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THE STATE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE CITY OF KARSHI DURING THE WAR AND POST-WAR YEARS (1941–1955)

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Abstract. Based on documents of the Kashkadarya Regional State Archive, the article analyses the state of the education system of the city of Karshi in 1941–1955. It covers the activities of general schools during the war and post-war years, student numbers, the composition of the teaching staff and academic performance. It also describes the work of the Karshi Pedagogical College, the establishment of the medical college and the Karshi Teachers' Institute, and the problems of the material and technical base of schools and preschool institutions.

Keywords: Karshi city, education system, war years, general school, pedagogical college, medical college, Karshi Teachers' Institute, teaching staff, academic performance, material and technical base.

СОСТОЯНИЕ СИСТЕМЫ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ ГОРОДА КАРШИ В ГОДЫ ВОЙНЫ И В ПОСЛЕВОЕННЫЙ ПЕРИОД (1941–1955 ГГ.)

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Аннотация. В статье на основе документов Кашкадарьинского областного государственного архива анализируется состояние системы образования города Карши в 1941–1955 годах. Освещены деятельность общеобразовательных школ в годы войны и в послевоенный период, численность учащихся, состав педагогических кадров и показатели успеваемости. Раскрыты также деятельность Каршинского педагогического училища, создание медицинского училища и Каршинского учительского института, проблемы материально-технической базы школ и дошкольных учреждений.

Ключевые слова: город Карши, система образования, годы войны, общеобразовательная школа, педагогическое училище, медицинское училище, Каршинский учительский институт, педагогические кадры, успеваемость, материально-техническая база.

INTRODUCTION

During the years of Soviet rule, the various cities of the republic were developed under the direct influence and control of the state, although cultural processes were autonomous in character and rested on personal initiative. The urbanisation of cities was closely linked to the economic policy of the state. For example, with the development of the Karshi Steppe, the territory of the city of Karshi expanded. In turn, significant changes also took place in the cultural life of the city.

During the years of Soviet rule, the cultural sphere was turned into the principal propaganda instrument of the Communist Party. All branches of culture – education, science, literature and art, and the work of cultural and educational institutions – were directed towards instilling the ideas of the ruling ideology in the minds of the broad masses. The distinctive traditions and features of Uzbek national culture began to be displaced by the traditions of an entirely new and alien culture described

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as “national in form, socialist in content”. In the documents of the Communist Party, a number of demanding and complex requirements of a political and ideological nature were placed on preschool education, secondary, specialised secondary and higher education, on cultural and educational institutions such as clubs, libraries and cinemas, and on workers in literature and the arts in carrying out the tasks set in the field of culture. The requirements placed on cultural institutions were never removed from the agenda during the years of Soviet power; on the contrary, ever newer tasks were added in line with the demands of the time. As administrative-command methods of government were widely promoted and entrenched in the country, the main emphasis in every field came to be placed on the pursuit of gross indicators and on carrying out the “cultural revolution” by various methods and means. The interest and aspirations of the masses towards science and enlightenment were channelled towards political interests.

This article analyses, on the basis of archival documents, the activities and general condition of the general schools, preschool institutions, and specialised secondary and higher educational institutions of the city of Karshi in 1941–1955.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The study was conducted on the basis of the principles of historicism, objectivity and a systematic approach. Comparative-historical, problem-chronological and statistical methods of analysis were used in treating the subject. The source base of the article consists of documents held in funds 1, 2, 17 and 182 of the Kashkadarya Regional State Archive (QVDA). The statistical indicators in the archival documents were compared across academic years, revealing the changes in the education system of the city.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational institutions during the war and the first post-war years

During the war years, the educational institutions of the city continued to operate under difficult conditions. As throughout the country, the work of every sector was directed primarily towards the needs of the war.

With the outbreak of the war, the responsibilities of teachers increased. Alongside teaching in accordance with wartime requirements, public education workers intensified propaganda and agitation work among the population and held talks at industrial enterprises and on farms. Lectures were delivered on various topics, wall newspapers and combat leaflets were issued, and exhibitions were organised.

