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**Women's Departments in Central Asia in the 1920s: Methods and Results
of the Campaign for Muslim Women's Emancipation**

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Problem of the topic

Gender transformations in societies on the Russian Muslim periphery began to occur before the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks who came to power considered women to be the most oppressed part of the country's population, regardless of their nationality. Women were squeezed into the narrow confines of various taboos, deprived of the legal rights and freedoms that men possessed. To the Bolsheviks, this situation seemed to be an unfair world order, which should be immediately abandoned in the name of the public good and progress. In 1917–1918, by decrees of the Soviet government, women, regardless of nationality and religion, recognized the right to vote and be elected at various levels, to divorce on the woman initiative, to claim the property of a former spouse, and was eliminated gender discrimination in wages¹. Gender equality was also proclaimed in the first Soviet Constitution². The women of Soviet Russia received unprecedented social, political, and economic rights and freedoms overnight. Despite this, A. M. Kollontai wanted to create a special women's organization. A. M. Kollontai achieved her goal in 1919, when in Moscow appeared a Commission for Agitation and Propaganda among Women under the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party of the Bolsheviks. In February 1920, the commission was reorganized into the Moscow Central Department for Work among Women (Moscow Central Committee). After that, branches – women's departments began to create throughout the RSFSR, including in Tashkent in March 1920 was organized central local Central Committee.

A set of measures to change gender roles in Soviet society in the 1920s was combined under the term «*raskreposhenie*» (emancipation). This term was

¹*Sovetskaya vlast' i raskreposhchenie zhenshchiny: sbornik dekretov i postanovleniya RSFSR* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1921).

²*Dokumenty po istorii sovetskoi konstitucii. Pervaya sovetskaya konstituciya. Konstituciya RSFSR 1918 goda: sb. dokumentov / ed. A. YA. Vyshinskogo* (Moscow.: Izd. NKYU SSSR, 1938), 436.

understood as the liberation of women from any infringement of their rights and freedoms. Emancipation presupposed changing the worldview, psychology, everyday and family life of peoples who, according to the Bolsheviks, were at different stages of historical development. Therefore, the women's departments, to which this study is devoted, were forced to adapt to the conjuncture, and in the Muslim suburbs, in this case in Central Asia, to take into account geographical, confessional and household specifics.

Relevance of the topic

This is explained by the fact in the 1920s, complex but powerful cultural and psychological processes were launched, which in the following decades were developed and, in some way, still have not lost their strength. Political mobilization, labor socialization and cultural development of women were declared like a priority of the Bolshevik Party in the Muslim suburbs. Women had to try on unusual roles and social statuses, and contribute to the economic revival of the country. Studying the history of the solution of the «women's issue» in Central Asia in the 1920s can give an understanding of how the transformation of gender relations took place. Critically comprehend allows us the socio-cultural reforms of the Bolsheviks, determine how the indigenous peoples of the region tried to adapt to new living conditions. Factors contributed to this on the contrary, reduced the desire to integrate into the modern Soviet society.

Degree of scientific development of the topic

Probably, the first researcher who dealt with the history of solving the «women's issue» in the USSR was V. L. Bilshai. In 1948, she claimed that the «women's issue» in the Soviet state was resolved by the Communist Party and «Marxism-Leninism theory»¹. V. L. Bilshai did not mention the women's department, which is a consequence of the censorship and ideological restrictions. The second study by V. L. Bilshai is more detailed². It touches on the plot of the

¹Vera Bilshaj-Pilipenko, *Sovetskaya demokratiya i ravnopravie zhenshin v SSSR* / ed. I. T. Golyakova (Moscow.: Yuridicheskoe izdatelstvo ministerstva yusticii SSSR, 1948).

²Vera Bilshaj, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v SSSR* (Moscow.: Gospolitizdat, 1956).

women emancipation in the «Soviet Orient». V. L. Bilshai wrote about the total illiteracy of women of «Soviet Orient», the coexistence of courts, as well as *adat* and *sharia* in the Turkmen and Uzbek SSR, persecution and terrorism against activists¹. V. L. Bilshai mentions women's departments, but does not go into details of their history and functioning. In 1957, was published the B. P. Palvanova's book, in which she «summarize the experience of emancipation of Turkmen women in the construction of socialism»². B. P. Palvanova did not mention women's departments. Reading her research, one gets the impression that emancipation met no obstacles. She made the main accent on the «nominees» – Turkmen women, who have become symbols of participation in industry, science and culture. B. P. Palvanova's research ignored the problems of emancipation in the «Soviet Orient» despite the fact that it was published later than the second book by V. L. Bilshai.

In the 1960s and 1970s, B. Clements³ and R. Stites⁴ abroad began to study the gender history of the USSR. Historians in the USSR could not familiarize themselves with developments of foreign colleagues, because the «iron curtain» greatly hindered intellectual exchange. Therefore, the narrative of the women emancipation in Central Asian are full of gaps. For example, in Central Asia, in addition to the indigenous peoples, there were *Europeans*. «Europeans» are an important ethnic, confessional and linguistic category for the the region. This term unites people with similar worldviews, cultural practices, values and ideals, as well

¹Ibid: 145, 148, 165.

²Bibi Pal'vanova, *Pobeda Velikoi Oktyabr'skoi socialisticheskoi revolyucii i raskreposhchenie zhenshchin-turkmenok* (Ashkhabad: Izd. Akademii nauk Turkmenskoi SSR, 1957), 15.

³Barbara Clements, «Emancipation Through Communism: The Ideology of A. M. Kollontai,” *Slavic Review* 32, no. 2 (1973): 323–338; Idem. “Kollontai's Contribution to the Workers' Opposition,” *Russian History* 2. no. 2 (1975): 191–206; Idem. *Bolshevik Feminist. The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); Idem. “Working-Class and Peasant Women in the Russian Revolution, 1917–1923,” *Signs* 8. no. 2 (1982): 215–235; Idem. *The Births of the New Soviet Woman. Bolshevik Culture. Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*: eds. by Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985): 220–237; Idem. “The Utopianism of the Zhenotdel,” *Slavic Review* 51. no. 3 (1992): 485–496; Idem. *A History of Women in Russia. From Earliest Times to the Present* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012).

⁴Richard Stajts, *Zhenskoe osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Rossii: Feminizm, nigilizm i bolshevizm (1860–1930)* / trans. from Eng. I. A. Shkolnikova, O. V. Shnyrovoy (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004).

as those who speak Russian at the native level. In Central Asia, Europeans were understood: Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Armenians, Georgians, Jews and other Christian peoples, as well as Muslim Tatars.

