

Bolsheviks' Reforms in the Educational System of Turkistan

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Annotation: As a result of the Bolsheviks' rise to power, so many reforms started to be done not only in the political but also in the social spheres. They had serious aspects especially in education, science, and culture, which are important in changing their minds. Reforming the national education system was not easy, but mandatory.

Keyword: Turkestan ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic), TASSR CEC (Central Executive Committee), People's Commissariat of Education, military communism, unified labor school, Labor school – communes.

Turkestan had an old system of schools, mosques, qorixonas (places where religious people recited the Koran and small children were taught to do so), otin oyi schools (female schools), and madrassas before the Russian Empire conquered the country. Since the colonial authority established the Governor-General of Turkestan in 1867, the local education system, as well as all economic and political activity, has been under its supervision. The Tsarist administration investigated the local educational system and determined that it posed a threat to colonialism's future. The madrassas, which had played a vital role in Muslim society for generations, were regarded by colonial administrators as "relics of the past".¹

Despite the Tsarist government's policy of Russification and brutality against the local religious education system, traditional religious schools continued to operate, and a new promising principle of national education evolved. With the impact of the 1905 revolution and, in particular, the overthrow of the Tsarist government, the principle of democratization began to take root in the education system.

The Bolsheviks, who came to power after the October 1917 coup, established the Turkestan People's Commissariat of Education in November 1917 in order to terminate the existing system of governance in the education system and build a Soviet model of public education.²

The Turkestan ASSR decreed on May 14, 1918, that the education system in Turkestan would undergo fundamental socialist transformation.³ It stressed the importance of establishing a Soviet school that would be suitable for all.

¹ Alimova D.A. Lessons from the witness of history: the exploration of national treasures of Uzbekistan during the period of tsarism and Soviet colonialism. – Tashkent: Sharq. – P. 29.

² NSA RUZ, 34-f., 1-list, 28-work, 51-sheet.

³ NSA RUZ, 34-f., 1-list, 30-work, 3-sheet.

The first alternative in the program plan was the Soviet school model, known as the "Unified Labor Schools", which was adopted by a decree of the RSFSR's Central Executive Committee on October 16, 1918. The unified school was divided into two phases: the first for children aged 8 to 13 (five years of education) and the second for youngsters aged 13 to 17 (four years of education).⁴

TASSR CEC issued a directive on the transfer of education in the mother language and published the "Regulations on the organization of Turkestan's schools."

The Republican People's Commissariat of Education's "Student Youth" campaign encouraged both boys and girls to attend school.⁵

Russian language lessons were launched in Turkestan national schools, while "Turkish" language classes were started in Russian schools; the republic's state languages were designated Russian and "Turkish". The teaching of Russian and Turkish in schools became mandatory from the third grade forward, although the study of both languages was optional.

The departments of public education were invited to "contact the local national affairs department to initiate efforts to open Muslim schools in the areas".⁶

At a time when efforts to reform public education in the country were growing, Mulla Ghazi Yunus Muhammad oglu published an article titled "On the Reform of Madrasas" in the Great Turkistan newspaper.⁷

According to the authorities, the reputation of religious schools was strong in Turkestan because the majority of the population was made up of locals who were affected by the believers.

The attitude of Bolshevik Soviet authorities in the RSFSR and Turkestan toward the local education system was heavily influenced by religion policy and the RSFSR CPC Decree of January 23, 1918 on the separation of the church and the state.⁸ TASSR passed a similar decree on November 20, 1918.⁹

As a result of the "military communism" strategy intended to suppress the local system, the waqf properties was confiscated, and mosques, schools, and madrasas were abolished. The majority of local youngsters were unable to attend school due to the insufficient number of Soviet schools. By decree No. 6486 of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Turkestan ASSR on December 14, 1918, financial assistance for Muslim schools was terminated, and they were offered a transition to a new methodical system as a first step.¹⁰

M. Hasanov gave a positive assessment of the activities of schools and madrasas in Turkistan in his article "Autonomy of Turkistan: truth and fiction", and provided accurate information about the liquidation of waqf, the destruction of mosques, and restrictions on the rights of Muslim schools and madrasas by the Soviets.¹¹

The Turkestan ASSR's People's Commissariat of Education has introduced a new school system. The school, according to the system, is split into three stages: primary (three years), secondary (seven years), and advanced. At the age of seven, a pupil was accepted to primary school. This stage

⁴ News of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. October 16, 1918.

