

Turkestan Mission - Defunct

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Valeriy N. Nazimko, B.A. in theology (Zaoksky Theological Seminary, Zaoksky, Tula Region, Russia), served as executive secretary of the Southern Union Mission, and then president and executive secretary of the Kyrgyz Mission. At present, he is a retiree.

Dmitry O. Yunak graduated in Finance and Economics from a Soviet secular educational institution and completed a six-year course of Theology at an underground SDA Theological Institute (Moldova, USSR). In the Soviet times, he served as a pastor, administrator, and bible/history professor in the underground Theological Institute. In 1990, he was appointed as Treasurer and Publishing Ministries Director for the USSR Division. After the Euro-Asia Division was organized in 1991, Dmitry O. Yunak served as ESD auditor and under treasurer. He was the author of a dozen of SDA history books and scores of other publications. He owns a major SDA history archive.

The Turkestan Mission was a church unit in Central Asia that operated from 1909 to 1925, when it became the Central Asian Conference.

Territory and Statistics¹

Period: 1909–1925

Territory: The Fergana, Samarkand, Syr-Daria, and Transcaspian Oblasts (and the Khiva Khanate and the Emirate of Bokhara until c. 1920)

Membership: 247

Churches: 7

Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Territory

The Adventist message came to Kyrgyzstan in 1891 through German colonists, when Georg Otto moved with his family from the Volga region to the village of Orlovka. Other Adventist families also settled in the village. The first official reference to Adventists in Turkestan dates to 1906, when Philipp Trippel moved to the territory and began his ministry there. He was the first Adventist minister who served in the villages of Orlovka and Kalininsk and the regional city of Talas. As the years went by Adventist congregations emerged in other German settlements such as Johannesdorf and Staperfeld.²

The first Adventists appeared in southern Kazakhstan in the late nineteenth century in the village of Konstantinovka (now Derbisek village, Shymkent Region), 25 kilometers from Tashkent. There they gave pamphlets to several German families, who started keeping the Sabbath. After some time congregations were

organized in Auliye-Ata (now Taraz) and other towns. The oldest published data about believers in Kazakhstan appeared in the Russian Union report for the second quarter of 1908 under “East Russian Mission Field”: Auliye-Ata (now Taraz), 24 believers and 36 Sabbath School members.

In 1909 Heinrich J. Löbsack traveled from Siberia through Semipalatinsk and Auliye-Ata on his way to Tashkent. He organized a church with eighteen members in Semipalatinsk, ten of whom were Germans and eight Russians. Tittel from Rudnya, Saratov Region, was invited to serve there as an elder.³

Organizational History

By 1907, “Asiatic Russia” was included in the East Russian Mission.⁴ This probably included Central Asia as well. The territory became its own field the next year, when the Central Asian Mission was accepted or organized at the Russian Union meeting in Moscow, March 18–29, 1909. The church unit was dated back to January 1 of that year. The Russian Union administrated the mission.⁵ Its territory was Central Asia, the Emirate of Bokhara, and the Khanate of Khiva.⁶ By 1911 it had been renamed the Turkestan Mission. In addition to Bokhara and Khiva, its territory was described as the Fergana, Samarkand, and Syr-Daria Oblasts.⁷

In 1912 the Transcaspian Oblast was added to the territory, and the mission was assigned to the Siberian Union.⁸

In 1913 the mission was listed among the detached missions of the European Division.⁹ In 1916, the mission was assigned to the West Russian Union.¹⁰ In 1917 the Mission was again listed among the detached Missions.¹¹ In 1920, the Mission was assigned to the Levant Union Mission.¹²

In 1921 and 1922 the mission was not listed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. In 1923 the mission was assigned to the Caspian Union in the All-Russia Federation of Seventh-day Adventists. The headquarters was now at Novo-Moskovskaia ulica meshdu Stepnoi i Galizinskoi, Armavir, Kuban District.¹³ The Khiva Khanate and the Emirate of Bokhara were missing from the territory description. The USSR had dissolved both in 1920 and changed them to People’s Soviet Republics, neither of which appears anywhere in the *Yearbook*. In 1925 the two Republics were changed into the Uzbek and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics.

In 1925 the mission was assigned to the East Russian Union. The address was a postbox in Samara.¹⁴ In 1926 the Turkestan Mission was dissolved and the Central Asian Conference was organized. The new conference comprised Central Asia and belonged to the East Russian Union.¹⁵

List of Presidents

Central Asian Mission Advisory Committee and Ministers, 1909.

Turkestan Mission Advisory Committee and Ministers, 1910–1913.

Turkestan Mission President: B. Schmidt, 1914–20; no listing, 1921–1922; H. Ostwald, 1923–1924; G. Arnholdt, 1925.

SOURCES

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Böttcher, J. T. "Russia." *ARH*, May 13, 1909, 19.

Nazimko, Valeriy N. "Kyrgyz Mission." Manuscript, June 2019.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1909–1927.

Yunak, Dmitry. "Southern Kazakhstan Mission." Manuscript, December 2017.

NOTES

1. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, (1924), 110.
2. This paragraph is from Valeriy Nazimko's article, "Kyrgyz Mission," Manuscript, June 2019.
3. Dmitry Yunak, "Southern Kazakhstan Mission," Manuscript, December 2017.
4. "East Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1908), 113.
5. Sophie Bojanus, "Sitzung des Unionausschusses in Moskau," *Zions-Wächter*, April 19, 1909, 130; J. T. Böttcher, "Russia," *ARH*, May 13, 1909, 19.
6. "Central Asian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1910), 109.
7. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1911), 111.
8. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1912), 120.
9. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1913), 124.
10. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1916), 124.
11. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1917), 135.
12. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1920), 149.
13. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1923), 108.

14. "Turkestan Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1925), 121.

15. "Central Asian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1927), 144.

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