Appeared a lot of researches in USSR about the women emancipation in the Central Asian republics, for example, by Kh. S. Shukurova¹, B. P. Polvanova², R. Kh. Aminova³, Zh. Tatybekova⁴. The scholars continued to ignore the contribution of women's departments to freedom. But there is an exception. Women's departments, as an important part of Soviet gender policy, are mentioned in the brochure, which was prepared by the Doctor of Philosophie S. T. Lyubimova⁵. She is a key figure in the history of the Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia in the 1920s. She was born in 1898 in Saransk, joined the Bolshevik Party in 1919⁶. She began to cooperate with the Bashkiria and Tatarstan women's departments in 1920⁷. A year later, she was transferred to the Moscow Central department as an inspector. In 1923, S. T. Lyubimov was appointed head of the Tashkent Central department. She spent 3 years in this position. Working in women's departments was an important stage in S. T. Lyubimova's life, so she could not remain indifferent to them.

A separate important topic in historiography about the Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia is Khujum. There was almost no disagreement about

¹Khujuma Shukurova, *Kommunisticheskaya partiya Uzbekistana v borbe za raskreposhenie zhenshin (1924–1929)* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR 1961); Idem. *Socializm i zhenshina Uzbekistana. (Istoricheskij opyt KPSS v raskreposhenii zhenshin sovetskogo Vostoka na primere Uzbekistana 1917–1937 gg.)* / ed. K. E. Zhitova (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1970).

²Bibi Palvanova, *Docheri sovetskogo Vostoka* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961); Idem. *Oktyabr i zhenshina Turkmenistana* (Ashhabad: Turkmenistan, 1967).

³Rahima Aminova, *Oktyabr i reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: FAN, 1975).

⁴Zhanetta Tatybekova, *Raskreposhenie zhenshiny Kirgizii Velikoj Oktyabrskoj socialisticheskoy revolyuciej (1917–1936 gg.)* (Frunze: Izd. Akademii nauk Kirgizskoj SSR, 1963); Idem. *Velikij oktyabr i zhenshiny Kirgizstana* (Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1975).

⁵Serafima Lyubimova, *Oktyabrskaya revolyuciya i polozhenie zhenshin v SSSR* (Moscow: Znanie, 1967).

⁶Dilarom Alimova, “K istoriografii resheniya zhenskogo voprosa v Uzbekistane. Zhizn' i trudy S.T. Lyubimovoi,” *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*, no 10 (1977): 44–47.

⁷Serafima Lyubimova, “Nuzhny izmeneniya,” *Kommunistka*, no 10–11 (1920): 31–32; Idem. “Led idet,” *Kommunistka*, no 10–11 (1922): 45–47; Idem. “Rabota ozhivaet,” *Kommunistka*, no 12 (1922): 38–40.

the representations it. Khujum was defined as the struggle of the Soviet government against the veil. However, Zh. Tatybekova gave Khujum a different characterization: «The slogan “on the offensive” meant a transition from primarily explanatory work to mandatory implementation of Soviet laws on women's equality and party directives on the emancipation of women in Central Asia»¹. B. P. Palvanova wrote about the same thing later, quoting an archival document in which the elimination of the veil was not indicated as the goal of the campaign. The first point of the source stated that Khujum was started to «popularize the legislation of the Soviet government on the emancipation of women», the second on «promoting economic emancipation», and the third on «the struggle for literacy»². Further, B. P. Palvanova pointed out that local party officials «made a mistake» and universally perceived Khujum as a struggle against the veil³.

Economic transformations during emancipation were one of the leitmotifs of Soviet historiography. The emphasis on the country's economic priorities unwittingly emphasized the utilitarian nature of gender policy⁴. The most important problem of Soviet historiography is its stereotyping. This problem is related to the narrative about the awareness of officials in the «Soviet Orient» of the importance of solving the «women's issue». B. P. Palvanova wrote: «The women's departments were surrounded by constant attention from party committees, Soviet organizations, and received the necessary assistance from them»⁵. Soviet historians noted the «decisive struggle» of the court, the prosecutor's office, the police and the

¹Zhanetta Tatybekova, *Velikij Oktyabr i zhenshina Kirgizstana*: 32.

²Bibi Palvanova, *Emansipaciya musulmanki. Opyt raskreposheniya zhenshin sovetского Vostoka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982): 166.

³Ibid: 167.

⁴Dilarom Alimova, “Istoriografiya uchastiya zhenshin v razvitii promyshlennosti UzSSR (1925–1941),” *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*, no 9 (1978): 45–48; Idem. “K istoriografii uchastiya zhenshin v razvitii selskogo hozyajstva UzSSR (1925–1941),” *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*, no 5 (1979): 52–56.

⁵Bibi Palvanova. *Oktyabr i zhenshiny Turkmenistana*: 47.

Komsomol for the emancipation of women of the «Soviet Orient», especially their help during the Khujum¹.

General researches were written in the USSR, which considered emancipation without reference to a specific republic². Also, the role of women's departments remained unclear. The authors ignored the conflicts of women's department employees with trade unions³, their desire for autonomy, but without losing the moral and material support of the state. In the generalizing work of B. P. Palvanova's «Muslim Woman Emancipation» has a number of advantages in comparison with previous studies. For the first time, B. P. Palvanova spoke about the patriarchal family structure: «A Central Asian woman entered the twentieth century as a slave to her father, husband, father-in-law, older brother, even son. The best quality of a woman was considered to be silence»⁴. It should be understood that even before the 1980s, historians criticized the Central Asian patriarchal system, but not in such acute form.

In the late 1980s, some historians still tried to go beyond the narrative, which represented emancipation as a movement from victory to victory. D. A. Alimova argued that, contrary to popular opinion, the «women's issue» in Central Asia has not been resolved: «Unfortunately, at present, D. A. Alimova wrote, in the republic, the study of the women's issue is not among the most important scientific developments with access to a practical solution. It is also completely insufficiently covered in the press. The appearance of articles on women's issues in the republican press is still spontaneous. The year 1987, which gave a noticeable shift in the volume and quality of published materials in connection with the Khujum 60th anniversary, was followed by a noticeable decline in interest in this problem, although it is

¹Khujuma Shukurova, *Kommunisticheskaya partiya Uzbekistana v borbe za raskreposhenie zhenshin*: 101; Rahima Aminova, *Oktyabr i reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v Uzbekistane*: 72–89; Bibi Palvanova, *Emansipatsiya musulmanki*: 164.

²Petr Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v SSSR (1917–1937 gg.)* (Moscow: Mysl 1978); *Opyt KPSS v reshenii zhenskogo voprosa* / ed. N. I. Kondakova (Moscow: Mysl, 1981).

³Wendy Goldman, *Zhenshiny u prohodnoj. Gendernye otnosheniya v sovetskoj industrii (1917–1937)* / trans. from Eng. V. Yu. Lobovskoj (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010).

⁴Bibi Palvanova, *Emansipatsiya musulmanki*: 7.

noticeably far from its solution. In a republic where the women's issue has always been and remains burning, it would be necessary to have a constantly open podium on the pages of a newspaper or magazine»¹.

