



TURKISTAN GENIUS

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Abstract

The article presents the work of Mahmudkhoj Behbudi, a scholar who fought for the freedom of Turkestan in the first two decades of the 20th century, the founder and leader of the Jadid movement, in the field of enlightenment, his political views, his role in the declaration of Turkestan's autonomy, and the good deeds he did to appease the people after the Bolsheviks seized power, based on concrete facts.

Keywords: Intelligentsia, Mahmudkhoj Behbudi, Jadid, movement, new knowledge, colonialists, enlightenment.

Introduction

Among the intelligentsia fighting for Turkestan's freedom at the beginning of the 20th century, Mahmudhoja Behbudi, the founder of the Jadid movement, played an unrivaled role.

Research by historian and archaeologist Amriddin Berdimuradov revealed that on the eve of the capture of Samarkand by Tsarist Russia in 1968, the population's attitude toward the enemy was divided into two groups. "The first group—merchants, wealthy individuals, and city elders—advocated surrender without war. The second group—religious individuals, madrasah students, and ordinary people—advocated fighting the enemy to the last drop of blood" [1]. According to the scholar, those who attempted to fight were punished by local authorities (the first group).

The father of the hero of our article, Mahmudkhodja Behbudi, Behbudkhodja Salihkhodja, was among those who went to the struggle, but he was one of the intellectuals who analyzed the current situation, especially the deplorable military situation of the emirate, the small number of weapons and the fact that they were



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very old. According to the distribution of officials, he settled with his family in the village of Bakhshitepa near the Zarafshan River, where he managed the affairs of the waqf lands, and at the same time served as an imam-khatib in the mosque. When Samarkand fell into the hands of the colonialists, the oppression of the invaders affected not only the city but also the population of remote villages. With the annexation of the territory to Russia, the empire's demands directly impacted the lives of the people. In particular, lands allocated for madrassas came under their control. Furthermore, the forced cultivation of crops and the resulting treatment of water, which had been carefully stored for centuries, sparked protests, and those who disobeyed were punished. Although cotton plantations were expanded in many areas of Turkestan, horticulture was partially preserved, contrary to local customs, with an emphasis on wine-producing grape varieties, and wine production was established.

One of the intellectuals of his time, Behbud Khoja, saw and understood the situation that had arisen, and suffered even more than the common people. At a time when his parents were carrying these sorrows in their minds, Mahmud Khoja was born.

“When Behbudi Efendi was 6-7 years old, he learned to read and write under the supervision of his great uncle Mukhammad Siddiq. Then his father Behbud Khoja began to teach him the Quran little by little with the aim of making him a reciter. Within 3-4 years, Behbudi Efendi memorized the entire Quran and continued to recite the verses during the nights of Ramadan. It is said that Behbudi Efendi made only one mistake in a three-night recitation. This shows the extent of his powerful memory” [2].

The conclusion to our introduction is that Mahmudkhodja was thirsty for knowledge since childhood, he tried to master new knowledge, which was considered a factor in the development of the world.

Working in the court, Mahmudkhodja read a cold report about the uprising led by Muhammadali Khalifa in Andijan and its consequences in the publication called "Turkiston Region Gazette" that came to the court. What struck Mahmudkhodja was that he could not remember that the popular uprisings that had occurred up to that point had been covered in this tone of mockery, that is, humiliation and intimidation.



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Until 1917, Kazikhona served as the courthouse in our territory, where the qadi conducted legal proceedings. In other words, legal matters were heard in this office. People who worked in such institutions were well versed in the essence of state—in our case, colonial—policy. In this regard, they were guided by the only Uzbek publication of the time, the “Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti”.

Mahmudkhoja learned the first news of the incident in Dukchi Eshan from this newspaper, even before the merchants reported it.

"On Monday, May 18 of this year, at dawn, more than a thousand headless Muslims named Muhammad Ali Khalifa Eshon arrived at a camp occupied by two hundred Russian soldiers on the outskirts of Andijan. They surrounded the soldiers, engaged in combat, killed 22 soldiers, and wounded 16. But when the soldiers opened fire on them, these headless men fled in fear. Eleven of them were killed and eight wounded." [3]

More than a thousand people participated in the uprising. The colonial press called the rebels "headless Muslims."

"His Excellency, the Turkestan Governor-General, Lieutenant-General Dukhovskiy, is currently leaving St. Petersburg to visit the Turkestan region.