As a result of the transition from the Latin to the Cyrillic script in 1940, a shortage of new textbooks and teaching aids was felt. Despite the difficult situation, substantial funds were spent on public education from the Karshi city budget. For example, in 1941 city budget expenditure amounted to 4,773 thousand rubles, of which 1,469.5 thousand rubles, or one third of total expenditure, was allocated to public education[1]. In 1942 the city budget stood at 3,569,500 rubles, of which 1,058,600 rubles was allocated to public education.

At the beginning of the 1941–1942 academic year, a total of 2,591 pupils were enrolled in the schools of Karshi, of whom 360 were first-graders[2].

[1] Kashkadarya Regional State Archive (hereinafter QVDA), fund 1, inventory 1, file 169, sheets 16–19.

[2] QVDA, fund 2, inventory 1, file 53, sheet 1.

HSR (LONDON),
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During this period, teachers such as Karatayeva, Ibragimova, Karimov, M. Ribakova, Raximov, Hasanova, Nazarova, Xaliqova, Ro‘ziyev, Nurullayev, Shakirova and Habibulina worked in the schools, and most of them held a diploma from a pedagogical college. At the same time, 30 per cent of them had no pedagogical training.

In 1941, at the school named after Stalin in the city, pupils were taught by such teachers as S. Azizov (director), Abramov (physics and mathematics), Rasulev (mathematics), Shermatov (Uzbek language and literature), P. Monastirskaya (Russian language and literature), Churayev (Russian language), Bikchintayeva (biology), Xudayberdiyev (history), Shevchuk (military training) and Bergen (German language).

Specialised secondary educational institutions also continued to operate in the city during the war years. In this period, the number of students at the Karshi Pedagogical College was steadily increased. In the 1943–1944 academic year, 86 students studied in 4 classes at this institution, and in the 1948–1949 academic year, 460 students in 15 classes. Uzbek girls made up a very small minority among them: in these years their number was 15 and 69 respectively. The number of teachers at the Karshi Pedagogical College also grew: 6 teachers worked there in the 1943–1944 academic year, 11 in 1945–1946 and 24 in 1948–1949[3]. Only 50 per cent of the teachers had higher education. The college operated in a two-storey building constructed before the war, where there were no proper working conditions. The corridors of the building were narrow, and the classrooms could not accommodate the students. When the student dormitory of the Karshi Pedagogical College was inspected in 1946, it was found that the food supply and sanitary conditions did not meet the required standard[4].

Drawing school-age children into educational institutions became one of the most difficult tasks. Because many teachers had left for the front, schools were short of teaching staff. Teaching in schools was conducted by extremely backward methods. Many pupils remained in the same grade for several years. All these negative factors affected the quality of education. In the 1945–1946 academic year, the number of pupils in the schools of Uzbekistan was 823 thousand instead of the planned 1 million 10 thousand. In September 1949, 2,512 pupils were studying in the schools of Karshi.

In 1949, the seven-year incomplete secondary School No. 3 in Karshi was converted into a secondary school, and X. Murodov was appointed its head. At the school, pupils were taught by Ayupova, S. Yuldashev, J. Ahmedova, X. Ibragimov, J. Ixsanova, Shodiyeva and Z. Ibrogimova.

Many teachers who had earned the respect of the people – knowledgeable, experienced and wholeheartedly devoted to their profession – served in the schools of Karshi. Among them were N. Chubakova, K. A. Koyra, A. A. Nemenko, Bezbarodova and Terexova of School No. 1, Karimov, Jo‘rayev, Saminova, Migunova and Axtuganova of School No. 2, and Ayupova of Secondary School No. 4[5].

[3] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 2, file 524, sheet 3.

[4] QVDA, fund 182, inventory 1, file 51, sheet 3.

[5] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 417, sheets 4–5.