In 1987, the journal «*Obshestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*» dedicated one of its issues to the 60th anniversary of Khujum². In the same year, was published the book «*Khujum means offensive*»³, the most interesting for its third part, «*Activist of Khujum*», which contains biographies of women's departments employees. In 1990, appeared the research of V. N. Mineev, which describes in detail the mobile agitation of women's departments among nomads⁴. At the same time, a study by Sh. M. Masharipova on the Khorezm People's Socialist Republic appeared, which reveals unknown facts about the role of Tatar actresses of the Khorezm theater in attracting indigenous residents to education⁵.

In 1991, was published a study by D. A. Alimova in which she exposed Soviet historiography in lies, admitting that in the 1930s, «the developing process of women's emancipation was slowed down». According to the researcher, «especially hard consequences in the republics of Central Asia, where in fact women had not yet been involved in production, seclusion, veil, kalym, underage marriage, polygamy, bride stealing»⁶. In the post-soviet Uzbekistan, D. A. Alimova revised her views on the experience of Muslim women emancipation and Khujums. In 1998, she assessed the work of women's departments: «The approach was generally correct: a lot of explanatory work, home visits, conversations, organization of women's clubs, artels, workshops where women learned to sew, trade, read and write without intersecting with men. All this indicates that local traditions and peculiarities of everyday life

¹Dilarom Alimova, «Zhenskij vopros v sovetskoi istoriografii Srednei Azii 20-h godov», *Obshestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*, no 11 (1989): 51–56.

²Rahima Aminova, «Istoricheskaya vеха v reshenii zhenskogo voprosa v Uzbekistane», *Obshestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*, no 5 (1987): 3–9.

³*Hudzhum – znachit nastuplenie* / ed. S. A. Dmitrieva (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1987).

⁴Vladimir Mineev, *Stanovlenie i razvitie kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty sredi zhenshchin Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: FAN, 1990).

⁵Shodmon Masharipova, *Raskreposhchenie zhenshchin Horezma i vovlechenie ih v socialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo* (Tashkent: FAN, 1990).

⁶Dilarom Alimova, *Zhenskij vopros v Srednei Azii. Istoriya izucheniya i sovremennye problemy* (Tashkent: FAN, 1991), 4.

were taken into account. In the 1920s, successes were achieved in the field of women's rights, their involvement in industrial and social activities. There is archival evidence that the poor highly appreciated women's work, which contributed to the family budget. The *dehkans* were satisfied that their wives earned money in the *artel* without violating social norms, since they were among women»¹. A few years later, D. A. Alimova changed her attitude to the emancipation. Now D. A. Alimova called the involvement of Uzbek women in industrial work «enslavement», and the Soviet way of achieving equality «violent»².

The earliest research that appeared in the West was the research of G. Massell³. The author argued that the emancipation of Muslim women in Central Asia was a violent policy which was initiated in order to implement economic reforms. According to G. Massell, Muslim women were a «surrogate proletariat» because there was no class of proletarians in Central Asia. G. Massell came to the conclusion that the indigenous inhabitants of the region, including the communists, did not understand the essence of *Khujum*. It was perceived as an «uncompromising struggle against the veil»⁴.

The Muslim women emancipation as part of the national policy of the Bolsheviks was considered by D. Northrop⁵. He mostly agrees with G. Mansell and developed his thesis on emancipation as an economic reform. D. Northrop considers emancipation to be a violent colonial policy of the Bolsheviks, which was no different from Western imperialism. According to D. Northrop, Central Asia for the Bolsheviks represented a «laboratory of identities» in which Russians conducted experiments on the consciousness of Muslims⁶. The Bolsheviks, represented by the

¹Dilarom Alimova, "A Historian's Vision of «Khudjum»," *Central Asian Survey*, no. 17:1 (1998): 147–155.

²Dilarom Alimova, *Istoriya kak istoriya, istoriya kak nauka*: In 2 Vol. Vol. 1. / ed. E. V. Rtveldze (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2008), 262.

³Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat. Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

⁴Ibid: 235.

⁵Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (New York, Cornell University Press, 2004).

⁶Ibid: 7–8.

women's departments, fulfilled a «civilizing mission» and brought enlightenment to the «natives»¹. D. Northrop begins his story from Khujum, which «changed the face of Central Asia for years»². D. Northrop considers Khujum as a campaign against the veil, which was started by the Central Asian together with the Caucasian Bureau³.

The research of M. Kamp – «The New Woman in Uzbekistan»⁴ is made within the framework of oral history and is in many ways unique. In 1992-1993, the scholar took a number of interviews with Uzbek women, who overlive Khujum in their youth⁵. M. Kamp proves that emancipation in the USSR Muslim republics was not a continuation of Russian colonial policy. According to M. Kamp, Soviet emancipation is similar to processes in Iran and Turkey, and there was no less «coercion of women to freedom» in these countries than in the USSR⁶. A. Edgar complements M. Kamp by saying that Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and the Soviet republics in Central Asia sought to liberate themselves in a short time. They eventually resorted to extraordinary measures to remove women for mobilized political and labor resources⁷. A. Edgar comes to a opposite conclusion that «Soviet policy towards women in Central Asia in the 1920s-1930s was not imperial in intent, but turned out to be imperial in essence»⁸. A. Edgar agrees with G. Massell and D. Northrop that the goal of Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia was economic modernization⁹.

In conclusion, the review of research dissertation topic should be noted despite the fact that the study of the Muslim women emancipation in the region has been

¹Douglas Northrop, “Nacionalizaciya otstalosti: Pol, imperiya i uzbekskaya identichnost” in *Gosudarstvo nacij: Imperiya i nacional'noe stroitel'stvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina*. eds. R. G. Suni, T. Martina; trans. from Eng. V. I. Matuzovoj (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011): 235–272.

²Douglas Northrop. *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia*: 12.

³Ibid: 82.

⁴Marianne Kamp. *The New Woman in Uzbekistan. Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2006).

⁵Ibid: 14.

⁶Ibid: 4.

⁷Adrienne Edgar, “Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet «Emancipation» of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 252–272.

⁸Ibid: 252–272.

⁹Ibid: 252–272.

going for many decades, still remain serious gaps in international and national historiographies, one of which is the extremely poorly studied activities of the women's departments in Soviet Central Asia in connection with the gender projects and transformations of the 1920s. Archival materials have not been introduced into scientific circulation. The Soviet press and ego-sources have not been sufficiently studied.

The **object** of this research is a corpus of historical sources that allows us to reconstruct the Soviet state policy on gender equality, as well as to understand what methods and why women's departments used to liberate Muslim women in Central Asia. The **subject** of the study is the activity of Central Asian women's departments for Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia in the 1920s.

The **purpose** of the research is to find out what consequences for the government and indigenous society led to projects for Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia in the 1920s.