And Lieutenant-General Kurulkuf, acting Governor-General, will leave Tashkent for Andijan on Wednesday evening, May 20, to deliver a military verdict in the case of major riots and conspiracy in the city of Andijan."

The generals' involvement in such controversial situations was, of course, accompanied by harsh punishments. The consequences are easy to understand when the newspaper, in its July 6, 1898, issue, detailed the executions, exiles, and other punishments of participants in the Dukchi Eshon rebellion, as reported by the Turkestan Governor-General [4].

"In a monstrous and sinful act, unbecoming of believers and honest people, a large group of Muslims from the Fergana region, having secretly conferred in advance and gathered all possible weapons, attacked the rebellious and sleeping Russian soldiers stationed near this city like bandits. They began to overwhelm the soldiers, wounding and killing those sleeping under the command of the White Tsar. There is no reason for such a reckless and ignorant incident. And the Muslim people, who have always shown loyalty and true devotion to the Russian authorities, using peace and prosperity as a pretext, preserving their religion,



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nationality, rules, and laws inherited from their ancestors, as well as their way of life, customs, and customs, committed such a dishonest and immoral war against Russian soldiers. And such people... The madman from Mingtepa, Muhammadali Sabir, is right in leading people astray from the path of peace. And this Eshan himself, forgetting God Almighty and forgetting the great benefits that His Majesty the Tsar Emperor of All Russia has shown to the citizens of all Turkestan, and showing the people a meaningless and insignificant paper that has fallen into the hands of the Russian authorities in these days, thinks and imagines, like a madman, that he has been ordered from heaven to sow enmity between Islam and Russia and that some of his close people, who respected this Eshan in the past, believe him and are afraid that the Russian nobles will learn of the evil intentions of this traitor, and he is fearfully rushing to carry out his intention.

Any sane person reading the passage will understand that it is one-sided, that colonial interests are prioritized, that the eshan is insane, that there is an attempt to incite hatred among the local population toward the executed, and that there is false evidence. We see that the report emphasizes that the execution was carried out by the local population.

"And indeed, on June 12 of this year, the eshan Mingtepa Mukhammadali Sabir oglu and his five senior companions, namely: Mullah Goyibnazar Ortik oglu, Subhonkul Arabboy oglu, Rustambek Sotiboldibek oglu, Mirzo Hamdam Usmonboy oglu, Bobotoy Aynaboy oglu, and the residents of this area hanged themselves in the presence of the people and soldiers."

Information about these punishments was intended to intimidate the local population, keeping them from rebelling, to keep them in fear, even when the thought of "rebellion" or "mutiny" flashed through their minds when confronted with the injustice of the colonizers.

Naturally, Behbudiy traveled to the Fergana Valley and learned that more than three hundred innocent people had been killed, that a well had been dug, that the corpses had been covered with mortar and razed to the ground, that many residents had been exiled to the distant lands of Tsarist Russia, and that the day after the executions, the military had shelled the village of Mingtepa with cannons. But most importantly, he realized that against a well-armed colonizer, several thousand men with hoes and swords would not be able to achieve the



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same result, and he was faced with the eternal question that arises in such situations: what to do?

To answer this question, he undertook extensive research. First and foremost, he studied the stages of development of the powerful state established by Amir Timur and the reasons for its collapse. He explored world history, the events that unfolded across the globe, including wars, their causes, and their essence in terms of national interests. At the same time, he analyzed the stages and causes of the decline of Turkestan's history and developed plans for the future.

Under the pretext of the Hajj, he visited places where eastern countries remained under colonial oppression and analyzed the plight of the local population, caused by their lack of education. Most importantly, he conversed with them, reflected, and compared the methods of struggle of this country's intelligentsia with the life, worldview, and, in general, the achievements and shortcomings of the Muslims of Turkestan. He then learned of the movement against the European colonialists, united under the banner of Islam (Islamism) and the Turkish flag (Turkism), and conversed with their leaders. Knowing the injustices of their time, as well as the treachery and power of Tsarist Russia, the Turkestan intelligentsia realized they needed to choose a new path. Therefore, Jadidism is a national liberation movement directed not against the old educational system, but against pronounced Islamist and Turkic movements.

Another important aspect is that Behbudi attempted to convey his knowledge and thoughts to his people under the guise of education through his fiction and journalistic works, books, and lectures. For those interested, about half of his three hundred works were written as a result of this suffering. He did this to the best of the abilities of every Jadid.

