

THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CENTRAL ASIA: A BRIEF RETROSPECTIVE LOOK (BEFORE 1917)

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Abstract

The article examines the role of the subject of history in the education system in Central Asia in the Middle Ages and modern times. Based on an analysis of sources and literature, the authors hypothesize that history was not taught as an academic discipline in old religious maktab (schools) and madrasahs. It is argued that for the first time, as a separate subject, history began to be studied by students of educational institutions created in Turkestan by the Russian colonial authorities—parish, city, and Russian-native schools and gymnasiums. In the national education system, history was included for the first time in the curricula of the new method schools opened by the Jadids. The article presents thoughts on the problems of teaching history in schools and madrasahs in Turkestan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the subjects and books taught in them, and, in particular, the subject of history.

Keywords: Educational institution, old school, madrasah, parochial schools, city schools, Russian-native schools, gymnasium, new method schools, history as an academic discipline, general history, national history, local history, curriculum, textbook, chrestomathy, class-lesson system, verbal method, laboratory method, method of preparing essays.

INTRODUCTION

The history subject takes an important place in educating knowledgeable, enlightened, and highly spiritual people. That is why famous scientists and writers, state and public figures have emphasized the need to study history. For example, the great Uzbek poet and philosopher Alisher Navoi, realizing the importance of historical knowledge in human development, encouraged people to study history. [7, 109].

Schools and universities are the main places where the sciences, including history, are taught to the younger generation. After the spread of Islamic teachings in Movarounnahr, religious schools and special higher and secondary educational institutions—madrasahs—were established. Over the centuries, these educational institutions played an important role in the spiritual development of the society. It is commonly known that our ancestors who studied in

these educational institutions made a great contribution to world civilization. But it is surprising that history has not been taught in schools and madrasahs for centuries.

The analysis of sources and literature shows that history as a separate subject in Turkestan was initially taught in Russian educational institutions established here by the colonial authorities—parish schools, city schools, Russian-native schools, and gymnasiums. In the national education system, history was taught on a systematic basis in the new method schools that opened in the early 20th century.

Literature analysis and Methodology

This problem has been reflected in a number of works [4; 5; 9; 12; 14; 15; 17; 18]. But most of them reflect the development of the educational system in a general, but do not shed light on the question of the place of history in it. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to focus on this issue in this article.

Historical and comparative analysis, problem-chronological and problem-territorial methods of scientific research were used in the process of preparing the article.

Results and Discussion

The famous writer and scientist Sadriddin Ayni wrote interesting facts about the subjects and the style of teaching in the old-method schools in his autobiographical short story “The Old School.” The author studied at the old-method school in the village of Suktare, where he was born and raised. According to him, the book “Haftiyak,” which contains the shortest surahs of the Holy Quran, and “Charkitob” were taught in the school. Sadriddin memorized some surahs and some poems of Khoja Hafiz Shirazi at school. Since Sadriddin’s father, Saidmurodkhoja, was a literate person, he realized that the level of education in the old-method school was extremely low, and realizing that his son still did not know reading and writing, he took him out of school and gave him to the Khatib of the village’s mosque for discipleship. Sadriddin memorized the books “Avvali Ilm” and “Bidon” from Khatib and learned abjad calculation from his father.

By the time Sadriddin had finished school, he still could not write. After that, Saidmurodhoja asked his nephew Saidakbar, who had been studying in one of the Bukhara madrasahs, to teach his son writing. During the summer vacation, Saidakbar taught Sadriddin writing. Thus, Sadriddin’s primary education came to an end. Ayni does not give any information in the story “The Old School” as well as in his “Memoirs” that history was taught in the old-method school. From this we can conclude that history was not taught in the old-method schools.

However, it should be noted that there is some data in the sources that some pedagogues engaged in private activity and taught history to children to a certain extent. For example, in one of the first stories of Chulpon, it is mentioned that the father of Muhammadyar, who is the hero of the novel, apprentices his son to a Tatar teacher who graduated from a madrasah in Ufa to receive primary education. Over the course of a year, the teacher gave Muhammad excellent knowledge of Islam, history, and geography [17, 35].

Although some similar information can be found in other sources, we did not find any mentions in the literature that history was systematically taught in old-method schools.

Now let's turn to the question of how history was taught in madrasahs—higher education institutions. To find an answer to this question, we turn to the works of Ayni again. Sadriddin Ayni studied in Bukhara madrasahs for many years. Therefore, he was well acquainted with the curriculum and programs of these institutions and wrote down his opinions about it in his work entitled “Memoirs.”