To achieve this goal were formulated the following **tasks**:

- Analysis of state policy on gender equality in the USSR in the 1920s.
- Clarification of the attitude of the Bolshevik Party members in Central Asia to women's departments and projects for Muslim women emancipation.
- Description of the emancipation methods used by Central Asian women's departments.
- Analysis the interaction of women's departments with scientists for Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia.

Novelty of the topic

The eventful first Soviet decade needs to reflect on the role of institutions that underwent ambiguous transformations. The novelty of this study is:

- to investigate emancipation through the prism of perception of Central Asian women's departments employees, who were the projectors and performers of gender transformations. Therefore, this study is dedicated to the cultural experience and socio-political thought of the Central Asian women's departments employees.

- in using of different types of sources. Their main part consists of the document which produced in Tashkent and Moscow Central Department, which is still poorly introduced into scientific circulation. The corpus of records management of Central Asian women's departments in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), accessible to researchers, was fully studied. Recently, some of the documents have been secret.
- The collected materials make it possible to clarify and supplement knowledge about subjects already existing in historiography; helped to identify unknown interesting incidents; determine the importance of women's departments' cooperation with the local academic community; rethink Khujum.

The theoretical significance of the study lies in the formation of representations in the historical and cultural context of the Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia. Also, it lies in its concept, that the results of the Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia depended on the involvement of women's department employees in the regional cultural life, primarily in the knowledge of indigenous languages. The Muslim women emancipation turned out to be a failed project, because there was no understanding between the various levels of power in Central Asia. The leadership of the republics, rare exceptions, were Europeans who did not know the local languages, and the officials of the middle and lower levels were semi-literate natives. They did not know Russian well, which was the language in which most of the orders were given. Middle and lower-level officials could not understand the aims of gender equality projects, simply because they did not know Russian-language political terminology and its semantic apparatus. The negative attitude of the natives towards the idea of gender equality made it difficult to introduce the new perceptions about the women role in politics, economics, society and culture.

The practical significance of the study is to expand knowledge about the failures and successes of projects to achieve gender equality in the «Orient». This research can be useful for the emergence of inclusive society and gender-neutral labor legislation in the independent states of the Central Asia; creation of didactic

material on contemporary ethics for courses to improve the qualifications for civil servants and workers; further development of the tolerance policy in non-Western societies; development of creative potential, as well as the women security in the region.

Primary historical sources base

The research is based on unpublished sources stored in Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History. These are the documents of the women's departments¹, the Turkestan Bureau (1920-1922)² and the Central Asian Bureau (1922-1936)³, as well as others, which contain information on the solution of the «women's issue» in Central Asia. Not far from all documents have been found in the Moscow archives, but they also contain rich information on the history of the «women's issue». These documents are able to change the perspective of the study of emancipation, which is inherent in Soviet and modern research. Documents from the Moscow archives make it possible to abandon admiration for emancipation and unconditional condemnation. Moscow archives help to form an overall picture of the Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia. When opening free access or publishing documents from Uzbek archives, some of the ideas and conclusions of this study may be adjusted.

There are several types of written sources. The most widespread is paperwork – reports, court cases, summaries. Some reports of women's departments are poorly structured, anonymous and undated. The quality of the paper leaves much to be desired, which makes it difficult or impossible to read some phrases or sheets. Judicial decisions are a source capable of demonstrating the ways in which men in power resist emancipation. In many ways, the decisions of Soviet judges are similar to the proceedings in pre-revolutionary Central Asia⁴. The affairs of the Eastern Department of the Plenipotentiary Representation of the United State Political

¹RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 10.

²RGASPI. F. 61. Op. 1–3.

³RGASPI. F. 62. Op. 1–4.

⁴Paolo Sartori, *Ideji o spravedlivosti: shariat i kul'turnye izmeneniya v russskom Turkestane* / trans. from Eng. D. Daur (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2022).

Administration (OGPU) in Central Asia stand out. Information from this department should be treated with caution, since it had a specific interest in the lives of citizens, political and cultural institutions in the USSR. The reports of agents in the OGPU are an important source on the history of emancipation. The employees of the Tashkent Central department perceived the information from the OGPU as a reflection of the real state of affairs in the region.

Anthropological and ethnographic questionnaires are evidence of an attempt to systematically study of the culture and Muslim women way of life in Central Asian. The ethnographic questionnaires noted the attitude of Muslim women to «household remnants», indicated the type of economic relations, described local traditions and customs. The anthropological questionnaires characterized the appearance of Muslim women, for example, race, body structure, diseases. Such information was collected to prove the perniciousness of the antisocial life of Muslim women and to demonstrate the negative impact on women's reproductive health of religious clothes and «old life».

Additional information about the Muslim women emancipation is provided by the collection of documents «Great October and the Emancipation of Women in Central Asia and Kazakhstan»¹. This edition has significant drawbacks. The collection is formalized and has an obvious ideological orientation – to complement the picture of the successful solution of the «women's issue» in Central Asia in the 1920s–1930s under the Bolshevik Party leadership. Some documents and articles were published with banknotes, which was justified «for reasons of removing repetitions that occur in various documents or secondary information»².

The journalism provides rich material. It is known that from January to March 1924, in «Pravda Vostoka» were published 150 articles and notes by women's department employees³. They were not inclined to idealize emancipation. For the Central Asian women's departments employees, publications in the main newspaper

¹*Velikii Oktyabr' i raskreposhchenie zhenshchin Srednei Azii i Kazahstana (1917–1936 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov.* ed. Z. A. Astapovich (Moscow: Mysl, 1971).

²Ibid: 19.

³RGASPI. F. 62. Op. 2. D. 419. L. 84–95.

of the region were not only an instrument of agitation among Russian-speaking citizens, but also a platform to highlight the problems of implementing the principles of gender equality. The active publication of the Central Asian women's departments employees should be considered as a desire to keep the interest of Soviet citizens and influential party figures in the topic of gender equality. Of course, it cannot be said that the Soviet press was free. It was under the censor's control. «Pravda Vostoka», because it was published on the outskirts of the USSR, was still somewhat freer than «Pravda», which was printed in Moscow. Censorship restrictions in the Central Asian periodicals were weaker¹.

The «Pravda Vostoka» was appeared on November 25, 1924². The newspaper has been published every day except Sundays and holidays and only in Russian. «Pravda Vostoka» contained several sections: editorials talked about current international events or featured speeches by Soviet politicians. The second page was devoted to the foreign East, followed by local news, where articles and notes by women's department employees were published. The editorial office of «Pravda Vostoka» was located in Tashkent, but covered the events of the entire region.

In addition to newspapers, women's department employees had the opportunity to express their opinions in the «Kommunistka» magazine, which was published by the Moscow Central department since 1920. Its executive editor was N. K. Krupskaya. The magazine was published until 1930 for 12 issues per year. The magazine included several headings: issues of organization and propaganda; work in the village; international cooperation; solving the «women's issue» in the «Soviet Orient». The last section was devoted to Central Asia. The «Kommunistka» magazine was not fully agitational and propagandistic, nor was it considered such by the women's departments employees. The magazine was a place to discuss the successes and failures of emancipation in the USSR.

