



## THE FATE OF CHARLES STODDART AND ARTHUR CONOLLY IN BUKHARA

**Tojiyev Bobur Toshpoyonovich**

*3rd year doctoral student of the Uzbek State University of World Languages*

*tel: +998919583532*

*e.mail: tojiyevbobur1@gmail.com*

Legends about the inexhaustible riches of India have always attracted the attention of many rulers, merchants and tourists of the world. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the great European imperial powers: Great Britain, Russia and France, competed with each other to bring India into their sphere of influence. Great Britain conquered Bengal in 1757 and began to colonize the rest of India. In Russia, from the time of Emperor Peter I, a movement began to bring India into the sphere of influence of the empire, and Russia expanded its borders to the south. This movement was not realized due to the wars waged by the Russian emperors in Europe, the fact that India was located very far from the empire and the lack of complete information about the roads. However, these efforts of the Russian Empire were not in vain and it subjugated the countries of Central Asia. In 1807, the Treaty of Tilsit was signed between the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and the Russian Emperor Alexander I. According to this treaty, they agreed to impose a continental blockade on Great Britain, attack India, and conquer the world and divide it into two. Naturally, this situation did not leave Great Britain, which was firmly established in India, uneasy. To prevent this, Great Britain and its colonial government in India began to send their specially trained spies to the countries located north of India: Punjab, Afghanistan, the Emirate of Bukhara, the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand, in the guise of ambassadors, merchants, travelers, and dervishes. The task of these spies was to map the routes to these countries, study the military potential of these countries, establish relations between their rulers and Great Britain, warn of the danger coming from the north, and, if necessary, invite English military experts and advisers to increase the military power of these countries. Despite the outbreak of war between Russia and France in 1812 and the defeat of Napoleon at the threshold of Moscow, a new threat arose for India. It was the Russian Empire, which defeated the invincible Napoleon and freed Europe from him. A struggle began between Great Britain and Russia to include the territories from the north of India to the southern borders of the Russian Empire in their spheres of influence. This struggle went down in history under the name "The Great Game". The participants of this game, Charles Stoddart and Captain Connolly, were executed by the ruler of the Bukhara state, Amir Nasrullah Khan, in Bukhara Sharif in 1842. While the Anglo-Afghan War was ongoing, Charles Stoddart first arrived in





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Bukhara Sharif in 1838 as an ambassador. He was tasked with "ensuring that Great Britain would not be afraid of an attack on Afghanistan, freeing Russian slaves who would be used as a pretext for an attack on St. Petersburg, and maintaining the prospect of friendly relations between Britain and Bukhara."<sup>39</sup>

The arrival of Charles Stoddart to Bukhara Sharif, his two visits to the emir, his conversation with the emir, and his imprisonment are described in the work "History of Turkestan" by Mirzo Alim Makhdum Haji. "In 1254 AH, 1838 AD, Colonel Sutud Dorat/Stoddart came to Bukhara Sharif as an ambassador from the British government to Amir Nasrullah Khan. From that time on, the British government, for the first time, intended and promised to maintain friendly relations with the government of Transoxiana. At that time, the British had entered Afghanistan after waging war with the Afghans. The mission and purpose of the ambassador, Sutud Dorat, was to convince the emir that the British would not cause any ill will or harm, and to protect and defend these countries from the aggression and aggression of another state, namely Russia. At the same time, if the emir wished and considered it appropriate, he would arm the Bukhara army with heavy and rapid artillery, provide military instructors, and inform the Bukhara government about the Russian secret operation. Amir Nasrullah received the British ambassador in his presence twice, treated him well, and then returned his good treatment. Colonel Sutud Dorat was not a soft politician who received his education in the mirzokhona and the secretarial office, but a brave, tough and sharp man who received his military education. For this reason, he paid too much attention to the old customs of Bukhara and did not put his mind to it. He would always watch the Bukhara bazaars from the embassy. Most of the time, when the cavalry rode through the Arki Oli square, that is, the Registan, the people of the city did not dismount, according to custom. However, when passing in front of the Arki Oli, where the emir stood, they would dismount out of respect for the emir. The British military administrator was either unaware of these old customs of Bukhara or did not attach due importance to these procedures. Whatever happened, Emir Nasrullah became angry and ordered the ambassador to be imprisoned"<sup>40</sup>.

