia, and Siberia is no exception. For example, a Tashkent native asked to be counted among the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) community, after arriving there with his relatives. The number of families, livestock, occupation were established and that he had not previously been engaged and not punished. The acting military governor of the Siberian Kirghiz region (Kazakhs) received a report that the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) take responsibility for this person, and in case of his unreliability, are ready to answer for him as a fellow tribe. In addition, in accordance with Article 981 of the Charter on tolls (1857), it was ordered to impose him on the yasak [11].

The Muslim intelligentsia, which received education abroad, primarily in the Ottoman Empire, had an important impact on the population [4]. It was outside the Russian Empire that Muslims saw an opportunity to get a decent education. For this, they were sent to the Ottoman Empire, where they were often honored with prominent positions. Representatives of the Muslim clergy of Russia also did not stand aside. So, in 1893, Mufti M. Sultanov received the order "Osmni" [12].

The intelligentsia and the Tatar schools become a bulwark of anti-government sentiments. Such a statement is confirmed by the discovered manuscript literature in the Tatar language, which contained dissatisfaction with the Russian government and its policy towards the Muslim population. This literature was discovered during an audit by the Ministry of Public Education in Muslim schools. In addition, the Constantinople publications in which thoughts directly hostile to the Russian people and state principles are carried out, were also found. This test showed that teachers in Muslim schools are sometimes the persons who have been educated outside of Russia and even have no Russian citizenship [13].

4. Discussion

It should be noted that at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the military ministry controlled the territories of the Caucasus and the Turkestan Territory, since the main issue regarding Muslims during this period was their contacts with co-religionists outside Russia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid significant attention to the "Muslim issue." This was connected not only with the emigration of the Russian Muslims to the countries of the East but also with the pilgrimage [14]. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Muslims are hardly sought permission to travel outside the Russian Empire. According to the government, it is precisely the restriction of pilgrim activities that would contribute to a decrease in communication with the Muslim community outside the Russian Empire [15], [16]. Thus, since the 80s of the 19th century, restrictions are imposed on the creation of educational societies, as well as on the pilgrimage to Mecca [17]. The question of pilgrimage was under special control of the Russian authorities. The 1903 Charter on Passports stipulated the terms and conditions that allow the Muslims to go on pilgrimage. The pilgrim who evaded the requirements was brought to criminal responsibility and to all sanitary measures ordered by the local police [18].

Starting from the end of the 19th century, the problems of the Hajj of Muslims of Russia became actively discussed in the foreign affairs agencies, particularly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the Embassy in Constantinople, and the Consulate in Jeddah. Moreover, the heads of administration of those regions where the Muslims lived compactly (Novorossiysk, Turkestan, Bessarab governorates and the Caucasian governorate) were involved in this issue. The Caucasian War of 1818-1864 and the annexation of Turkestan were the reason. The Muslim population lived in these annexed territories. This population sharply differed not only from the Center, but also from those regions of internal Russia where the Muslim believers (Volga region) lived compactly. Government agencies demanded that local officials report the situation related to the Muslim pilgrimage and made decisions based on this information [19].

Despite the restrictive measures imposed on Muslim pilgrims, the government was reluctant to give them passports, because it believed that the Hajj brings material benefits to Turkey, and the money then goes for military purposes. In addition, during the pilgrimage, epidemic diseases developed, which created additional problems for Russia.

The statistics, which led the Russian administration, also caused concern. So, according to these data, 1,795 Russian nationals visited Mecca in 1898. At the same time, most of them came from Central Asia, and primarily from the Fergana Valley. That region was considered an unreliable region prone to rebellion. The Russian authorities could not stop the pilgrimage process, since the pilgrims went to Mecca without passports. Repeatedly, pilgrims were attacked by Bedouins or Afghan scammers. Turkish newspapers testified to this. They blamed the government, which did not give out the passport to pilgrims, of the powerless Russian Muslims [19].

5. Conclusion

Thus, it should be noted that in the second half of the 19th century, the Russian Empire entered a new stage of migration processes. At the same time, one of the main tributaries of migrants to the territory of the Russian state came from Muslims. These processes cause special concerns on the part of the state, since along with migrants, anti-government sentiments began to penetrate. At the beginning of the 20th century, despite all attempts to limit Muslim influence from abroad, a significant increase in migrants from Eastern countries is observed in Russia. It should also be noted that missionary activity is activated in the Muslim environment. Missionary activity was anti-government, sometimes. All attempts by the government to impose restrictive measures on the communication of Russian Muslims with co-religionists from abroad have not been crowned with any significant successes.

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