¹Najdzhel Raab, *I vsyo sodrognulos': stihii nye bedstviya i katastrofy v Sovetskom Soyuze*. trans. from Eng. A. Chyornogo (Saint-Petersburg: Academic Studies Press, 2021), 111–112.

²«Nasha gazeta», *Pravda Vostoka*. May 6, 1927, no. 100: 4.

S. T. Lyubimova was actively published in the «Kommunistka» magazine. According to some estimates, during her leadership of the Tashkent Central department, she published 13 articles in the «Kommunistka» about Muslim women of Turkestan and the Uzbek SSR¹. In this study, for the first time, it was possible to collect all the known S. T. Lyubimova papers. After returning to Moscow, she continued to follow the progress of the Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia for some time². Leaving Tashkent had a bad effect on S. T. Lyubimova's political career, but a positive effect on scientific. S. T. Lyubimova lost her position as a leading expert on the region and an important link between the Central Asia women's departments and the Moscow Central department. Later, she held minor nomenclature positions in Kaluga and the Jewish Autonomous Region. In 1928 she was sent to inspect the activities of women's departments among Tatars, Bashkirs and Chuvash. Then S. T. Lyubimova stopped delving into the women's departments in Central Asia³.

¹Serafima Lyubimova, “Rabota na Vostoke,” *Kommunistka*, no. 3–4 (1923): 27–29; Idem. “K itogam soveshchaniya po rabote sredi zhenshchin vostochnyh narodnostej,” *Kommunistka*, no. 5 (1923): 11–12; Idem. “Eshche shag na puti k raskreposhcheniyu. Mezhdunarodnyi den' v stranah sovetskogo Vostoka,” *Kommunistka*, no. 6 (1923): 32–34; Idem. “Nashi sily,” *Kommunistka*, no. 9 (1923): 37–39; Idem. “Vostok,” *Kommunistka*, no. 11 (1923): 28–30; Idem. “Pis'ma iz Turkestana,” *Kommunistka*, no. 1–2 (1924): 40–41; Idem. “Na Vostoke,” *Kommunistka*, no. 3 (1924): 13; Idem. “Rabota sredi zhenshchin v Turkestane,” *Kommunistka*, no. 7 (1924): 20–21; Idem. “Kursy volostnyh organizatorov,” *Kommunistka*, no. 10 (1924): 49; Idem. “Na puti k raskreposhcheniyu. K 5-letiyu raboty zhenotdelov v Srednei Azii,” *Kommunistka*, no. 12 (1924): 36–39; Idem. “Po Srednei Azii,” *Kommunistka*, no. 4 (1926): 56–59; Idem. “Zhenskie lavki v Srednei Azii,” *Kommunistka*, no. 7 (1926): 70–72; Idem. “Bor'ba na ideologicheskom fronte,” *Kommunistka*, no. 9 (1926): 74–75.

²Serafima Lyubimova, “Pervoe Vsesoyuznoe soveshchanie rabotnikov zhenskih klubov,” *Kommunistka*, no. 1 (1927): 28–33; Idem. “Vos'moe marta na Vostoke,” *Kommunistka*, no. 2 (1927): 50–52; Idem. “O kooperirovani zhenshchin vostochnyh narodnostei,” *Kommunistka*, no. 5 (1927): 51–53; Idem. “K byudzhetu 1927/28 goda,” *Kommunistka*, no. 6 (1927): 23–25; Idem. “Zakonodatel'stvo o nakazuemosti bytovyh prestuplenii,” *Kommunistka*, no. 9 (1927): 12–15; Idem. “Vostok k desyatiletiiyu Oktyabrya,” *Kommunistka*, no. 10 (1927): 55–61; Idem. “Vsesoyuznyi s'ezd rabotnic i krest'yanok i rabota sredi zhenshchin Vostoka,” *Kommunistka*, no. 11 (1927): 73–77; Idem. “8 marta na Vostoke,” *Kommunistka*, no. 2 (1928): 83–86; Idem. “Vsesoyuznoe soveshchanie komissii po uluchsheniyu truda i byta zhenshchin,” *Kommunistka*, no. 3 (1928): 58–61; Idem. “Na nekotorye temy k soveshchaniyu,” *Kommunistka*, no. 7 (1928): 78–82; Idem. “Dekret o chadre i obshchestvo «Doloi kalym i mnogozhenstvo»,” *Kommunistka*, no. 8 (1928): 73–78; Idem. “Bol'nye voprosy,” *Kommunistka*, no. 10 (1928): 62–64.

³Serafima Lyubimova, “Rabota sredi zhenshchin Tatarii,” *Kommunistka*, no. 7 (1927): 72–76; Idem. “Krest'yanki Chuvashskoi respubliki,” *Kommunistka*, no. 5 (1928): 66–68.

S. T. Lyubimova was the author of numerous brochures and handbook. In one of the first brochure, «Kommunist!»¹ she called for the introduction of new standards of social hygiene and child care, which were unusual for the indigenous inhabitants of the region. Almost simultaneously, the brochure «Sdvigi»² was published, which can be considered the most successful. The «Sdvigi» describe the manifestations of men's cruelty towards Muslim women, and provide evidence of their servile position. In 1925, S. T. Lyubimova published a historical and ethnographic brochure «Kak zhivut i rabotayut zhenshini v Sredney Azii»³. Its purpose was to tell about the cultural diversity of the region, the complexity of its socio-economic conditions, the businesses of Muslim women, the way of life, the legal situation before and after the October Revolution.

In 1926, was published the propaganda brochure «Za noviy byt»⁴. It was anti-religious and directed against the *ulama* (Muslim jurists) paper. They, as S. T. Lyubimova claimed, opposed the women's departments, wanting to lured Muslim women who had embarked on the Sovietization path. The brochure justified the need for a Khujum. In 1928, was published the propaganda brochure «Rabota partii sredi truzhenits Vostoka»⁵. In its S. T. Lyubimova criticized the course of Khujum and the attitude of the Uzbek Communists to this campaign, as well as summed up its disappointing results. S. T. Lyubimova's propaganda brochures are diverse, demonstrate positive developments and negative consequences of the Muslim women emancipation, highlight the shortcomings of party work and the problems faced by women's department employees in Central Asia. Under the authorship of S. T. Lyubimova was published, a handbook for Central Asian women's departments

¹Serafima Lyubimova, *Kommunist! Esli ty ne hochesh', chtoby tvoj narod vymiral, esli ty dejstvitel'no zaborish'sya o razviti narodnogo hozyajstva i kul'tury, esli ty ne baj, ne mulla i ne podderzhivaesh' mull i baev – ty dolzhen rabotat' po raskreposhcheniyu zhenshchin* (Tashkent: Izd. zhenotdela Sredazbyuro, 1925).

