

## **Courses of Cultural Policy Making of Tsarist in Transoxiana (1864-1917)**

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### **Abstract**

The first years of Russian marching to Transoxiana were not the climax of their authority. Some of the reformist advocates tended to proceed inside the country after the defeating *Crimea* (1854). The idea even permeated among the greater community. These groups wanted to establish liberal institutions and Constitutional government as those of European countries. *Alexander* the second, the new Tsar (1855-1881) had deeply found out that the Russia was too weak to stand against the opposing powers and, thus, started to reform immediately. Among the reformative actions, there was the freedom of peasantry from the past slavery in social reform to establish the selective associations in administrative reformations. To restore the national pride, the country's military forces, and to obtain the trade benefits, the orientation was though toward east rather than west, namely *Turkistan*. The reason for this orientation could be considered from the political viewpoint. Russia's failure in *Crimea's war* meant that Russia as a political and economic power could not be on a solid ground in west and south Europe. Involving in *Crimea's war* several times and having conflict on Balkan under the pretext of protecting Christians, Russia was trapped in wearing out and fruitless wars in

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which the European states under the leadership of England were a hinder in front of the Russia's purposes against Ottoman Empire. Russia had no more initiative in Eastern Europe and Mediterranean area because the British-French secure umbrella over Ottoman government was the determinant factor in failure of Tsar Policy in foreign affairs. Russia, in these circumstances, had no other alternatives except to focus on the surrounding areas particularly *Transoxiana*, in order to compensate for what was lost.

When they arrived in *Transoxiana*, there were lots of other problems that made Russia a weak colonizer. From the very beginning, it was obvious that they have real problem in wielding new occupied lands and policy making for it, but distinguishing the reasons was not that much easy. In this time, there were new political identities such as Italy, Germany, and the Balkan nations which were forming based on a unified nationality, history, language, culture, and common religion. Alike Europe, Russians began to establish history and form thoughts for the great Russia. Here, the focus is how a civilized government allows the different religions to exist inside its borders. They stated that the Islam's flag was flying in Islamic nations before the Christian civilization, but it was under the Russian's governing. The powerful government of Russia converted into Islam in Tatar region. This power got Polish- German quality in western borders and Tatar- Islamic in Volga part. This doctrine named *Eurasianism* discusses that the Eurasia is the Tsar Empire territory and is unique in its civilization and separated from the Europe and Asia. This civilization should not be mistaken with European civilization or the other ones; hence, it could not be one of their sub civilizations. The most important cultural components of this civilization are orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. Nevertheless, the Russian culture is the most advanced and widest element in this composition. In order to implement this political thinking, Russian

needed to turn the people who were interested in the regions to the Great Russian Empire, into loyal followers. That is, if there was a Muslim in the region, considered himself/herself as a Russian citizen. Apart from this doctrine, those politicians who were affected by Christian nationalists believed that existence of different religions in their empire would cause confusion in the area. They couldn't accept other religions and nationalities besides themselves so by motto of "faith, Tsar, homeland tried to dominate on non- Slavic people by strong support of Orthodox Church. They were interested in changing the religions of new nations.

Within the study of all these trends we can come with this idea that church, ministry of war, ministry of interior, foreign affairs along with ethnologists, Russian Orientalists and other groups disagreed in the components of their attitudes toward Muslim people. Political discourses among these groups led to two final ideas that were conservative: The first one was considering order and law in new occupied lands (giving Russian civilization) and considering Russia position in the eyes of other Muslim countries by tolerant policy.

Besides that, another important issue was Muslim reaction against Russian authorities. Naturally Russian politicians couldn't ignore native people especially Muslim scholars and elites who were followed by society. These elites during the occupation were exposed by modern world and new trends that had entered the other Muslim communities as well. They had different kinds of reactions against these modern waves and by passing the time these reactions had been changed. The most famous elites were Jadidi and conservative scholars who were against each other. Although Russian officials tried to intensify these quarrels, these attitudes had affected their policy making in the occupied lands.

All these issues had undermined Russian operation in the region. Therefore, the disagreement of politicians with Christian nationalists

and local reaction, the weakness of appointed commanders and regional and global developments have all conducted the final policy of Russification with specific features. When we study the whole period of Russian presence, we cannot see a unified policy (especially in cultural field) toward Muslim people.

This article studied different sources and analyzed a variety of data to investigate the elements that affected cultural situation of Muslim people. Our main questions are that: in cultural aspects, how we can study these periods in different courses, what were the courses of cultural policy making in Transoxiana, and why did it change? Our answer is that the Russian commanders had shown three different courses of policy making that some sets of local, internal and global factors caused its changes in each period.

**Keywords:** cultural policies, Russia, Russification, transoxiana, Turkestan.