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THE POLICY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON THE ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY IN UZBEKISTAN: GOALS AND RESULTS

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a scholarly analysis of the policy implemented by the Soviet government to eradicate illiteracy in Uzbekistan, its main objectives, mechanisms of implementation, and socio-cultural outcomes. Along with highlighting the positive aspects of this policy, the study also reveals its ideological and colonial nature.

Keywords: *eradication of illiteracy, Soviet policy, education, cultural revolution, ideology, Uzbek SSR.*

SOVET HOKIMIYATINING O'ZBEKISTONDA SAVODSIZLIKNI TUGATISH SIYOSATI: MAQSAD VA NATIJALAR

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqolada sovet hokimiyati tomonidan O'zbekistonda amalga oshirilgan savodsizlikni tugatish siyosati, uning asosiy maqsadlari, amalga oshirish mexanizmlari hamda ijtimoiy-madaniy natijalari ilmiy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, mazkur siyosatning ijobiy jihatlari bilan bir qatorda, uning mafkuraviy va mustamlakachilik mohiyati ochib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: *savodsizlikni tugatish, sovet siyosati, maorif, madaniy inqilob, mafkura, O'zbekiston SSR.*

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the level of literacy among the population of Uzbekistan was extremely low. This situation was directly related to long-standing socio-economic backwardness, colonial policies, and the limited capacity of the traditional education system. Education was mainly conducted within religious institutions and did not encompass broad segments of the population, nor

did it adequately serve the formation of modern knowledge and skills. As a result, illiteracy emerged as one of the major factors hindering social development.

Following the establishment of Soviet power, the eradication of illiteracy was designated as one of the priority directions of state policy and began to be implemented within the framework of the so-called “cultural revolution.” Although this policy outwardly appeared to be aimed at social progress and educational advancement, its underlying essence was closely tied to the ideological interests of the Soviet regime. In particular, increasing literacy was intended to facilitate control over the political consciousness of the population, promote the mass dissemination of communist ideas, and shape new social relations in accordance with Soviet ideological principles.

Therefore, the policy of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan under Soviet rule should be analyzed not merely as an educational initiative, but as a complex socio-political and ideological phenomenon. An objective examination of its goals, mechanisms of implementation, and outcomes makes it possible to reveal the true nature of Soviet educational policy and to draw meaningful lessons from historical experience for the development of education policy in independent Uzbekistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

The issue of the Soviet government’s policy on the eradication of illiteracy in Uzbekistan has been addressed in historiography at different stages and through various methodological approaches. The literature on this topic can be conditionally divided into three groups: works produced during the Soviet period, scholarly studies conducted in the years following independence, and analytical research within the framework of contemporary historiography.

The first group consists of works published during the Soviet era, in which the policy of eradicating illiteracy was predominantly interpreted in a positive and one-sided manner. In these studies, the Soviet government’s activities in the field of education were portrayed as a “people-oriented policy,” and the rise in literacy rates was presented as a direct achievement of the socialist system. However, these works largely ignored the ideological nature of the policy, its negative impact on national educational traditions, and the elements of coercion involved in its implementation.

The second group includes scholarly studies produced during the years of independence, which introduced a critical approach to the Soviet educational policy. In these works, historians evaluated the eradication of illiteracy not only as an educational process but also as a tool of colonial and ideological control. These studies provide evidence-based analyses demonstrating how the Soviet authorities

sought to regulate public consciousness through literacy campaigns and restricted national values and traditional educational systems.

The third group comprises academic articles and monographs developed within the scope of contemporary historiography. These studies adopt a comprehensive approach, examining the policy of eradicating illiteracy by analyzing its social, cultural, and political consequences through comparative methods. Particular attention is paid to the impact of literacy campaigns on everyday life, the social status of women, and the formation of national consciousness.