First of all, it is necessary to open new (Jadid) schools, unlike those of the scumbags who serve the policies of tyrants. New curricula and textbooks will be written for them by Jadid intellectuals. Teachers will be trained to teach new subjects. To this end, he will draw on the experience of new, advanced schools, similar to those he saw during his pilgrimage.

In Samarkand, schools began to be established in 1903. He began to create new textbooks for teaching in the native language. For new schools in the villages of Halvoyi and Rajabamin near Samarkand, he wrote and published the books



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"Risolai az-osi savod" (1904), "Risolai jug'rafiyai umroniy" (1905), "Risolai jug'rafiyai Rusiy" (1905), "Muntahabi jug'rafiyai umunyy" (1906), "Kitobat ul-atfol" (1908), "Amaliyoti islom" (1908), "Tarihi islom" (1909). At the same time, he prepared and published maps for geography and history.

It is clear that the colonialists did not like the explanation of the causes of the decline of the nation. But they could not go against scientific conclusions. Therefore, the local mullahs, who came from among the local people, began to fight against the new schools. For example, during the Friday sermon in the mosque, the Jadids who impart such knowledge are declared infidels.

The newspaper "Samarkand," founded by the great educator Mahmudhoja Behbudi, is published in three languages.

Unlike the newspaper, the editor of the magazine "Oyina" is required to submit materials prepared for publication to military censorship, read them, and obtain permission two days before delivery to the printer. A paper version of the magazine has been preserved in archival documents. Its pages became a forum for the intelligentsia of the era, who strove for a new way of life and dreamed of freedom. This publication featured the pens of many progressive artists, such as Abdurauf Fitrat, Saidrizo Alizoda, Tavallo, Siddiqi-Adzhzii, Haji Muin, Mahmud Tarzii, and Sadriddin Ainiy.

Although the magazine's circulation did not reach the seven climates, information has reached us that it was read by Muslims in Russia and the Middle East. "Oyina" spread from Turkestan to Tatarstan, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Egypt and was widely read everywhere" [5].

After Tsar Nicholas fell from the throne (the February 1917 events in Tsarist Russia), the Jadids, among others, turned the movement from an educational to a political one. During the Provisional Government, Behbudi's thoughts on parliament in his article "Bayoni Haqiqat" published in the newspaper "Ulug' Turkestan" (June 12, 1917) are significant: "We want the Muslims of Turkestan, together with Russians, Jews and others, to establish a Turkestan government under their leadership, in which Russia would be considered a part of it, and our assembly and deliberations would be "parliamentarianism".

When the Bolsheviks seized power, Behbudi refused to be "part of Russia." He happily accepted the autonomy of Turkestan.



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This attitude, the pride he felt in his participation, is evident in his article "Turkestan Autonomy": "On November 27, at a general Muslim assembly in Kokand, the autonomy of Turkestan was proclaimed. May it be blessed and enlightened! I, too, am proud to have attended this assembly. Long live the autonomy of Turkestan!" [6].

Unfortunately, not everything worked out as the Jadids had hoped.

Behbudi was a pragmatic man. Therefore, no matter how deeply saddened he was by the bloodshed in the Turkestan Autonomous Region, he tried to assess the current situation and reach out to the people as much as possible. During the famine of 1918, he used his connections to import grain from India at a low price. Although he refused government positions offered by the Bolsheviks, he participated in consultations during the Turkestan mourning period.

Mahmudhoja Behbudi's last article was entitled "Grain, Soldiers, Land, and War Indemnity" [7]. It can be considered an account of Behbudi's work for the benefit of the country not only during the Bolshevik era but over a period of twenty-five years.

The conclusion of his latest article is that we must pay attention to what we should do to avoid becoming slaves to others, but he regrets that our spiritual state does not allow this.

"Finally, I must admit that the times demand much work from us in the political, scientific, everyday, and military spheres, and this work is conditioned by our times. But there are very few people who work, and those who don't either make mistakes. These opportunities pass, just as they passed. Then we can only regret, for example, that we now avoid military and scientific work, which is the equivalent of a child running away from school."

This conclusion places a grave responsibility on the nation's shoulders, one that cannot be ignored even in the era of modern Uzbekistan's independence. Only the nation's heroes, the nation's geniuses, who fear no danger for the sake of the nation's prosperity, can reach such a conclusion.



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