The British could not do anything other than diplomatic action to save Charles Stoddart. They urged the rulers of Russia, Turkey, Iran, Khiva and Kokand to write letters to Emir Nasrullah to save Stoddart, but these letters also failed to free him from the emir's prison. As Mirzo Alim Makhdum Haji's "History of Turkestan" states, "Having learned of this matter, the British government appealed to the Russian state and demanded that Colonel Sutud Dorat be released and sent to the Afghan border through the Russian administrator Mr. Butakuf/Butakov, who had been sent to Bukhara on other

<sup>39 39</sup> Peter Hopkirk "The Great Game", - London. 1990. 191 page

<sup>40</sup> Мирзо Олим Махдумхожи. "Тарихи Туркистон". – Т.: Янги аср авлоди, 2009. – 189 p.







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advice. Mr. Butakuf was ordered by Petrograd to this effect. But Emir Nasrullah Khan did not listen to the Russian request either"<sup>41</sup>.

The British could not risk military action to save one person. Because in Afghanistan, they had to leave their main forces in Afghanistan to maintain the government of Shah Shuju, Shah Shuju was not able to maintain power, and if the British left this place to Shuju, the Afghans could expect a rebellion and remove him from power. In addition, it was only two years since the British started the first Opium War with China.

In 1839, the Russian emperor Perovskiy sent a military expedition to the Khiva Khanate, which also awakened the Emir of Bukhara. The Emir corresponded with McNachten, the representative of the British government in Kabul, with the aim of concluding an agreement with the British against the Russians, which gave Stoddart some hope of freedom from the clutches of the Emir. However, when Perovskiy's expedition failed, his hopes were dashed.

Arthur Conolly traveled from Kabul to the Khiva Khanate on September 3, 1840, to end the war between the Emirate of Bukhara, the Khiva, and the Kokand Khanates and encourage them to unite against the Russians<sup>42</sup>. Captain Conolly's arrival in the Uzbek states and his capture by Emir Nasrullah Khan is described in the work "History of Turkestan". "When the khans were at war with each other, the British government sent Colonel Sutud Dorat and Mr. Mayur Konolly/Conolly to Khiva as an ambassador to Khokand to establish friendly relations. After the British ambassador arrived in Bukhara, Captain Konolly first went to Khiva, then traveled by foreign roads to Khokand and met with Muhammadali Khan.

Muhammadalikhan had accepted some military training from the English. But not long after, when the Bukhara army was defeated and Muhammadalikhan's army was defeated in Marham and fled, the Englishman did not hesitate to flee, even though Captain Qonulli Nasrullahkhan invited him to the emir's camp in Mahram. The emir also detained him and sent him to the Bukhara prison to accompany Colonel Sutud Dorat. When he returned to Bukhara, Emir Nasrullahkhan offered the English ambassadors to accept Islam. In response, the British government said that they had come to Maverounnahr with an administration, not to abandon religion or to accept religion, and they hoped that they would be treated accordingly. Against these wishes, the executioner was ordered to behead the ambassadors. "This was the response to the British's benevolent treatment"<sup>43</sup>. In addition, Emir Nasrullah Khan was expecting a direct letter from the Queen of England and when the letter did not arrive, the Emir was very angry. The execution of the two British officers caused great discontent and uproar in Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States. As a result, rumors spread that they were still alive and were being held captive in Bukhara Sharif. In 1831-1834, the Jew Josef Wolf, who went to Central Asia and India as a dervish to serve as a missionary, met Captain Connolly in India and

<sup>41</sup> Мирзо Олим Махдумхожи. "Тарихи Туркистон". – Т.: Янги аср авлоди, 2009. – 186 р.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Hopkirk "The Great Game", - London. 1990. 234 р.