²Serafima Lyubimova, *Sdvigi* (Tashkent: Uzgosisdat, 1925).

³Serafima Lyubimova, *Kak zhivut i rabotayut zhenshchiny Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926).

⁴Serafima Lyubimova, *Za novyi byt* (Tashkent: Sredazkniga, 1926).

⁵Serafima Lyubimova, *Rabota partii sredi truzhenic Vostoka* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

employees «Teoriya i praktika raboty partii sredi zhenzhin»¹. The handbook was compiled at the request of the II regional meeting of heads of women's departments delegates (October 1924) to eliminate the theoretical illiteracy of local personnel. Initially, the handbook was published only in Russian, but in 1926 it was translated into the languages of the indigenous peoples.

Were also discovered a personal source – this is a published diary by S. T. Lyubimova², autobiographies of Muslim and European women who collaborated with women's departments, as well as memoirs. The autobiographies were compiled in 1925. In its, there is no reflection of the past by women's departments employees, there are no assessments of the women status before the October Revolution. Autobiographies are stored in the RGASPI in typewritten Russian-language copies. The diary of S. T. Lyubimova was born in 1926. In her diary, she described everyday life, acquaintance with Central Asian colleagues, the negative attitude of indigenous people towards women's departments, and some incidents. The diary is published with banknotes. It could have passed a censorship filter before publication. S. T. Lyubimova's diary should rather be considered as memoirs written on the basis of a diary, since it does not divide into days, weeks and months, and the time of records creation is not reflected.

There are many memories of women's department employees. The collection of memoirs «Za pyat let» is the earliest, it was published in 1925 in Moscow under the editorship of S. T. Lyubimova³. The main theme of the collection was the pre-revolutionary Central Asian women's organizations and the emergence of women's departments. The memories of the Central Asian women's departments employees were created in February 1930⁴. They do not show the position of a person who carried out emancipation with his own hands, but reflect the party's attitude – the

¹Serafima Lyubimova, *Teoriya i praktika raboty partii sredi zhenshchin. Posobie dlya kursov po podgotovke rabotnikov sredi zhenshchin Srednei Azii* (Tashkent: Turkpechat', 1925).

²Serafima Lyubimova, *Dnevnik zhenotdelki* (Tashkent: Sredazkniga, 1926).

³*Za pyat let. Sbornik po voprosam raboty kommunisticheskoy partii sredi zhenshin Srednei Azii.* ed. zhenotdel Sredazbyuro CK RKP (Moscow: Centralnoe izdatelstvo narodov SSSR, 1925).

⁴RGASPI F. 62. Op. 2. D. 2442. 18 l.

«women's issue» in Central Asia and the USSR has been successfully resolved. In fairness, it should be noted that in these memoirs one can find interesting data that reveal unknown episodes in the history of Central Asian women's departments.

In 1958, S. T. Lyubimova published memoirs of her work as the head of the Tashkent Central department¹. In 1959, was published another collection of memoirs «Zhenzhiny v revolutsii»², in which were printed S. T. Lyubimova's impressions of Central Asia. In 1967, S. T. Lyubimova, in collaboration with historian E. I. Bochkareva, published memoirs about the solution of the «women's issue» in the USSR, which were timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Khujum³. In the memoirs of the 1950s – 1960s, there was also a Soviet narrative about the successful Muslim women emancipation in Central Asia. But when reading, it is easy to find evidence of the difficult socio-political and psychological conditions in which the women's departments employees were lived.

The methodological basis

The research is at the intersection of several methodological optics – institutional, social, cultural and gender history, which complement the orientalism and occidentalism concepts. The study of the «Soviet Orient» is directly related to the orientalist discourse that was inherent in European intellectuals and officials. «Orientalism» is a representation of the Orient, invented by science, literature, art in Europe and the USA⁴. Orientalism is associated with the romanticization, exoticism and eroticism of the Orient, filled with ideas about people shrouded in fatalism, constantly staying in idleness. On the other hand, in the representations of Europeans, «Oriental societies» are characterized as uncivilized, lagging behind the material and spiritual benefits of the West, not striving for progress⁵. The concept of

¹Serafima Lyubimova, *V pervye gody: o rabote kommunisticheskoi partii po raskreposheniyu zhenshin Sovetskogo Vostoka* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1958).

²*Zhenshiny v revolyucii: sb. vospominanii* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959).

³Ekaterina Bochkareva, Serafima Lyubimova, *Svetlyj put. Kommunisticheskaya partiya sovetskogo soyuza – borec za svobodu, ravnopravie i schaste zhenshin* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1967).

⁴Edward Said. *Orientalizm. Zapadnye koncepcii Vostoka*. trans. from Eng. A. V. Govorunova: vol 2. (Saint-Petersburg: Russkij Mir", 2016): 25–66.

⁵Svetlana Gorshenina, Orientalism, Postcolonial and Decolonial Frames on Central Asia: Theoretical Relevance and Applicability. *The European Handbook of Central Asian Studies*.

orientalism has gained success among orientalists who work within the framework of postcolonial studies. It became applicable to colonial and Soviet Central Asia¹. The works of M. Kemper , V. Tolz , S. N. Abashin , D. Schemmelpennik van der Oye can be called significant in the understanding of Russian and Soviet orientalism.

In addition to the Orientalist, there is also an occidentalist discourse. There are incomparably fewer works about occidentalism and it is more difficult to make sense of it. The inhabitants of the «Eastern societies» left almost no sources in which they characterized the culture of the Europeans/colonizers. If such exist, they are created in local languages that contemporary scientists often do not know. Occidentalism does not have its «ancestor», i.e. there is no separate conceptual work that would formulate an analytical language. Occidentalism is the opposite of orientalism. These are representations of European culture by non-Western societies through the prism of stereotypes that exist, as a rule, in oral culture. As E. Steiner writes, «occidentalism is usually colored by the hostile perception of Asian, Arabian, African and other societies of Western culture»².

Theses, presenting for the defense

- The history of solving the «women's issue» in the early Soviet period allows us to get away from the representation of the Bolsheviks as radical revolutionaries. But they wanted to radically modernize only the political and economic segment of the state system, at the same time they were culturally conservative, especially when expanding the rights and freedoms of women. Temporary and

History, Politics, and Societies., eds. by Jeroen J.J. Van den Bosch, Adrien Fauve, Bruno J. De Cordier (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2021): 175–246.

