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**FROM THE HISTORY OF THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY IN  
 UZBEKISTAN IN THE 20S AND 30S OF THE XX CENTURY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In this article, the author describes the process of eradicating illiteracy in the 20s and 30s of the twentieth century. The People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR disclosed the content of the criteria set out in the directive document on this issue. This aspect of the issue serves as additional material for the works published so far.*

**KEYWORDS:** *History Of Education, Elimination Of Illiteracy, Cultural Revolution, Ideology, School Of The Illiterate, School Of The Illiterate, Rural Population, Peasantry, Society "Elimination Of Illiteracy".*

**INTRODUCTION**

**1. The urgency of the problem.** During the period since the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as in all spheres of life of our society, several works have been carried out to study different periods of the history of Uzbekistan based on the principles of historical truth. In particular, the work done by scientists of the republic on the study of the history of the Soviet period in terms of scientific objectivity is commendable. In the history of the Soviet era in Uzbekistan, the issue of eradicating illiteracy among the general population is an important problem. In this complex and controversial period, the study of the historical process of eradication of illiteracy in Uzbekistan as a holistic scientific problem is one of the most pressing issues today [1-3].

**2. Methods and level of study.** The article follows the principles of comparative analysis, historical, logical, structural, statistical analysis of scientific knowledge. The issue of eradicating illiteracy in Uzbekistan has been studied in the historiography of the Soviet period within the framework of one-sided, dominant ideological models. Research conducted during the years of

independence has partially covered some aspects of the issue. These studies examine the work of eradicating illiteracy among the general public as part of the "cultural revolution" in the early stages of "socialist" construction. However, it can be said that the work to eradicate illiteracy among adults was organized as a campaign independent of the Soviet education system, and this campaign, in turn, served a specific purpose.

**3. Research results.** During the years of Soviet rule, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, several measures were taken to eradicate illiteracy among the adult population throughout the country. This issue has risen to the level of public policy, and in Uzbekistan, extensive work has been done to eliminate illiteracy among all segments of the population. The main measures taken to eradicate illiteracy among the general population in Uzbekistan were taken in 1920-1930, and during these years the regulatory framework for the eradication of large-scale illiteracy was formed and a great deal of experience was gained in this area. Most importantly, in the most difficult conditions of these years, significant work has been done to train teachers needed to end illiteracy, to form the educational and methodological base of literacy courses.

One of the important directions of cultural construction in Uzbek villages was "the elimination of illiteracy among the broad peasant masses". This campaign was put on the agenda by the Soviet leadership not only as a social policy but also as a very important economic and political issue. Indeed, the achievement of mass literacy was considered by the Bolshevik leadership to be an important means of communalizing the worldview of society.

Admittedly, in the early 1920s, when the Soviet government was in power, the illiteracy rate among the rural population of Turkestan was much higher, with about 70-80 per cent of the population illiterate.

As the Soviet party leadership launched an attack on illiteracy, all government structures and political institutions of the Soviet state were widely involved in organizing this campaign. Elimination of illiteracy in the Republic of Turkestan began after the promulgation of the decree "On the Elimination of Illiteracy among the Population of the RSFSR" signed by V.I. Lenin, on December 26, 1918. The decree stipulated that in the territory of the RSFSR, including the TASSR, which is part of it, citizens between the ages of 8 and 50 who cannot read or write must be literate in their mother tongue or in Russian. In late December 1918, the Central Executive Committee of the TASSR Soviets, following the Leninist decree, issued a Decree on the involvement of the adult population of the autonomous republic in general compulsory education. Accordingly, members of the population between the ages of 17 and 50 were required to study literacy in public schools or short courses.

In June 1920, the All-Russian Emergency Commission for the Elimination of Illiteracy was established under the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR, and the Commission was entrusted with the general management of the activities of adult schools, and the involvement of the adult illiterate in schools.

However, initially, illiteracy eradication activities were carried out only in cities, with literacy schools and courses organized in cities primarily involving Europeans. In 1920, 35 schools for the Elimination of literacy were opened in the Turkestan ASSR. In 1924, the total number of such schools was 174, with about 6,000 students. Illiteracy eradication courses were originally opened mainly in cities, but in 1924 they had only just begun to appear in rural areas.