<sup>43</sup> Мирзо Олим Махдумхожи. "Тарихи Туркистон". – Т.: Янги аср авлоди, 2009. – 187 р.





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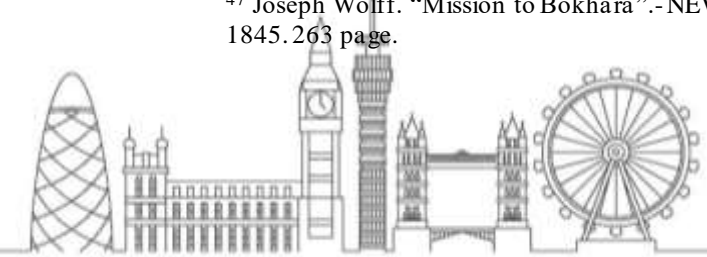
saw many good things from him, and Josef Wolf developed a strong respect for him. The fate of the two unfortunate officers deeply saddened Josef Wolf. He wrote a letter to all the officers of the British army with the following content. "I've been in Bukhara for two months, I can't believe the people of Bukhara would commit such a disgrace. If you pay me for my travel expenses, I'm ready to go to Bukhara and clarify everything,"<sup>44</sup> he offers himself. Furthermore, Josef Wolf's belief in their survival grew even stronger when he came across two letters written by Arthur Conolly to his brother John Conolly, who was a prisoner in Kabul, in the summer of 1842, describing their plight<sup>45</sup>. He had been to Bukhara before in 1831 and had gained a good reputation among the people. He also met with the Bukhara officials and Emir Nasrullah Khan, who had sent him gifts and greetings, saying that he had been to Jerusalem and that he was a Haji. Josef Wolf, on the advice of the British, received letters from the Sultan of Turkey, Sheikh-ul-Islam, and the Shah of Persia to the Emir of Bukhara and the Chief Qaziqalani about the release of two English officers. During his journey to Bukhara, he inquired about the fate of the two English officers from the Bukhara merchants, tourists, dervishes, and people traveling from Bukhara to Mecca, whom he met on the way, and when he was convinced that they were dead, he decided to investigate how they died. Josef Wolf reached Bukhara Sharif with a thousand hardships and difficulties and sent Amir Nasrullah Khan the letters he had received from the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia, and other notable people. The Emir invited him to his reception. Josef Wolf bowed to the emir repeatedly and loudly said peace to the king, the emir said enough and ordered them to be entertained. The emir often sent people to Joseph Wolf and asked him the following questions. Can you shake the dead?, Do you know when the Day of Judgment will be?, Does the queen have a husband?, Why is the ruler not a man?, Is witchcraft practiced in England, Are ambassadors killed in England?, Why are the English interested in old coins, How do the English rule India<sup>46</sup>?. After answering the emir's questions, Josef Wolf asked him for the bones of the executed British officers and received a positive answer. The emir did not want to let Josef Wolf go, but that day the Persian ambassador Abbasqulikhan brought a letter from the Iranian ruler Muhammad Shah to Emir Nasrullahkhan, and the emir, after opening the letter, agreed to the ambassador to take Josef Wolf with him and to send Bukhara envoys to England to inform them about the deaths of Charles Stoddart and Arthur Conolly<sup>47</sup>. For this, the Bukhara ambassador had to first go to the Sultan and seek his intercession with England.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Wolff. "Mission to Bokhara".-NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF STREET. 1845. 59-60 pages.

<sup>45</sup> Joseph Wolff. "Mission to Bokhara".-NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF STREET. 1845. 67 p.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Wolff. "Mission to Bokhara".-NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF STREET. 1845. 222-225 pages.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Wolff. "Mission to Bokhara".-NEW YORK: HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF STREET. 1845. 263 page.





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In our opinion, the British had no choice but to react to the murder of these two officers, which would have led to the downfall of the British government among its own people and internationally. Sending Josef Wolf to Bukhara to calm the public was the most appropriate way for England.

