

SOCIO-POLITICAL PROCESSES IN UZBEKISTAN AT THE SIGHT OF BRITISH SCHOLARS

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ABSTRACT

This article is dealt information about the research institutions of Great Britain, studying with close attention the history of Central Asia, in particular Uzbekistan, also socio-political processes, state policy, religion, youth, ethnographic situation, social reforms and other spheres of the country. Along with this, there is provided information on the history of the emergence of such organizations. Furthermore, there is given information about universities, institutes, societies, centres, as well as their specialists. At the same time, there is discussed the completed projects of British orientalists and specialists, also research works that are being carried out at the moment. Research institutions have been studied, their activities have been objectively assessed.

KEYWORDS: *Central Asia, Oriental Studies, The Islamic World, Politics, Society.*

INTRODUCTION

It is known that the Renaissance in Europe in the late Middle Ages was an important factor in the development of Oriental studies and high interest in Eastern countries, along with other fields, as well as industrial development in the region was the reason for investigating the East for political and economic purposes. Even though the study of Eastern countries in Europe was first started by the French, later the British and Germans conducted a large amount of research and acquired a large scientific source on Oriental studies.

Central Asia played an important role in the development of international trade relations for a long period, and a significant part of the Great Silk Road is located in this region. This great trade route had a great impact on the dissemination of technological and spiritual values among different nations, ensuring the development of human civilization. Due to this factor, we can say that the culture of Central Asia is rich and diverse.

The Ox-Yaksart basin (between the Amudarya and Syrdarya) is a place where all the important roads of the Middle East intersect, and natural conditions allow the roads of this region to become international crossroads. Indeed, studying the rich and unique history of Central Asia plays an important role in understanding the complex processes which are taking place in the region today and also defining future priorities.

Based on the given considerations above, we can justify the relevance of the topic as follows: firstly, the chosen topic has not been the subject of a separate scientific study yet; secondly, the researches carried out in foreign historiography to date have not been sufficiently studied in this direction; thirdly, one of the most pressing problems facing historians today is the objective study of foreign historiography.

Methods.

In the context of research work, the author collected works in various areas of the Central Asian region, written by British experts during the XIX-XXI centuries. Initially, has been studied works published in the 19th century about Central Asia, exactly "Travels In The Himalayan Provinces Of Hindustan And The Panjab" (Moorcroft), "Travels Into Bokhara" (Burnes), "Narrative Of A Mission To Bukhara 1843-1845" (Wolff), "Narrative of a Journey from Herat to Khiva" (Abbott). At the second stage, there were collected and studied research projects, comprehensively studying Uzbekistan from the end of the twentieth century to the present, including K. Melchert, L. Treadwell, P. Wordsworth, K. Humphrey, S. Saxena, P. Kalra, J. Goodhand, C. Harris, R. Harris, P. Molinga, S. Newton, J. Heathershaw, D. Lewis and C. Owen. This gave us a big picture of researches on Uzbekistan.

The purpose of our research was to gain knowledge about the areas in which Europeans, especially British Central Asian orientalists analyze the socio-political processes taking place in Uzbekistan, as well as how they evaluate them. The research works carried out by various organizations, universities, centres and projects to achieve these goals has been carefully studied. As a result, it became known that in only one European country, Great Britain, more than a dozen institutions are specializing in the study of Uzbekistan in various fields.

In the course of our research on this topic, several printed and electronic publications, numerous articles, more than a hundred electronic resources were studied, translated and analyzed. The data obtained were summarized, systematized and were drawn conclusions.

The emergence of Central Asian studies in Great Britain

Speaking about the development of social and political sciences in Great Britain, we see that in the first half of the 19th century, British scientists and tourists began to study the countries of Central Asia, sources of historical research appeared. The first 20 years of the 19th century were an important period for the British Empire in expanding its colonies. [1] It is known that having lost its rich colonies in North America, Britain at the end of the 18th century began to develop new lands in the East with a centre in India under the name of the "Second Colonial Empire". Subsequently, for the next hundred years, India served as the main link in the British colonial empire. In turn, the British ruling circles, who afterwards strengthened their positions in India, also began to show interest in Central Asia.