⁵ Bendrikov K.E. Essays on the history of folk education in Turkistan. – Moscow: Izd. Acad. Ped. Nauki of the RSFSR, 1960. – P.

⁶ NSA RUz, 34-f., 1-list, 86-work, 107-sheet.

⁷ Great Turkistan. May 28, 1918.

⁸ Decrees of the Soviet government. V. 1. – Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959. – P. 271–274.

⁹ NSA RUz, 25-f., 1-list, 144-work, 34-sheet.

¹⁰ NSA RUz, 34-f., 1-list, 34-work, 26-sheet.

¹¹ Hasanov M. Autonomy of Turkistan: truth and fiction // Science and life. – Tashkent, 1990, №11. – P. 6–8.

comprises "the first four classes of all lower primary schools, all upper primary schools, and all secondary institutions (gymnasiums, practical schools, commercial schools, and so on)".¹²

Seven-year schools were to be established in all parts of the Turkestan ASSR in 1918. However, it was impossible to complete this task at the time. The Bolshevik regime was not yet prepared for it, both economically and politically. As a result of the scarcity of local instructors, the establishment of "complete seven-year schools" was made possible. The benefit of this arrangement is that primary schools are entirely free. Soviet schools were formed in lieu of existing gymnasiums and educational institutions as Russian schools were quickly overhauled. There were "labor schools - communes" in addition to secondary schools. V.F. Lubensov was one of the first to establish a labor commune in September 1918. Similar schools were opened in Samarkand, Skobelev, and Kattakurgan in 1919-1920.

The Sovietization of school building may be observed in the fact that, while Soviet schools were first founded mostly in cities, they quickly spread to rural areas by 1919-1920.

The colonial regime's political emphasis on women's education began as a "red army struggle for old lifestyle" in the aftermath of the October coup. This may be seen in the way they strive to teach both boys and girls together. The idea, however, was met with significant resistance from the locals. As a result, the Bolshevik regime had no choice but to submit. As a result, it was suggested that separate schools for girls be established. Tashkent hosted the first such school, which enrolled 42 Uzbek women. Later, such kind of schools were founded in Andijan, Kokand, and Samarkand. Tashkent had 12 women's schools and Andijan had two in the early 1920s. At the time, 270 Uzbek and 130 Kyrgyz women were studying in the Kokand area.

The establishment of Soviet national schools was met with a lot of resistance. The restriction of religious schools and the transformation of Russian-style schools led to an increase in their proportion. Six Uzbek schools were established in Skobelov district at the beginning of the 1918-1919 academic year.¹³ Tashkent had 57 schools with 8,500 learners at the time. Over 100 schools have been built for the local community in the Samarkand region.

In the civil war-torn Fergana area, establishing Soviet schools was challenging. Nevertheless, in the "freed" territories, Red Army detachments began to open new sorts of schools. As a consequence, the number of schools in the Fergana area reached 350 at the start of the 1919-1920 academic year.¹⁴

The financial position of Soviet schools was exceedingly tough, regardless of how politicized the educational activity was. Textbooks and instructional tools, particularly pens, ink, and notebooks, were in limited supply. Furthermore, during the Bolsheviks' fast reform of education policy, there was a scarcity of local staff, which exacerbated the situation. The textbooks weren't perfect also. Furthermore, the brand-new system was met with skepticism by local youngsters. The study's effective operation was hampered by a lack of student discipline.

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¹² NSA RUz, 34-f., 1-list, 25-work, 33-sheet.

¹³ The Soviet victory in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. – Tashkent: Fan, 1967. – P. 561.

¹⁴ History of the Uzbekistan SSR. V. 3. – Tashkent: Fan, – P. 247.

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