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The establishment of higher and specialised secondary educational institutions

The first higher educational institution in the city was established in 1945 as the Karshi branch of the Bukhara State Pedagogical and Teachers' Institute[6]. The branch was founded on 16 June 1945 by a decision of a joint meeting of the Organising Committee of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan and the Kashkadarya Regional Party Committee. One lecture room in the building of a seven-year school was allocated to the branch, while the teachers were housed in the guest house and cells (hujra) in the large courtyard of Og'aliq Eshon. Umar Davronov, an organiser and a participant in the Second World War, was appointed the first director of the branch, and teachers such as P. Y. Mejinskiy, T. Yadixanova, M. Tohirzoda, N. Raxmonov and S. Rasulov taught the students. Teachers were invited from Bukhara to teach the core courses; among them were P. N. Narishkin, N. Boruxov, S. Usmonov and M. Mirzayev. In the year the branch opened, 32 students were admitted to the specialities of history and of language and literature, 11 of whom were Russian.

By Resolution No. 1966 of the Council of Ministers of Uzbekistan of 27 October 1949, the independent Karshi Teachers' Institute was opened. The course of study at the institute lasted two years and was designed to provide incomplete higher education. The institute was headed by Tursun Tojev in 1949–1951, Barot Muzaffarov in 1951–1954, A'zam Shermatov in 1954–1955 and Azim Samadov in 1955. Specialists were trained in three specialities: physics and mathematics, history, and language and literature. In the year of its opening, 101 students were admitted: 29 in physics and mathematics, 19 in history, 17 in Russian language and literature and 36 in Uzbek language and literature.

During this period, teachers such as A'zam Shermatov, Ochil Tog'ayev, Abdi Umirov, Abdumo'min Qahhorov, Bozor Samadav, Samad Rasulov, Qodir Mirzayev, Boqi Soqiyev, Cho'li Qo'ziyev, Andrey Sumenkov and Tursun Sodiqov worked at the institute. To improve staffing, Candidates of Philological Sciences A'lo Ashrapov and Oxunjon Sobirov were invited from Tashkent. In 1955, Tasliya Yadixanova became the first member of the institute to successfully defend a candidate's dissertation, in philology, in the city of Leningrad.

In 1946, a feldsher and midwifery school was set up on the basis of the Karshi city polyclinic, and from 1954 it was granted the status of a medical college. Between 1946 and 1954, the college trained 177 medical workers with secondary education, 19 of whom were Uzbek girls[7].

The relocation of the Karshi Medical College to a new building was repeatedly delayed. Under the plan, construction of the building was to be completed in 1952; yet although every condition for this existed – building materials and labour were available – the construction was not completed on time owing to the irresponsibility of the officials in charge[8].

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[6] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 417, sheet 89.

[7] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 2, file 156, sheets 76–79.

[8] QVDA, fund 17, inventory 1, file 20, sheets 67–68.

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Problems in the work of general schools in the post-war years

For 1947–1948, the plan was to admit 2,410 pupils to the schools of the city, whereas 2,437 children were actually admitted. In that academic year, the school named after Molotov in Karshi was meant to have 920 pupils, but in fact 1,020 pupils studied there[9].

In the same year, 412 pupils left the schools of the city for various reasons; 275 of them did so because the work of their parents had been transferred to another city.

In addition, the insufficient skills and experience of the teachers also hindered the development of schooling. Teachers did not work individually and systematically with lagging, low-achieving pupils. Moreover, they did not take adequate measures to identify and eliminate the real causes of poor performance.

In the 1947–1948 academic year, Simonova, a third-grade teacher at Secondary School No. 1 named after Molotov in Karshi, held over 11 of her 30 pupils for autumn re-examination. Odilova, a first-grade teacher at School No. 1 in the city, held over 21 of her 44 pupils for re-examination[10]. At times, 50 per cent of the pupils of a school were kept back for another year because of unsatisfactory performance.

Another reason for the poor performance of pupils was that no out-of-school activities were organised for them.

Yet standing commissions for various fields operated under the Karshi City Executive Committee. In 1948, for example, there was a nine-member commission on public education chaired by S. V. Nesterova and an eight-member commission on urban improvement chaired by M. M. Samsonov. However, the commission did not carry out its work at the required level.

In 1947, 80 teachers were working in the schools of Karshi, of whom 20 had higher education, 25 held a diploma from a teachers' institute and 35 had secondary education. The work of the teachers' methodological associations did not meet requirements. There was no exchange of experience among teachers, and no practical assistance was given to young, inexperienced teachers[11].