The nineteenth century was a milestone in British historiography in the study of Central Asia. First of all, it was a period of collecting information about the region and active travel and research. For modern researchers, research data from the British are an important historical source. The authors of these works were the first Europeans and the first Englishmen who visited various regions of Central Asia and began a comprehensive study of this region. It was they who laid the foundations of British Orientalism, and their works became the first publications on various issues of the history, politics, economics and military affairs of Central Asia.

At the first stage of studying Central Asia, the main source was the travel diaries and reports of officers of the British army, British tourists, etc., at the next stage, the study of the region was carried out by newly created specialized research organizations and institutions. So, during the 19th and 20th centuries, various scientific institutions were created and developed in Great Britain, focused on the study of different regions of the world. Their development has always been at the centre of attention and supported by the state.

From the second half of the 19th century, the region of Central Asia, like many other countries of the East, began to be studied by scientists at Cambridge and Oxford Universities. During this period, such great scientists as William Stubbs [2] and George P. Gooch [3], who were specialists in history, worked at the University of Oxford. These scholars were also interested in Eastern problems. During this period, the School of Oriental Studies was founded at the University of London. Simultaneously, the study of Central Asia was carried out in the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Asiatic Societies. In general, R. Murchison [4], D. Boulger [5], J. Malleon [6] and many other specialists were engaged in the study of the eastern countries in England. Most of these scholars were former officers and officials who had served for a long time in the East India Company. They visited India and neighbouring Asian countries and studied the language, customs, lifestyle, history, geography and religion of the peoples of these countries. In the meantime, the British government expressed an interest in studying these sciences and supported the researchers.

One such institution is the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, founded in 1823 in London. Since its inception, the society has become the centre of true conferences for scholars studying Asia through lectures, journals and other publications. At the same time, the society is the oldest scientific society for Asian studies in the UK. Among the members of this society, there are many famous scholars of Asia. [7]

During this period, the activities of the Royal Geographical Society were also at the centre of scientific and political attention. The meetings of the society were attended not only by specialists but also by representatives of various fields. Commenting on the activities of the society, the famous Hungarian scientist and tourist A. Vambery (1832-1913) said: "No one in the UK is as popular as travellers. The traveller leads to a missionary and a merchant, followed by a warrior... Continuing our point of view, in England during this period the ideology was established that researchers of new countries would help the state in the future to expand its political influence and add new territories to its sphere of influence." [8]

The Royal Geographical Society is one of the British scientific societies, founded in 1830 as the Geographical Society of London under the auspices of King William IV [9] for the development of geographical science. The society granted Royal Charter under Queen Victoria [10] in 1859.

The next British research institute to study Central Asia is the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford. Currently, the Faculty of Oriental Studies includes several research centres, such as the Center for Asia Minor, the Nissan Institute, the Khalili Research Center, the Chinese Center, the Center for Hebrew and Judaism Studies, the Nizami Ganjavi Center for Azerbaijan, the Caucasus and Central Asia. [11]

At the same time, many researchers of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford, such as C. Melchert [12], L. Treadwell [13] and P. Wordsworth [14], research Central

Asia. In particular, Christopher Melchert studies the spread of Islam in the IX-X centuries, Islamic law, hadith [15], Luke Treadwell studies the history of Central Asia in the III-VII centuries AD, Islamic numismatics [16], and Paul Wordsworth studies the history of early Islamic archaeology, the Caucasus and Middle Asia. [17]

The University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom is the second oldest university in the country (after Oxford University) and the fourth largest in the world. [18] The so-called "schools" of Cambridge organized the educational and research work of students, masters and researchers. Each "school" is administratively a group (united by directions), consisting of several faculties (a set of departments), research institutes, laboratories, and so on.