At the same time, the analysis of existing literature indicates that certain aspects of the policy—such as its regional characteristics, resistance among the local population, and long-term social consequences—have not been sufficiently explored. This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive and systematic study of the topic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

This study is aimed at examining the Soviet government's policy of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan as a historical process on a scientific basis, employing methodological principles and research methods commonly used in modern historiography. The research is grounded in the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systematic analysis.

Based on the principle of historicism, the policy of eradicating illiteracy was analyzed in close connection with the socio-political conditions of the period, Soviet ideology, and the system of state governance. The stages of the policy's formation, its evolution, and its chronological characteristics were examined in a consistent and logical manner.

The principle of objectivity was applied through a comparative analysis of sources produced during the Soviet period and scholarly studies conducted in the years of independence. Special attention was paid to avoiding one-sided ideological interpretations and to drawing balanced scholarly conclusions. The positive and negative aspects of existing perspectives were evaluated through a critical analytical approach.

The principle of systematic analysis made it possible to study the policy of eradicating illiteracy in relation to the education system, cultural policy, and social relations. This approach helped to identify the comprehensive impact of this policy on societal development.

In addition, the study widely employed historical-comparative methods, analysis and synthesis, as well as inductive and deductive approaches. Changes in literacy

levels were analyzed on the basis of statistical data, while archival documents, official resolutions, and scholarly literature were examined comparatively.

This methodological framework made it possible to conduct a scientifically grounded analysis of the Soviet policy of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan and to present an objective assessment of its essence and historical significance.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.

The research findings demonstrate that the Soviet government's policy of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan was a complex and contradictory process that served not only socio-educational objectives but also political and ideological purposes. Although the measures implemented in the 1920s–1930s achieved certain results in increasing literacy levels among the population, the content and direction of this process were largely subordinated to the interests of the Soviet system.

The analysis indicates that literacy campaigns were initially carried out more actively in urban and industrial centers, whereas progress in rural areas was considerably slower. The involvement of the adult population—particularly peasants—in educational activities was often compulsory and relied on administrative-command methods. This circumstance negatively affected the effectiveness and quality of the educational process.

In addition, the process of improving literacy was characterized by the one-sided nature of educational content. Curricula and textbooks were primarily aimed at promoting communist ideology and emphasizing the superiority of the Soviet system, while national history, traditions, and cultural values were relegated to a secondary position. As a result, literacy education functioned not only as a means of enlightenment but also as an instrument of ideological indoctrination.

The research results also reveal contradictory aspects in the sphere of women's literacy. On the one hand, the involvement of women in education within the framework of the “Hujum” campaign contributed to an increase in their social activity. On the other hand, this process involved abrupt interference in traditional ways of life, which intensified social tensions and conflicts.

Overall, although the Soviet policy of eradicating illiteracy contributed to a rapid increase in literacy levels in the short term, it had negative long-term consequences for the national education system and cultural identity. The findings suggest that this policy should be assessed not solely in terms of its positive or negative aspects, but through a comprehensive evaluation that takes into account the historical conditions and ideological context in which it was implemented.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION.

The results of the conducted research demonstrate that the Soviet government's policy of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan was a complex, multifaceted, and contradictory process. Although this policy outwardly appeared to be aimed at increasing literacy levels and establishing a formal education system, in practice it primarily served the political and ideological interests of the Soviet regime.

The study reveals that literacy campaigns led to a rapid increase in literacy rates in the short term, largely due to the establishment of new educational institutions and the involvement of broad segments of the population in the learning process. At the same time, this policy was frequently implemented through administrative-command methods, and the content of education was heavily ideologized in line with communist doctrine.

Moreover, national educational traditions, cultural heritage, and religious-intellectual values were not given sufficient consideration in the process of literacy education. This had a negative impact on the formation of national identity and ultimately transformed the education system into an instrument of colonial policy.

Overall, the Soviet policy of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan was carried out at the intersection of historical necessity and ideological obligation. Its experience underscores the importance of grounding contemporary education policy in historical memory, national interests, and the principles of free and independent thought.

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