¹Adib Khalid, *Rossiiskaya istoriya i spor ob orientalizme. Rossiiskaya imperiya v zarubezhnoi istoriografii. Raboty poslednih let: antologiya.*, eds. P. Vert, P. S. Kabytov, A. I. Miller (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2005): 311–323; Nait N, *O russkom orientalizme: otvet Adibu Khalidu in Rossiiskaya imperiya v zarubezhnoi istoriografii. Raboty poslednih let: antologiya:* 324–344; Todorova M, *Est' li russkaya dusha u russkogo orientalizma? Dopolnenie k sporu Natanielya Naita i Adiba Khalida in Rossiiskaya imperiya v zarubezhnoi istoriografii. Raboty poslednih let: antologiya:* 345–359; *Orientalizm vs orientalistika: sb. statej.* eds. V. O. Bobrovnikov, S. Dzh. Miri (Moscow: Sadra, 2016).

²Evgenij Shteiner, *Vostok, Zapad i orientalizm: mesto vostokovedeniya v globaliziruyushchemsya mire. Orientalizm/Oksidentalizm: yazyki kul'tur i yazyki ih opisaniya = Orientalism/Occidentalism: Languages of Culture vs. Languages of Description: Coll. papers / Ros. in-t kul'turologii;* ed.: E. S. Sstejner (Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2012): 14–24.

declarative achievements of gender equality in the 1920s became possible by the activity of A.M. Kollontai and her comrades, who managed to consolidate in various documents the widest possible understanding of emancipation. The women's departments were constantly under pressure from socio-political and other circumstances, constantly teetering on the verge of closure, since few of the Bolsheviks supported the project of total equality of men and women in the USSR.

- From 1923 to 1927, women's departments were not only institutions that engaged in the comprehensive emancipation of Muslim women in Central Asia, but began to increasingly claim the role of interpersonal relations regulator between men and women. The male urban population, who expressed a desire to integrate into the Soviet reality, gradually began to accept the increased activity of women in the economy and culture, as well as correlate their actions with the moral imperatives promoted by the women's departments. Often, indigenous people used the principles of gender equality situationally, usually in their personal interests, for example, when interacting with the authorities, who demanded respect for women's rights and freedoms. However, the indigenous people have not become guided by the principles of gender equality in their daily lives.
- The main opponents of Khujum were not «counter-revolutionaries» and other «enemies of the Soviet system», but Muslim communists and Komsomol members, judges and police officers. It was they who, possessing material and administrative resources, as well as authority, sabotaged the campaign to respect the rights and freedoms of Muslim women.
- The essence of Khujum was not to rid Muslim women of the veil, but in strict compliance by the Communists with Soviet legislation on gender equality. Due to the lack of a common language of communication between the leadership of the Central Asian Bureau with the middle and lower levels of the Bolshevik party cells, the Muslim Communists mistakenly interpreted the aims of Khujum, reducing the campaign to liquidate the veil. On the other hand, it can

be assumed that the Muslim communists deliberately distorted the essence of Khujum in order to provoke general discontent and disobedience to the authorities, thereby forcing them to stop the campaign. Thus, Khujum turned into a protest of the middle and lower levels of the Bolshevik Party against the policy of gender equality and an act of intimidation of women's departments.

- In fact, the Central Asian women's departments ceased to exist in 1928, when, after the failure of Khujum and many victims among women, began a «Retreat» – an unspoken departure of the Bolshevik party from the secular principles of emancipation in favor of preserving the traditional norms of interaction between men and women in the family, everyday life and society.

Degree of reliability of the dissertation

The degree of reliability of the dissertation is determined by a wide range of sources selected in accordance with the goals and objectives, which formed the source base of the research. The results of the dissertation research formed the basis for 3 reports at interuniversity scientific seminars at MGIMO, HSE and the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies named Abu Rayhan Beruni; 2 open lectures for employees of the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies named Abu Rayhan Beruni, the Youth Parliament of the Uzbekistan Republic and the Commission on Education, Science, Culture and Tourism of the Uzbekistan Republic, as well as on the Moscow discussion platform of Lomonosov Moscow State University dedicated to gender studies; at the one winter school, which was held in Tashkent under the Ministry of Family and Mahalla and the Institute for Family and Gender Studies; including at 3 international conferences in Tashkent and Moscow, which were organized by the Ministry of Family and Mahalla and the Institute for the Study of Family and Gender, as well as the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

2019: The Caucasus in the Past and Present: Society and Politics, Economics and Culture (Moscow). Report: Bobrovnikov V. O., Melentev D. V. Ethnographic Photography and Eroticism in Russian Turkestan and the Caucasus (1860s - 1910s).

2020: Cross-cultural Interactions: Muslims in Russia (Moscow). Report: Imagining the Muslim women Emancipation in Soviet Turkestan: Cross-cultural Aspects of Gender Modernization.

Lecture Hall in the Union of Young Scientists of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Sciences Academy of the Uzbekistan Republic together with the Agency for Youth Affairs of the Uzbekistan Republic and the Youth Parliament together with the Commission on Education, Science, Culture and Tourism of the Uzbekistan Republic (Tashkent). Report: Government, Women's Departments and the Personal Space of Soviet Central Asian Muslims.

2021: International Scientific and Practical Conference Dedicated to the International Family Day - May 15, 2021: «Current Directions for Strengthening the Institution of the Family: National and Foreign Experience» (Tashkent). Report: Current Problems of the Family Institution in Uzbekistan: the Search for a Balance between Gender Equality and National Values.

Scientific Seminar «Bilimkent» at the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Sciences Academy of the Uzbekistan Republic (Tashkent). Report: «The Craft of the Historian» in the Age of Turns: on the Analytical Expansion of Historical Research.

Open Discussion on the Political and Cultural Aspects of Women's Emancipation in the Orient (Moscow). Report: The Emancipation of Muslim women in Soviet Central Asia: from the Liberalization of the 1920s to the Conservatism of the 1930s.

«Izhtimoi bosim – esh olimlar nigoida» mavzsidagi kishki maktab («Social Pressure in the Eyes of Young Scientists» – winter school) (Tashkent). Report: Cultural History of Discrimination Against Muslim Women in Imperial and Soviet Central Asia: Traditions vs Modernity;

2022: II All-Russian Scientific Conference «Oriental Field Research» (Moscow). Report: Oriental Studies in the Women's Departments of Central Asia in the 1920s (Based on the New Archival Materials).

2023: III All-Russian Scientific Conference «Oriental Field Research» (Moscow).

Report: Anthropological and Medical Field Studies of the Women's Departments in Central Asia in the 1920s.

Structure and summary

The structure of the dissertation was created in accordance with the set purpose and objectives. The research consists of an introduction, 5 chapters, conclusion, list of sources and literature. Chapter I «**Bolshevik Antifeminism**» is an overview and is devoted to examines the views of Bolshevik Party representatives on the creation of a special women's organization in the USSR. As it turned out, there were few supporters of this idea. The bulk of the Bolsheviks were opposed to the women's departments, creating difficulties for the work of their employees, ignoring the laws on gender equality. The most famous example is the conflict between women's departments and trade unions.