The University's School of Humanities and Social Sciences brings together the Faculties of Social and political sciences, Economics, Education, History, History and philosophy of science, Law and the Institute of Criminology. In turn, the Faculty of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences has departments of Archaeology, Social anthropology, Politics and international sciences, Sociology. The Department of Social Anthropology includes the Department of Mongolian and Internal Asian Sciences; The Department of Political Science and International Sciences conducts research and development at the Centers for African, Evolutionary, Gender, American and South Asian Sciences. [19]

In these schools and their faculties, departments and centres, studies of the Central Asian region are carried out in the field of archaeology, ethnography, urban studies, political science, sociology, religion and many other disciplines. Among the aforementioned studies carried out in the Unit of Mongolia and Inner Asian Studies of the Department of Social Anthropology, there are topics related to Central Asia, in particular, Uzbekistan. In particular, the professor of this department Caroline Humphrey conducted anthropological research in Russia, Mongolia, China, India, Nepal and Ukraine. She has researched a wide range of themes, such as Soviet and post-Soviet provincial economy and society; Buryat and Daurian shamanism; Jain religion and rituals; Trade and exchange in Nepal; Environment and pastoral economy in Mongolia; history and contemporary situation of Buddhism in Mongolia. Her recent research focuses on urban transformation in Buryatia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. [20]

In 2007 the book named "Urban Life in Post-Soviet Central Asia" was published. This book contains a chapter by Caroline Humphrey, 'New Subjects and Situated Interdependence: After Privatisation in the City of Ulan-Ude.' In 2008 her article "Cosmopolitanism and the City: Its Interaction and Coexistence in Bukhara" was published. [21] C. Humphrey in her studies deals with social anthropology and urban problems.

The next research institution is the Department of Politics and International Studies, which studies historical and contemporary political ideology, international relations, various regions of Asia, governance and gender issues. [22] Dr Siddharth Saxena [23], one of the Affiliated Lecturers of the Center for Development Studies, is also the Director of the Cambridge Central Asia Forum at Jesus College, University of Cambridge. His research interests are in the areas of religion and identity, knowledge systems, social and political development and institutional history in Central Asia and the Middle East. He also holds a number of Professorships, Honorary Professorships and Visiting Professorships at Universities in Central Asia. [24]

Since 1996, he has been conducting field research in Central Asia, in particular in the Bukhara oasis and the Fergana Valley. In 2009, in the book "Uzbek Relations with the Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council in modern and pre-modern times", an article was published about his study of Uzbekistan. [25]

Prajakti Kalra, another specialist at the Center for Development Studies, is also one of the researchers in Central Asia. In particular, P. Kalra is a specialist for the project "Comprehensive Capacity Building in Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia: research integration, impact governance and sustainable communities", as well as a Research Associate with the Cambridge Central Asia Forum. [26]

Another institution that researches Uzbekistan and neighbouring Central Asian countries is the Cambridge Central Asia Forum, an interdisciplinary forum organized by academic professors from the University of Cambridge and located at Jesus College, Cambridge. This forum was founded in 2001 and is closely associated with the Center for Development Studies at the University of Cambridge. The main goal of the forum is to summarize the results of the scientific activities of Cambridge in Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as to increase the interest of the best interdisciplinary scientists in research in the region. Another important area is the development of bilateral academic relations between Central Asia and the United Kingdom; encourage research in existing sciences, arts, social sciences, engineering and medicine, and encourage new interdisciplinary research in Central Asia and Eurasia. CCAF's management committee is chaired by Professor Lord Robert Mair, and Forum is directed by Dr Siddharth Saxena. [27]

CCAF has conducted and continues to conduct various researches on themes such as Documenting local and traditional environmental knowledge in Central Asia; Models of Eastern Cosmopolitanism: Coexistence in Central Asian Cities; Early and Medieval Madrassa Curriculum in Central Asia; Trade Guilds in Central Asia and Europe; Central Asia and the Arabian Gulf (GCC): Case of Uzbek-Saudi Relations; Social Development in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO); Conceptualising Civil Society in Central Asia; Capacity Strengthening and Gender in Central Asia; Central Asia Technological Innovation Initiative. [28]

Each of the research centres established in the UK has its periods of origin and development. According to the sources, in the 1920s, interest in Central Asia began to grow in the United Kingdom. The events that took place in the Central Asian region during this period attracted the attention of the world community, which aroused the interest of researchers in the study of the history, culture, customs and socio-political life of the country. As a result of this strong interest, the largest institution for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East in the UK has emerged.