According to Ayni, Arabic language (syntax and morphology), logic, Islamic doctrine, “ilmi kalom” (word science), “ilmi hikmat” (philosophy) (natural and divine), fiqh (ablution, fasting, funeral, Hajj rules, trade rules, the procedure for owning and freeing slaves, marriage rules, and other Sharia laws) were taught in madrasahs. Mathematics and literature were not compulsory subjects. If students wanted, they could study these subjects themselves outside of madrasah. Mother tongue was not among the subjects taught in the madrasa. Those who wanted to learn this subject also learned it from life or from books. According to Ayni, the program of subjects taught in madrasahs and the list of literature were permanent and stable and did not change for years and even centuries [1, 163].

“Memoirs” also contains information about books studied in madrasahs, or, speaking in modern terms, textbooks and study guides. As mentioned above, some young people who graduated from school and entered the madrasa were not literate, so they were given education based on the school program in the first years of studying. First of all, they studied the books “Bidon” and “Avvali Ilm.” Then, Arabic morphology was taught based on the books “Muizzi” and “Zanjani” and syntax based on the book “Avomil.” It took three years to master the books listed above. At the next stage, Abdurakhman Jami’s book “Sharhi Mulla” was studied. At the same time, the books “Kofiya” and “Shamsiya,” related to the science of logic, were studied. It took five years to learn these books.

After “Sharhi Mulla,” comments written on the book “Shamsiya” based on the book “Hoshiyai Qutbi” were studied. It took three years. At the same time, the rules of Islam were learned based on Nasafi’s book “Aqoid.” Interpretations of this book were studied for another four years. After that, for two years, students learned logic and metaphysics based on the book “Tahzib.” For another two years, natural and divine philosophy was studied based on the book “Hikmat ul-ain.” Finally, in the last two years of study, the book “Mulla Jalal,” dedicated to theology, was studied, and after that the madrasah graduation ceremony was held [1, 165].

As can be seen from the information given above, the curriculum of madrasahs does not include the study of history, which is important for the development of society and the spiritual maturity of people. Despite the fact that some works say that in madrasahs since ancient times, along with religious ones, secular sciences were also taught, including history, geography, and “Arab history”, but this is not confirmed by sources [12, 36, 60].

It is worth noting that there have been attempts to include history in the curriculum of madrasahs. This issue is reflected in some literature. For example, during the rule of the Russian Empire, the Russian colonial authorities wanted to introduce a course of Russian history in one of the madrasahs in Tashkent. The following story can be used as an example.

In 1868, the Governor-General of Turkestan, K.P. von Kaufman, visited the Beklarbegi and Khoja Ahror Vali madrasahs, which were the big ones in Tashkent. He got acquainted with the educational work and expressed the opinion that such subjects as the Russian language and general history should be included in the madrasah's curriculum. One of the pro-Russian judges supports this proposal in order to please the head of the country. But at that time, there was no one in Tashkent who could teach Russian history in Uzbek. Reluctantly, a Muslim Tatar educated in a Russian school is appointed to this task. This person was also the imam of the Tatar mosque in the new city of Tashkent. But Kaufman considered the Tatars to be the most dangerous Muslim propagandists and did not give permission. As a result, the plan to introduce the Russian language and history in madrasahs was not implemented at that time [12, 24].

So, this naturally begs the question of why history was not taught in old-method schools and madrasahs.

In our opinion, history and some other secular subjects were not included in their program, since old-method schools and madrasahs were mainly confessional, that is, religious educational institutions. Any religious teaching connects how the historical process goes, what it ends with, and what consequences it leads to with the divine will. As a result, such a point of view leaves no room for the scientific research of the past of humanity, for the study of the causes of historical events.

Therefore, another question arises: how history lovers studied this science in Central Asia for centuries. As we considered, people who love history and respect it have studied the events of the past independently or based on the tradition of "master-disciple," which is widespread in the East.

The analysis of sources and literature makes it possible to put forward the opinion that the systematic teaching of history in schools in Turkestan began in the second half of the 19th century, after the establishment of the rule of the Russian Empire in the country.

After Russia invaded and annexed Turkestan in the second half of the 19th century, the colonial authorities began to establish schools similar to the educational institutions that existed in the metropolis. Primary schools intended mainly for children of the European population (literate schools, parish schools, city schools, and public educational institutions), incomplete secondary schools (higher elementary educational institutions and pro-gymnasiums), and complete secondary schools (gymnasiums and schools of real education) were established. History was initially included in the curricula of these educational institutions.

The listed educational institutions were subordinated to different agencies, and there was no interrelationship and continuity between them. The education system has a class character; in most cases, the children of ordinary workers studied in elementary schools, and children of the middle and upper classes studied in gymnasiums and real educational institutions.

Children were taught theology, writing, reading, and arithmetic in the primary educational institutions that functioned in the Russian Empire, including the Turkestan region (people's schools, parish and city schools). Also, in the reading lessons, students were introduced to some texts on natural science, geography, and Russian history.