Chapter II «**The Formation of Central Asian Women's Departments**» is devoted to the history of emancipation before Khujum. The chapter is divided into 5 paragraphs and opens with the section «*Women at the Ages*», which tells about the history of the emergence of pre-revolutionary women's organizations in the region. They arose spontaneously, without the moral and material support of the authorities. In paragraph 2, «*The Women's Issue and the Political Context*», we are talking about the short period from the February Revolution to 1920, when there was a surge in political activity of various religious and political groups in Central Asia. In addition to the issue of the region status, religious and political groups also addressed the «women's issue».

Paragraph 3 – «*The Emancipation Projects of the “Oriental Women”*» refers to the basic principles of the activities of women's departments among Muslims. They largely repeated what was practiced in the RSFSR. At the same time, the Moscow Central department was aware of the complexity and heterogeneity of Central Asia. Therefore, it stressed that women's departments in the Muslim suburbs should conduct careful campaigning for gender equality. The first project for the emancipation of women in Central Asia appeared in 1921. According to it, among

Muslim women, the women's departments had to eradicate «household remnants», and among European women «colonizatorstvo».

In paragraph 4, «*Difficulties of Muslim women Emancipation*», is paid attention to the administrative and socio-cultural problems of Central Asian women's departments, for example, their weak human resources or the «language issue». The creation of new republics in connection with gender policy was also considered. In the short period from 1924 to 1926, the Central Asian women's departments experienced a dawn. Paragraph 5 – «*Women's Departments on the Central Asian Outskirts*» casts doubt on the widespread opinion in historiography that all indigenous women who agreed to cooperate with women's departments were marginalized. The paragraph makes it clear that not only Muslim women who could not fit into a patriarchal society, but also women who made a conscious choice.

Chapter III is called «**The Struggle for the “Practical Emancipation” of Muslim Women in Central Asia**», consists of 5 paragraphs and is devoted to Khujum, as well as its consequences. Paragraph 1 – «*The Controversy about the Role of Women's Departments*» demonstrates how the paradigm shift of emancipation. Soviet party elite came to the conclusion that women's departments should only help Muslim women realize their rights in the legislation, but they will not be able to forcibly change their worldview until the indigenous women want it themselves. At the same time, the work of the women's department begins to become more bureaucratic, which happens at the suggestion of party functionaries, who thereby wanted to reduce the practical benefits of emancipation, to separate the women's department employees from their target audience. Paragraph 2 – «*The Pivotal Point*» is devoted to this process.

Paragraph 3 – «*The Important Decision*», reveals the logic of the leadership of the Central Asian Bureau of making a decision on extraordinary measures to liberate. It is proved that the heads of the Tashkent Central department realized that Khujum would lead to victims. The women's departments had no allies among the officials except in the OGPU in Central Asia. The main opponents of emancipation were not

the Ulama, namely Muslim communists, Komsomol members, police officers, as well as other representatives of the Soviet government.

Paragraph 4 – «*Offensive*» is dedicated directly to Khujum. It clearly follows from this paragraph that the employees of the women's departments and the European party members considered the elimination of the veil a dangerous matter for the Soviet government and the Muslim women themselves, and therefore secondary. The primary tasks were political mobilization, labor socialization, education, and compliance with Soviet legislation. The Uzbek party members, who were afraid of losing high positions, thought otherwise. Disorganization and misunderstanding between the upper and lower echelons of government led to an upsurge in violence in the Uzbek SSR. The «*Offensive*» quickly turned into a «*Retreat*», as described in section 5. The «*Retreat*» crossed out all the achievements of women's departments in the fight for gender equality in the region.

Chapter IV – «**Emancipation Methods of Central Asian Muslim women**», is divided into 5 paragraphs. The first paragraph, «*Agitation is the Core of Emancipation*», talks about it was divided into «artistic» and oral, stationary and mobile. Unlike the Central Asian employees, the Moscow ones considered the participation of Muslim women in delegate movement, which is the subject of paragraph 2. Another method was labor. But, as shown in paragraph 3, this method has not justified itself. The employees of the Central Asian women's departments considered enlightenment to be the main method of emancipation, which they proposed to understand as broadly as possible, as discussed in paragraph 4. This method had an extensive infrastructure, for example, women's clubs. The struggle for the modernization of medical care for Muslim women. In paragraph 5 – «*Women's Departments and the Protection of the Civil Rights of Muslim women*», an analysis of attempts to modernize marriage, family and household relations of natives. The women's departments sought to remove marital and family relations from the influence of Adat and Sharia.

The last – V chapter – «**The Scientific Approach in Central Asian Women's Departments**», is divided into 5 paragraphs and is devoted to the practical

application of the knowledge of the local scientific community for the emancipation of Muslim women. The purpose of this activity was to study of life and worldview of Muslim women in order to fill the agitation of women's departments with «objective» scientific facts. Paragraph 1 – «Ethnography» reveals the plot of the appeal of the employees of the Tashkent Central department to the expert assessment of a former official of the Turkestan General-governor, who believed that Kyrgyz/Kazakh women should not be liberated, and it was high time for the *Sarts* (Uzbek) women, because they are oppressed by Sharia. The second plot of this section is «questioning». As it turned out, Muslim women in different parts of the region were quite satisfied with their legal status. In paragraph 2 – «*Orientalism*», is analyzed the appeal of employees of the Tashkent Central department to the pre-revolutionary works of ethnographers, orientalists, travelers and colonial administrators.

In paragraph 3 – «*Oriental Studies*», talking about why the Tashkent Central department turned for help to the orientalists: A. E. Schmidt, A. A. Divaev, M. S. Andreev and others. No one besides A. E. Schmidt wanted to answer questions. However, his response most likely supported the prevailing orientalist perception of indigenous people by women's department. Plot 4 – «*Physical Anthropology*» tells how the Tashkent Central department and the anthropologists of the SAGU in 1925 developed a project to study the indigenous inhabitants. In paragraph 5 – «*Medicine Against the Veil and Prejudice*», talking about the cooperation between Tashkent Central department with doctors to counter the local traditional medicine (*tabibs*). S. T. Lyubimova and Soviet doctors tried through agitation to prove to the indigenous people the harmful effect of the veil on the reproductive health of Muslim women.

The author's publications in journals included in the high-level list prepared at the Higher School of Economics and indexed in Scopus databases

1. Melentev, Daniil V. “Rol Glavnogo Vakufnogo Upravleniya v sovetizacii musulmanskogo obrazovaniya i stanovlenii sovetsoj seti shkol v Turkestane” [The Role of the Waqf Supreme Office in the Sovietization of Muslim Education and the Establishment of the Soviet School Network in Turkestan] *Islamology* 8, no. 1 (2018): 57–77. (HSE University D list)

2. Melentev, Daniil V. “Etnografiya i erotika v Russkom Turkestane” [Ethnography and Eroticism in Russian Turkestan] *Gosudarstvo, religiya, cerkov v Rossii i za rubezhom* 38, no. 2 (2020): 308–344. (*Scopus*)
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