This research institution in the United Kingdom is the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London, founded in 1916. [29] This research institution is one of the world's leading organizations for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and its library is one of the fifteen international research libraries in the UK. [30] Now the school has several centres and institutes that research different regions of the world, one of which is the Centre for Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus. [31] The centre currently has a multidisciplinary team of specialists in Central Asia and the Caucasus, more than any other institution in the UK or Europe. In addition to specialists studying contemporary problems in the member states of the former USSR, the centre employs a large group of scientists engaged in archaeology, religious

studies, linguistics, pre-and post-BC history of Central Asia and the Caucasus. [32] Currently, the Center is responsible for promoting, coordinating and disseminating information about scientific research in the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus in scientific, governmental, non-governmental and other circles of interest to the region. This is being done by the specialists of the centre through research, publication of research results, creation of new curricula, a series of seminars and special events.

The Centre for Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus currently employs several Central Asian scholars and experts, including Jonathan Goodhand [33], Colette Harris [34], Rachel Harris [35], Peter Mollinga [36] and Scott Newton. [37] Each of these scientists specializes in a specific problem in the region.

In particular, J. Goodhand's research interests include the political economy of aid and conflict, NGOs and peacebuilding and 'post conflict' reconstruction; C.Harris's interests are in the fields of gender and religion, sexualities, (reproductive) health, and community development in Central Asia, East and West Africa; R.Harris's research is centred on China and Central Asia, and especially on the Uyghurs. She focuses on intangible cultural heritage, music and Islam, soundscapes, and state projects of territorialisation; P. Mollinga's research focuses on the relationship between water/natural resources and development. It focuses on agricultural water use (irrigation), and its intensifying interlinkage with urban and industrial water use, with a geographical focus in South Asia and Central Asia. [38]

One of the largest educational and research institutions in the UK is the University of Exeter. There are many research works on Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, conducted by researchers from the College of Social Sciences and International Studies and the College of Humanities at the University of Exeter. In particular, John Heathershaw, a professor at the College of Social Sciences and International Studies, addresses post-Soviet conflict, security and development issues in Central Asia. He founded the Exeter Central Asian Studies Network (ExCAS) in 2010 and managed various projects in the network from 2015-2020. In addition, J. Heathershaw was elected to the board of directors of the Central Eurasian Studies Society from 2011-2014. From 2017-2019, he served as Vice-President of the European Society for Central Asian Studies and chaired its biennial conference at the University of Exeter in June 2019. Along with J. Heathershaw of the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, David Lewis and Catherine Owen have also been involved in research projects in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan.

The Exeter Central Asia Research Network (ExCAS) was established in 2010 and now includes as active members around ten doctoral students and alumni, as well as academics, honorary fellows and partners. The group's research focus is on the five Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan.

The European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS) researches Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and neighbouring regions of the Caucasus, as well as Russia, China, Afghanistan and Iran. Its main activity is a biennial conference in one of the European countries or in Central Asia.

In 2004, a new institute was founded at the University of St Andrews in Scotland to study topics ranging from history, language, culture to security issues in the Middle East, Central Asia and

the Caucasus. The Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies (MECACS), unique in the UK for its geographic remit, is dedicated to preparing a one-year self-contained Masters degree. The programme is aimed for both students and professionals wishing to pursue a doctoral degree related to these geographic areas and for individuals who seek intensive study of the region. Dr. Sally Cummings, Director of the University School of International Relations said: "The Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus have become centers of modern security studies. The region with large oil reserves and intractable problems in the world is attracting great interest from the West. States and societies in the region are being rebuilt, and their directions are being redefined. [39]"

Although these regions have important historical, religious and cultural similarities, they also have various differences and contradictions in political and economic development."

CONCLUSION

If you look at the activities of the above institutions and their research specialists, it is clear that also in the 21st century the study of the Central Asian region, in particular, the state of Uzbekistan, remains relevant in the UK. This is due to the fact that in the current information age, Uzbekistan is remaining as one of the most important countries in the world of geopolitics. It should be noted that the favourable geographical position of Central Asia and its various underground and surface resources have attracted the conquerors of the world for millennia. At the same time, Central Asia attracts the attention of many political scientists and diplomats. The largest powers in the world, as in all eras, are trying to establish their sphere of influence in the region.

Today, many foreign experts call international competition for energy resources in Central Asia a new "Great Game", analyzing the course of events that took place hundreds of years ago and are now in full swing. The main feature of the current political situation in the heart of Asia is that the new "Great Game" is not being waged between the colonial powers, as a hundred years ago, but between other actors, primarily the United States, China, Russia, Great Britain and Turkey.

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