According to some reports, some city and regional administrations tried to introduce subjects such as history, geography, natural science, and labor into the primary school curriculum in order to raise the level of knowledge of students. However, in letters sent to localities, including official institutions of the Turkestan Governorate General, the Russian Ministry of Public Education demanded strict adherence to state programs [4, 291].

Later, the situation changed a little. At the end of the 19th century, primary schools in Russia were converted from a three-year to a four-year course. In connection with this, in the last, fourth year of study, a short course in Russian history was introduced as a separate subject in these schools. This curriculum consisted of episodes from the lives of some princes, tsars, and generals, as well as stories related to political history and the history of the church. The book "A Brief Russian History" by F. Novitsky was used as a textbook [8].

Naturally, the history of Turkestan was not taught in the Russian primary schools operating in the region. In order to partially eliminate this shortcoming, in 1884 and 1910, at the congresses of people's teachers in Tashkent, it was recommended to use local history materials in history lessons. For this purpose, the need for publishing a special anthology was emphasized. Before the publication of the "Anthology," it was considered advisable to use in Russian schools "The Third Book for Reading" by Gramenitsky, designed for teaching in Russian-native schools [4, 286].

The Russian colonial administration also established separate schools for the local population of Turkestan. These schools were called Russian-native schools. The first Russian-native school was opened in Tashkent in 1884. By 1912, their number in Turkestan reached 89. The main purpose of establishing Russian-native schools was to teach the youth of Turkestan in Russian, educate them in the spirit of loyalty to the Russian Empire, and train them as translators for government agencies. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to teach the history of Russia to students. Therefore, history was included in the curriculum of Russian-native schools [9, 12]. Academician T.N. Qori-Niyazi, who studied in a Russian-native school, testified that, in addition to the Russian language, arithmetic, Arabic script, and the basics of Islam, history, and geography (mainly Russian history and geography) were taught in this school.

The first alphabet book for students of Russian-native schools was written by the inspector of the Public Education Department, V. Nalivkin. This book is "Sart-Persian Chrestomathy. With examples for translation from Russian into Sart and Persian languages". The noteworthy aspect of the chrestomathy is that it contained some texts related to history. The alphabet book contains local folk proverbs that are easy to learn, stories about the Prophet Solomon and Harun al-Rashid, stories about the conquest of Central Asia by the Arabs, sayings of Ahmed Yassavi, the history of Ferghana outlined by Babur, Khudoyor Khan's struggle against the Kipchaks, information about the customs of the native population, as well as poems and examples of local scripts were included [11]. But the colonial authorities criticized it under the pretext that this book did not cover the lifestyle of the people of the Russian Empire.

After Turkestan became a colony of Tsarist Russia, here, as in Russia itself, gymnasiums were opened, primarily for the children of Russian officers and officials. The main purpose of the gymnasiums was to prepare graduates for universities and other higher educational institutions. In the ‘New Regulations on Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums’ approved on November 19, 1864, the operation of two types of gymnasiums in the Russian Empire was legalized. One of them was the classical gymnasium, in which one or two ancient languages (Greek and Latin or one of them) had to be taught. 41 percent of the total hours allocated to academic subjects were spent on learning these languages. Classical gymnasiums also pay great attention to the study of ancient literature and the history of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome [5, 9].

CONCLUSION

Thus, the history was not taught on a systematic basis in the old religious schools and madrasahs that existed in Central Asia for centuries. The main reason for this was that these educational institutions had a confessional character. Any religious teaching emphasizes that the course of the historical process and its historical consequences are determined by divine will. Therefore, there was no place to study the past on a scientific basis in religious educational institutions. However, some historical sources testify that even in the pre-revolutionary period, some teachers in their personal pedagogical activities tried to teach the history within the limits of their capabilities.

In the territory of Turkestan, history was taught for the first time in Russian educational institutions—primary schools (literate schools, parish-parochial schools, city educational institutions, public educational institutions), non-complete secondary schools (higher elementary schools and pro-gymnasiums), and complete secondary schools (gymnasiums and schools of real education), as well as in Russian-native schools established here during the rule of the Russian Empire. These educational centers taught general history and the history of Russia, while the history of Turkestan was almost not studied. History lessons were mainly conducted in the form of question-answer or in the verbal form (telling the topic to the students orally). The past is described mainly in terms of the reigns of the kings of earlier times. Textbooks emphasize political events; social and cultural issues are neglected.

Teaching of history in the national education system of Turkestan started with the new-method schools opened by the Jadids at the end of the 19th century. Bekhbudi, Fitrat, and other Jadid leaders took the initiative to include this subject in the program of new-method schools, realizing the important role of studying history in the development of society and spiritual maturity of people. Jadids wrote the first history textbooks and manuals. Thus, the teaching of history was introduced in the national education system.

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