



Personality, Activity and Legacy of Ashurali Zokhiri

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the life path, socio-political activity, and scholarly and creative legacy of one of the prominent representatives of the Turkestan Jadid intelligentsia of the early twentieth century—Ashurali Zokhiri. On the basis of archival materials and scholarly publications, his contribution to the development of the public education system, national journalism, linguistics, and the enlightenment movement in Turkestan is revealed. Particular attention is paid to Ashurali Zokhiri’s role in the national liberation movement, his pedagogical and publishing activities, as well as his tragic fate during the period of Stalinist repressions.

KEYWORDS: Jadidism, Turkestan, national intelligentsia, enlightenment, journalism, linguistics, repressions.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the twentieth century became a period of intensive cultural and socio-political upsurge in Turkestan, during which a stratum of national intelligentsia was formed, oriented toward modernization of society and the development of public education. The strengthening of the colonial policy of the Russian Empire, and then the repressive course of Bolshevik power, contributed to the activation of reformist and enlightenment movements. One of the most vivid representatives of this process was Ashurali Zokhiri—an educator, publicist, linguist, and public figure who made a significant contribution to the development of national culture and education.

Formation of Personality and Educational Path

Ashurali Zokhiri was born in 1885 in the village of Oyim near Kokand in a peasant family. He received his primary education at a rural school, after which he continued his studies at the madrasah of Muhammad Ali Khan—one of the largest educational institutions of the Kokand Khanate. During his studies he mastered Arabic and Persian, studied Islamic law, the history of Islam, literature, and a number of secular disciplines.

It was precisely in the years of study that his sustained interest in the classical literary heritage of the East was formed, above all in the works of Alisher Navoi, Abdurrahman Jami, and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, which subsequently determined the direction of his scholarly research.

Pedagogical and Enlightenment Activity. From 1907 Ashurali Zokhiri taught the Uzbek language and literature at the Russian-native school of the city of Kokand. In parallel he actively studied Turkic languages and Russian, which enabled him to effectively introduce new teaching methods. From 1910 Zokhiri began publishing articles devoted to issues of school education,

teaching methodology, and language culture. In the same period he joined the Jadids and became one of the organizers of the society "Taraqqiyparvarlar," the main goal of which was the expansion of the network of new-method schools and the повышение of the professional level of teachers.

A significant contribution to the development of educational literature was his participation in the creation of the "Turkic Chrestomathy," as well as the writing of the textbook "Orthography" for primary schools of Turkestan, published in Kazan in 1916.

Journalistic and Publishing Activity. Ashurali Zokhiri played a notable role in the formation of the national periodical press. He collaborated with the newspapers "Turkestanskiy kray," "Sadoi Fargona," "El bayrogi," "Fargona," "Yangi Fargona," and other publications. In 1917 Zokhiri founded and headed the journal "Yurt," which, despite its short-lived existence, became an important platform for discussing the political, social, and cultural problems of Turkestan. Through his journalistic materials he called for national unity and active participation of the population in socio-political processes.

Scholarly and Linguistic Legacy. A special place in the scholarly activity of Ashurali Zokhiri is occupied by linguistics. He consistently defended the significance of the native language as the basis of national self-awareness. His two-volume "Russian-Uzbek Dictionary" (1927–1928), including about 34 thousand words, became one of the most significant lexicographic works of its time and played an important role in the formation of lexical norms of the Uzbek literary language. Zokhiri also advocated a balanced approach to the reform of writing, insisting on the need to take into account the cultural and spiritual traditions of the people when transitioning to a new orthography.

Socio-Political Activity and Repressions. After the establishment of Soviet power, Ashurali Zokhiri continued to work in the sphere of education and the press; however, he remained a supporter of the idea of national independence. This became the reason for his persecution by the repressive bodies.

In 1930 he was arrested on charges of participation in a "counterrevolutionary organization," sentenced to the highest measure of punishment, later replaced by ten years in лагерь. After early release in 1936, Zokhiri was arrested again and in 1937 was shot. In 1958 he was fully rehabilitated.

CONCLUSION

Ashurali Zokhiri is one of the key figures of the national enlightenment movement of Turkestan of the early twentieth century. His activity in the field of education, journalism, linguistics, and publishing contributed to the formation of national self-awareness and the development of the cultural life of the region. Despite the tragic fate, his legacy retains scholarly and historical value and requires further comprehensive study.

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