In the late 1920s, there were about 1,000 schools and courses for the Elimination of literacy in TASSR. More than 70,000 people completed the courses, 70 per cent of whom were locals [4-7].

In the first years after the establishment of Soviet power in Turkestan, the intellectuals of the Fergana Valley also took an active part in the process of eradicating illiteracy among the population. In particular, since 1920 in the village of Shahand in Namangan illiteracy eradication schools under the leadership of Muhammadsharif Sofizoda, in the village of Argin Orifjon Umarov, in Turakurgan under the leadership of Ishakhon Ibrat and Mirzahamdard Khankeldiev began to work. Ishakhon Ibrat was in charge of this work, he worked in teacher training and illiteracy eradication courses. Because by these years, the elimination of illiteracy among the population was the basis of the cultural sphere. In 1923-1924, along with about fifty Old Methodist schools, six illiteracy eradication schools operated in the mahallas of Namangan. The Soviet government sought to coordinate reforms in the public education system with lower-level initiatives. The Society for the "Elimination of Illiteracy", founded in 1924, was the basis of such initiatives. The basis of this society was teachers, students of higher educational institutions. In the first year, the society had 1,417 members in the Syrdarya region, 800 in Fergana, and 1,000 in Samarkand.

The Society for the "Elimination of Illiteracy" also set out to expand its activities by attracting resources from outside the state. According to the charter, it helped to expand the network of illiteracy eradication schools both at the expense of local funds, organizations and mainly at the expense of the population. For this purpose, the society also conducted an oral campaign through the press to reach as many contacts with the population as possible. In the context of the transition to a new economic policy in the Turkestan ASSR, significant changes have taken place in the measures to eliminate illiteracy among the adult population. In 1922, due to the removal of most of the illiteracy eradication schools from the state budget and their transfer to the local budget, and the reduction of funds provided by the Commissariat of Education, many schools ceased operations. At the end of 1922, there were only 107 literacy schools and 3 lower literacy schools left in the system of the TASSR Education Commissariat.

The Union "Koshchi" has also taken significant steps to spread communist ideology among the rural population of Turkestan. In June 1923, the Central Committee of the Union "Koshchi" signed an agreement with the Emergency Commission for the Elimination of Illiteracy of the Turkestan ASSR on "cooperation in the education of suburbs and villages". According to the agreement, the Union "Koshchi" has organized a total of 300 schools and literacy courses for farmers, with an average of 10 in each district. The emergency commission undertook to provide these schools with teaching aids and textbooks. Between 1923 and 1924, more than 70,000 farmers under the age of 25 were educated in these schools.

Coercion and administrative measures to attract the rural population to illiteracy eradication schools were prohibited. The state used only propaganda and economic impact. The People's Commissariat for Land Affairs, the Agricultural Bank, and the Cotton Committee used to lend seeds and money, as well as agricultural machinery, to those who took illiteracy eradication courses.

The government has also gone the route of providing economic incentives. This privilege included the following:

- a) The People's Commissariat for Land Affairs: in the first instance, a percentage discount on lending and repayment, a five per cent discount on the purchase of agricultural implements, a priority in the distribution of land;
- b) By the Cotton Committee: the first receipt of cotton to the mills and immediate settlement, as well as several local preferences;
- c) By the Agricultural Bank: lending in the first instance in cases where it can lend.

Every farmer who had completed six months of illiteracy termination schools and presented the relevant document of the political-educational institutions could enjoy these benefits. These measures have played a much more positive role in ending illiteracy.

Efforts to eradicate illiteracy in the Turkestan ASSR became widespread in late 1924 and yielded major results in the years following the demarcation of the nation-state in Central Asia. By the end of 1924, there were 1,005 illiteracy eradication schools in the TASSR, with more than 50,000 students. By this time, illiteracy eradication schools and courses began to be funded from a variety of sources: 205 schools from the state budget, 355 schools from the local budget, and the rest from trade unions, the Union "Koshchi", and other organizations [8-11]. In February 1926, the first congress of educators and cultural workers of the republic was held in Samarkand. Ishakhon Ibrat from Namangan also took part in the congress as an active organizer of the campaign to eradicate illiteracy. During the congress, educators and cultural workers were tasked with opening new schools and involving women in state, public and educational work.