A number of specialised secondary schools also operated in the city during this period. In 1949, the plan was to admit 30 students to the Karshi railway school and 10 to the FZO (factory training) school, but in fact 23 students were admitted to the railway school and 8 to the FZO school. The admission plan for these institutions was not fulfilled because the applicants lacked the required level of knowledge and had certain health problems.

In the years after the Second World War, the number of school pupils grew throughout the world. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s the number of school pupils worldwide tripled. In the former Soviet Union, the number of secondary school pupils increased 1.5 times. Thus, while there were 84 classes in the schools of Karshi in the 1950–1951 academic year, the number rose to 87 in the

[9] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 343, sheet 7.

[10] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 343, sheet 9.

[11] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 343, sheet 13.

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following academic year[12]. The growth in the number of pupils was driven by the spread of mass education and by increased demographic growth.

However, the task of increasing the number of secondary schools in the city and strengthening their material and technical base was neglected, even though the population was growing in this period as new industrial enterprises opened in Karshi. The four existing schools in the city could not meet the demand of the population for secondary schooling. Pupils from the city travelled to schools in the villages of Kat and Kamandi in Karshi district, 6–10 km away. In 1956, K. Akimov, chairman of the Karshi City Executive Committee, wrote to the higher authorities asking that a Pioneers' house, a children's sports school and a 400-place secondary school building in the Karshi Station settlement be included in the plan of urban construction projects, but the request was disregarded[13].

In 1952, there were 3 secondary schools, 2 incomplete secondary schools and 2 primary schools in Karshi, located on average 12 km apart[14]. Owing to a shortage of classrooms, lessons in these schools were held in three shifts, which hindered the proper organisation of teaching and upbringing. Because of the poor material and technical base of public education institutions and the shortage of teaching and auxiliary buildings, it was impossible to run extracurricular clubs for pupils.

The academic performance of pupils in the schools of the city remained very low. In the 1950–1951 academic year, attendance was 90.7 per cent and the pass rate 80.8 per cent. In particular, 187 of the 955 pupils of School No. 1 named after Molotov and 179 of the 905 pupils of School No. 2 named after Stalin failed to master the curriculum. According to archival documents, 478 pupils across the city failed in that academic year[15].

During the Soviet period, the causes of poor performance among the schoolchildren of the city were much the same from year to year. They included inadequate supervision of the schools by the heads of the public education department, the failure of school administrations and parents to take firm measures regarding the attendance of pupils at lessons, and the shortage of textbooks. For example, in the 1951–1952 academic year the schools of the city had no textbooks for subjects included in the curriculum such as Uzbek language and literature, Darwinism, chemistry, history, Russian language and the Constitution.

In 1951, there were 3 kindergartens in the city, attended by 135 children of preschool age. However, the material and technical base of the preschool institutions of the city was in an extremely poor state. The kindergartens had no buildings of their own. For example, Kindergarten No. 1 was housed in two rooms of Secondary School No. 3, and the children had to eat, sleep and play in the same room. In 1955, the kindergartens of Karshi had a total of 300 places, and the needs of a city that was expanding and growing in population year by year remained unmet in this respect.

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[12] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 446, sheets 222–223.

[13] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 553, sheets 59–61.

[14] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 446, sheets 85–86.

[15] QVDA, fund 1, inventory 1, file 446, sheets 222–223.

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CONCLUSION

In sum, during the period of Soviet rule the education system in Karshi took shape as a core component of the cultural life of the city and played an important part in its development. Although, in line with state policy, educational institutions were turned into a means of instilling the ruling ideology, the opening of schools and of specialised secondary and higher educational institutions, the training of teaching staff and the expansion of the educational infrastructure helped to create an educational environment in Karshi. Despite the hard conditions of the war years, the shortage of staff and problems of material supply, the educational process in the city did not come to a halt; on the contrary, new schools and technical colleges, pedagogical and medical colleges and higher educational institutions were established, and a generation of local specialists emerged.

At the same time, analysis of the archival documents shows that there were serious problems in the education system of the city during the war and post-war years: there was a shortage of teaching staff, some of whom lacked specialised training; lessons were held in three shifts because of the shortage of school buildings and classrooms; the academic performance of pupils was low; and there were not enough textbooks or places in preschool institutions.

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