On May 25, 1937, signed by Niyazov, Head of the Adult Education Department of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR, a guide on "On the organization of educational work to eliminate illiteracy among illiterate workers in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan" was sent to the city, district public education departments, all teachers and cultural soldiers. It noted that the eradication of illiteracy was an important political task in the Soviet Union and the document defines who is illiterate and identifies measures to establish schools for the illiterate in the country. According to the document, two types of schools were noted to establish in Uzbekistan - "school for the illiterate" and "school for the lower literate".

A school for the illiterate, aged 16 to 50, who could read aloud but could not write; who is able to read less difficult words with syllables or with whole words, who reads the word slowly, slurred, stuttering, who adds letters and syllables excessively; it was decided to accept adults who knew addition and subtraction within 5-digit numbers from the account.

The lower literate schools were shown to accept adults between the ages of 16 and 50 who could read, write, and count within the school's literacy program, who were familiar with the basic spelling rules, and who knew how to operate with whole numbers. The document also sets several tasks for school teachers. In particular, teachers needed to determine whether a student was illiterate or illiterate, to select students according to their level of knowledge and production, age, to determine the level of literacy after the alphabet, and to organize literate people completely apart from illiterate.

The manual of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR also stipulates that the subjects of "Mother Tongue" and "Accounting" should be taught in illiterate schools, and they should work according to the program and curriculum of illiteracy schools. It stipulates the

teaching of "Mother Tongue", "Accounting" and "Geography" in primary schools, the work of these schools on the program and curriculum of schools for the completion of illiteracy.

According to the document, political dialogue lessons in the curriculum of illiterate schools and political dialogue and nature lessons in the curriculum of lower-literacy schools have been dropped.

The above document pays special attention to the issues of ideological education and control. It stipulates that the elements of Marxist-Leninist education (political dialogue), "Mother tongue", "Arithmetic" and "Geography" are taught based on extensive use of socio-political materials. The document stipulates that to control students in illiterate and lower-literate schools by party and Komsomol organizations, teachers attached to them should try to involve students as much as possible in local political education circles.

The document also lists the subjects taught in illiterate schools and the number of hours allocated to them. In particular, a total of 330 hours were allocated in one academic year, of which 200 hours were "Mother Tongue" and 130 hours were "Arithmetic".

A total of 330 hours per academic year were allocated for lower-literacy schools and 146 hours were devoted to "Mother tongue", 125 hours to "Arithmetic" and 60 hours to "Geography". For the above schools, the school year in the cities was set from September 1 to July 1, i.e. 10 months. According to the curriculum, each month was divided into 12 training days, which consisted of 3 hours of training. In rural areas, the school year was 7 months - from October 1 to May 1. 12-day school days were organized every month, 4 hours of classes were held on the school day, and there were no short-term vacations.

It should be noted that our intellectuals, who worked in the Soviet-era education system in the country in the 1920s, served this system, but their main goal was to help educate their people, to raise their consciousness. Unfortunately, the Soviet government's efforts to build a single socialist society without recognizing the identity and cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples in the field of education were carried out through many repressions and oppressions during the 20s and 30s of the twentieth century and the content of education continued to contradict national values and traditions. Although the educational policy of the Soviet government was positive in terms of overall social development, it was essentially aimed at alienating the local population from their identity, culture, and traditional way of life, as well as national values. As a result, during the 1930s, many zealous, nationalist, enlightened, people's intellectuals who fought for the prosperity of the Motherland were repressed.

**4. CONCLUSIONS:** The measures taken based on the document studied by the Ministry of Education of the Uzbek SSR to some extent served to eliminate illiteracy and lower-literacy in the country. As a result, on the eve of World War II, almost 60-70% of the population of Uzbekistan was literate. However, the Bolshevik campaign was aimed at inculcating in the masses the foundations of a "European" culture that had been distorted only by unrealistic communist ideas. Such ideologicalization of the field of public education, the centralized definition of science programs and textbooks has led to the alienation of the younger generation of our people from the national history and culture.

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